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Reviewed by **John Sbardellati**, University of Waterloo

In her introduction to *Diplomatic History*'s recent special forum on gender and sexuality in American foreign relations, Katherine A.S. Sibley reminds us of the foundational articles, now nearly two decades old, which launched this subfield.¹ The new articles in

¹ Sibley highlights three articles from 1994: Laura McEnaney, "He-Men and Christian Mothers: The America First Movement and Gendered Meanings of Patriotism and Isolationism," *Diplomatic History* (January 1994): 47-57; Emily Rosenberg, "Foreign Affairs' after World War II: Connecting Sexual and International Politics," *Diplomatic History* (January 1994): 59-70; and Andrew Rotter, "Gender Relations, Foreign Relations: The United States and South Asia, 1947-1964," *Journal of American History* (September 1994): 518-542. Another foundational article in this subfield (which Sibley later cites), path-breaking for its marriage of gender and discourse analysis, is Frank Costigliola, "'Unceasing Pressure for Penetration': Gender, Pathology, and Emotion in George Kennan's Formation of the Cold War," *Journal of American History* (March 1997): 1309-39.

this forum by Frank Costigliola, Naoko Shibusawa, and Veronica Wilson are perhaps not as ground-breaking because, as Laura McEnaney notes in her comment, “we are past the question of ‘whether?’ and on to the business of ‘how?’ when it comes to understanding gender and sexuality’s influence on international relations” (770). Freed, to some degree, from the burden of justifying their approaches, these articles succeed on their own terms and illustrate just how fruitful “the business of how” can be.

Veronica Wilson’s lively portrayal of Hede Massing, the former Soviet agent who gained notoriety for corroborating the testimony of Whittaker Chambers in the Alger Hiss trials, accomplishes her goal of resurrecting this long-forgotten figure and demonstrating how even politically sympathetic Cold Warriors marginalized her importance and ignored the personal toll of her political journey from the Communist underground to the anti-Communist Right. Wilson puts forward two objectives for her article. First, she aims to demonstrate “how Hede Massing’s life can be interpreted in ways other than those employed by male commentators and how representations of Massing served various interests and perpetuated certain ideologies and assumptions about communism, espionage, and women” (699-700). Second, she endeavors “to restore some of Massing’s voice that has been silenced by male commentary or inattention” (700). Wilson delivers on both counts, though her article also presents (but does not fully explore) some evidence that Massing herself subscribed, at times, to the same patriarchal traditionalism that served to silence her voice.

Massing, according to Wilson, “played a crucial role in fomenting the anti-Communist crusades of the early Cold War” (722). She entered the Communist orbit via marriage to her first husband, the Communist writer and future Comintern operative Gerhart Eisler. Wilson employs psycho-analysis to explain Massing’s attraction to communism, as Eisler’s revolutionary commitment apparently filled a void that had been created by an absentee father. The love of her life, however, was her third husband, Paul Massing, whom she met in Frankfurt in 1928. The Massings soon became embroiled in Soviet espionage activities, and they remained in the apparatus despite disillusionment with the USSR brought on by having witnessed some of the horrors of forced collectivization while stationed in Moscow. By the mid-1930s they had moved to the United States where Massing continued her espionage work, which included recruiting State Department employee Laurence Duggan and meeting with Alger Hiss. But as both Hede and Paul distanced themselves from the Communist movement, they found “their lives no longer sealed by the romance of the revolutionary enterprise” (705). Politically, they drifted apart. Despite his anti-Stalinism, Paul remained on the Left, subscribing to the cultural Marxism of the Frankfurt School. Hede’s involvement in the Hiss-Chambers affair, however, pulled her further to the Right. As their marriage crumbled, Paul admonished her for contributing to McCarthyism. “Their union,” Wilson stresses, “had died in the tense atmosphere of Cold War” (713).

During the Alger Hiss trials, Hede Massing fell victim to a sexism that cut across the political aisles. In the first trial she had been ruled an unfit witness, not only because of her admitted espionage, but also because she had been married three times. In the second

perjury trial, Hiss's lawyers sought to discredit her testimony based on her sexual history, claiming that she had been known as "the whore of Vienna" among German radical circles; *Time* magazine perpetuated this portrayal of Massing when it branded her a "woman with a past" (707-08). As Wilson deftly shows, Massing now confronted the early Cold War era stereotype of "divorced women as manipulative, hard, selfish, or wanton; they were dangerous, sexually mature, and probably sexually frustrated women who posed a temptation to married men, a threat to monogamy, and a danger to the traditional nuclear family" (708). Even upon her death in 1981, periodicals on both the Left and Right still marginalized her as little more than the femme fatale in a broader drama in which the major players were all men.

Wilson's aim to restore Massing's voice, silenced as it was by male commentators, is laudable, but her article also suggests that Massing herself contributed to the very stereotypes she faced. In 1951 Hede published her memoir, *This Deception*, a work that, according to Wilson, echoed "sexist beliefs about female irrationality and emotionalism" and that, through her emphasis on Freudian explanations for her youthful radicalism, contributed to the myth of leftist women who were "misled by their own neuroses" (714). One questions, therefore, the degree to which Massing challenged patriarchal authority (as Wilson at times suggests) or even recognized its oppressive role in her life. Wilson's article, nevertheless, succeeds in using Massing's story to illuminate the role of patriarchal traditionalism in American Cold-war ideology.

Like Wilson, Frank Costigliola's contribution to this special forum employs a biographical approach. And, as with Hede Massing, Pamela Churchill emerges here as a formidable figure worthy of our attention. But unlike Massing, Churchill proved far more adept at navigating the politics of gender and sexuality which Costigliola presents as being central to the so-called 'special relationship' between Washington and London. Indeed, Costigliola insists that intimate relations cemented the special ties between the wartime partners, and Winston Churchill's daughter-in-law found herself uniquely positioned to cultivate friendships and sexual relationships with a number of high-ranking Americans stationed in London. According to Costigliola, Pamela Churchill "embodied what would become known as the special relationship" between Britons and Americans (754).

Pamela Rigby married into the Churchill family when she and Winston's son Randolph wed in 1939. Their union was not a happy one; it barely lasted the length of the war, and for most of that time Randolph was stationed in the Middle East. Meanwhile, Pamela soon positioned herself at the center of an "erotically charged network" that included affairs with a number of prominent American officials, most significantly W. Averell Harriman, who served as Franklin D. Roosevelt's special envoy for Lend Lease (762). "There is a tradition of male diplomats and leaders influencing each other through the medium of courtiers and courtesans," Costigliola writes, though he appears hesitant to apply such a label to Pamela (762). Though her flirtations with the likes of Roosevelt adviser Harry Hopkins and her flings with Harriman and others appear to have benefitted her country, Costigliola does not portray Churchill as someone pressed into service against her will.

Quite the contrary, the Pamela Churchill that appears in these pages is someone who was discriminate in her choice of lovers (poor Hopkins!) and who appeared firmly in control of her many liaisons. “She operated like many men of power,” Costigliola claims (758). At one point he even likens her dexterity and guile to Roosevelt himself, for “both ranked as world-class jugglers, seducers, and manipulators” (754).

What was Pamela Churchill’s contribution to the forging of this special relationship? Costigliola takes note of Roosevelt’s apprehensiveness toward Winston Churchill’s government, of the lack of trust that threatened to rupture the Grand Alliance. He suggests, therefore, that the “blurring of personal and political relations” (or what Winston referred to as “mixing up”) played a significant role in fostering the mutual confidence necessary to sustaining a close bond (755). Costigliola even speculates not only that Churchill likely knew of his daughter-in-law’s dalliance with Harriman, but that “the love affair must have seemed to the prime minister a godsend for significant ‘mixing up’” (757). Pamela seems to have served as an unofficial back channel for intelligence and communication, and Costigliola cites one journalist who suggested that the Prime Minister used his daughter-in-law’s flings with various American generals to influence American bombing strategy. Her ‘s affairs clearly served more than her own amusement. “Pillow talk,” according to Costigliola, “made this sexuality politically significant” (758).

Of course there are no archives for pillow talk. Costigliola is to be credited for his imaginative mining of the available records, but he frankly admits that we cannot take precise measure of Pamela Churchill’s influence on British-American relations. Instead, he wisely sidesteps questions of causation, and is content to meditate on questions of process:

Does the story of Pamela Churchill tell us *why* the Anglo-American special relationship developed? No. Would the U.S.-British alliance have faltered if she had stayed faithful to her husband? Again, no. But the story of her network does elucidate a key aspect of *how* these ties actually developed.... Pamela Churchill and her network helped make the Anglo-American relationship an intimate one (760).

For those of us who focus predominantly on questions of causation (I myself plead guilty here), Costigliola’s article offers the challenging proposition that ‘how’ can matter as much as ‘*why*.’ He also proposes broader implications for his work, suggesting that as historians continue to trace the “transnational interactions of nonstate actors” it will be worthwhile considering “intimacy, sexuality, trust, and secrecy” as important factors in these relations (761). Robert Dean puts it best when he notes in his commentary that “Costigliola’s use of emotion, gender, and sexuality are analytically deployed in order to clarify otherwise hidden dimensions of international diplomacy during wartime; this framework also suggests the possibility of a new terrain for scholars of diplomatic history” (766).

Naoko Shibusawa likewise seeks to put forward a new framework, in this case for understanding the lavender scare. In the existing literature, the homosexual purges at

midcentury have been explained by traditional homophobia merging with the anxieties stirred by the second Red Scare. Shibusawa does not reject the Cold War context, but instead elaborates a broader ideological setting in which the root cause was not so much the competition with the Soviets, but rather a more general anxiety over America's self-assigned world-historical mission as the torch-bearer for civilization. The rampant homophobia of the 1950s is here explained as the byproduct of a sort of imperial insecurity, the cracks of self-doubt hidden within the bold proclamations of American exceptionalism.

The central argument in Shibusawa's thought-provoking article is "that visions of the larger world and America's role in it...played into the heightened fear and loathing of gays during this period" (741). In unfolding her thesis, she makes several digressions. Her piece comes off as a sort of intellectual rollercoaster where familiar Cold War stalwarts such as Dwight Eisenhower, Joseph McCarthy, Henry Morgenthau, and Dean Acheson are fitted within the intellectual heritage of John Winthrop, Adam Smith, Thomas Jefferson, and Sigmund Freud. Ideas about civilization, and especially the rise and fall of empires, appear to have weighed heavy on the minds of Americans at midcentury. Shibusawa does an admirable job discovering traces of this ideology from the top levels of policy-making to the pages of *Reader's Digest* and hit songs such as "Civilization" which took stock of the frantic pace of modern American life by setting it in binary opposition to 'primitive' existence — "Bongo, Bongo, Bongo, I don't want to leave the Congo... Bingo, bangle, bungle, I'm so happy in the jungle" (739).

The key point is that those who pushed forward the purges had adopted a pop-Freudian view of homosexuality in which it was seen as evidence of an abnormal 'primitivity.' America's world position rested, so it was thought, on the leadership of "stoic, rational, civilized, straight men," but the revelation that the State Department had ousted ninety-one suspected homosexuals only fueled a broader suspicion that gays were embedded throughout the federal government (746). Shibusawa finds evidence for this line of thinking in an oft-cited government memo entitled "Problem of Homosexuals and Sex Perverts in the Department of State," which she brilliantly contextualizes within this broader "civilizational declension" discourse so prevalent at the time (742). She also highlights R.G. Waldeck's article on the "homosexual international" (or "homintern") which appeared in the conservative rag *Human Events* in 1952.² Stirring up fears of a "fantastical gay international," Waldeck's diatribe was significant not merely as evidence of this widespread homophobia in popular discourse, but especially since it was preserved and referenced by State Department officials well into the next decade (731). The ideological connection between imperial declension and homosexuality had a long shelf life. Years later, Richard Nixon's aides suffered through one of his bombastic tirades, this

² R.G. Waldeck, "Homosexual International," *Human Events* 9, no. 16, April 16, 1952. (NOTE TO THE EDITOR: Shibusawa does not provide the page numbers here. She does indicate that this article was "found in Reading Files of Director Samuel D. Boykin, box 5, RG 59, NARA" though I am not sure whether you wish to include the archival citation here?)

one a meditation on the rise and fall of nations: “you know what happened to the Greeks. Homosexuality destroyed them. Sure, Aristotle was a homo, we all know that, so was Socrates.... Do you know what happened to the Romans? The last six emperors were fags” (752). Nixon’s rant illustrates the staying power of the lavender scare’s ideological linkage between homophobia and fears of national decline.

The implications of Shibusawa’s article stretch beyond her contributions to the literature on gender and sexuality in U.S. foreign relations. This is a study of Cold War culture, but with the U.S.-Soviet confrontation effectively de-centered. The assumption here (and it is one I agree with) is that American postwar internationalism was motivated by more than just a reaction to the Soviet threat. It was, instead, propelled by a more deeply-rooted sense of duty and obligation “to lead the free world” (to borrow from the title and theme of John Fousek’s magnificent book).³ What other aspects of Cold War culture might be more fully understood within the broader context of anxiety over empire and world leadership?

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³ John Fousek, *To Lead the Free World: American Internationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).