

said of the commentaries that accompany it, all of which contribute to the larger debate about the implications and problems that the Holocaust continues to present.

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Kampfner, John  
**Freedom for Sale: Why the World Is Trading Democracy for Security**

New York: Basic Books  
304 pp., \$21.24, ISBN 978-0465015399  
Publication Date: January 2010

This is a book about one of the most important challenges our times face—how to balance two major conflicting normative claims. On one hand, the most elementary duty of a government is to ensure the safety of its citizens. On the other hand, there is a danger that our rights will be diminished. One can argue that there are ways to enhance our security in the face of attacks by terrorists without any changes in the ways we define our rights, but this is not the subject that Kampfner, a journalist, chose to tackle, nor is he interested in the observation that our rights were never cast in stone but are constantly recalibrated. Thus, the understanding of the First Amendment as the right to freedom of expression, now often considered by Americans as their most basic right, was fashioned by the ACLU in the 1920s. The right to privacy is not even mentioned in the U.S. Constitution. Rather, it was hammered out of an odd series of court cases dealing with reproductive rights, beginning in 1965. Moreover, not all reinterpretations—by a long shot—lead to the expansion of rights. For instance, the rights of those charged with treason were diminished during World War II. Hence, one can ask if some of the new security measures introduced over the last decades are not reasonable—for instance, demanding that people who voluntarily enter controlled spaces (e.g., the British Parliament) submit to a search.

Kampfner, instead, chose to document a sweeping generalization: namely, that people all over the world—from Singapore and China to Italy, the U.K., and the United States—have given up their freedoms wholesale for an affluent life (which he often conflates with security). Moreover, most are cheated, because the only

ones who do benefit from the deal are the “wealthy and the aspiring wealthy” (7), an alliance of “political leaders, business, and the middle classes” (6). Kampfner is so ideologically driven that he does not even note that the first quotation he employs to support his conclusion makes a much more qualified and nuanced point. Kampfner quotes Benjamin Franklin as stating, “Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety” (1). Note that Franklin does not dismiss the need for some carefully considered trade-offs, but only rejects giving up *essential* liberty for a *little temporary* safety.

The limited space allotted to this review leads me to focus mainly on one of the nations Kampfner selected to examine, the one with which I am most familiar: the United States. It is also the nation that, according to Kampfner, provides the purest case of citizens choosing en masse to surrender their freedoms. The main turning point, the author claims, came when Congress enacted the Patriot Act after 9/11, which Kampfner argues entailed a major curtailment of individual rights. He ignores that, out of some 160 provisions in the act, only 10 were contested by even diehard civil libertarians; that some of those items merely adapted existing laws to new technological innovations (e.g., roving wire taps, which—once approved by a court—allow for following a person rather than being limited to one instrument, which worked in the days when people had one phone, hooked to one landline); and that other items were later repealed. (For details, see *How Patriotic Is the Patriot Act* by Amitai Etzioni [Routledge, 2004]).

Kampfner adds one outlandish claim after another. “A culture of self-censorship gripped the nation,” he writes (236). Journalists and editors are said to have chosen not to make trouble, in order to gain “an easier life” (237). In actuality, the drum beat of critics of the new security measures has been and is in full force, augmented by the new and powerful blogosphere. Kampfner further claims, without any documentation, that strikes have been eliminated because these would undermine the War on Terror. Finally, he reports (on the basis that one person said so) that Americans have become so fearful of speaking up that they whisper their criticisms, fearing to be overheard, especially if they are critical of Israel.

My hearing is not as good as it used to be, but I assure you that Americans have not become a whispering lot on any subject.

All this is a crying shame, because the issue Kampfner raises deserves a careful treatment. On one hand, dead people have few rights. Hence, even if our only concern is people’s rights, we had best keep them alive. On the other hand, there is a danger that our quest for safety will be overdone. How to determine which new security measures are reasonable and which are not is the question with which we must struggle. Above all, we need new measures of accountability—for instance, a civilian-security review board, akin to civilian-police review boards—to regularly examine the ways new security tools are used and ensure that they are not abused. Sadly, this book distracts our attention from the task at hand through its confused and overheated rhetoric. Those who wonder if my review is unduly harsh may wish to note that practically all other venues simply ignored this book.

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Finkel, David  
**The Good Soldiers**

New York: Sarah Crichton Books  
287 pp., \$26.00, ISBN 978-0-374-16573-4  
Publication Date: September 2009

In 2007, four years after his ill-advised incursion into Iraq, President George W. Bush began taking steps to reverse America’s aimless military-political strategy. Bringing in Robert Gates to replace the discredited Donald Rumsfeld, General David H. Petraeus as his commander in Iraq, and Ryan Crocker as his ambassador, the president, finally, created a first-class leadership team. Petraeus, recently the commander of the United States Army’s Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth and the principal author of a new field manual on counterinsurgency, had strong views on how to change the direction of the war in the post-Saddam Hussein era. At the top of his wish list were more troops on the ground to clear insurgent-held areas and hold them long enough for newly trained Iraqi units to establish control.