

Bluestone, we are given no information on changing firm structures and how these affect workplace identities and job markets. In short, careful measurement of the characteristics of the workforce can only take us so far and it is sad that nearly all contributors to this book made no effort to go beyond the bounds of their own discipline in seeking to promote greater understanding of the questions they wished to answer.

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**American Science Policy since World War II** by *Bruce L R Smith*

(The Brookings Institution, Washington DC, 1990), pp. ix + 230, ISBN 0-8157-7998-4, 0-8157-7997-6 (pbk).

**A Fragile Power Scientists and the State** by *Chandra Mukerji*

(Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1989), pp. xxiii + 253, ISBN 0-691-08538-2.

Back in the 50s, when cinema emerged as an art form, I saw a Japanese film which recounted the same incident first from one person's point of view, then from another's. I was impressed. It struck me as a poignant allegory of the central problem of historiography. It came back to me when I read these two books. Ostensibly they deal with the same subject: science policy in the USA. Both, after taking a brief look at earlier history, concentrate on the period since World War II. The galleries of the names that are mentioned overlap. The two books even quote the same passage from Vannevar Bush's 1945 classic *Science: the Endless Frontier* — the passage which affirms faith in basic research, arguing that

a nation which depends upon others for its new basic scientific knowledge will be slow in its industrial progress and weak in its competitive position in world trade.

There, however, the similarities end. One book is establishment, the other anti-establishment. For Smith, the story concerns attempts by the state to nurture a research system with its parts properly balanced and well articulated with each other. For Mukerji, the state is an intrusion on the proper autonomy of science.

Smith's view is a view from Washington. He writes from the Brookings Institution and formerly worked in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. For him, science policy is a matter of watching with tender loving care over a valuable activity, even if non-intervention is the guiding principle. In a revealing analogy, he compares the situation before World War II with an orchestra which had been assembled, "but there was as yet no common score for the musicians and no conductor" (p.4). No wonder balance and co-ordination are necessary!

Smith's book invites comparison with David Dickson's detailed treatment in *The New Politics of Science* (Pantheon, 1984), especially since both books divide the postwar period into three. Smith's periodisation is neater and simpler, possibly at the expense of some loss of fidelity to real life complexities. He distinguishes a first period of consensus lasting until 1965, a period of disarray until 1980 and finally a new and more questionable consensus is the '80s.