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Book Review: *Talking Conflict: The Loaded Language of Genocide, Political Violence, Terrorism, and Warfare*

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Talking Conflict: The Loaded Language of Genocide, Political Violence, Terrorism, and Warfare. By Anna M. Wittman. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2016. 386 p. Acid free \$89 (ISBN 978-1-4408-3424-0). E-book available (978-1-4408-3425-7), call for pricing.

The language used to describe conflict situations, whether military, political, or personal, has the potential to help resolve or escalate. Terms such as “collateral damage,” “ethnic cleansing,” and “final solution” often refer to historical events, but can also be used to condemn or endorse particular points of view in political speeches, the media, and local debate. Euphemisms, oxymorons, propaganda, jargon: all come into play. The nuanced and powerful rhetoric of conflict is the topic of *Talking Conflict*, an interesting and wide-ranging encyclopedia discussing the impact of linguistics, political science, journalism, and other fields on the language of conflict.

Focusing on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, this work’s entries range from brief definitions to in-depth essays, depending on the topic. For example, the entry on “Freedom Fries, Liberty Cabbage, and Hot Dogs” is an interesting account of how American anti-German and anti-French sentiment during World War I prompted the renaming of popular foods (French fries, sauerkraut, and frankfurters). The entry on the Cold War, in contrast, discusses the post–World War II conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States in terms of not only historical events, but also the origin of the term in earlier history and literature. A further section on the Cold War’s context in the arts and athletics reveals how the term has developed a life of its own far beyond its original meaning.

A list of alphabetical entries, thorough index listing main entries and brief mentions, and plentiful “see” and “see also” references help the reader navigate through often overlapping concepts and events. Each entry ends with useful suggestions for further reading, including encyclopedias, books, websites, and journal articles. The book’s content, however, could perhaps have been usefully supplemented with illustrative material such as linguistic and historic timelines, maps of world conflicts, and photographs or other illustrations depicting specific historical events.

While perhaps not aimed at advanced researchers, the book’s format, organization, and clear writing make it a useful addition for high school and undergraduate library collections. *Talking Conflict* is a fascinating, useful, and highly relevant resource that can be used profitably in introductory historical, linguistic, and general research projects and assignments.—Jennifer A. Bartlett, *Interim Associate Dean of*

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