

Mercenaries and Masculinity: Exploring the Role of Gender in Twentieth Century American Warfare

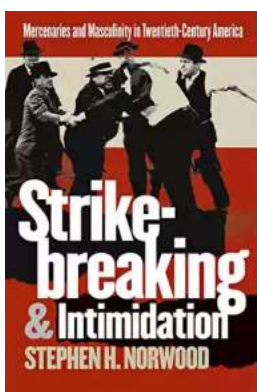
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The Rise of Mercenaries in Twentieth Century America

When we think of American military history, the image that often comes to mind is that of the strong, courageous male soldier fighting on the front lines. However, a deeper exploration of the twentieth century reveals an intriguing connection between mercenaries, masculinity, and the changing dynamics of American warfare.

Defining Mercenaries and their Role

Mercenaries, also known as contract soldiers or private military contractors, have a long history dating back to ancient times. In the context of twentieth-century America, these individuals played a significant role in various conflicts, including the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and more recently, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.



Strikebreaking and Intimidation: Mercenaries and Masculinity in Twentieth-Century America (Gender and American Culture (Paperback))

by Stephen H. Norwood (Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Print length : 338 pages



Mercenaries and Masculinity

The profession of a mercenary has always been associated with qualities traditionally attributed to masculinity – strength, bravery, and a willingness to engage in combat. In the context of the twentieth century, the notion of masculinity evolved and became closely intertwined with notions of patriotism, heroism, and national identity.

Gender and American Warfare

Examining the relationship between gender and American warfare provides valuable insights into societal attitudes and expectations surrounding masculinity and femininity. Throughout the twentieth century, warfare was often perceived as a male-dominated realm, with women primarily limited to supporting roles.

The Influence of Mercenaries on Masculine Ideals

The emergence of mercenaries in warfare challenged traditional gender roles and the concept of masculinity. These individuals, regardless of their gender, were evaluated based on their combat capabilities and their ability to fulfill their contracted obligations. The presence of female mercenaries, although relatively rare, further challenged the prevailing notion of masculinity and broadened the scope of acceptable roles for women in warfare.

Media Representations and Celebrity Mercenaries

Media portrayal and popular culture have played a crucial role in shaping perceptions of mercenaries and their masculinity. Movies, books, and video games often depict these individuals as heroic and highly skilled warriors, reinforcing the image of masculinity associated with their profession.

Post-9/11 Era and the Privatization of Warfare

The new millennium brought significant changes to the field of warfare and the role of mercenaries. The events of 9/11 and subsequent conflicts led to an increased dependence on private military contractors. This shift further blurred the lines between traditional military forces and mercenaries, challenging our understanding of gender in the context of warfare.

The Legacy of Mercenaries and The Evolving Face of Masculinity

As we examine the history of mercenaries and their impact on masculinity in twentieth-century America, it becomes clear that the traditional image of the male soldier is not the only representation of strength and heroism. The inclusion of mercenaries, regardless of gender, expands and redefines our understanding of what it means to be masculine in the context of warfare.

Mercenaries have played a fascinating and often overlooked role in twentieth-century American warfare. By exploring the relationship between mercenaries, masculinity, and gender, we gain valuable insights into the changing dynamics of warfare and the evolving societal expectations surrounding gender roles. It is clear that the battlefield, once considered a predominantly male domain, has become more diverse, reflecting the broader shifts in society's perception of gender and the expanding roles available to both men and women.

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This is the first systematic study of strikebreaking, intimidation, and anti-unionism in the United States, subjects essential to a full understanding of labor's fortunes in the twentieth century. Paradoxically, the country that pioneered the expansion of civil liberties allowed corporations to assemble private armies to disrupt union organizing, spy on workers, and break strikes. Using a social-historical approach, Stephen Norwood focuses on the mercenaries the corporations enlisted in their anti-union efforts--particularly college students, African American men, the unemployed, and men associated with organized crime. Norwood also considers the paramilitary methods unions developed to counter mercenary violence. The book covers a wide range of industries across much of the country.

Norwood explores how the early twentieth-century crisis of masculinity shaped strikebreaking's appeal to elite youth and the media's romanticization of the strikebreaker as a new soldier of fortune. He examines how mining communities' perception of mercenaries as agents of a ribald, sexually unrestrained, new urban culture intensified labor conflict. The book traces the ways in which economic

restructuring, as well as shifting attitudes toward masculinity and anger, transformed corporate anti-unionism from World War II to the present.



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