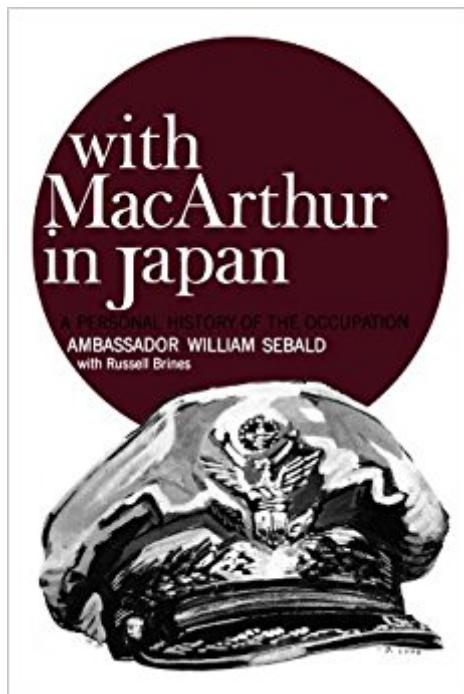


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With MacArthur In Japan: A Personal History Of The Occupation



Synopsis

The American Occupation of Japan was perhaps one of the most fateful periods in the history of our foreign relations. From his position as senior civilian in the Occupation hierarchy, Ambassador Sebald had a unique opportunity to observe the implementation of policy by MacArthur and his staff and the sometimes acrimonious struggle between civilian, military, and Japanese elements. After serving as a Naval Japanese language officer in the twenties and as a practicing attorney in Kobe for nearly ten years, Sebald returned to Japan after the war as a member of the staff of the U.S. Political Advisor. In 1947 he was appointed Acting U.S. Political Advisor to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Forces. In this book, Ambassador Sebald explains the major problems and policy shifts with clarity and a fresh approach. For the first time we are told the complete story of his efforts as Chairman of the Allied Council for Japan to repatriate the 650,000 Japanese POW's held by the Soviets. The Korean War, as seen from Tokyo, also takes on a new dimension. Sebald examines the failures on all sides which led to MacArthur's quarrel with Truman. In a highly dramatic scene, Ambassador Sebald records his interview with the General on the day he was dismissed by the President. This is the story of the incredibly busy years of one of America's new-style diplomats. It is a contribution of lasting importance to history, thoroughly documented and eminently readable. Mr. Sebald's co-author, Russell Brines, served in Tokyo and Manila as a correspondent prior to the war and was interned in Manila by the Japanese. He was Chief of the AP's Tokyo Bureau during most of the Occupation.

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"The United States government eventually threw its great resources, with remarkable unanimity of purpose, into the unpopular task of transforming an enemy--one bitterly remembered--into a viable ally." (p. 294) "There was no adequate precedent in the history of the United States or, indeed, in the recent history of man for the Occupation. But this did not prevent the Americans from embarking with uninhibited enthusiasm upon the task of altering the entire Japanese structure--political, economic, and social--seemingly regardless of the consequences." (p. 79) "The Supreme Commander [MacArthur]'s authority rested on a patchwork of informal arrangements of various kinds... This was, at best, peculiar machinery for such an enterprise; so peculiar, in fact, that in retrospect it is amazing that it worked at all." (p. 102) The author went on to serve as Ambassador to Burma ('52 -'54) and Australia ('57-'61). He was one of the relatively few who took on the task of the Occupation with considerable pertinent experience. He had gone to Japan with the US Navy in the Twenties, learned Japanese, married a Japanese wife, and practiced law in Japan in the Thirties before international tensions forced his family to return to the States. Through luck and talent, he came to play a significant role in the Occupation. Chapter 8, "War Crimes Trials," shows the author as being personally and professionally conflicted about that process and its implications--and his relatively prominent but most unwilling role in it. "The validity of the trial itself doubtless will be long debated." (p. 151) The civilian-military ramifications of the Truman-MacArthur controversy ripple forward through the decades.

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