tive to the various institutions and the individual investigators are summarized in a table near the end of chapter 6. The difficulties in going from a concept for applications to a useful working system are detailed, and the contributions of physicists, chemists, engineers, materials scientists, and optical scientists, especially the cooperative aspects, are emphasized.

The book is clearly written. Bromberg gives explanations (without equations) of relevant physical principles, and some scientific literacy is required for full appreciation of the story she tells. Anyone, however, can appreciate the drama of the major discoveries, the successful and unsuccessful attempts to find applications, and the circumstances that made it all possible. There are numerous illustrations, mostly photographs of the principals in their laboratories, but also sketches of lasers, a few energy-level diagrams, and copies of key notebook pages. There is a comprehensive index and 50 pages of notes, most referencing the sources, but many providing glosses on the text, even to pointing out instances in which the advisory committee of the Laser History Project did not agree with the author's interpretations.

Perhaps the main limitation of the book is that made clear in the title-the concentration on the two decades between 1950 and 1970 and on work in the United States. There are occasional comments that extend beyond those limits, but they lack the detail given the primary material. Those familiar with Mario Bertolotti's historical account (Masers and Lasers, Hilger, 1983) will recall that he does take an international approach, and also devotes two chapters to the explorations of stimulated emission before the maser. His book, however, requires a scientific background, as he develops the laser principles quantitatively, together with the history. Although he went well beyond the published literature, Bertolotti did not have the considerable resources of the Laser History Project behind him, so could not be as detailed in the central portion. Thus the two books are complementary, each important in its own way. Bromberg's book is essential reading for anyone interested in the history of the laser itself or in the societal factors that shaped its development.

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SCIENCE • VOL. 258 • 23 OCTOBER 1992

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