

that might threaten its position in England, as well as England's position in the world. In the first resistance it has succeeded far better than in the second.

Either of these books would be too much for most students in introductory courses in European history or western civilization in most colleges. Teachers either in high school or in college should find them useful for themselves, and each would serve very well as a basic text in an upper-level college course on the period it covers in English history. Honors students in high school could also be able to handle them.

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C. Ashley Ellefson

Alan Sked. *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815-1918.* London and New York: Longman, 1989. Pp. viii, 295. Cloth, \$29.95; paper \$17.25.

In a densely packed book, Alan Sked of the London School of Economics offers what he calls an extended essay on the decline of the Habsburg Empire in the nineteenth century. Sked, who has already published a number of specialized works on the Habsburg Empire, here tries to present an accessible study of the causes for its collapse. The basic question he is attacking, Sked says in his introduction, is to determine at what point the collapse became inevitable. He suggests, too, that the Austrian experience might help in solving problems emerging as Europe moves toward integration; looking at how the Habsburgs ruled a large number of quite different peoples, often peoples hostile to each other, can guide today's politicians.

With chapters on Metternichean Austria, 1848, the years between the revolutions of 1848 and the Compromise of 1867, the Compromise, the Dual Monarchy, and the last days, Sked maintains a good chronological balance in his treatment. His judgments are defensible and defended, if not always the majority viewpoint. With substantial recent research on the Habsburg Empire, a new history of the empire's final century is certainly welcome, but Sked's study is not one for the classroom. It will leave most undergraduates in a fog of confusion. The book is full of names familiar only to a specialist, and he identifies few of them. In Sked's discussions of Habsburg historiography, a major element of the book, he assumes his readers are familiar with the major writers on the Habsburg Empire: Paul Schroeder, F. Engel-Janosi, Hans Kohn, and the like, although he excludes Enno Kraehe.

He concludes that the empire's fall did not become inevitable until 1918, when the Central Powers lost World War I. Moreover, it was not the nationalities problem, precisely, that did Austria in: It was the failure of Habsburg statecraft over a number of years to deal effectively with the interconnections between the nationalities problem and foreign policy. An excellent study, Sked's book is one that instructors who lecture on the Habsburg Empire will gain from reading.

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Adam Westoby. *The Evolution of Communism.* New York: The Free Press, 1989. Pp. 333. Cloth, \$22.95.

This is a book that has been overtaken by history. British historian Westoby has written a theoretically supple and critically subtle analysis of how Communism has evolved as a uniquely successful political species at a time when that success is most in doubt. And although Westoby makes tantalizing allusions to seeing the Soviet Union operating somewhat like the Roman Empire, successful adaptation and not slow collapse is clearly his central model. He does mention Gorbachev, but who but a journalist could keep up with the crises that have engulfed the communist world in the last year? Still, the book is useful in helping readers understand how communism dominated the political life of a large part of the world for most of this century.

For most college or secondary students, the book's strengths and weaknesses are intertwined. Westoby integrates a great number of studies and theoretical material in a concise way, so that he