

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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Bullitt Lowry

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

covers the history of Leninism in fifteen pages, the takeovers in Eastern Europe in ten, a survey of communism in Asia in 25. Aiming to combine both abstract analysis and historical detail, material is deftly condensed. Of course, for those who are not familiar with a history of the Comintern or the theory of "stratocracy," such quick sketches might lead to confusion more than enlightenment. There is definitely more breadth than depth here.

As a result, I found the historical sections overly abstract, and the theoretical ones too thin on elaboration. Westoby often makes stunning observations—the Roman Empire analogy emerges in the prescient remark about the USSR's imperialism coming as a conqueror of more advanced economies (like Rome and Greece), for instance. There are also quick tantalizing tidbits on Trotsky and Freud, a bloodchilling conversational extract with first Soviet secret police chief Dzerzhensky, and searing remarks on how Marxism has become an ideology of the educated. Certainly much of what Westoby says could help explain the collapse of the Soviet hegemony he does so much to explain in triumph, but it is nothing compared to what he might do in the future, turning his knowledge and skill directly on that question. A list of reading at the end of each chapter is useful, but somewhat shallow.

Thayer Academy

Daniel Levinson

Dan Bar-On. *Legacy of Silence: Encounters With Children of the Third Reich.* Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 1989. Pp. x, 338. Cloth, \$25.00.

Ian Kershaw. *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation.* London & New York: Edward Arnold, 1989. Second edition. Pp. viii, 207. Paper \$15.95.

Dan Bar-On's *Legacy of Silence* is a collection of interviews with children of the perpetrators of the Holocaust—the children of Nazi officials who participated in or witnessed the mass murders of the Jews. Bar-On, an Israeli psychologist whose family left Germany in 1933, offers a new, moving, and disturbing complement to the more usual studies of the victims of Nazi genocide and their children. Just as the children of Nazi victims carry a life-long legacy of their parents' experiences, Bar-On suggests that the children of the Nazi perpetrators also bear a legacy of their parents' deeds, a legacy of silence.

Bar-On freely admits that his book is not an objective, "social science" approach to the effects of genocide. "When I return from my fourth trip to Germany in October 1987," he writes in his conclusion, "I feel a tremendous need to try to 'analyze my data' . . . But I know I am doing something wrong . . . I am distancing myself from my interviewees, looking at them from the outside . . . I wonder if this is a result of my ongoing ambivalence about the research: am I afraid that if I look too closely I will see ordinary human beings?"

It is this subjective, human dimension that makes *Legacy of Silence* a powerful reading experience. Bar-On establishes an emotional bond with the people he interviews, feeling their pain and confusion and blending it with his own. But Bar-On's approach may also pose problems for student readers of his book. Students tend to demand "answers" and to reject ambiguity, but the ambiguity of living with unbearable knowledge is precisely what Bar-On offers. There are no answers in *Legacy of Silence*, at least in any conventional sense. If there is a lesson in Bar-On's book, it is that building a wall of silence around such events as the Nazi genocide only serves to burden future generations.

Because it confronts students with the ambiguity of living with the legacy of genocide, *Legacy of Silence* would make an excellent supplementary text in courses on the Holocaust. It could be juxtaposed with the writings of survivors and their children, to encourage students to engage in a dialogue about the long-term effects of the Holocaust. Bar-On's book might also be useful in courses on post-war Germany. Several of Bar-On's interviewees raise disturbing questions about contemporary Germany, such as Peter, the son of an SS doctor, who says he could easily envision Germans today supporting "an Auschwitz for Turks."