

Feud is a complex work, and I have greatly over-simplified Waller's sophisticated argument. But in one area analysis is not so sophisticated: religion. In her first chapter Waller pronounces that the Appalachian people were quite religious, and, in fact, it was "these religious values which most cogently reveal the community's definition of itself and its relation to the world beyond the valley." Having said this, she then proceeds to devote all of three paragraphs to religion, with very little discussion of religion in the remainder of the book. In this cursory treatment Waller argues that the Primitive Baptist Calvinism of the mountaineers led them to be fatalistic, suspicious, and opposed to capitalism and personal economic advancement. Waller does not really prove this point, nor does she attempt to square her argument with the long historiographical tradition linking Calvinism with the rise of capitalism.

Religion aside, *Feud* is social history of the first order. Moreover, given Waller's engaging treatment of a fascinating topic, *Feud* could work very well in an upper-division social history or twentieth-century America course.

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Anthony Short. *The Origins of the Vietnam War*. London & New York: Longman, 1989. Pp. xv, 347. Paper, \$14.95.

The Vietnam War is a "hot" course topic now and texts are being produced to meet the demand. Neglected for so long, the Vietnam conflict has now generated a host of combat memoirs as well as works dealing with the diplomatic side of the war, but has produced fewer studies of the early years of U.S. involvement. The natural questions for each new Vietnam text are: Is this book useful, and is it necessary?

Anthony Short's *Origins of the Vietnam War* is part of the *Origins of Modern Wars* series, that has already weighed in with some distinguished entries, such as James Joll's *Origins of the First World War*. Short defines his origins broadly, providing chapters on the early career of Ho Chi Minh, the French involvement and exodus, and the subsequent growth of U.S. involvement through 1965. The American involvement is broken down into a chapter on the period from 1952 to 1954 and another on the Geneva conference of 1954. These two chapters are followed by three chapters that cover the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson years through 1965. Throughout, the author concentrates on the diplomatic maneuvering behind the conflict rather than on the purely military side of the war.

The author's purpose is to provide essentially a narrative of events rather than closely argued analytic treatment. In doing so he displays a command of the relevant secondary literature as well as the major printed document collections. Short, a reader in international relations at the University of Aberdeen, does not claim to break new ground, but he ties together the various French and American accounts of the early years of the American involvement. He points to John Foster Dulles's unwillingness to participate in a settlement of the first Vietnam war as sowing the seeds for the widening American involvement in the late 1950s, but he is also critical of the Geneva accords as being carelessly worded and poorly conceived. Short draws an analogy between the causes of the Vietnam war and the nineteenth-century wars of unification in Germany and Italy. Hence, the United States stood in the way of a people determined to unite their country, a nearly impossible task. This concluding point is an interesting one, but one that Short's narrative does not adequately address.

The Origins of the Vietnam War is a solid work, even if written in pedestrian style. What then is the audience? The author's style and his assumption of wider knowledge make the book unsuitable for beginning audiences unless they have extensive coaching along the way. A college history course dealing with the Vietnam War seems to be the most likely market. For those who want a text that ties together the diplomatic side of the French conflict and the early stages of the American effort *The Origins of the Vietnam War* fills the bill. It does not replace works such as Peter Dunn's *First Vietnam War*, but its wider coverage makes it more amenable to classroom application. The very strength of *The Origins of the Vietnam War*, its emphasis on diplomatic history, may leave some readers cold, who desire a more campaigns-and-battles orientation. Nonetheless, it is time to go

beyond memorizing Vietnamese names and fighting the Vietnam War in the classroom and begin to help our students to place the conflict in a wider context.

Short's book is helpful in dealing with this last issue, but it is probably a book that will be neglected in the classroom. His flat writing style coupled to a narrow focus in subject matter and time limits the book's application in many settings. *The Origins of the Vietnam War* is useful, but not completely necessary.

Converse College

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S.A.M. Adshead. *China in World History*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988. Pp. x, 422. Cloth, \$37.50.

China in World History is a seminal, theoretical work waiting to be absorbed into the developing body of approaches to world history. Not only is China revealed as a much more interactive participant than it is usually regarded but the entire Central Asian arena blooms as much more important than most historians note. Perhaps the current events in the Soviet Union with its Asian minorities receiving mention in the western press will create some greater interest in these fascinating and significant peoples.

The volume is an immense piece of scholarship for its size. If every name of empire and leader mentioned were to be explained a whole set of encyclopedias would be required. Combine the required knowledge and complex vocabulary in this work and it is not a text for the casual reader or student. Acquiring significant understanding from the work requires previous knowledge of much Eurasian history and a well-developed mental map of the world.

Adshead is extremely well organized. His purpose is to present the history of China as part of the world. Although the emerging world system is designed largely by the West, China has made more contributions than generally recognized. He divides history into six periods: Antiquity, Late Antiquity, Middle Ages, Renaissance, Enlightenment and Modern (to 1976). In each period he discusses China's place in the world, avenues of contact, interchanges, and world institutions.

Some world historians may be surprised to find world institutions mentioned in antiquity. Although Adshead states that Buddhism is the only phenomenon approaching a world institution, he also explores commodity exchanges of food and energy sources and ecosystems. In late antiquity the Tang court balancing ideas and elements from many sources is viewed as a world institution. With the Renaissance and a potential "birth of world history through Columbus, Magellan and St. Francis Xavier" two new institutional layers were added: a world economy and the religious internationals based on the Naqshbandiyya dervish order, Tibetan lamaism, and Jesuit Christianity. The Enlightenment added the naval "pax Britannica" and a "republic of letters" or communality of intellectual pursuits. In the modern period the international effort to reduce disease and the "world technological bank" are shared. Yet official secrecy in a polycentric world limits the growth of shared knowledge and institutions.

What were some of the key objects of exchange? Well-known commodities such as silk, porcelain, tea, and spices and the less desirable microbes are supplemented by peaches, apricots, oranges, cotton, sugar, copper, rhubarb, medicine, tobacco, Mexican silver, the chrysanthemum, and dyestuffs. Knowledge spread included nautical techniques, metallurgical techniques, mechanisms in the use of water power, the chemistry of explosives, and an Enlightenment challenge to the prevailing Mediterranean centered European views.

Adshead offers new perspectives such as viewing Europe less through its wars and conflicts and more through conflict resolution and unity. Since Adshead is from New Zealand his perspectives differ from the typical American historian. His sources are extensive, including both English and French, yet he has not had an opportunity to work with more recent relevant U.S. work such as William McNeil's *Plagues and Peoples*. Although he cites Jonathan Spence's early work he would also find useful the more recent works on K'ang Hsi and Matteo Ricci. In exchange this volume should complement McNeil's new interest in China.