

Immanuel C. Y. Hsu. *The Rise of Modern China*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990. Pp. xxxi, 971. Cloth, \$35.00.

It has been more than twenty years since the first edition of Immanuel C. Y. Hsu's classic text on China's rise since the early Ch'ing dynasty, yet the book has remained almost unchallenged throughout that entire period. In fact, only recently with the publication of Jonathan Spence's *The Search for Modern China*, did serious students looking for a truly sophisticated and comprehensive overview of modern China even have an alternative.

And China has changed enormously in those twenty years. In 1970, when the first edition appeared, the Cultural Revolution had hardly played itself out. Subsequent editions took on the enormous challenge of narrating and making sense of a Chinese revolution that wrenched itself back and forth between Maoists of the Cultural Revolution and the followers of Deng Xiaoping. This last edition, published within months of the Tiananmen Square crackdown, nevertheless successfully attempts a serious effort to explain the crackdown and to put it into the context of modern China's historical ambivalence regarding both the West and various alternative forms of economic planning. In that effort, as with the material dealing with China as early as the seventeenth century, Professor Hsu's text remains a gold mine of information and clarity.

Despite the above, *The Rise of Modern China* does pose some serious problems for the classroom instructor. Two issues are most fundamental: (1) the retention of the Wade-Giles transliteration system in an academic world clearly turning toward Pinyin makes the later chapters on recent China clearly out of "sync" with the other published materials students might be drawn to, thus creating unnecessary problems; (2) the very length of the book makes it a problem for many undergraduate academic settings, especially when the instructor might be anxious to assign additional readings. Nevertheless, a two-semester course on modern China would not have the same problems with the size of the work. Although not all instructors will be able to use the book as a classroom text, *The Rise of Modern China* will continue to be one of the very best resources for all those who attempt to teach about modern China.

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J. M. Bourne. *Britain and the Great War, 1914-1918*. London and New York: Edward Arnold, 1989. Pp. xi, 257. Cloth, \$49.95; paper, \$14.95.

"War," said Thomas Paine, "involves in its progress such a train of unforeseen and unsuspected circumstances that no human wisdom can calculate the end." History is replete with examples of wars that didn't exactly go as planners planned, but one conflict above all, the "Great War" of 1914-1918, has been responsible for our contemporary fear of the "unforeseen and unsuspected circumstances" of war. The short, heroic, victorious war that most Europeans foresaw in August, 1914, became an unimaginable tragedy that buried a generation in the mud of the western front. It is, therefore, not surprising that books on World War I continue to flow from the presses.

John Bourne's *Britain and the Great War* is a recent addition to the flood, and a very good book. The writing is literate; the scholarship thorough (Bourne makes full use of the most recent literature on the war); and the judgments controversial, convincing, and even entertaining. Bourne's compact style and knack for pithy *obiter dicta* (reminiscent of the work of A. J. P. Taylor) make the book a pleasurable reading experience.

Front and center in this study is the British army, for, as the author notes, the Great War marked the first time "Britain put a truly national army into the field . . . and it was the only time in which that army bore the principal share of the military burden." And it was the creation of that army and the struggle in which it participated, that served as "the mechanism by which British government, politics and economic life and national values were changed." The theme is of Homeric scope, but within the compass of slightly over 200 pages Bourne covers the military history of the war, the