

felt most confident of success in that very period when the empire they served was cracking under its final crises.

The role of Napoleon himself in advocating and promoting imperial idealism remains ambiguous in Woolf's book; the emphasis throughout the work is on the civil administration. Woolf offers insight into how its potential members were identified and recruited; he speculates on the significance of property rights in driving a wedge between officials and the lower orders they claimed to be helping. He looks at the impact of changes within France on the governance of the rest of the empire and devotes considerable space to the compromises imposed on bureaucratic dreams as the various annexations and vassal states struggled to maintain their separate identities. There is some indication also of the conflict between the civilians and the soldiers; the army, despite its preeminence in public life, shared little of the spirit of the administrators. Indeed, conscription, the economic burdens of military occupation, and the army's tendency to ignore the salutary legal procedures established by the officials all worked to undermine whatever possibility might have existed for European integration. Military defeat brought the experiment to an end, but Woolf points out how much nationalism and liberalism, the supposed nemeses of the Napoleonic system, borrowed from that same system.

This is an ambitious analysis, probably too much so, given its brevity (fewer than 250 pages of text). It aspires to sketch the temporal and geographic nuances of an enormously complex and protean situation and to impose order on something that defies such efforts. Of necessity, there is much in the book that is stated more than argued. Even so, this work presents a compendium of wonderful information not readily accessible in English elsewhere and a thought-provoking, unusual way of evaluating that information topically. Woolf certainly makes manifest the labyrinthine difficulties that beset those intent on regularizing and modernizing Europe. *Napoleon's Integration of Europe* is too involved to be effective as assigned reading in a regular survey course on the French Revolution; Owen Connelly's older investigations of Napoleon's satellite states might prove more acceptable for that purpose. However, Woolf's intriguing comparative study would be of value to the advanced student who is curious as to how empires actually operate.

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Eugen Weber. *France: Fin de Siècle*. Cambridge and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986. Pp. x, 294. Cloth \$27.50; Paper \$9.95.

For many years Eugen Weber has been one of the most prolific and respected American historians studying the Third French Republic. With *France: Fin de Siècle*, Weber presents a broad but comprehensive view of France during the period he has come to know so well, taking the reader on a tour of the major events and everyday life of this troubled and at times paradoxical era. The result is a well-written and insightful work of history that is accessible, informative, and a joy to read.

Weber's work is pleasantly unique in several respects. Whereas other accounts of this period tend to gravitate around either the political arena, social life, or cultural and intellectual circles, *France: Fin de Siècle* provides a panoramic and balanced vista that takes in all of these areas. The author eschews the detailed analyses of his previous works, opting instead to illustrate the "surface phenomena" of the period, those aspects that might catch the attention of "the inquisitive tourist: us." As such Weber presents French life in its multiplicity: from the vibrant and tumultuous city of Paris to the often disinterested provinces; from the lofty and pretentious squabbles of café intellectuals to the everyday issues of personal hygiene, domestic relations, women's rights, and xenophobia.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of this book is Weber's examination of the paradoxes of French society at the turn of the century. On the one hand, the *fin de siècle* was represented by its artists and intellectuals as an age of decadence and pessimism, marked by the flight from politics and everyday reality into private paradises via drugs, the occult, or subjective aesthetics. On the other hand, Weber stresses, this was a period of real social progress, when average people were able to enjoy the benefits of modernity, such as more extensive health care, expanded leisure time, electric lighting, the telegraph and the telephone, bicycles, automobiles, vacations, and sporting events. Perhaps in response to recent critics of modernity, Weber reminds us of the general improvement in the quality of life of millions, a fact that was "misjudged and misrepresented" by the "fashionable perception" of the time.

The *fin de siècle* was above all a time of movement, but not necessarily progress. While the political and financial scandals of the Third Republic may have provided cause for artists and intellectuals to become cynical about the effectiveness of practical action, domestic developments such as anarchism, the Dreyfus Affair, and the rise of labor unions aroused intellectuals from their aesthetic detachment to become engaged in political and social affairs. Whereas the humiliating defeat at the hands of the Prussians in 1870-71 may have left many feeling that France had become physically degenerate and ineffectual in the world arena, the increasing popularity of physical fitness and sporting events, such as the *Tour de France*, provided many with a renewed vigor and sense of patriotic purpose that pulled them from their former *ennui* and lassitude. The century ended on a note of optimism for the one to come, with a sense of vitality and nationalism that, as we have come to realize only through hindsight, would end in disaster fourteen years later.

Eugen Weber's *France: Fin de siècle* is a moving and enjoyable book that will be of great value to educators. While providing a sweeping view of the period, it inspires one to learn more, to dig deeper in areas that are of interest, and reminds the student of the "larger picture," which Weber brushes with great skill and clarity. It would be an excellent text for adoption in either undergraduate or graduate history courses, and a fine complement to more detailed studies of the *fin de siècle*.

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Ruth Henig. *The Origins of the First World War*. Lancaster Pamphlets. London and New York: Routledge, 1989. Pp. xii, 49. Paper, \$7.95.

Holger H. Herwig. *The Outbreak of World War I. Problems in European Civilization*. 5th ed. Lexington, MA: Heath. Pp. xix, 139. Paper, \$13.40.

Who was responsible for the outbreak of war in Europe, during the summer of 1914? The question of accountability is still an absorbing one for scholars, despite the intervening decades. In fact, the old arguments over "war guilt" have taken on renewed significance in light of the current instability in the Balkans. Two recent books that address the events that led to World War I are *The Origins of the First World War*, by Ruth Henig, and *The Outbreak of World War I*, edited by Holger H. Herwig.

Henig, an authority on British foreign policy and a lecturer at the University of Lancaster, in Lancaster, England, provides a clear, succinct explanation of the political and economic factors that influenced the European powers to respond as they did, when mounting internal and external pressures increasingly threatened "vital national objectives." According to Henig, most of the European governments believed as early as 1912 that diplomacy and negotiation had failed and that a European war was inevitable. The leaders of Austria-Hungary and Russia,