

Current weaves the biographical details of his chosen individuals together with narrative that keeps the reader mindful of the larger historical context of Reconstruction. Thus, for example, he points out that of the more than 1,000 delegates to the 1867-1868 constitutional conventions in the 10 states that went through Congressional Reconstruction, fewer than 200 were post-1860 arrivals from the North, and only about 250 were blacks. The remainder were southern whites.

Current's volume should shatter the myth of carpetbaggers as venal political opportunists who plundered the South at will and shamelessly used the freedmen to their own advantage. At the same time, he is not trying to portray them as saints: They were not. But most were persons of reasonable honesty, some of unquestionable integrity, aspiring "to reconstruct their respective states economically as well as politically," trying to make their homes in the South, working to make the place better than they found it—and many were disillusioned by the experience. In judging these men, and the remaining carpetbaggers not included in this book, Current asks that the reader "refrain from comparing realistic representations of these men with an idealized picture of their southern white opponents." That seems only fair.

*Those Terrible Carpetbaggers* is well written and filled with important, useful information and startling insights. Current, for example, is the first historian in this reviewer's experience to suggest a similarity between those who went South to improve their lives during and after the Civil War and those who went to California in the 1840s—or came to America in the 1600s—for the same purpose. Graduate students of American history and anyone teaching (or preparing to teach) either the American history survey or an advanced undergraduate course in Civil War and Reconstruction will profit from this book. The organization of the material, however, makes it difficult to assign to undergraduates. It would be easier if the material were organized either by state or by person; but it is presented chronologically, and there is some overlap in time periods among the chapters. It is thus difficult to divide the book into sections for collateral reading assignments—and in any case, it is necessary to read the entire book to gain the full import of Current's argument.

Denton, Texas

Sharon K. Lowry

**David Kaiser. *Politics and War: European Conflict from Philip II to Hitler*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990. Pp. vi, 433. Cloth, \$29.95.**

David Kaiser, professor of history at Carnegie Mellon University, has tackled the historical problem of the origin and manifestation of war from a new perspective. He views European war in the modern era not as an attempt of one power or coalition to gain an advantage over others, but rather he places conflict in the embrace of the contemporary European domestic and political climate. Kaiser argues that warfare reflects a common set of European political developments intrinsic to a specific era and that these structures have changed over time.

He supports his contention by reviewing four periods since the sixteenth century: the era of civil and religious war, 1559-1659; the age of Louis XIV; the generation of the French Revolution and Napoleon; and the twentieth century experience of two world wars, 1914-1945. Kaiser believes that the century of war 1559-1659 was characterized by tensions between aristocratic factions seeking to resist the efforts of monarchs to impose authority throughout their realms. In this setting, religious change did not undermine order but actually reinforced monarchical goals of unified kingdoms. Kaiser breaks with tradition by claiming that the French Wars of Religion and the English Civil War are bound by similar developments, that is to say,

the desire of great magnates to maintain and expand their position in society at the very moment monarchs sought to reverse such trends.

Kaiser contends that this rub did not end with such powerful figures as Richelieu and Mazarin but under the influence of Louis XIV and his contemporaries. In this era, rulers seized the upper hand by bringing violence under control and stressing the benefits of moderation and achievable objectives in conflicts, an approach that Kaiser claims permitted "Louis XIV and his fellow monarchs [to conduct] war in the service of politics more successfully than any other generation of modern European political leaders."

Kaiser views war in the French Revolution and Napoleonic eras as the means by which states consolidated central authority. He stresses that reason supplanted the idea of glory in war, a shift in approach that led to expansion and ended the more restrictive nature of war in the preceding century. A generous by-product was the opportunity that these years provided for the ambitious to engage in social and political mobility.

After a century of relative peace, two irrational ideas—imperialism and nationalism—fueled the next era of confrontation in Europe, one that plunged the planet into the conflagrations of two world wars. The efforts of European states to establish self-sufficient empires was not compatible with the emergence of a world economy. Furthermore, nationalism and its appeal to homogeneity could not be reconciled in central and eastern Europe, which was (and remains) a patchwork quilt of nationalities and ethnic groups. Whereas Louis XIV had succeeded by stating his objectives in ambiguous terms, twentieth-century governments publicly declared lofty aims that resulted in a deadly spiral of cost, destruction, and disillusionment.

Kaiser has provided an important contribution to the growing literature concerned with the relationship of war to society—his belief that European conflicts over the past four centuries have not necessarily resulted from the need for states to expand but rather reflect the political, economic, and social forces peculiar to each era. Kaiser's essay, well-researched and written in an engaging crisp style, is especially important because it provides the reader sufficient detail as well as a wide array of nineteenth and twentieth-century historiographical material. In this regard, the work is valuable on two levels. First, the novice can follow the flow of events within Kaiser's established framework. Second, the more seasoned reader has the opportunity to weigh his arguments on the spot in the face of the more traditional scholarship. Thus, Kaiser has established himself as an important scholar in the field of modern international politics.

United States Military Academy

Lee T. Wyatt, III

Gordon Martel, ed. *Modern Germany Reconsidered: 1870-1945*. New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1992. Pp. x, 286. Cloth, \$24.95; paper, \$19.95.

*Modern Germany Reconsidered* is a collection of introductory historiographical and synthetic essays written by top scholars especially for undergraduate students beginning their study of German history. Students receive introductions to the historical discussions and interpretations of major events and periods (Second Reich, World War I, Nazism, Holocaust) and topics (economic history, women's history) without the acrimony that often laces debates played out in the professional journals. The book may be used as a companion volume to such reference textbooks as Gordon Craig's *Germany 1866-1945*, or instructors may prefer to assign a variety of topical monographs and use this book to link them together. Each essay has ample endnotes that should serve curious students well as they branch out and pursue those specific topics in the fields that interest them for term papers.