

William Carr. *A History of Germany: 1815-1990*. New York: Edward Arnold, 1991. Fourth edition. Pp. vii, 430. Paper, \$24.95.

Now in its fourth edition, William Carr's *A History of Germany: 1815-1990* still ranks as one of the best single volume works available, succinctly delineating the political and diplomatic history of post-Napoleonic Germany. The first edition (1969) covered German history from 1815 until the end of World War II and received much acclaim and some criticism, though most of the criticisms were based upon differences in historical interpretation, not factual presentation. The second edition clarified Carr's historical interpretations and expanded the information on the Wilhelmine and Weimar eras. The third edition included a new chapter "The Two Germanies" covering 1945 to 1984. Carr's fourth edition "cleans up" the third edition's added chapter and includes a new chapter on Germany's reunification in 1990.

In the new "Preface" Carr clearly states his premise for the fourth edition: The Cold War ended and Germany peacefully united. These two events were not expected in the mid-eighties and since they occurred Carr desired to add them to his book. Carr admonishes the reader, however: "How successful the new Germany will be in finding its rightful place in the world constellation will determine whether the 'German problem' has been resolved once and for all." This leads the reader to think that Carr sees a unified Germany as somehow a possible threat to a world at peace.

Carr uses the first eleven chapters to discuss the importance of the *Volkgeist* to the political leaders in their efforts to create a nationalism among the German speaking peoples. This spirit of a unified people poses a "problem" because, to achieve national unity, existing political structures must be put aside, destroyed, in the best interests of the unified state. Throughout these eleven chapters Carr focuses on the political and diplomatic elements of Germany's history with little attention given to intellectual and cultural history. Mention is given to the Schlegels, Hegel, Max Weber, and a few others. He does not discuss the importance of Fichte in his call to the Germans to throw off their French oppressors; nor does he write of Wagner's glorification of the German people. These two men alone deserve some mention as their philosophical purpose was nationalism and German unification. It is this cultural and intellectual astigmatism that creates the "German problem" upon which Carr focuses.

The last chapter—the purpose for the fourth edition—is perhaps the weakest of all the chapters. It is not written with the same style and verve as the first eleven chapters. "The German Revolution 1989-1990" accurately recounts the facts surrounding the reunification of East and West but is pedantic in presentation when compared with the preceding chapters. Carr takes for granted that the student of history knows who President George Bush is without associating the head of state to his nation, the United States. This is akin to using the term the "Big Three" without dating the term since the composition of the "Three" changes from 1944 to 1945. This is a very minor flaw, but one made repeatedly with other heads of state.

Carr gives an adequate bibliography for all the chapters except the two newest. The bibliography for "The Two Germanies" is scant and there is no bibliography for the last chapter. The numerous quotations cited in the last chapter require the support given the preceding chapters.

I first read *A History of Germany*, the first edition, as an undergraduate attending the University of Texas. I credit Carr for sparking my interest in German nationalism. I still find this fourth edition to be a near-perfect text for college students, instructors, and anyone searching for a brief explanation of modern Germany's political history. I hope Carr will publish a fifth edition that includes a full bibliography and a bit more information on the cultural and intellectual influence upon the politics of German nationalism.

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