

advanced undergraduates and graduate students, but assumes a background in European history that less advanced American students will ordinarily lack.

University of Memphis

Abraham D. Kriegel

Paul Hayes, ed. *Themes in Modern European History, 1890-1945*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992. Pp. vii, 315. Cloth, \$69.95; paper, \$19.95.

This collection of essays focuses on that period of history from 1890 to 1945 that other publishers refer to as the end of the European era, or something to that effect. Such texts usually concluded a series in the history of modern Europe, but as the post war/cold war wore on, another volume was needed to cover events since 1945. And now the events of the late eighties and nineties seem to demand another concluding volume. This volume, edited by Paul Hayes of Oxford University, is part of the Themes in Modern European History series that is targeted at an undergraduate audience. Hayes does more than edit, since he and Philip Bell of the University of Liverpool wrote eight of the twelve entries in this book that thematically treats a period of tremendous change and upheaval in Europe.

Since the work seeks a university audience (primarily upper-level history majors), the authors provide a standard fare of interpretations based on current secondary literature. Each essay contains a very useful annotated bibliography that will be of immeasurable help to students. The essays by Hayes do have a common theme. Whether discussing pre-1914 Germany, France, Austria-Hungary, and Russia, or, later, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, he keeps returning to the idea of the changed relationship between the individual and the state: Was the state an expression of individual or collective wills? While certainly not original, Hayes does bring out nicely the idea that the absorption of the masses into politics goes far in explaining such movements as Fascism and Nazism. And now even Leninism can be seen as nothing more than a bizarre excess of intellectual modernism and/or an outcrop of early twentieth-century idealism and revolutionary puritanism. Philip Bell competently covers the origins of World War I and World War II, although in the latter case he does not go beyond what he previously wrote in the *Origins of the Second World War in Europe* (1986). Michael Biddiss, the general editor of the series for Routledge, covers the cultural history of the period in two selections. He presents the Valhalla of modernism in a clear, unpretentious style: Einstein, Freud, Nietzsche, Durkheim, Weber, Woolf, Ibsen, Proust, Picasso, Stravinsky, Wittgenstein, and Joyce, concluding with H. G. Wells's pessimistic last work of 1945, *Mind at the End of its Tether*, where he predicted the extinction of mankind. Biddiss uses Wells's journey from an earlier scientific utopian optimism to his final gloomy assessment as a trope for the history of Europe from 1890 to 1945. What I do find extraordinary is the lack of any mention of cinema, arguably the most influential and popular art form of the twentieth century. Essays by Edward Acton on the state and society under Lenin and Stalin, a particularly important theme given the reassessment now taking place in the new post-Soviet Russia, and by Nicholas Atkin on France in the years 1918-1945, complete this useful anthology. Instructors can not only assign the book as supplemental reading for courses in modern European history, but may themselves find it useful for its synthesis, bibliographies, and as a source for that pithy phrase or anecdote so sought after to enliven a lecture.

Cameron University

Richard A. Voeltz

Teaching History 19(2). DOI: 10.33043/TH.19.2.90. ©1994 Richard A. Voeltz