

Seeing all of this evidence, the reader can decide for himself whether to accept Vernon's claim that in spite of the resistance of the elite to the demands for broadened participation there was no class struggle.

Most of what Vernon says can be applied also to the United States. He does not mention two other ways in which the elites of the two countries helped to reduce the significance of the franchise. First, they established public schooling systems and then compulsory attendance to guarantee that future voters would be brainwashed into political attitudes that would not threaten their own positions. Second, they promoted the doctrine of *laissez faire*: If the people might by some chance gain an effective voice in the government, it was important that that government not be allowed to do anything the elite did not want it to do.

*Politics and the People* will be useful not only to people who teach English history but also to those who teach American, European, or world history on any level. It should also help broaden the thinking of graduate students and the best upper-level undergraduates. The general reader who wonders how English and American politics got into the grotesque situation in which in the 1990s oligarchy is called democracy will also find it worth their time.

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**Ruth Henig.** *The Origins of the First World War.* London & New York: Routledge, 1993. Second edition. Pp. 55. Paper, \$9.95.

**V. R. Berghahn.** *Germany and the Approach of War in 1914.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993. Second edition. Pp. 265. Paper, \$14.50.

Scholars have been focused on the details of the origins of major wars for many decades, but few have explored the ways that wars end, particularly those involving coalitions of nations. Often the termination of a war affects the agenda of subsequent wars. Clearly the unfinished affairs of the World War I belligerents affected the origins of World War II. But the subject here considered is the Great War, the war to end all wars.

Both these books are revisions of earlier editions. Teachers of World War I history have relied on the standard works of Sidney B. Fay, Bernadotte Schmitt, Joachim Remak, James Joll, Holger Herwig, and others with confidence. The Berghahn book is more substantial than the Henig pamphlet in both scope and detail, but the latter is useful for its brevity in a first introduction to the subject matter.

Ruth Henig teaches at the University of Lancaster in the United Kingdom. This pamphlet on the origins of World War I is intended to bridge the gap between survey texts and more detailed monographic literature. It fulfills that aim very nicely. Perhaps because it will be used by students as a first book on the subject, historical persons and authors should be introduced initially with their full names, not just the title and surname. The book is divided into two sections: a brief chronological overview of the period from 1871 to 1914 and a review of the major historical interpretations. There is a short, select bibliography, but no index.

Volker Berghahn is Professor of History at Brown University. His interest in European history has been communicated in several books dealing with German affairs in the Wilhelmine era. His 1981 book, *Militarism: The History of an International Debate 1861-1979*, was uniformly praised for its careful scholarship and compelling analysis. The first chapter of this recent book was revised to deal with new scholarship suggesting that pressures from the lower middle classes in Germany, along with that of the privileged elites, resulted in the "general deterioration of the monarchy's domestic position in the years prior to 1914." Otherwise the 1993 text is essentially the same as the first edition. This second edition of *Germany and the Approach of War in 1914*

was released because "Samuel Williamson's parallel volume on Austria-Hungary has finally appeared." The first edition was "a synthesis of the new research on Wilhelmine Germany that had been produced in the wake of Fritz Fischer's controversial books on the origins of the First World War." Ruth Henig includes Berghahn's first, but not the second, edition in her review of the historical literature, describing it as a middle-of-the-road interpretation.

Both books treat the diplomatic maneuverings before 1914 accurately, but Berghahn explains the interrelationship of domestic and international events in greater detail. Moreover, he says, decision making in Germany was based on a badly flawed perception of political reality. As the Ottoman Turks relaxed their grip on south central Europe, Russia and Austria-Hungary each sought to fill the hegemonic void. The emerging national aspirations of the Slavs, released from Turkish domination, and the foreign policy ambitions of two of Europe's venerable empires were on a collision course. The Bismarckian system required an Otto von Bismarck-Schönhausen; successive chancellors—General Leo Count von Caprivi, Prince Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, Bernhard Prince von Bülow, and Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg—failed the stature test. As Henig concludes, "By 1912, Germany's leaders not only felt that German world ambitions had been thwarted but perceived her European position to be increasingly vulnerable."

A major feature of the growing crisis in the decade prior to 1914 was the hypertrophy in armaments, particularly naval weapons. As Walter Millis pointed out in *Arms and Men* (1956), the post-war period of each of the two world wars exhibited some remarkable similarities. Although the nuclear weapon had dramatically changed psychological orientation about what was possible on the battlefield after 1945, the startling growth in German naval weapons before 1914 had unsettled British and French naval thinking. Some explanations of the great catastrophe blamed the unrestrained growth of armaments as a cause of the war. Grand Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz's "grand design" for a German high seas fleet capable of challenging British supremacy accelerated the British Admiralty's plans to expand its fleet. German strategy, writes Henig, "proved totally misconceived. . . . Not only did it arouse Britain's fierce antagonism but it strengthened the forces of opposition to German ambitions in Europe."

As Berghahn explains, the interaction of domestic and international issues created the circumstances leading to Germany's decision for war in 1914. He believes that Fritz Fischer's conclusion that the decision for war was made in the fateful war council meeting of December 1912 is less certain in light of recent scholarship. Germany took a big risk by issuing the "blank check" to Austria-Hungary in July 1914, but Bethmann-Hollweg seemed to be hoping for a localized, short war of the 1866 and 1870 types. Certainly the massive armies and the huge inventories of modern weapons argued against that hope. As Berghahn notes, without explaining "the function which Tirpitz's battle fleet was to fulfill in Wilhelmine politics at the turn of the century . . . the origins of the First World War cannot be understood."

Each of these books provides the teacher or student with a different view of the outbreak of World War I: Henig gives a wider, but less detailed account and Berghahn crafts a study of Germany's path to war examined at every turn in its many details.

Reviewer's note: Acknowledgement is made of Gordon A. Craig's *Germany 1866-1945* (1978) that provided artful descriptions of German foreign and domestic issues prior to World War I and Fritz Fischer's *World Power Or Decline: The Controversy Over Germany's Aims in the First World War* (1974).