

and the 1909 to 1914 period when Germany became increasingly fearful of being encircled.

This book is not a narrative account of nineteenth-century diplomacy--its brevity does not permit this--but rather the thoughtful judgments of a leading historian of international relations on recent scholarly literature dealing with nineteenth-century diplomacy. Pauls Choeder's *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763-1848*, Jacques Joll's *The Origins of the First World War*, and R. Langhorne's *The Collapse of the Concert of Europe* are only a few of the recent and significant works discussed in this book. An annotated bibliography at the end of the book walks you through nineteenth-century diplomatic history.

Peace, War and the European Powers would be an excellent book to use in an upper-division or graduate class in nineteenth-century Europe where students can be expected to have some knowledge of the broad outlines of nineteenth-century European history and some familiarity with the literature of the field. It is written in a clear and even lively style, but does presume more background knowledge than most lower-division students can be expected to have. This is a very useful book for the instructor teaching nineteenth-century Europe without specialization in diplomatic history; it provides many thoughtful judgments on key events in diplomatic history.

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Geoffrey Ellis. *Napoleon.* London & New York: Longman, 1997. Pp. viii, 290. Paper \$13.95; ISBN 0-582-02547-8.

Peter Jones, ed. *The French Revolution in Social and Political Perspective.* New York: Arnold, 1996. Pp. xv, 495. Cloth, \$59.95; ISBN 0-340-65291-8. Paper, \$18.95; ISBN 0-340-65290-X.

In the current historiography of the French Revolution, the king is dead, but the succession is being hotly disputed--or, to borrow from Aristophanes, perhaps whirl is now king. The classic interpretation of the Revolution, inspired by Marxism and definitively articulated by Georges Lefebvre, was of the struggle between the decaying, feudal aristocracy and the ascending, capitalist bourgeoisie. For the last thirty years or so revisionists have chipped away at this view, noting the social mix among the revolutionaries and the complexities of their aspirations. Critics decry revisionism as the "new orthodoxy" or conservatism triumphant, but the revisionists, who take their various starting points from sources as diverse as Alexis de Tocqueville and Jürgen Habermas, offer no monolithic system, as Peter Jones's reader, *The French Revolution in Social and Political Perspective*, demonstrates.

Jones, Professor of French History at the University of Birmingham, has collected two dozen examples of recent scholarship to inform students, albeit advanced ones, of the

new debates, methodologies, themes, and even efforts to reformulate the social approach now engaging historians of the Revolution. His introduction provides a useful overview of the controversies, and he opens every section of his book with incisive commentary about each selection, its context, and its problematic qualities.

The volume is divided into five sections, the first devoted to familiarizing readers with the emerging contours of the arguments. One key excerpt here is from François Furet's 1977 seminal attack on Marxist perceptions and his call for renewed emphasis on revolutionary politics and ideology. Students should also be interested in Colin Jones's sarcastic response to the revisionist challenge and the editor's article on how, ironically, Lefebvre's own research into the French peasantry helped to generate revisionism.

The next two sections deal with intellectual and women's history. Although Jones sees little future in intellectual history, its practitioners have been revitalizing the field with insights borrowed from linguistic analysis, social history, and even popular culture. Examples in this collection include a discussion by Keith Baker, a leading authority on the eighteenth century, of the changing signification of "public opinion;" Roger Chartier's intriguing argument that the style of reading Enlightenment literature more than its content stimulated revolutionary attitudes; and a selection from one of Margaret Jacob's penetrating works on the masonic lodges. Jones questions less the value of a "gender-differentiated" approach to the Revolution, which examines the role of women within it and the extent to which it translated liberty into patriarchal dominion. Students will doubtless be fascinated by Lynn Hunt's account of how Marie Antoinette became the victim of pornographic rumors. However, they should not miss Jane Abray's pioneering article that chronicles the demise of feminism in the radical phases of the Revolution or Barrie Rose's curious endeavor to defend the Revolution's achievements in the area of women's social rights, even though continuing inequalities in the political, economic, and educational spheres matter most to Abray.

The final two sections contain reassessments of traditional topics. One section is a disparate array of themes, for example, the inadequacy of either Marxism or revisionism to account for the organized efforts by noblemen in the National Assembly to defend their privileges; the genesis of the "Federalist revolts" in local, republican politics rather than in counterrevolutionary opposition to national polices; and the radical credentials of the Thermidorians who overthrew Robespierre. The all-too-brief concluding section focuses on the Reign of Terror and includes Colin Lucas's article stressing continuity between Old Regime and revolutionary crowd mentalities as well as Furet's speculations on the Terror as an inevitable outcome of revolutionary rhetoric.

Jones's anthology offers valuable insights into present controversies about the Revolution; it is a welcome guide through the perplexities of a mercurial field. Still, Jones might have served his intended audience even more had he included biographies of the contributors and translations of the French terms and passages quoted in their articles. Today's students appreciate such aids.

Napoleon by Geoffrey Ellis, Lecturer in Modern European History at Oxford, likewise gives a concise survey of new directions taken by scholarship, in this case an

emphasis on the era of Napoleon rather than the man and on continuity between that era and previous developments. Ellis has produced a study of Napoleon's concept of power reflecting both of these trends. He assumes a prior knowledge of key events in the Emperor's biography and regime. Even the section on army affairs chiefly examines matters of organization, recruitment, and supply, with only passing reference to Napoleon's battlefield prowess. Ellis's Napoleon had no ideological bedrock beyond ambition and manifested no preconceived plans for unifying Europe; he improvised, building on past achievements whenever military victories, patronage, or fortune presented opportunities.

Ellis has an excellent chapter on Napoleon's manipulation of the arts, struggle with prominent writers, and use of propaganda. Ellis judges the period as one of great aesthetic activity and sees Napoleon, however much he was interested solely in advancing his own cult of personality, as a "cultural catalyst." Also noteworthy is Ellis's review of recent work on the backbone of Napoleonic administration, the notables, nonaristocratic landowners who gained status from the Revolution and benefited from the looting of the Continent. Finally, Ellis marks the limits of Napoleon's power in astute examinations of the failure of the Continental System and of the repeated attempts to dominate Pope Pius VII, who emerged victorious despite repeated humiliations.

Almost 20 percent of *Napoleon* is occupied with bibliographical essays. One particularly rich chapter is a supplement to Pieter Geyl's legendary *Napoleon For and Against* (1949). To Geyl's roster of French commentators and historians, Ellis adds a tentative list of British, German, and Italian authors. Here is a topic deserving of more extensive treatment.

Ultimately, Ellis deems Napoleon's greatest impact to have been on French institutions, not on the rest of Europe. The Napoleonic legacy is one that Ellis assesses with clarity and authority. Students who already have some familiarity with the topic will welcome this skillful summation of where Napoleonic scholarship presently stands.

It is too early to predict the resolution of these intellectual skirmishes or to estimate which of the outlooks recounted in these two books will become part of some future, standard interpretation of the Revolution. In the meantime, the spirited conflict among historians does seem appropriate for the subject matter in question.

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Robert Gildea. *France: 1870-1914*. London & New York: Longman, 1996. Second edition. Pp. viii, 128. Paper, \$12.37; ISBN 0-582-29221-2.

Robert Aldrich. *Greater France: A History of French Overseas Expansion*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996. Pp. x, 369. Cloth, \$45.00; ISBN 0-312-15999-4. Paper, \$19.95; ISBN 0-312-16000-3.