

Sometimes Todd writes as though two revolutions occurred in Russia in 1917, and elsewhere he suggests that the March Revolution was a modest political reform that was only important for its role in preparing for the Bolshevik Revolution in November.

Although Todd's interpretations are usually balanced and reasonable, several of his generalizations about Marxism, Leninism, and the Bolshevik Revolution are uncritically favorable and highly questionable. He finds, for example, that the early Bolsheviks instituted a system of "direct democracy," and thus he denounces the Constituent Assembly of 1918, although elected, as a focus for "the growing counter revolution." Likewise, he asserts that "orthodox Marxism" is a logical extension of "the 1789 ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity," and he fails to acknowledge the logical connection between Stalinism and Lenin's theory of an elite party as the vanguard of the working classes.

Mount Senario College

Thomas Tandy Lewis

**Annika Mombauer.** *The Origins of the First World War: Controversies and Consensus.* London & New York: Longman, 2002. Pp. ix, 256. Paper, \$16.00; ISBN 0-582-41872-0.

Debate on the origins of the First World War, "the great seminal catastrophe" of the twentieth century according to George Kennan, has continued for almost a century. Oceans of ink have already been devoted to the topic, yet excellent new contributions continue to pour from the presses. Small wonder that it is difficult, if not impossible, for an instructor or graduate student to keep up with the nuances of this long-continuing debate. Annika Mombauer's *The Origins of the First World War: Controversies and Consensus*, is, therefore, a welcome, and affordable, addition to the still-burgeoning literature on the topic.

Mombauer, a Lecturer in European History at Britain's Open University and author of a recently-published monograph on the origins of the war (*Helmuth von Moltke and the Origins of the First World War*, 2001), attempts here to provide a panoramic overview of the historiography of war origins. Her aim is "to explain why the search for an explanation of the outbreak of the war has been 'almost obsessive,' [and to provide] a guide through the maze of interpretations on the origins of the war."

Proceeding chronologically, from the war years themselves to the present, Mombauer argues that in every era there was an "intimate connection between the political concerns of a society and its interpretation of history." For instance, during and immediately after the war it was in the interest of all belligerents, especially the Germans, to displace the blame from their own leaders. But, by the 1920s, says Mombauer, a consensus emerged that diluted the harsh anti-German verdict of the Versailles Treaty in favor of interpretations that emphasized shared responsibility or argued that the war was no one's fault in particular. This outlook reflected, of course,

Germany's passionate rejection of the war guilt clause of the treaty, but also the allied (predominately British and American) desire to rehabilitate Germany politically. All this changed dramatically in 1961, Mombauer argues, when German historian Fritz Fischer published his historiographical blockbuster, *Griffnach der Weltmacht* (English edition: *Germany's Aims in the First World War*). Fischer reinvigorated the "war guilt" debate by arguing that Germany in 1914, indeed, had been an expansionistic power whose policies contributed greatly to the descent into madness. What made Fischer's thesis especially explosive in Germany was the post-World-War-II political climate in which Germans were eager to argue, and believe, that the militaristic expansionism of the Third Reich had been an aberration in German history. If Fischer was correct, that assumption would be thrown into question. According to Mombauer, the publication of Fischer's book marks the major dividing line in the war origins debate. After Fischer, she argues, a new consensus emerged in which "no one would seriously maintain ... that Germany had been an innocent party" (the dominant view of the interwar years) or that "Germany had acted in complete isolation" (the verdict of Versailles).

The book is thoroughly researched and documented (31 pages of notes out of 224) and includes a superb map (redrawn from Martin Gilbert's *First World War Atlas*) of German territorial losses after 1919. Professor Mombauer rightly focuses on the issue of German war guilt, but perhaps spends too much time recounting the shifting vicissitudes of the debate within Germany itself. And, in places, the book is repetitive. Still and all, I can think of no better single volume to help instructors and graduate students get a quick and insightful overview of one of the last century's most passionate historiographical controversies.

Webster University

Michael Salevouris

**Robert Service.** *The Russian Revolution, 1900–1927*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. Third Edition. Pp. x, 111. Paper \$11.95; ISBN 0-312-22361-7.

**James D. White.** *Lenin: The Practice and Theory of Revolution*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. Pp. x, 262. Cloth, \$69.95; ISBN 0-333-72156-X. Paper, \$19.95; ISBN 0-333-72157-8.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 is one of the most compelling and controversial topics in modern Russian history. The backgrounds and ideologies of the participants vary from defenders of the monarchy to radical revolutionaries and many in between. How these events and people have been interpreted over the past 85 years has filled hundreds of books and journal articles with many varied opinions. The controversy over how to interpret the Russian Revolution has made it difficult to introduce to students who are unfamiliar with the depth of the subject. The two books under review here try, in different ways, to present this controversial part of history for undergraduate students. Robert Service provides a broad overview of the Russian Revolution in a brief work that