

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.

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**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

covers about thirty years. James D. White paints an interesting portrait of Vladimir Lenin's theory of revolution and how he put that theory into action.

Service's work is divided into three broad chapters. The first chapter covers Russia from 1900–1914 and includes basic discussions of the Romanov dynasty, the Russian economy, the political problems facing Russia, and others. He blends information about the Russian world with more sophisticated analysis of the problems facing the monarchy. He notes the importance of the Russian economy for the nation's development and the monarchy's attempts to catch up with European industrial developments. The key problems facing Russia were underlying radical agitation and the crisis of the Revolution of 1905. Service shows how this revolution illuminated Russia's problems with military preparedness, food supply, social unrest, and radical agitation.

The second chapter addresses the complicated story of how World War I affected the course of Russian history. The war itself was a colossal disaster that left the Russian monarchy in a vulnerable position while radical groups continued to demand change. Service gives a good description of the two revolutions here. He notes how the first in February 1917, the one that deposed the monarchy, was carried out by Duma members. The resulting government was a fragile one that had few choices as they tried to hold Russia together and keep the country in the war. The chapter concludes with the rise of the Bolsheviks, the collapse of the Provisional government, and the rise of a new government.

The third chapter looks at the extent of the Russian Revolution over the next decade. This broad approach looks at the revolution, not so much as a singular event, but as a process that goes through many changes and phases over the succeeding decade until Joseph Stalin gains complete control over the Soviet Union, when most historians acknowledge that at this time the revolution took a different direction. This chapter lays out clearly the revolutionary turmoil that plagued the new Soviet Union for several years after the initial seizure of power.

White's biography of Lenin examines this complex and controversial figure from an intellectual perspective rather than from a traditional biographical approach. White organizes his work into seven chapters. In the beginning of the work, he explains in great detail Lenin's background and family life. In this section, the author describes Lenin's parents and siblings and their outlook on Russia. He draws specific attention to the two dramatic events in the 1880s that seemed to shape the rest of Lenin's life. His father died when Lenin was sixteen, and then his brother Alexander was executed in 1887 for his involvement in an assassination attempt on Alexander III. White makes a convincing argument for these events, especially the latter, being the factors that shaped Lenin into a revolutionary.

Once in the revolutionary circles in which his brother once traveled, Lenin explores Marxist ideology and spends much of his time in debates with other radicals about the course of action. Many still advocated direct action and violence to further their goals, while Lenin and others in the Social Democratic Labor Party wanted to form a viable party with an alternative for Russian society in order to see the complete

revolution occur. This was one of the many points of division Lenin had with other revolutionaries of his own time.

White's biography focuses on Lenin's thought as he passes through prison, exile, revolution, and achievement of power. White gives a basic sketch of the events of this tumultuous time while focusing continuously on how Lenin's thought and writing changed and influenced those around him. It is a refreshing approach to Lenin. While Lenin was a man of action when 1917 arrived, he spent most of his time in the first two decades of the twentieth century formulating his ideas and debating with friends and enemies.

Both works make outstanding contributions to Russian history. For teaching purposes, the Service book is certainly designed for just that purpose. It is brief and written clearly. It has a nice chronology and bibliography in the back, while the text itself is supplemented with numerous political cartoons from the era. This book would certainly be appropriate for a survey of Russian history or for a modern European history course that has a significant component on this topic. White's book is a more sophisticated work. It is not necessarily designed for a general survey course, but it would work well for a class on the Russian revolution or the Soviet Union in general. It includes a fine bibliography of the latest works in English on Lenin. It also includes especially good glossaries on the key players during this time and the more theoretical vocabulary. These books would work well together in a course that analyzes the Russian Revolution. The Service book could lay the foundation while the White book would be a good work for class analysis and discussion.

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**Charles W. Calhoun, ed. *The Human Tradition in America from the Colonial Era through Reconstruction*. Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2002. Pp. xxii, 323. Cloth, \$60.00; ISBN 0-8420-5030-2. Paper, \$19.95; ISBN 0-8420-5031-0.**

Scholarly Resources has recently published a number of undergraduate reading supplements targeted to topical and period college courses in U.S. History. This volume, intended for the first half of the two semester U.S. survey, brings together eighteen essays from those earlier volumes. Each chapter is preceded by one or two introductory paragraphs, usually stressing questions for students to consider and discuss. There are no illustrations. Each essay is biographical in subject matter, presenting an individual who encountered, responded to, and often influenced the outcome of a significant political, social, or cultural conflict. Each is the product of a different author, and the differences of tone and focus would permit class discussion of the range of modern historiography. Yet thanks to the volume and series editor, there are clear common elements.