

emerged after 1945 "owed everything to Churchill's decision that in 1940, Britain should fight on against Hitler whatever the risks or costs."

The intended audience for this book is students, but the general reader would profit greatly from the author's writing style as well as his balanced and thoughtful assessments of the voluminous literature on Churchill. The book includes a helpful chronology of the main events in Churchill's life and an annotated bibliography of the works on Churchill used by the author. Unfortunately, the book appeared before the publication of two new important Churchill biographies, those of Roy Jenkins and Geoffrey Best, and David Dutton's biography of Neville Chamberlain.

Since Churchill played such a significant role in many of the key events of the first half of the twentieth century, this book would be excellent to assign to students in any class dealing with this era as well as any course on modern British history. It introduces students to the vast literature on Churchill and demonstrates that very able historians can differ greatly on key aspects of his career, thus giving students a more sophisticated understanding of the nature of history. Depending on the instructor's purpose, this book could be assigned at the undergraduate and/or the graduate level. Teachers who are not well versed in the literature on Churchill, especially the arguments of the revisionists, can obtain a quick overview of their arguments and the counter-arguments by reading this book.

In many ways this book is more serviceable than another biography of Churchill. In less than 200 pages, Wood looks at Churchill's illustrious career through the eyes of its leading historians and gives the reader his careful, balanced, and sound judgments on the key issues in that career.

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Harry E. Wade

Paul A Winters, ed. *The Collapse of the Soviet Union*. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1999. Pp. 288. Cloth, \$24.96; ISBN 1-56510-997-X. Paper, \$15.96; ISBN 1-56510-996-1.

Christopher Read. *The Making and Breaking of the Soviet System: An Interpretation*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. Pp. x, 259. Cloth, \$65.00; ISBN 0-333-73152-2. Paper, \$20.95; ISBN 0-333-73153-0.

The Collapse of the Soviet Union and *The Making and Breaking of the Soviet System* offer two different approaches to the question of why the Soviet Union came apart. Paul Winters focuses his attention on the Gorbachev period and immediately after. Christopher Read, on the other hand, provides what is, essentially, a history of the entire period of the Soviet Union and its aftermath.

The Collapse of the Soviet Union is a collection of essays organized under the following chapter headings: "Prelude to the Collapse," "Attempts at Reforming the Government," "Disintegration of Empire," "Collapse of the Union," and "Strife in the

Former Union." Each of the sections contains four or five readings presenting different perspectives on the topic. The range of interpretations is impressive, reflecting the editor's view that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a complex event with no clearly identifiable single cause. It is unfortunate, however, that nearly all of the essays were written by Westerners, leaving the reader with little understanding of how the Soviets viewed the collapse of their nation. With only a couple of exceptions, the essays were written during or immediately following the period of Soviet collapse. Thus, there is little benefit of hindsight or examination of sources that have become available more recently. The reader is left with a feeling of suspense as the information ends in the early 1990s. An Afterword might have been included to tie some of the loose ends together and to bring things closer to the present. Nonetheless, the diversity of interpretations presented would provide an excellent starting point for discussion in a course on the history of the Soviet Union. Some of the selections probably assume a bit too much general knowledge of the Soviet Union for the book to be effective in a western or world civilization class.

There are discussion questions on the readings at the end of the book. However, each question focuses on a specific essay. None seem to ask students to pull the essays together for comparison and contrast. An extensive appendix includes excerpts from a number of documents critical to the period—several speeches by Gorbachev, declarations of independence by Soviet republics, and Shevardnadze's resignation speech, among others. One of the most useful features is an extensive chronology of the major events from the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 to Gorbachev's resignation as Soviet president in 1991. A list of books and articles for further reading is also included.

The Making and Breaking of the Soviet System begins with the triumph of Bolshevism in 1917 and unfolds the story of its strengths and weaknesses until its final collapse in 1991. It examines the role of the Communist Party under each of the Soviet leaders, describing the inherent contradictions implicit in establishing a workers' society in a peasant-dominated nation. Read argues that three themes can be followed throughout the Communist period, those of productionism, careerism, and bureaucratism. He defines productionism as putting "every effort ... into increasing industrial output *at all costs* in the short and medium term in order to build the revolution in the long term." Careerism is the phenomenon whereby people increasingly joined the Communist Party in order to advance their careers rather than in support of revolutionary goals. Finally, the revolution gave rise to endless agencies that employed large numbers of *apparatchiki* (bureaucrats) and yet seemed to accomplish very little. These themes appear repeatedly throughout the book as weaknesses in the Communist government that are never successfully overcome. Another theme that likewise appears in nearly every chapter is the notion that "Centralization and the erosion of democracy created discontent—discontent made the leadership turn to even stricter centralization and greater discipline." Using the above concepts, Read argues that although it never engaged the hearts and minds of its citizens, Soviet Communism survived because

discipline eroded the will to resist and bureaucrats were unwilling to jeopardize their positions. When the centralized economic system atrophied under Brezhnev, observers on various sides of the political spectrum were concerned. However, they lacked both the power and the will to act. It was Gorbachev with his use of *glasnost* who opened the floodgates of reform. Although he had hoped a revitalized Communist Party would be the agent of change, there was no revolutionary commitment to its goals. The failure of the Bolshevik experiment ever to win genuine support among Soviet citizens was ultimately its undoing.

Read is clearly a Gorbachev supporter. He takes great pains to delineate the restraints under which Gorbachev was forced to act, given the divisions between reformers and conservatives whose support he needed to bring about change. The implication is clear that Gorbachev is not responsible for the ultimate failure of his efforts. On the other hand, the author is critical of Yeltsin for taking a "bull-at-a-gate approach" to Russia's problems without having any long-term plan in mind. The reader is left with little hope that things will improve in the foreseeable future.

While Read's ideas are thought-provoking and well argued, they will be challenging for the undergraduate student. If used as a textbook for a course on the Soviet period and supplemented by other readings (such as *The Collapse of the Soviet Union*), undergraduate students might be able to handle the material. Certainly graduate students and faculty will find useful information here. The layout of the text is uninviting, however, with solid pages of small print often organized into nearly page long paragraphs. The book does include an extensive list of suggested reading that includes a number of post-Soviet works.

Both works provide useful contributions to the on-going debate over why the Soviet Union collapsed and who should take the credit/responsibility. While Winters's book might be profitably used by the typical undergraduate student, Read's requires a greater degree of sophistication.

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Steven E. Woodworth, ed. *The Loyal, True, and Brave: America's Civil War Soldiers*. Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2002. Pp. xii, 222. Cloth, \$60.00; ISBN 0-8420-2930-3. Paper, \$18.95; ISBN 0-8420-2931-1.

Paul Ashdown & Edward Caudill. *The Mosby Myth: A Confederate Hero in Life and Legend*. Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2002. Pp. xxxvi, 231. Paper, \$17.95; ISBN 0-8420-2929-X.

Clearly, there is no shortage of source material when studying the American Civil War. Where does a teacher or student begin to sort through the thousands of volumes that have been published on America's most-studied conflict? Steven E. Woodworth, associate professor of history at Texas Christian University, has assembled a collection