

accept the massive body of evidence that vaccination worked. Finally, in a bow to our post-9/11 preoccupations, the book finishes with an assessment of the threat posed by bioterrorism and the efforts to prepare for the horrifying possibility that smallpox could again be unleashed against a population that has lost its immunity.

Since the publication of William McNeill's *Plagues and Peoples* in the mid 1970s, the history of epidemic disease has become a thriving cottage industry within the discipline. A course on the subject, or a section within a course, can provide students with a fascinating lens with which to view the past and to see the relevance of the past to the present. While *The Life and Death of Smallpox* would be useful for the teacher of such a course, either as a primer on the relevant science or a repository of interesting anecdotes, it would not be the best choice for assigned reading in an introductory course. The book focuses so single-mindedly on one disease that the broader ecological perspective that one finds in McNeill's book, or the classic studies of Alfred Crosby, is lost. The book might, however, be a useful addition to a seminar.

Webster University

Michael Salevouris

Jerzy Lukowski. *The European Nobility in the Eighteenth Century*. European Culture and Society Series. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. Pp. x, 243. Paper, \$24.95; ISBN 0-333-65210-X.

As the title suggests, this book offers readers an exhaustive history of the customs, beliefs, rituals, and mores of the European nobility in the eighteenth century. The book has much to recommend it. For one, it is organized thematically, with each chapter addressing a particular aspect of noble life, from marriage, to economics, to education, to inheritance. By eschewing a chronological format, Professor Lukowski is able to present the history of the European nobility in a much more comprehensive and diverse fashion, giving the reader a fascinating glimpse into the everyday life of Europe. For another, the author considers nobility as a European wide phenomenon and in doing so he is able to demonstrate the notion that the institution of "nobility" was not a static one and varied greatly across the European continent, particularly between East and West.

Two broad themes emerge in the book. First, there exists a stereotype of the European nobility from that era as a privileged elite enjoying hedonistic, carefree existence on their manorial estates, free from any sort of worldly concern. As Professor Lukowski vividly illustrates in his book, this was by no means the case. While nobles did enjoy the benefits of great wealth and status, they were nonetheless burdened with numerous worries. For example, it is commonly taught in schools that tax exemptions given to nobles were a major cause of the French Revolution. While it is true that nobles did enjoy such exemptions, in times of war (rather frequent occurrences in the

eighteenth century) they were expected to serve in the military and personally raise and finance military units that were cripplingly expensive. Similarly, more mundane matters such as collecting rents, providing dowries, discharging seigniorial obligations, and insuring the continuation of the family name all insured that nobles' lives were more difficult than is normally supposed. A second theme concerns the nature of nobility itself. As Professor Lukowski shows, the definition of who was noble and who was not constantly changed over the course of the century and the nobility was by no means a closed institution. Rather, it was within the nobility itself where different degrees of class and status mattered. As such, one comes to realize that European society during that era was stratified in a much more diverse and varied way than a simple dichotomy of nobles and peasants.

Professor Lukowski's book is a scholarly effort of high order. It is well researched and brings to general readers a significant amount of information that would be otherwise difficult to come by. The author also has a sense of levity that makes the book easy to read and follow. As for the audience of the book, it seems targeted to specialized readers and would not be suitable for students of history on the undergraduate level. Teachers of European history would be well served to use the book's perspective, however, and bring to students a more comprehensive and varied understanding of European history and society.

Teachers College, Columbia University

Michael Marion

Vera Tolz. *Inventing the Nation: Russia*. London: Arnold Press. Pp. viii, 307. Paper, \$24.95; ISBN 0-340-67705-8.

During the Cold War, Americans often used, and confused, the term Soviet with Russian. Indeed, they were often synonymous in the American mind. Vera Tolz, however, asks the relevant question: Who are the Russians? The Soviet state was a multi-national one, as was the tsarist empire and what remains of modern Russia. Two competing views of the state and the nation emerged in the mid-nineteenth century that have dominated ever since, both of which evolve around Russian similarities with and differences from the European perception of a modern nation and state.

Tolz begins the work with a brief, but very useful examination of the theoretical framework, citing the works of Hans Rogger, Roman Szporluk, Geoffrey Hosking, Ronald Suny, and others. Her work subsequently follows a linear path through Russian history, arguing that Peter the Great established the foundation by which Russians viewed themselves and the nation in comparison to surrounding peoples. This theme is repeated throughout the book and the author does an excellent job maintaining a relatively simple, but intellectually sound, analysis of the material. Tolz is able to incorporate effectively critical topics in Russian history, such as the Decembrist revolt,