

(psychological, social, historical, economic, etc.) and the policy itself. The contention is that Great Britain has not, as Dean Acheson said, become a country that "has lost an empire ... and not yet found a role," but a country whose role has changed over the century. Especially strong are the parts of the book in which the author discusses the difficulties England had in giving up her position as the world's major imperial power, her relations with the United States, and how hard it has been to decide what approach to take concerning the European Union and what role Britain should play in that Union.

The work contains a two-page list of abbreviations and what they stand for; in the modern world of "alphabet soup," this eliminates the difficulty of trying to remember what a certain collection of letters means. A very fine bibliographical essay discussing the major works on the topic of twentieth-century English foreign policy is included. This is a minor point, but it would be helpful if the author had provided a basic chronology and a list of Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers with their party and dates.

The work is on too specific a topic to be used in high school or in a general college survey on England, but it is strongly recommended for any detailed course on modern England, English foreign policy, or modern European foreign policy. The book should be in the library of any historian who teaches English or European history and it will make a wonderful source for lecture notes. The work is a must-have for all college libraries.

*Britain and the World in the Twentieth Century* is a most impressive achievement. Hopefully the other books in the series will be as clear, concise, and informative as this one.

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K. Gird Romer

**Patrick Finney, ed. *The Origins of the Second World War*. London & New York: Arnold, 1997. Pp. xviii, 461. Cloth, \$59.95; ISBN 0-340-67641-8. Paper, \$18.95; ISBN 0-340-67640-X.**

This collection of readings, based upon recent research into various German, Japanese, Italian, Chinese, French, British, and American documents that were still classified during the 1960s, presents the basis for Finney's observation that the origins of World War II were very much more complex than the traditional Eurocentric or nationalistic scholarship written largely by the victors. The readings come from a selection of works by such historians as David Dilks, Sidney Aster, Anthony Adamthwaite, Tim Mason, and R.J. Overy in the section entitled "Interpretations and Debates." In "Germany, Italy, the USSR and Japan: Dictatorships and Revisionism," there is a sampling of the works of Ian Kershaw, MacGregor Knox, Teddy J. Uldricks,

and Hosoya Chihiro. R.A.C. Parker, Stephen A. Schuker, Arnold A. Offner, and Michael A. Barnhart contribute to "Great Britain, France, and the United States: The Democracies at War." The studies by Scott Newton, Williamson Murray, John Erickson, and Philip M. Taylor contribute to "Beyond Diplomacy: Economics, Strategy and Opinion." The final section, "The Approach of War," features selections from Willard C. Frank, Jr., Gerhard L. Weinberg, Anna M. Cienciala, and David Reynolds.

One of the Arnold Readers in History series, this book provides a starting point from which to synthesize the post-1960s historiography of the origins of the Second World War. Although useful as a reader for an undergraduate course on World War II, this work would also enable a United States history survey instructor to quickly glean notes for a lecture on the origins of World War II in that it provides a basis for understanding the issues surrounding the war's origins from a multinational perspective in a thematic framework. It would also be useful in a graduate readings course on the interwar years. Moreover, each section is prefaced with an excellent introduction and literature survey. The edited bibliography and notes are also quite good.

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Richard W. Byrd

**Robert D. Marcus and David Burner, eds. *America Firsthand*. Boston: Bedford Books, 1997. Vol. 1—*Readings from Settlement to Reconstruction*. Pp. xv, 308. ISBN 0-312-15349-X. Vol. II—*Readings from Reconstruction to the Present*. Pp. xv, 336. ISBN 0-312-15348-1. Paper, each \$27.32.**

The fourth edition of *America Firsthand* delivers exactly what it promises. It "gives voice to ordinary Americans," providing a wide range of eyewitness accounts that permit students to sample "a broad range of human experience." The selections are substantial enough, ranging from six to eight pages each, to allow students "to immerse themselves in each writer's perspective." *America Firsthand* is intended to help meet "the challenge of connecting traditional chronology with the new materials of social history." Both volumes are organized in accordance with "the traditional markers of United States history" and include accounts of the American Revolution, the Civil War and Reconstruction, the two World Wars, the Great Depression, and the Vietnam War. The editors' introduction to each part announces the theme and briefly explains the relationship of each selection to that theme. The equally concise headnotes preceding each reading are very informative and help contextualize the subject matter for the beginning student.

For instructors wishing to assign primary source readings, this reviewer has no hesitation in recommending that *America Firsthand* be given careful consideration. Of