4 March 2009

Culture, Economy, and Politics after the Great War

Weissenhof Estate, 1927
Stuttgart, Germany
Le Corbusier (C. E. Jeanneret-Gris)
Culture, Economy, and Politics after the Great War

World War One disrupted certainties
   “Congress system” of alliances
   gender roles
   Europe=civilized
   history=progress

Reactions
   mourning and memorials
   Dada and Surrealism
   modernist architecture, city planning
   Wilsonianism in Paris, 1919

Hyperinflation: Consequence of the Peace?
   What was it? Who was affected?
   How has it been explained?

Otto Dix, “Dead Sentry in the Trenches”
   War series (1924)
I am proud to be his widow, but regret that because I live in the mother country [England] I have lost my war widow's pension. I am told this is because of the exchange rate… I appreciate my husband's name being erected on the “Hall of Memory” but what about those left behind?

Violet Selma Aiken (Australian woman whose husband died of his wounds in 1928), letter to Australian War Memorial
Will Longstaff, *Menin Gate* at Midnight (1927)

* memorial for British and Commonwealth soldiers who died at the second Battle of Ypres

reactions to World War One: mourning and limits of conventional spirituality
Dadaism and the Absurd

Dada is a new tendency in art. One can tell this because until now nobody knew anything about it, and tomorrow everyone in Zurich will be talking about it. Dada comes from the dictionary. It is terribly simple. In French it means "hobby horse." In German it means "good-bye," "Get off my back", "Be seeing you sometime". In Romanian: "Yes, indeed, you are right, that's it. But of course, yes, definitely, right". And so forth…. How does one achieve eternal bliss? By saying dada. How does one become famous? By saying dada. With a noble gesture and delicate propriety. Till one goes crazy. Till one loses consciousness. … Dada is the world soul, dada is the pawnshop. Dada is the world's best lily-milk soap.

Hugo Ball, “A Dada Manifesto” (1916).

“The war is founded on a glaring mistake, men have been confused with machines.” —Hugo Ball

reactions to World War One: art and the limits of conventional meaning
Surrealism and the rejection of “reality”

The realistic attitude, inspired by positivism...seems to me to be hostile to any intellectual or moral advancement. I loathe it, for it is made up of mediocrity, hate, and dull conceit. It is this attitude which gives birth to ridiculous books, insulting plays. It constantly feeds on and derives strength from the newspapers; it stultifies both science and art by assiduously flattering the lowest of tastes. It is clarity bordering on stupidity…

André Breton, *Surrealist Manifesto* (1924).

Max Ernst, *Hydrometric demonstration of how to kill with temperature* (1920)

Salvador Dalí, *The Persistence of Memory* (1931)
Building the Future? Modernist Architecture between the Wars

• little or no ornamentation
• industrial production integrated with craft techniques
• glass, concrete, steel

“A house is a machine for living”
Le Corbusier

Bruno Taut and Martin Wagner, *Hufeisensiedlung* (Horseshoe Estate) Berlin, 1925-1933

Le Corbusier, plan for Palace of the Soviets, Moscow (1932)

reactions to World War One: re-make the world
President Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points (January 1918)

We demand that the world be made fit and safe to live in; and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation which, like our own, wishes to live its own life, determine its own institutions, be assured of justice and fair dealing by the other peoples of the world … All the peoples of the world are in effect partners in this interest,

1. “Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at.”
2-3. freedom of the seas, free trade
4. arms reductions
5. “free and impartial adjustment” of colonial claims
6. “intelligent and unselfish sympathy” to Russia
7. “the whole world will agree” that Belgium be restored
8. France restored to pre-Franco-Prussian War borders
9. Italian frontiers adjusted “along clearly recognizable lines of nationality”
10. “autonomous development” for peoples of Austria-Hungary
11. international guarantees for independence and autonomy of Balkan countries
12. “unmolested opportunity of autonomous development” for “non-Turkish” peoples of Ottoman Empire
13. independent Polish state to include “all territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations”
14. general association of nations to guarantee “integrity of great and small states alike”

reactions to World War One: re-make the world
Paris Peace Conference, 1919 and Treaty of Versailles

Key terms of Treaty of Versailles (between Allied Powers and Germany)

Germany lost approx. 13% of European territory and all overseas colonies

German military limited to 100,000; no draft allowed
no submarines or weapon manufacture

Germany solely responsible for the war

Germany to pay reparations of 132 billion marks—equal to two year’s of Gross National Product before the war

reactions to World War One: re-make the world (by punishing Germany)
November Revolution (1918-1919) in Germany

late Oct. 1918 mutiny by German navy in Kiel
Nov. 9 Kaiser William II abdicates
Nov. 11 end of war; provisional government formed
Dec. 1918 Freikorps (Free Corps) begin forming
Jan. 1919 radicals leave government over militarism; create German Communist Party
Jan. 15, 1919 Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg murdered by Free Corps troops
April-May 1919 Bavarian Soviet Republic declared in Munich; repressed by Free Corps
July 1919 constitution of German Republic written and ratified in Weimar

George Grosz, *Berlin Street* (1931) Museum of Fine Art, Grenoble
Weimar Republic, attacked by Left and Right

Main political groups under Weimar
KPD—revolutionary socialists (Communists)
SPD—parliamentary socialists
“liberal” republicans
nationalists (many of whom advocated the
creation of a constitutional monarchy)
non-parliamentary right (advocated return
to autocratic institutions)

1923 nationalist poster—masked figure
in red stabs German soldier in the back

Grosz, Republican Automatons (1920)
Hyper Inflation in Germany, 1922-1923

How many German Marks make one dollar?

July 1914 4.2
Jan. 1919 8.9
Jan. 1920 64.8
Jan. 1922 191.8
July 1922 493.
Jan. 1923 17,972.
July 1923 353,412.
Sept. 1923 98,860,000.
Nov. 1923 4,200,000,000,000.
(four trillion, two hundred billion)

100-mark note, “over stamped” to be good for 1,000,000 marks

woman using paper money in her fireplace
Lectures do not repeat the textbook or the readings. Material presented in lecture is, generally, one of the following:

- a question (“Why start with Napoleon?”)
- an answer (“image management”)
- evidence, an example that supports the answer (“invasion of Egypt”)
- an explanation of a difficult conceptual term (such as “Orientalism”)

— lecture slides often also contain further information to help you understand the answer or example being presented [for instance, the caption of one of the Napoleon caricatures refers to Revelations, book 13; I cited a bit of that text on the slide so you would have it while looking at the caricature]

— historians often confront source materials (texts and images from the past) that contradict each other [for instance, Napoleon is the savior of Europe or he is the spawn of the devil]; when you review the lecture slides, you should ask yourself whether all the source materials support a single interpretation

— your job is to know the material and to think about it, not to “memorize” it
History 104: Europe from Napoleon to the Present

Concerns raised by the midterm exams:

• copying material from slides without understanding it
• poor or incomplete note taking
• not reading or understanding the Merriman text
• simply summarizing the passages on the exam
• the average (mean) grade was 79 (C+)

— if you find Merriman overwhelming, get yourself a good “Western Civilization” textbook (such as Lynn Hunt, et. al., *The Making of the West* or Frank Kidner, et. al., *Making Europe*) and read it first. Then go through Merriman.

— when commenting on a passage, you need to place it IN CONTEXT and you need to analyze the *specific passage*. This means you must address it in terms that are both “more general” and “more detailed” than the text itself.

— your job is to know the material and to *think* about it, not to “memorize” it
History 104: Europe from Napoleon to the Present

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— “model answers” are posted on the website (from the main “Schedule” page). These are answers we actually received on this midterm, so it is possible to do well!

— participation counts for as much in your overall grade as one midterm (20%).

— if you do better on the next midterm than on the last one, then the first one will count for only 15% of your overall grade and the next one will count for 25%.
History 104: Europe from Napoleon to the Present

How to read for this course (and comment on passages):
Concentrate on the following:

WHAT was happening when a particular source (text, image, data set, etc.) was produced? In other words, what is its “historical context”? Was it produced in peacetime or during war? Where was it produced? For what audience?

WHO is its author? What else did he or she write? How is this significant? (Zola and Dickens both mainly wrote works of fiction. Macaulay was a historian and a Member of Parliament; Mazzini was an international revolutionary.)

WHY was this text or image produced? Authors always have some intention for what they write, though often they have multiple, perhaps competing motives. (For example, in writing a paper, you may intend to get an “A” and you may also have a deadline to meet.) HOW did others respond to this text or image? (This is always one of the most difficult questions to answer, but we can sometimes speculate on likely reactions.) An author’s intention and his or her work’s impact may be very different.
How to read the textbook for this course:

Your job is to understand and think about the material, not to “memorize” it. Your strategy in reading John Merriman’s *A History of Modern Europe* should be similar to the way you approach the primary sources we read. You should concentrate on the following:

**ARGUMENT** In each section of the book, Merriman is offering his interpretation of a particular event or development in history. Because this is a textbook, he is unlikely to write “This chapter argues that…. Instead, he makes his points in a more subtle fashion, by the way he organizes the material and the examples he uses.

**EVIDENCE** In order to support his interpretation, Merriman uses examples. Some of these are very obvious: “For example, the growth of the linen industry in Porto, Portugal stemmed from villagers in the countryside.” Others may be slightly less so: “in Germany, there were twice as many ‘home workers’ as workers employed in factories.” Merriman uses these, and other examples, as evidence to support his contention that the Industrial Revolution was a gradual and uneven process.

**LANGUAGE** “Slowly but surely, factory production transformed the way Europeans worked and lived.”