

ESSAY BOOK REVIEW

WORLDS TOGETHER, WORLDS APART

A History of the Modern World from the Mongol Empire to the Present

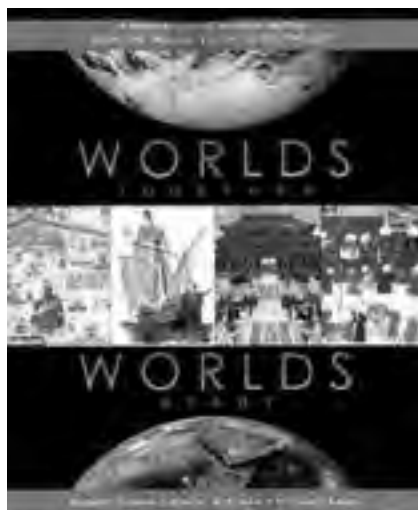
BY ROBERT TIGNOR, JEREMY ADELMAN, STEPHEN ARON, STEPHEN KOTKIN, SUZANNE MARCHAND, GYAN PRAKASH, AND MICHAEL TSIN

NEW YORK AND LONDON: W. W. NORTON, 2002

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By Jonathan Goldstein



In 1997 W. W. Norton and Company engaged Princeton University Africanist Robert Tignor to create a modern world history survey text “with integration and balance” and “written by a team of regional experts” (xxv). In *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart: A History of the Modern World from the Mongol Empire to the Present*

Tignor has produced such a volume. It is very much a Princeton product. Tignor has chaired Princeton’s History Department, all of his authors have taught in that department, one has a Princeton PhD, and the writing of the book was underwritten by Princeton’s 250th Anniversary Fund for undergraduate teaching (xxviii). This Princeton effort compares favorably with Prentice Hall’s Harvard-Yale collaboration under Japanologist Albert M. Craig, now headed for a seventh edition and heretofore the most comprehensive modern world history text among many collaborative and single-authored volumes on the American market.¹

PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATIONS

Like Craig, Tignor includes primary-source documents, global connections feature boxes, maps, and chronologies. To help students take maximum advantage of his book, beyond the study guide that has become standard with many college texts, Tignor offers an “online tutor” that provides free access to research and review materials. The tutor includes quizzes, interactive map exercises, world history excursions, more global connections feature boxes, audio and video clips, and e-Reserves. Surpassing the customary instructor’s manual and test file, the Norton Media Library includes Power Point

slides on CD-ROM with images and maps from the text, plus audio and video clips to help instructors and students integrate multimedia resources into classroom presentations (ISBN 0-393-10446-X/dual platform CD-ROM). As an additional inducement for instructors to adopt this text, Norton will bundle in some important historical monographs from their trade list. Thus, for \$5 per additional volume, students can acquire Jared Diamond’s *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, or David S. Landes’ *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some So Poor*, books that usually retail for \$16.95 each, making \$66.25 an attractive price for both textbook and adjunct reading. Norton’s cornucopia of ancillary materials exceeds what is available with Craig or other modern world history texts.²

GEOGRAPHICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL SCOPE

Tignor and Craig cover the same geographical regions. Tignor does not deal with history prior to the Mongol conquest, only briefly noting that Attila the Hun brought “turmoil to the peoples of the Eurasian land mass” long before the Mongols did (xxvi). Craig’s multi-volume tour-de-force covers pre- and post-Mongol history. Students taking a two-semester ancient/modern world history sequence might find the continuity of Craig preferable to using Tignor for post-Mongol history and a totally different text for the pre-Mongol era.

AN OVERARCHING COMPARATIVE FRAMEWORK

Tignor’s overarching theme is the connectiveness between “the four major cultural areas of Eurasia”: Christendom, the Islamic world, non-Islamic India, and China and its tributaries and borderlands, plus the extension of those connections to Africa and the Americas (12). Those interactions were mainly economic and often Sinocentric.

Tignor reminds us of the interplay between the four regions almost as if we were watching a split-screen television. He begins with the near-simultaneous travels of the Venetian Marco Polo (1254–1324) and the Arab Ibn Battuta (1304–69), both of whom were drawn to China because it was “known far and wide as a land of wealth and learning”(26). He traces the collapse of the Mongol empire and sees the spread of the Black Death through Eurasia as an important Mongol legacy, especially in China (43–47). China’s Ming Dynasty built on the ruins of the Mongol empire. The 1405–33 voyages of Admiral Zheng He extended Chinese trade and influence to West Asia and East Africa and created a maritime trade network stretching from Japan to Java to Zanzibar.

China’s wealth increased as a result of the 1519 voyage of Ferdinand Magellan, “the first true world traveler.” Magellan’s transoceanic passages on behalf of Spain exceeded those of Polo and Battuta and economically linked Eurasia and Africa with the Americas (79). Captain James Cook’s (1728–79) scientific/colonizing voyages further promoted transpacific trade (164). The wealth that originated in South American mines “pumped so much silver into the networks of European commerce that it transformed Europe’s relationship to all of its trading partners, especially those in China and India,” as Europeans and Americans paid hard cash for Chinese goods (104). Eighteenth century China, with its agricultural and manufacturing capabilities, became the final repository for much of the world’s silver. Tignor reminds us that “in a multicentered

world . . . Europe was a poor cousin” (115–6). An illustration of a Spanish milled dollar might have been helpful at this point.

Tignor then delineates how the late Ming and early Qing dynasties became hobbled by internal mismanagement and attacks from Japanese and indigenous Chinese pirates (*wokou*). But even when imperial leadership was weak, a robust internal market kept China economically and culturally vibrant (144, 171).

Tignor then discusses how the scientific and industrial revolutions enabled Europe and the United States to destabilize if not demolish non-Western powers. “European traders, who previously thought of Africa only as a source of human captives, now wanted Africans to supply Europe with raw materials and for them to purchase European materials” (214). Superior military technology enabled Britain to force an opium trade onto China. China saw its trade surplus with Europe spin into a deficit by the first half of the nineteenth century (234, 246).³

Tignor provides a nuanced discussion of imperialism in late nineteenth and early twentieth century China. He quotes Sun Yat-sen’s views on race, ideas embraced by Sun’s National People’s Party (Guomintang), and by the Chinese Communist Party. Sun believed “that there should only be one Chinese race . . . the existence of the different groups in China was simply the result of incomplete assimilation, a problem that the modern nation, having replaced an outmoded imperial dynasty, now had to confront” (388). The prevalence of Sun’s views remain an explosive issue in contemporary China, where many Tibetans, Muslims, and Taiwanese argue that they are subjected to foreign rule much as the Han Chinese majority once was. This specific aspect of Sun’s thought and its relevance in contemporary China goes unmentioned in the world history texts of Bentley, Craig, and Stavrianos.

Tignor’s discussion of imperialism is less nuanced when he invokes “third world” typology to explain post-World War Two national realignment. According to this scheme, a “first bloc” of nations was led by the US and a “second” by the USSR. A “third bloc” consisted of “formerly colonized and semi-colonized people” caught between the other two (386). This typology becomes problematical when one attempts to categorize non-aligned, formerly-colonized European nations like Finland, as well as renegade socialist states like Albania, Romania, and Yugoslavia. How does this formula apply to China’s wars with the USSR and Vietnam; Vietnam’s war with Cambodia; India’s wars with Pakistan; and numerous inter-African and inter-Arab squabbles? Tignor concedes that “Third World nations, having shrugged off the colonial yoke, now confronted a new series of ‘neo-colonial’ problems” (415). He might also have cited political scientist David Kimche’s caveat that “there was little to show for any Afro-Asian, or even Asian solidarity . . . There was very little agreement on any subject.”⁴

Tignor concludes his worldwide comparisons with the unifying themes of global finance, migration, and tourism (433–53). In the regions where Tignor’s team are expert, the results are impressive, especially in their handling of African, Chinese, and East Indian issues and events. In areas where his team does not have regional expertise, coverage is less comprehensive. A case in point is his rendition of modern Jewish history and especially the history of modern Israel. The Holocaust, a topic required to be taught in many public schools, does not appear in his index. Nor does the increasingly

widely used Hebrew synonym “Shoah.” By contrast, the Holocaust is discussed and indexed in Bentley, Craig, and Stavrianos.⁵ “Anti-Semitism” and “pogroms,” two other seminal concepts in modern Jewish history, go undefined in Tignor (343, 367). Perhaps most seriously, in a book which tries to redress Eurocentrism, Tignor speaks of “a group of European Jews, known as Zionists” (406). He ignores the contributions to Zionism of such non-European Jews as N. E. B. Ezra of Shanghai, Menasseh Meyer of Singapore, and Hayyim Yosef of Baghdad, and of such non-Jews as Orde Wingate, Jan Smuts, the Makuya sect of Japan, and the Christadelphians. Although he repeatedly refers to a small Jewish presence in India, he fails to cite a larger and more significant Jewish presence in Palestine for over two millennia in Jerusalem, Tiberias, Safad, and Hebron (6, 21, 83). He does not mention that until the recent mass migration of Jews from the former Soviet Union, a majority of Israelis originated in lands between Morocco and India, not from the continent of Europe. It is unfortunate that Tignor does not include these details, which exemplify the global connectedness he aims to explore and which bolster his central thesis.

Other factual errors are rare. He cites an 1848 uprising in “Czechoslovakia,” an entity created only after World War One (257). He refers to East Indians working “in South African mines” (285). East Indians certainly worked in Natal sugar plantations and as waiters, barbers, and merchants throughout southern Africa, but few if any actually toiled in the mines.⁶ These matters can easily be addressed in a second edition. Tignor, his Princeton colleagues, and W. W. Norton can be congratulated for creating a modern world history text with a dynamic, non-Eurocentric focus and with more resources for college students than any comparable volume on the American market. ■

NOTES

1. Albert M. Craig, William A. Graham, Donald Kagan, Steven Ozment, and Frank M. Turner, *The Heritage of World Civilizations*, 6th ed. (Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003). Craig’s text is available in six formats. The format most comparable to Tignor’s is *Volume Two: Since 1500*. Craig’s effort followed that of John McKay, Bennet Hill, and John Buckler, who in 1984 enlarged their *History of Western Society* (1979, 1983) into *A History of World Societies* (Houghton Mifflin, 1984, 6th ed., 2004 with Patricia Ebrey). Modern world history texts less expansive than Tignor, Craig, or McKay include Jerry H. Bentley and Herbert F. Ziegler’s *Traditions and Encounters* (McGraw-Hill, 2000, a third edition is forthcoming in 2006); Richard Bulliet et al.’s *The Earth and Its Peoples, Volume Two: Since 1500*, 3rd ed. (Houghton Mifflin, 2005); Pamela Crossley et al.’s *Global Society: The World Since 1900* (Houghton Mifflin, 2004); William J. Duiker and Jackson J. Spielvogel’s *World History, Volume Two: Since 1500*, 3rd ed. (Wadsworth, 2001); Anthony Esler’s *The Human Venture*, 5th ed. (Pearson, 2004); Carter Findley and John Rothney’s *The Twentieth-Century World*, 5th ed. (Houghton Mifflin, 2002); Mark Kishlansky et al.’s *Societies and Cultures in World History* (Addison-Wesley, 1997, soon to go out of print); William H. McNeill’s *A History of the Human Community, Volume Two: 1500 to the Present*, 5th ed. (Prentice Hall, 1997); R. R. Palmer et al.’s *History of the Modern World*, 9th ed. (Knopf, 2002); J. M. Roberts’s *New History of the World*, 4th ed. (Oxford, 2003); Howard Spodek’s *The World’s History*, 3rd ed. (Prentice Hall, 2006); and Jiu-Hwa Upshur et al.’s *World History*, 4th ed. (Wadsworth, 2002).

Kevin Reilly’s eminently readable *The West and the World* is out of print. I have found Leften Stavrianos’ *Global History*, 7th ed. (Prentice-Hall, 1999), which pioneered the field in 1970, excellent for honors students but not for average state university freshmen. There are also a wide variety of modern world history sourcebooks and reference books, including Alfred J. Andrea and James H. Overfield’s *The Human Record*, 5th ed. (Houghton Mifflin, 2005); Oliver A. Johnson and James L. Halverson’s *Sources of World Civilization*, 3rd ed. (Pearson, 2004); Mark

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2005 SUMMER SESSION OF ASIAN STUDIES Sophia University, Tokyo

Sophia University's 45th Summer Session of Asian Studies will take place from July 25 to August 17, 2005. Among the courses to be offered are: Basic Japanese, History of Edo and Tokyo, Japanese Theater, Contemporary Japanese Economy, Contemporary Japanese Politics, Japanese Business and Management, Japanese Literature and the City, Survey of Japanese Art, Contemporary Chinese Society, Contemporary Japanese Society, and Comparative Asian Industrial Systems.

The Summer Session also provides opportunities for students to attend Noh and Kabuki performances, visit the headquarters of a new religion, participate in the arts of the tea ceremony and flower arrangement, visit some of Tokyo's major museums, and attend special lectures by prominent experts on Japan. All of Tokyo is also available for study and exploration.

As much as possible, courses are conducted in such a way as to allow students to relate their studies to what it is possible to see and do in Tokyo. Tuition for six credits is 140,000 yen. For further information, contact:

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Kishlansky's *Sources in World History*, 3rd ed. (Thomson Learning, 2005); Richard Lim et al.'s *The West in the Wider World: From Early Modernity to the Present* (Bedford/St. Martins, 2003); Kevin Reilly's *Worlds of History: A Comparative Reader, Volume Two: Since 1400*, 2nd ed. (Bedford, 2004); Philip F. Riley et al.'s *The Global Experience: Readings in World History*, 4th ed. (Pearson, 2002); Perry M. Rogers' *Aspects of World Civilization: Problems and Sources* (Pearson, 2003); and Peter N. Steans' *The Encyclopedia of World History*, 6th ed. (Houghton Mifflin, 2001); the 2002 seventh edition of McGraw-Hill Dushkin's *World History, Volume Two: 1500 to the Present*.

2. Accessories to Tignor's main text include: (1) Michael G. Murdock, *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart Study Guide*. (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2002), ISBN 0-393-07838-9. \$16.88; (2) Jonathan Lee, *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart Instructors Manual and Test Item File*. (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2002), viii plus 151 pp. Paperback first ed.: ISBN 0-393-97837-0; computerized test item file on CD-ROM disk: ISBN 0-393-10448-6; (3) Jonathan Lee, *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart Online Tutor*: www.wwnorton.com/worlds; and (4) *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart Map Transparencies*. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003) 58 transparencies. ISBN 0-393-10480-X.
3. Sinologist John Fairbank described the opium trade from India to China as "the longest-continued systematic international crime of modern times." John K. Fairbank, *China Watch*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), 13.
4. David Kimche, *The Afro-Asian Movement*. (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1973), 67, 73.
5. Bentley, *Traditions and Encounters, Volume Two: From 1500 to the Present*, 960-63; Craig, *Heritage of World Civilizations, Volume Two: Since 1500*, 917-20; Stavrianos, 599.
6. On East Indian workers in South Africa, see Mohandas Gandhi, *An Autobiography*. (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1957), *Passim*; Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 287-88.

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