CONTENTS

Preface vii
About the Authors ix

1 The Importance of Theory in History 1
Empiricism or Theory: Does It Have to Be an “either/or”? 1
Case Study: The History of Slavery 3
Text Goals and Chapter Organization 5
1. Introducing Historical Materialism (Chapters 3–6) 5
2. Cultural Approaches to History (Chapters 7–10) 6
Your Reservoir of Knowledge—Just the Tip of the Iceberg 6
Endnotes 7

2 Professionalization of History: Time and Science in the Historical Method 8
History from the Ancient World to the Enlightenment 8
From Enlightenment to Progressive History (18th–19th Centuries) 11
The Move to Objectivity, Professionalism, and Critiques of Progressive Histories 14
Endnotes 16

3 Marxist History 17
Marxist and Materialist Philosophy in Historical Context 19
The Influence of Marx and Engels on Twentieth-Century Historical Writing 23
Conclusion 25
Thinking Like a Historian 26
Primary Source: Jack Bryant, “Sunny Cal” 26
Secondary Source: Christopher Hill, “John Bunyan and His Publics” 27
Endnotes 31

4 The Annales School 33
The First Generation—Bloch, Febvre, and “Histoire Totale” 34
The Second Generation—Fernand Braudel and the Waves of Time 35
The Third Generation—Le Roy Ladurie and Goubert: Making the Annales French 37
The Fourth Generation—Roger Chartier and the Rediscovery of Mentalités 38
Conclusion 40
Thinking Like a Historian 40
Primary Source: Chart: “Share of World GDP, 1700–1890” 41
Secondary Source: Fernand Braudel, “Towards a Serial History: Seville and the Atlantic, 1504–1650” 41
Endnotes 48

5 The Transformation of Marxism—The New Left and Social History 50
The British New Left 51
The American New Left 53
Western-European Marxism 55
The Global New Left—Dependency Theory and World-Systems Theory 57
The Impact of the New Lefts: Social History 58
Conclusion 59
Thinking Like a Historian 59
Primary Source: “Mrs. Walter Pinkus”: Name and Address of Informant Mrs Walter Pinkus, 2710–8 60
Endnotes 65

6 Environmental History 68
Natural History Through the Frontier Thesis and the Longue Durée: Roots of Environmental History 69
Mak	in

the decision to write yet another textbook on twentieth-century historiography when there are already so many on the market may seem puzzling to some readers. This text was actually a long time in the making, emerging organically from our teaching styles and the nature of the core curriculum program at California State University, Long Beach. Our experiences in leading undergraduate seminars in Theory and History convinced us of the value of such a course. Our students consistently emerge better prepared to read secondary works more critically and to consider more complex modes of interpreting primary documents. At the same time, we were frustrated by our inability to find a text that seemed suitable to the class. Many were pitched too high, appropriate for faculty or advanced graduate students, but would lose our bright undergrads. Those tailored more for undergraduates sometimes seemed to sacrifice substance in the name of readability. We each tried several texts in our classes but none quite hit the nail on the head for us in terms of providing the kinds of interconnectivity between activism, philosophy, and the construction of meaningful stories about the past. So, after several years of our office and asked ourselves, “why not write our own book?” So we approached the then editor, Charles Cavaliere, about the project who very enthusiastically supported our book proposal and the beginning stages of writing. Charles has since left Pearson, but we thank him for his early support of this project. Since then, we have since been blessed with three helpful editors: Rob de George, Ashley Dodge, and Nicole Suddeth, all of whom supported this project whenever we found our energy waning.

In terms of organization, we decided simply to model the text after our own syllabi, following the trajectory of history writing in the West from professionalization in the late nineteenth century through the end of the twentieth century. We also wanted to make this book a reader and have therefore included where possible works that have had demonstrated success in our classrooms or were chosen specifically to provide a broader understanding of particular theories. Another aspect to this reader was the conscious decision to include primary as well as secondary sources. We approached the task of composing this book with the idea that we were not just teaching theory but preparing young historians for their encounters with primary documents. We knew other historiography readers did not attempt to have students role play particular theoretical positions to give them a sense of the worldview of the historians they read about in the text. This book does both.

As with all books, this one has benefited from the direct and indirect help of students, colleagues, and friends. From our graduate-school seminars in which we debated particular approaches, to our own courses, we owe debts of gratitude. Sayegh’s work with scholars Jacques Derrida, Fredric Jameson, Mark Poster, Lawrence E. Klein, Kenneth Pomeranz, and Robert Moeller not only helped her to better conceptualize her own point of view, but also to think about how she might teach this material to her own students. For Altice, the list of scholars who have shaped his understanding of history and the attempt to apply theory is equally long: Joyce Appleby, Steve Aron, Barbara Loomis, Paul Longmore, Ellen Dubois, and Henry Yu all contributed, sometimes in ways they may not even realize.

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