

but also to provide their employers with information about what was going on. Clerks and doorkeepers of the House of Commons were hired to get information and to distribute propaganda.

With the increasing power of the state, therefore, there was a vast increase in the number of people who were engaged in economically unproductive work and whom, therefore, the economically productive workers had to support. That, as Brewer might have pointed out more explicitly, obviously left less of their own production for themselves.

In this intriguingly contemporary history, John Brewer traces the increasing power of—and the increasing danger from—a state that was more concerned with wealth and power than with rights. While the book is no doubt too specialized for any but the most advanced undergraduates, it should be very useful to graduate students with good backgrounds and to teachers on the high-school level and above.

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Ann Hughes. *The Causes of the English Civil War. British History in Perspective.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991. Pp. vii, 211. \$39.95.

Paul Seaward. *The Restoration, 1660-1688. British History in Perspective.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991. Pp. vii, 173. \$45.00.

Jeremy Black. *Robert Walpole and the Nature of Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England. British History in Perspective.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990. Pp. viii, 147. \$39.95.

The proliferation of research and writings on British history over the past twenty-five years or so has increased the demand for works that help historians as well as students keep up with the latest scholarship and debates. The *British History in Perspective* series, edited by Jeremy Black of Durham University, offers concise books on general subjects that combine surveys of the latest literature with the perspectives gained from the author's research in the field. In spite of their similarities in theme and structure, each of the three titles under review presents a different approach to its subject and consequently would appeal to different audiences.

Ann Hughes, a lecturer at Manchester University, begins her analysis of the fierce debates over the causes of the English Civil War by pointing out how current politics have influenced interpretations. Hughes, identifying herself with what has been "sometimes pretentiously described as 'post-revisionism,'" guides us through the battlefield of Whigs, Marxists, and Revisionists with skill and tact. She presents conflicting points of view in enough detail to allow readers to make up their own minds while still putting forward her own interpretation. Far from wanting to close the case, she hopes that her book will arouse further controversy.

The first chapter explores the theories explaining the so-called functional breakdown of government: the monarchy's unsuccessful attempts to repair the structural defects in its financial and administrative systems. Hughes goes on to consider whether England fit the "general crisis of the seventeenth-century Europe" model and finds that the degree of centralization and of local elite participation in government sets England apart. Treating the Civil War as a British problem makes more sense to her since it was the animosities produced by Charles I's policies for Scotland and Ireland that sparked rebellion.

The second and third chapters deal with the question of whether society and politics were polarized or hierarchical and deferential. Historians have argued over the relative significance of wealth, religion, culture, and status in producing the cleavages leading to civil war. Hughes points out that the distinguishing characteristics of the different social groups were often

obscure since religious and cultural differences as well as local interests cut across divisions in the social hierarchy.

Hughes concludes that the suspicions that Puritanism and Arminianism generated further poisoned the atmosphere of mistrust among the landed elite, the rising middling orders, and the poor. These elements, however, were not enough to precipitate civil war. Hughes spends her last chapter arguing that it was the regal style and policies of Charles I that reinforced the worst possible fears of all elements of society and allowed parliamentarians to justify the war as defensive.

Since the Restoration is not the same historical minefield as the Civil War, Paul Seaward does not offer the same sort of historiographical critique Hughes presents. Instead, he draws from the latest scholarship to bring into focus the main themes of late seventeenth-century politics. Like Hughes's book, *The Restoration, 1660-1688* seeks to explain England's instability. Seaward, now a clerk in the House of Commons, unravels the complex tangle of competing ideologies and groups. His four main chapters each deal with an area of conflict: political power, religion, foreign policy, and opposition to James's accession.

The problems that had plagued Charles I remained unresolved during the reigns of his sons, Charles II and James II. In spite of the jubilation accompanying Charles II's restoration to the throne, mistrust had not evaporated. Since the Convention Parliament had failed to redefine the power of the crown in more constitutional terms to head off absolutism, Charles II and the different groups in the ruling elite were left in an uneasy alliance. Religious divisions continued to fan the flames of suspicion. Banned during the Interregnum, the Church of England had survived underground and now emerged as the symbol of past harmony, stability, and lawfulness. Nonetheless, countless different sects that had emerged during the Interregnum also survived. Meanwhile, the King seemed to be tainted with popery; he certainly distrusted Presbyterians and appeared patently insincere in his support of the Church of England.

In this context it is easier to understand why Charles II's attempts to participate in European power politics were so disastrous. Seaward details how the king became financially dependent on Louis XIV while England became increasingly anti-French. By the 1680s English terror of Louis XIV's apparent plan to spread popery and absolutism caused James's Catholicism to seem a real threat. Seaward demonstrates that whatever James II's intentions, his insensitivity to England's social, political, legal, and religious institutions as well as to his people's long-held beliefs and growing fears brought his downfall.

Seaward concludes that political stability depends on the ability of different groups to work out their disputes through established channels as well as their willingness to trust one another. Restoration England was willing to cooperate but not to trust. The scars of civil war ran too deep.

In *Robert Walpole and the Nature of Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England*, it is the presence of political stability that requires explanation. Jeremy Black quotes H. T. Dickinson's observation that "political stability did not rest simply on the absence of strife, tension and disputes. It was also the product of a political system that was flexible enough to contain the competing demands of different interest and rival pressure groups." Strife certainly still remained. Jacobitism, the support of James II and his heirs, divided the Tory party and even led to an uprising in 1745. Walpole's Whig party was far from united; divisions over foreign policy finally brought him down. Historians, following contemporary assessments of Walpole have stressed corruption in explaining the longevity of his ministry. Black argues that it was Walpole's adept management of politics, finance, and domestic policy, as well as his control of patronage, that kept him in power from 1721 to 1742.

After describing Walpole's parliamentary career, Black assesses how Walpole met the challenges placed before him. We see him managing the national debt, his supporters, his opponents, and George I and II, only to have his career become a casualty of the War of

Jenkins' Ear. The third chapter points out Walpole's contribution to developing constitutional monarchy: teaching the first two Georges to work with parliament instead of against it. Black also describes Walpole's management of public opinion in the press, election contests, and political, religious, and commercial extra-parliamentary pressure groups.

In the next chapter Black takes issue with a number of historians on political party. He argues that Whig and Tory are meaningful terms if one considers the whole picture: court, parliament, and popular politics. He claims that the shift in party organization came in mid-century with the fall of Jacobitism and the accession of George III. In the fifth chapter, Black emphasizes the importance of the British dimension of political stability: the eradication of Jacobitism and some of the sectarian interests in Scotland and Ireland and the growing cultural hegemony of England.

Specialists in the field will find the arguments of Hughes and Black of interest. The books by Hughes and Seaward would be helpful to instructors preparing lectures on seventeenth-century Britain. The annotated bibliographies that these latter two provide would be useful for instructors constructing new syllabi as well as graduate students embarking on research. Both books could be assigned to upper-level students to supplement a basic textbook on the period. *The Restoration 1660-1688* would make good reading in a course on early modern Britain, while *The Causes of the English Civil War* might be more suitable for an historiography course if students had sufficient background in British history.

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Gale Stokes, ed. *From Stalinism to Pluralism: A Documentary History of Eastern Europe since 1945*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. Pp. xi, 267. Cloth, \$35.00; Paper, \$12.95.

This book was created from documents Professor Stokes gathered to assist his students in understanding what had happened in the autumn of 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall and to help students realize that those events had not occurred spontaneously or in a vacuum. The volume should prove useful to both students and teachers, since many concepts of communism and Stalinism are difficult to understand. While to call the book timeless would be an exaggeration, Professor Stokes has provided a book that should continue to have relevance as events continue to unfold in the Soviet world. Though the volume deals only with the Soviet Bloc in Eastern Europe, countries that were sovereign states until Stalin annexed them after World War II, the documents help to show that what has been happening in those countries has application to help explain more recent events in the Soviet Union.

Many experts have spent years trying to unravel the enigma of Stalin's mind with varying degrees of success. For the high school or college student, Stalin can seem beyond comprehension. The first section of the book attempts to help the student gain some understanding of Stalin and his methods. Of particular interest in this section are the documents describing the purge trials, which seem to be difficult for students to understand.

Section one also contains the Yalta agreement, a document that in recent years has taken a real beating for "giving" Eastern Europe to Stalin. Giving the student access to the entire document, as well as Charles E. Bohlen's comments on both the Yalta and Teheran Conferences, should help the student gain a better understanding of what really took place.

From the Western standpoint, communism was doomed to failure, but for the average person, in the West, there seemed to be little to support that view. Section two gives evidence this view was also held by some in Eastern Europe. Of particular interest in this section are the essays on the Hungarian Revolt, the Prague Spring, and the New Class. The essay on the New