

choices they think will produce the best visual narrative, something that Woloch himself will have to readily concede, because that is what historians do in their own written texts and monographs.

Finally, documentaries such as *Napoleon* are still tied to some boring, dry narrative conventions. For instance, Grubin lifted directly from Sergei Bondarchuk's *Waterloo* (1970) the riveting, clicking boots image as Marshal Ney and the other Marshals of France arrive at Fontainebleau to tell Napoleon in no uncertain terms that he must abdicate. Indeed, the entire story of Napoleon's return from Elba, the Hundred Days, and the Battle of Waterloo itself was done much more dramatically (more expensively also), if sometimes histrionically, by Rod Steiger as Napoleon in a 1970 fiction film. In contrast, Napoleon's return gets a rather staid presentation in the documentary, something not unimportant to an MTV generation of high school and college students to whom history teachers will certainly direct this very useful and evocative, if somewhat skewed, and not particularly historically new or revisionist, account of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Cameron University

Richard A. Voeltz

**John Davis.** *A History of Britain, 1885-1939.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. Pp. x, 241. Cloth, \$59.95; ISBN 0-312-22033-2. Paper, \$19.95; ISBN 0-312-22034-0.

**Martin Pugh.** *Britain Since 1789: A Concise History.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. Pp. x, 244. Cloth, \$45.00; ISBN 0-312-22358-7. Paper, \$18.95; ISBN 0-312-22359-5.

These admirable surveys are written by scholars who have previously made singular contributions to the monographic literature of modern British history. Martin Pugh, Professor of Modern History at the University of Newcastle, is the author of works on David Lloyd George, electoral politics of the late nineteenth and twentieth century, and twentieth-century women's history. The Oxford historian John Davis has written heretofore on the politics of metropolitan London. Each is familiar with the major revisionist interpretations of modern British studies and incorporates recent monographic research into their respective works. Pugh is perhaps the more successful in integrating work in social history into his compact narrative, Davis more helpful in explaining the complicated twists and turns of economic and fiscal policies that bedeviled twentieth-century British governments. Nonetheless, each author assumes the centrality of politics and demonstrates its indispensability to narrative history.

Pugh's succinct overview is all the more useful for having originated in response to an Italian scholar's proposal for an introductory volume on modern British history for Italian students. Hence, the customary assumptions made by British scholars about

the reader's knowledge of the subject are mercifully avoided. One incidental result is an excellent beginning survey for American undergraduates as well as a handy up-to-date reference for advanced students and a quick refresher for teachers. While politics predominates, the study is hardly confined to the "high politics" of an older historical school. Pugh begins with a clear discussion of the economy, social structure, and political system of eighteenth-century Britain. His chapter on the "Industrial Revolution" admirably summarizes differing interpretations, the author retaining the conventional phrase for the event while stressing the current consensus on more gradual economic growth over a longer period of time, and the prolonged coexistence of an older traditional society with the newer industrialized one. The "condition of England" question and the accompanying topics of the New Poor Law, Chartism, and free trade are effectively compressed, as are discussions of the Victorian idea of progress bolstered by the Pax Britannica. Pugh deftly analyzes the complicated party system as it developed in later Victorian Britain and the peaceful emergence of mass democracy. In the course of his judicious treatment, he manages to address, if not fully answer, some basic questions that have long intrigued historians of modern Britain: How did the country manage to avoid the violent revolutions that plagued the European continent in the nineteenth century? What does the historian mean by the decline of "liberal England"? How can one account for Britain's on-again-off-again relationship with Europe in recent decades? Ironically, the post World War I period, about which Pugh has written extensively elsewhere, is perhaps the least satisfying section of the book, principally because the complicated economic adjustments from the gold standard to Keynesianism to the monetarism of the Thatcher government require a more detailed explanation than space allows. Pugh excels in his treatment of foreign policy, giving short shrift to recent detractors of Winston Churchill and apologists for the failed policy of appeasement. The episode of decolonization is adequately discussed as is the emergence of the twentieth-century "welfare state" with the post-war Labour government in 1945. The author's treatment of the last quarter-century necessarily lacks the broad historical perspective that he brings to his discussion through the 1960s. Like many academics, Pugh finds little if any redeeming value in the long tenure of Margaret Thatcher, who is characterized as an exceedingly lucky politician whose prolonged government, nonetheless, capped the Conservative Party's twentieth-century dominance.

Davis, on the other hand, distinguishes between the Conservative Party and the "conservative state" that came to prevail in the half-century from the first unsuccessful effort to enact Home Rule for Ireland until the outbreak of the second World War. The liberal values of free trade internationalism and splendid isolation were to give way to a Britain absorbed with empire, nationalism, and protectionism. Davis skillfully discusses the breakdown of the Liberal Party, the Unionist ascendancy of the late nineteenth century, and the growing linkage of imperialism with social reform among such prominent politicians as Joseph Chamberlain. He is particularly effective in

locating the Irish question within the imperial context and in examining its effects on party politics. Davis also excels in analyzing the impact on national party politics of continued political decentralization at the constituency level in such legislation as the County Councils Act of 1888. His treatment of the New Liberalism in the early twentieth century is superb, and he is able to devote attention as well to such significant if elusive movements as National Efficiency. World War I is, of course, the great divide that produced an enhanced electorate and a far different society, whose concerns about unemployment and security would accelerate the growth of the state. The reader's patience is sometimes tested, but ultimately rewarded, by Davis's careful examination of the Conservative and Labor governments' economic policies of the 1920s and the Tory-dominated National Government presided over by Ramsay MacDonald. The intricate three-party politics of the twenties, Pugh argues, was unable to sustain the pre-war mix of free trade and welfare reform, while the post-1929 slump provided conditions favorable for the Chamberlainite protectionism proposed three decades earlier. Thus, "a Tory statism" triumphed. Ironically, as Davis persuasively argues, the same difficult conditions spawned the expansionism of totalitarian states on the continent that was immune to "the unedifying policy" so naively persisted in by Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain. "The failure of appeasement exacerbated the danger of war," Davis concludes. And that war would in turn result in the end of the "Conservative state" that had been constructed in the preceding half-century.

Davis's is a stimulating book for undergraduates and advanced graduates and provides a rich store of material for teachers of modern British history. Pugh's is the broader and more general introduction, but each volume is highly recommended. Davis provides an especially useful bibliography.

University of Memphis

Abraham D. Kriegel

**Frank McDonough.** *Hitler and Nazi Germany*. New York and Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Pp. vii, 152. Paper, \$11.95; ISBN 0-521-59502-9.

**Peter Neville.** *The Holocaust*. New York and Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Pp. vii, 103. Paper, \$11.95; ISBN 0-521-59501-0.

The National Socialist period in Germany (1933-45) is of central importance to any understanding of modern Germany—indeed, to twentieth-century Western and world history as a whole. The complex and diverse economic, social, and political aspects of these twelve years have occupied historians for decades and no doubt will continue to do so. Nevertheless, despite the central importance of the Nazi experience, until now instructors and undergraduate students of the period have had very few comprehensive, yet brief, one-volume studies that are appropriate for survey-level