

Hugh Tulloch. *The Debate on the American Civil War Era*. Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1999. Pp. 255. Paper, \$29.95; ISBN 0-7190-4938-5.

While one may not find much new in the way of interpretation in Hugh Tulloch's collection of historiographical essays, it is nonetheless a useful and valuable work. Many of the interpretive elements of the historiography that he presents have been seen before, but two factors set this work apart. First, Tulloch aspires to create a comprehensive examination of the major interpretations of the era from antebellum America to Reconstruction, and he focuses the discussion on the centrality of what he calls the "attempt to adjust the racial question in America to conform to the principle of the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal."

Keeping the centrality of race in mind, Tulloch breaks the historiographical discussion into five chapters dealing, in order, with slavery, abolitionism, the causes of the Civil War, the war itself, and Reconstruction. He begins the work with an introduction and a chapter on the "American historical profession," which nicely prepares the reader for the following chapters, by centering the discussion on race and clearly linking the historiography to contemporary trends from the 1860s through the 1990s. Tulloch provides a good accounting of social trends and their impact on historians and their interpretation of the past. On the whole, he paints a picture of progression in the American historical profession from "collusion" in writing a "false history" that eliminated African Americans from a meaningful role in shaping American history, to "atonement" through the shift in historical writing on the period, particularly after the mid-twentieth century.

On the whole, this is a balanced account that is as much a study in how contemporary events affect the writing of history as it is a study of the era itself. Tulloch demonstrates a solid knowledge of the literature in this area, and he provides endnotes and a selective bibliography at the end of each chapter. Tulloch is not shy about engaging the interpretations of the various historians he discusses, and he keeps the narrative focused on the theme of the "racial question." As a whole, the work comes together well in support of his thesis. The writing style is engaging and is presented at a level appropriate for both undergraduate and graduate students.

There are certainly areas with which some will take issue, particularly in the amount of coverage Tulloch gives to various works in each of his essays. For example, some of the classic names that have become associated with the history of this era, such as U.B. Phillips, Charles Beard, and William Dunning, receive a considerable amount of coverage, while more recent works receive less rigorous attention.

What is most useful about this book is the fact that it does provide a comprehensive discussion of the historical trends in each of the above-mentioned areas in one volume. It would serve as a good resource for upper-level history courses that deal with the antebellum and Civil War eras, and would be particularly useful for classes at the undergraduate or graduate level that focus on historiography. The book

is versatile in that individual chapters can be used for a particular focus area, such as slavery. Tulloch's style is lively enough to encourage student discussion of the key issues raised in this work.

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**Gerald L. Sittser.** *A Cautious Patriotism: The American Churches and the Second World War.* Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1997. Pp. x, 317. Cloth, \$39.95; ISBN 0-8078-2333-3.

Many histories mention briefly the role of churches in feeding the pacifistic isolationism of Americans as World War II first spread across Europe. In *A Cautious Patriotism*, Gerald Sittser presents us with the first comprehensive overview of the American churches' reactions and responses to World War II from the late 1930s to 1945. Using religious periodicals and denominational meeting minutes as his main primary sources, he surveys the thoughts and actions of Christian churches as wide ranging as fundamentalists and liberals, Protestants and Catholics, pacifists and internationalists. He concludes that with few exceptions the churches approached World War II with "a cautious patriotism." By this he means that the churches resisted transforming it into a "holy war." Rather they worked consciously to ensure that they were not swept up by patriotic fever even as they did all they could to serve the Allied cause. The churches' restraint after Pearl Harbor is surprising given the fact that the Second World War was labeled a "good war" by many, with a clear moral mission to defeat oppressive totalitarian foes. But Sittser explains the churches' cautious patriotism by emphasizing the disillusionment, naiveté, and shame that most churches felt after having fed the jingoism surrounding World War I. During World War II, the churches sought to synthesize their Christian ideals of peace and justice with a newly cultivated understanding of political realism. They supported the nation in its noble and necessary fight, yet condemned fueling hatred of the enemy, and emphasized primary loyalty to God and church which transcended national interests. They worked devotedly to fulfill their "priestly" roles through meeting the needs of servicemen and their families in multifarious ways (which Sittser describes thoroughly), yet also exercised their "prophetic" voices by criticizing the nation when necessary, such as the violation of civil liberties during the war and bombing civilians. Sittser is careful to note the differences between Christian churches in World War II as they wrestled with its meaning for America. But he also proves his thesis convincingly, that, in spite of diverging theologies, the majority of churches approached this war with a measured ambivalence that sought to keep the church politically independent, publicly influential, and loyal first to their spiritual missions. Sittser admires the careful balance that the churches struck and recommends it as a model. He also suggests that the work of the churches during World War II helped influence the post-war era in several ways,