

(possible, eventual) insanity relate to the acceptability of his ideas to other Germans, and if Nazis are just "crazy," then how does this affect the issue of culpability? The self-congratulatory tone of the excerpt from Hitler's "Last Political Testament" seems trivial when contrasted with other possible inclusions, such as his bitter "sunset" imprecations at the German people for ailing in their historic mission under Nazi leadership. The other documents are both well chosen and introduced by a paragraph of insightful analysis. An essay at the start of the book gives an overview of Hitler's rise to power and World War II in Europe; at the back of the book one also finds a bibliography, a chronology, and three pages of useful discussion questions for students.

The Stalcup book is well edited; unfortunately, the editing of the Nicholls book leaves something to be desired. The number of misspellings and other small errors, while not overwhelming, is puzzling, considering that this book is in its fourth edition. More troubling is the fact that we are told that the Nazis received nearly 44% of the vote in Reichstag elections on 5 April 1933, two weeks after the Enabling Act. This is a major error. The elections were on 5 March, and the correct date is actually given in the Chronology at the back of the book.

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Ian S. Wood. *Churchill*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. Pp. xii, 209. Cloth, \$49.95; ISBN 0-312-23061-3. Paper, \$19.95; ISBN 0-312-23062-1.

This new title in the British History in Perspective series by Ian S. Wood, Lecturer in History at Napier University in Edinburgh, is not a conventional biography of Churchill—adding another seemed superfluous to the author—but rather a thematic study of the major and sometimes overlapping issues in the long and exceptional career of Winston Churchill. After a short preface in which Churchill's political career is divided into three phases—1900–1915, 1915–1939, and 1939–1955—the author investigates Churchill's career through nine themes that make up the nine chapters of the book. Among the themes are "Churchill the Warrior," "National Leader, 1940–1495," and "Churchill, Party Politics and Social Policy." Wood also focuses on Churchill's relationship with the United States, the Soviet Union, Europe, Ireland, and the British Empire, as well as his role in the appeasement policies of the 1930s.

Each of the nine chapters reassesses the historical literature that bears on the theme under consideration, including the more recent revisionist literature of authors such as John Charmley and Clive Ponting. One of the author's strengths is always weighing critical events in Churchill's career in terms of his entire career. While Wood does not ignore Churchill's failures, he does believe that on the most important issue of going to war rather than attempting to negotiate with Hitler in order to try to save the British Empire, Churchill was right. He states that the democratic Western Europe that

emerged after 1945 "owed everything to Churchill's decision that in 1940, Britain should fight on against Hitler whatever the risks or costs."

The intended audience for this book is students, but the general reader would profit greatly from the author's writing style as well as his balanced and thoughtful assessments of the voluminous literature on Churchill. The book includes a helpful chronology of the main events in Churchill's life and an annotated bibliography of the works on Churchill used by the author. Unfortunately, the book appeared before the publication of two new important Churchill biographies, those of Roy Jenkins and Geoffrey Best, and David Dutton's biography of Neville Chamberlain.

Since Churchill played such a significant role in many of the key events of the first half of the twentieth century, this book would be excellent to assign to students in any class dealing with this era as well as any course on modern British history. It introduces students to the vast literature on Churchill and demonstrates that very able historians can differ greatly on key aspects of his career, thus giving students a more sophisticated understanding of the nature of history. Depending on the instructor's purpose, this book could be assigned at the undergraduate and/or the graduate level. Teachers who are not well versed in the literature on Churchill, especially the arguments of the revisionists, can obtain a quick overview of their arguments and the counter-arguments by reading this book.

In many ways this book is more serviceable than another biography of Churchill. In less than 200 pages, Wood looks at Churchill's illustrious career through the eyes of its leading historians and gives the reader his careful, balanced, and sound judgments on the key issues in that career.

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Harry E. Wade

Paul A Winters, ed. *The Collapse of the Soviet Union*. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1999. Pp. 288. Cloth, \$24.96; ISBN 1-56510-997-X. Paper, \$15.96; ISBN 1-56510-996-1.

Christopher Read. *The Making and Breaking of the Soviet System: An Interpretation*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. Pp. x, 259. Cloth, \$65.00; ISBN 0-333-73152-2. Paper, \$20.95; ISBN 0-333-73153-0.

The Collapse of the Soviet Union and *The Making and Breaking of the Soviet System* offer two different approaches to the question of why the Soviet Union came apart. Paul Winters focuses his attention on the Gorbachev period and immediately after. Christopher Read, on the other hand, provides what is, essentially, a history of the entire period of the Soviet Union and its aftermath.

The Collapse of the Soviet Union is a collection of essays organized under the following chapter headings: "Prelude to the Collapse," "Attempts at Reforming the Government," "Disintegration of Empire," "Collapse of the Union," and "Strife in the