

Rafe Blaufarb. *Napoleon: Symbol for an Age. A Brief History with Documents.* The Bedford Series in History and Culture. Boston: St. Martins, 2008. Pp. 256. Paper, \$14.95; ISBN 0-312-43110-4; ISBN 13: 978-0-312-43110-5.

Like other titles in the Bedford Series in History and Culture, this one focusing on Napoleon and his age is of high quality, accessible to students at different levels, and useful in a variety of contexts. Rafe Blaufarb packages an excellent and rich set of primary source documents supported by an introduction that underscores Napoleon's dynamic and complex relationship with the political and ideological currents of the period. While Blaufarb sketches the meaning of Napoleon's impact in necessarily concise but nevertheless substantial terms, he still manages to suggest those areas where historians have and continue to debate, illustrating the vital element of historiographical controversy so crucial to an appreciation of Napoleon as historical subject. The volume provides other pedagogical opportunities along the way, making it a valued resource for instructors in and out of the classroom.

Blaufarb addresses nine major topics, each section in the introduction corresponding in the book's second half to a set of relevant documents drawn from a wide range of sources, many plucked from archives and/or previously unpublished or untranslated. Since Blaufarb seeks to situate Napoleon "in his time," he explores Napoleon's Corsican background, his military education, and early political flirtations in the introductory essay. Later, in the documentary section, we glimpse Napoleon as he makes an impression on political friends and foes alike while putting down a royalist revolt in the Parisian streets or engaged in discussion at one of the many salon gatherings that helped launch his political career. Episodes and issues from the Consulate through the Empire are seen from above, below, and in between: Speeches, proclamations, and official instructions from Napoleon are included alongside memoirs, recorded debates, letters from prominent figures of the regime as well as popular views captured in imagery, song, even departmental archives. Worth mentioning is the attention Blaufarb pays to the Napoleonic regime in a global context—Haiti, Latin America, the U.S., and Egypt. Readers will *not* find much on Napoleon as a military strategist, the emphasis instead on the social and political repercussions of this essential element of his power and influence. The final section deals with the Napoleonic image as an enduring political touchstone into the mid-nineteenth century. This section really ought to have stretched into the twentieth—even the twenty-first—century to underscore the deep resonance that Napoleon has had culturally in France and beyond.

The volume is compact enough to assign as a supplementary text in a survey class, but substantial enough to serve various needs in upper-level courses. Instructors could also use certain selections from the volume around which to build lessons and assignments. I chose to flip back and forth through the book from an introductory section to the corresponding primary source documents, much as I expect I would assign the book in the classroom. The provenance of the documents themselves serves as a pedagogical tool, illustrating to students the diverse set of materials historians track down to get a comprehensive view of an historical figure or period. Each document is

preceded by a paragraph that provides its specific context, often information about the author, which allows instructors to explore questions of perspective, reliability, and bias. The "Questions to Consider" appearing at the end of the book might have been more effectively integrated into relevant places of the documentary section. Also, while it's understandable that the illustrations featured in another section aren't in color, perhaps the editors could reference websites where these images could be experienced in their full visual grandeur. These minor criticisms wouldn't deter me, however, from acquiring the book for my instructional toolkit.

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Jeffrey Brooks and Georgiy Chernyavskiy. *Lenin and the Making of the Soviet State: A Brief History with Documents.* The Bedford Series in History and Culture. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007. Pp. 192. Paper, \$14.95; ISBN 0-312-41266-5; ISBN 13: 978-0-312-41266-1.

With this latest work, award-winning authors Jeffrey Brooks (Johns Hopkins University) and Georgiy Chernayavskiy (Kharkov University, Ukraine) have crafted a superb supplemental text for the classroom. Well-written, logically-ordered, brimming with documents, yet concise in its presentation, this slim volume is an engaging and easy read. Undoubtedly, many will find it an authoritative work as well, but leftists might be dissatisfied with the image of Lenin that it projects.

The authors' stated intent is to let "Lenin speak for himself." Thus, the "history" that comprises part one of the text truly is brief. In less than three dozen pages, Brooks and Chernyavskiy sketch Lenin's life and the Russia in which he lived. The second, and largest, part of the monograph is given over to documents. Brooks and Chernyavskiy present 59 writings culled from Lenin's 45-volume *Collected Works* and from editor Richard Pipes' *The Unknown Lenin: From the Secret Archives*. Published in 1996, the Pipes sourcebook contains some of the 3500 Lenin manuscripts that the editors of the Soviet-era *Collected Works* excluded.

Though the number of documents included in *Lenin and the Making of the Soviet State* is minuscule when compared to the complete corpus of Lenin's writings, the orders and communiqués selected for inclusion range wide in topic and far in chronology. Brooks and Chernyavskiy open their documents section with Lenin's "Urgent Tasks of Our Movement," "What Is to Be Done?" and other pieces that the authors believe reveal the Soviet leader's theory of revolution. The document arrangement of subsequent sections leads readers through the Bolsheviks' rise to power, the civil war, the Terror, War Communism, and the New Economic Policy—standard subjects for a monograph on Lenin. But Brooks and Chernyavskiy also include a section devoted to Lenin's writings on spirituality and culture in the Soviet Union and another that raises questions about Lenin's mental health toward the end of his life.