

# The Good Book Guide

BRITAIN 1846-1919 by Jocelyn Hunt.  
Routledge - Spotlight History series,  
2003. xx + 399 pp. Index. £16.99 pbk

Jocelyn Hunt's text bravely explores the examination skills spoken of by others but rarely tackled. It proceeds conventionally enough by topic, including the foreign and colonial context, transport, health and Ireland, and explores Gladstone, Disraeli, the Hotel Cecil ascendancy, the Liberal return from 1905 and the wartime years. Distinctive is its dogged exploration of essay requirements and techniques, advice on the use and misuse of sources, and the development of historical skills.

Teachers will benefit from this. Here is sustained prose, delivered with authority and hugely interesting. It is offered as 'a new approach to teaching and learning': certainly it helps the former. However, it also addresses the student: it hopes 'to prepare you for the papers in AS History'. I hope that the student will look carefully at the current AS Level generic mark schemes and decide carefully whether the essay and technique advice in this book really does meet those requirements. There have been some changes.

The book offers a useful Glossary, a helpful Bibliography and a good Index. The text starts with the Tory disruption of 1846 and concludes with the Coupon Election of 1918 (why not the Tory redefinition of 1922, which would provide a certain symmetry?). It is strong on Conservative ascendancy, though might have explored the impact of the arrival of Asquith's cabinet of 1908 a little more; arguably Liberalism was not very 'new' before that. Undeniably, however, here is a weighty text of authority and conviction.

So this is a book for the student who can get his teeth into a mighty text and lift himself beyond AS Level - provided that he carefully surveys those generic mark schemes and uses the text judiciously with the advice of his teachers. Jocelyn Hunt has done him a service.

Richard Miller

BRITISH POLITICAL HISTORY 1867-2001 by Malcolm Pierce and Geoffrey Stewart.  
Routledge, 3rd edition 2002. xviii + 674 pp. Index. £17.99 pbk

Students and teachers will welcome this third edition of a text which has become essential for those who wish to lift their thoughts above the humdrum requirements of AS and A Level. Rooted in the needs of those examinations (the authors have important experience in Sixth Forms and Examination Boards) the book, none the less, extends the agenda; it never patronises and it always



*Suffragettes at 10 Downing Street, 1908*

drives the reader beyond exam specifications to provoke, intrigue and amuse. The familiar coverage of British politics from 1867 is retained, but there is now added perceptive coverage of domestic affairs to 2001 (its assessment of Thatcherism is masterly and brave, and the 'Third Way' is tackled with gusto), and the implications of the 2001 General Election are carefully considered (and, hence, a view of the political future is teased out). Of especial interest are the efforts to place the British experience into a European context, the willingness to confront the hot potato (such as 'cash for questions') and some definition of the 'new Elizabethan Age' - which provides a nice balance to the age of Disraeli and Gladstone with which the book starts.

This is a book to make teacher and taught think about their history. It proceeds by vigorous analysis, examining 'Controversy' in appropriate sections and providing 'Audits' where helpful. Data from the town of Glossop continues to feature - what a microcosm of British history that must represent!

Richard Miller

HITLER'S GERMANY by Jane Jenkins with Edgar Feuchtwanger. Hodder Murray, 2000. vi + 170 pp. Index. £10.99 pbk

This is a well-presented book. It is pleasing on the eye. The sources are well selected, with appropriate commentary and supplemented by relevant photographs and graphics. However, how far it uses the excellent sources to enhance source-based skills of candidates is doubtful. Questions are posed throughout but without much guidance to the student. Why are no marks displayed in brackets to indicate how much is expected? Why do the authors not give good detailed examples of what they consider to be good practice? Above all, it is puzzling why the summary questions at the end of chapters are essay based rather than focusing on source analysis. Much more attention should have been focused on the all-enveloping final question one finds in examination papers that candidates find difficult, especially if they involve a synoptic element.

The main topics of Hitler's Germany are well covered but there are some surprising omissions. More could have been included on the chaotic decision-making nature of the Nazi regime. The book is brief on the effects of the war and discussion of foreign policy ends in 1939. Surely the workings and collapse of the Nazi-Soviet Pact should have been included. It is also somewhat surprising that Pope Pius XII is omitted when analysing the role of the Nazis and the Catholic Church.

The overall impression is of a sound book but one which provides no viable alternative to standard textbooks; such as Hite and Hinton's *Weimar and Nazi Germany* or document selections; like the well established *Nazism 1919-1945: A Documentary Reader* by Noades and Pridham.

Andrew Bamford

CIVIL RIGHTS IN THE USA 1863-1980 by David Paterson, Doug and Susan Willoughby. Heinemann Advanced History, 2001. iv + 332 pp Index. £10.99 pbk

As usual in this series, the body of this textbook is split into two sections, an AS section and an A2 section. The AS section, as you would expect, is largely narrative, covering in detail the period from Reconstruction to Black Power. This is written in an accessible, measured tone. The margin notes, of key events, biographies and the like, aid comprehension. Each chapter concludes with useful summary questions - ideal for note-taking or for essay writing. The A2 section focuses on key issues, events, and areas historians disagree about; highlighting areas where historians differ or where ideas have changed. I found this heavier going, although there was plenty for students to get their teeth into.

Each section of the book comes complete with exam questions - both essay and source-based, in the style of AQA, Edexcel and OCR, making it useful preparation for examinations. There is a sectionalised, but not annotated, bibliography pointing to further reading, although I was surprised to see only one article there. I thought the AS section in this book worked very well - it is ideal for a detailed look at the growth of the Civil Rights Movement and its impact on American society. I was less convinced by the A2 section, which seemed in some ways to repeat much of what was in the AS section, only in more detail. There is plenty of depth to this book, and if you like the AS A2 style then it is worth a close look at a text.

Alf Wilkinson