

have offered sophisticated interpretations of the ways in which the empire shaped national imaginings. The book includes twelve illustrations, but does not attempt to analyse the changing visual iconography of empire. Thompson's emphasis on a fragmented British imperial experience also pushes him away from making strong claims about periodization. How do we explain the profound change in attitudes to empire between the heated controversy over the Royal Titles Bill and the strident celebration of Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee?

With *The Empire Strikes Back?* Andrew Thompson has written the most accessible, balanced and wide-ranging overview of the impact of imperialism on Britain currently available. Debates have been in danger of degenerating into a noisy contest between entrenched camps. Thompson's emphasis on the diversity of the imperial experience, both at home and abroad, sets a more productive agenda for future research.

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*Thatcher*. By E. H. H. Green. Hodder Arnold, London, 2006. x + 244 pp. ISBN 0-340-75977-1, £12.99.

Ewen Green's *Thatcher* follows his penetrating analysis of Conservative political thought in *Ideologies of Conservatism* (2002), and the two books together constitute an invaluable history of Conservative ideas and policies in the twentieth century. Both the books approach a similar intellectual problem, albeit from different directions: where *Ideologies of Conservatism* identifies continuities among an unwieldy bundle of ideas over a relatively long span of time, *Thatcher* unpacks the antecedents of a seemingly discrete political programme and historical moment. Despite their differences in scope, then, the underlying premise of both the books is that political ideologies—even those that resist the label, such as Conservatism, or that trumpet their break with the past, such as Thatcherism—tend to exhibit coherence over time, and Green's achievement in part is to identify the continuities among key aspects of Conservative thought and policy in the twentieth century.

Despite its title, neither the subject nor the perspective of *Thatcher* is biographical. Instead, Green identifies the origins of various policies that were implemented in the 1980s, while also sketching the political and intellectual contexts that enabled those policies to flourish at that particular moment. Two themes that emerge consistently in that account are the remarkable continuity of Thatcher's ideas from the time she first stood (unsuccessfully) for Parliament in 1950, and the dramatically shifting political terrain that created a receptive space for those ideas when she became party leader a quarter century later. These twin themes point to the historical problem that Green confronts repeatedly in these pages, that of determining the balance between continuity and change in political history, and he generally resolves that problem by

pointing to continuities of ideas amid changing backdrops of circumstance. In this interpretation, then, Thatcher's contribution was to press her ideas forward clearly, vigorously, and without apology when the opportune hour arrived (not to mention long before, and relentlessly thereafter). In his concluding assessment of the significance of Thatcherism, Green writes, 'Trade unions were reduced...to minor players on the political stage; local government was reshaped by the abolition of the metropolitan authorities and the imposition of central government controls over local taxation; "tax phobia" in terms of personal direct taxation was embedded in British fiscal policy; the State was withdrawn from direct involvement in the real economy; Europe became a touchstone rather than a political side issue. These were all fundamental changes, and they can be attributed to Thatcher and Thatcherism' (pp. 193–194).

Green's analytical introduction offers a periodization of Thatcher's term in office, before discussing some of the major associations that characterized her political career as a whole; the conclusion evaluates the legacies of Thatcherism for the two major parties in the era of New Labour, while also offering a summation of major political developments of the final quarter of the 20th century. The seven chapters in between discuss Thatcher's policies in areas including the economy, privatization, trade union reform, international affairs, and Europe. The narrative that emerges repeatedly in these chapters is startlingly similar, with Thatcher instinctively in tune with the party's grass roots from the 1950s, the hopes of both being dashed by Edward Heath's government of 1970–74, and Thatcher becoming the first leader committed to the realization of widespread aims among the rank-and-file in 1975. 'What *was* new about Thatcher's approach to policy was that she shared so many of the policy preferences and prejudices of the Conservative grass roots,' Green explains, 'and her desire was not so much to give 'the people' what they want, but to give 'our people' what they want' (p. 138). That story recurs in different forms throughout the book, from privatization to trade unions to immigration, with the result that 'Thatcherism' emerges less as the development of novel ideas than as the realization of longstanding aims.

Green supports these arguments through extensive work in the Thatcher Papers at Churchill College in Cambridge, papers which offer fascinating glimpses into the development and presentation of policy. For instance, when Geoffrey Howe planned to begin a speech in 1977 by asking rhetorically if he had been guilty of 'union-bashing' on a previous occasion, Thatcher wrote in the margin, 'No. Why put it into people's minds?'; in the same text she later circled the word 'corporate', instructing Howe not to use that term because it was 'too close to corporatism' (pp. 108, 113). Thatcher did not approve of European-style corporatism, which she regarded as akin to socialism, and at this point Green employs Oxford University Press's CD-ROM *The Complete Public Statements of Margaret Thatcher 1945–1990* to demonstrate that all twenty-five of Thatcher's public references to 'corporatism' and the 'corporate state' throughout her career were highly critical (p. 113). The same entertaining source informs us that Thatcher denounced the IRA thirteen times as Conservative leader, that she did not utter the word 'privatization' before 1981 (relying

instead on the more clunky 'denationalization'), and that she only mentioned the Falklands Islands once in public before the fateful year of 1982. Despite Green's demonstration that Conservative policy from 1975 derived less from the will of one woman than from longstanding preferences among the party's grass roots, sources such as these ensure that it is going to remain difficult to disentangle the historical movement of Thatcherism from the historical person of Thatcher—a dilemma represented by the title of this book no less than by the term for the movement it analyses.

The example of Thatcher's revisions to Howe's speech, and the nature of the sources that Green makes use of more generally, raise interesting issues regarding the relationship between individual agency and structural change in political history. Of course this is not an 'either/or' proposition, and examples of both abound in Green's account. For instance, after Thatcher rebuked Howe for expressing interest in corporate action to achieve economic goals, a concerted action between government, management, and unions tended to fade from the policy scene—a development with very real consequences in the years to follow. Similar examples of personal interventions animate these pages, yet when the time comes to determine the ultimate causation, larger developments appear as well, for instance, when Green concludes that Thatcher's successes against the trade unions resulted in part from structural changes to the British economy (p. 124). In his final assessment, one that deftly balances individual agency with structural change, Green concludes, 'This book accepts that Thatcher's time as Conservative leader and prime minister saw a great deal of change, but it would also conclude that she accelerated rather than inaugurated many of the changes that took place in the last quarter of the twentieth century' (p. 196). Indeed, Thatcher herself was eventually brought down by a rebellion among the very grass roots whose values and instincts she had long championed (p. 143), the Iron Lady proving no match in the end for the iron cage of history.

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*Making Reputations. Power, Persuasion and the Individual in Modern British Politics.* Edited by Richard Toye and Julie Gottlieb. I.B. Tauris, London, 2005. ix + 243 pp. ISBN 1-85043-841-2, £45.

This is a valuable collection of 13 biographical chapters, based on conference papers first delivered at Manchester University in 2002. The book promises (on the jacket cover) 'a major new assessment of the role of personality in British political life from the era of Gladstone to that of Tony Blair'. It takes as its main themes those of 'power, personality and persuasion', and seeks to explore not only the influence—and limitations—of particular political figures but also the role of 'rhetoric and reputation', the way in which images of individuals are shaped and revised. 'Sections', we are told on the cover, 'deal