

coverage than reviewing Lloyd George's failures as a war leader. Just as with the over-attention to sex, Wilkinson devotes a massively different amount of attention to Lloyd George's *War Memoirs* and his *Peace Treaty* volumes. Certainly, it is important to record what Lloyd George was saying about events and to show, where appropriate, the differences between his version of what went on and the accounts of others. Again, 24 pages – in a book of 225 pages – on these volumes is disproportionate and his attack would be more convincing if the author's references were accurate.

Of the issues arising during the war, the most arguable and argued has been Lloyd George's attitude to Haig and the other generals. Wilkinson is severe in saying that Lloyd George lacked the moral courage to sack generals. This would be a more reasonable point of view if he suggested any solution to the difficulties that would have occurred as a result, wholly unsupported as Lloyd George would have been by his Tory colleagues and the king. Of course, the most potent issue, as it turned out for the Liberal Party, was the Maurice debate. Wilkinson accuses Lloyd George of lying about the figures. In fact, it is not actually known whether Lloyd George saw revised figures before the debate – we merely have the interesting story of Frances and another secretary actually destroying the relevant papers some years later.

One of Lloyd's George's acknowledged skills was oratory, and we are provided with detailed illustrations

of the content of some of his most significant speeches. But then we are also treated to Wilkinson's assessment of them. On a 1907 speech: 'what a performance. In its blubbery hyperbole and shameless exploitation of his audience's emotions'. While the author's disapproval of Lloyd George's infidelities and his frequent seduction of women at different levels of society may be shared by many, his disparagement of the speeches will not receive such wide support. He seems to draw a parallel here between the kind of seduction Lloyd George exercised over an audience and his seduction of women. His criticism of the famous speech in Queen's Hall at the beginning of the war is well founded (interestingly, a speech not referred to in Lloyd George's memoirs); his general disapprobation does not arouse support in this reviewer. On the Queen's Hall speech, the author's judgement is that it was 'brilliant, if you were impressed by challenging rhetoric verging on moral blackmail.' While accepting Wilkinson's judgement that the speech produces a queasiness in a reader nowadays, it would surely have been appropriate for him to record how successful the speech was, not only in the hall, but in the thousands of copies subsequently sold. Perhaps its effectiveness makes it even less praiseworthy

– but an acceptance of its significance at the time is surely necessary. There is no understanding in his comments of the different context of those times – no radio, no television, so the power of direct communication was much more significant. It is indeed a relief to read these speeches again and to be excited by their content, in comparison with the flat TV sofa experiences we endure today.

There are, at several points, incomplete references: i.e. an author, but a simple statement 'page unknown'. Towards the end of the book, a number of references appear in the text but disappear entirely on the reference pages: extraordinary errors from a reputable publisher.

As with all books about Lloyd George, issues of balance, weight and significance are matters of opinion; there is quite a lot of material here which enables the reader to make his or her own decision.

Alan Mumford has written about Lloyd George and Churchill for this journal. His most recent book is David Lloyd George: A Biography in Cartoons (Troubadour, 2014).

- 1 T. Crosby, *The Unknown Lloyd George* (IB Taurus 2014)
- 2 R. Hattersley, *David Lloyd George: The Great Outsider* (Little Brown 2010)

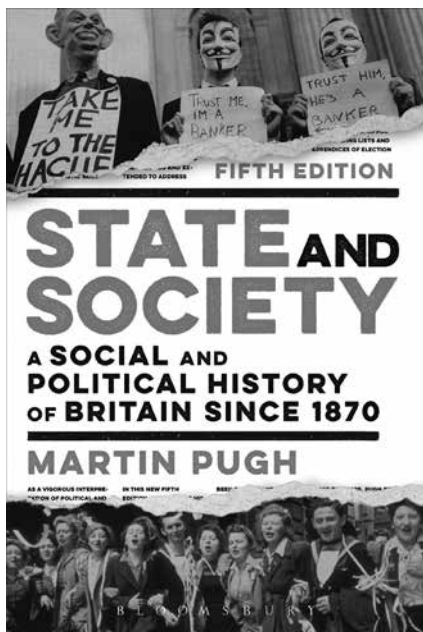
The long march of British history

Martin Pugh, *State and Society. A Social and Political History of Britain since 1870* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017)

Review by **Eugenio Biagini**

MARTIN PUGH IS ONE OF THE most widely read and influential historians of modern Britain. His books – including his study of Lloyd George, the Primrose League, the women's 'long march' to the vote, the British Union of Fascists, and *The Making of Modern British Politics* – have shaped the views of generations of students and academics on both sides of the Atlantic. The extraordinarily long shelf life of his work – through frequent reprints and new editions – is in itself a witness to their enduring significance. *State and Society* is now in its fifth edition – having first appeared in 1997. It is structured in five parts, each consisting of a variable

number of chapters – with each chapter articulated in various sections devoted to a specific question in modern British history. This structure makes *State and Society* not only a pleasure to read, but also easy to use as a reference work. The titles of its five parts convey a sense of Pugh's overall interpretation: Part I is about 'The loss of confidence, 1870–1902'; Part II surveys what Pugh calls 'The Reorientation: the emergence of the interventionist State, 1902–1918'; Part III is about 'The period of confusion: collectivism versus capitalism, 1918–1940'; Part IV explores 'Consensus: the age of the benign state, 1940–1970'. Finally, Part V is about 'The era of reaction and



decline, 1970–2015’, with the last section of the last chapter dealing with ‘National disunity’.

Despite the ‘declinist’ picture suggested by these titles, *State and Society* offers an account that is far too complex and nuanced to be summarised in a formula or historiographical stereotype. For example, one important dimension of Pugh’s analysis is the full integration of gender history in the course of British political and social history: and, as far as women are concerned, this was certainly not a history of ‘decline’. Nor was there decline in terms of living standards, life expectancy, health care and many other aspects of everyday life. In Pugh’s vision, there is tension between the ground irreversibly lost by the state in the sphere of power politics and international relations, and the practical experience of most ordinary citizens – a reminder of the extent to which imperial greatness was compatible with social misery at home, while the loss of great power status (and even the crisis of the Unions in 1916–22 and 2014) was far from a curse from most Britons.

In a short review, it is difficult to do justice to the richness of the canvass painted by Pugh, which is awe-inspiring both in its breadth and depth. Interestingly, the book starts and ends with the Liberals (or the Liberal Democrats) in office, either on their own or as part of a coalition. It also sheds light on the wider meaning and context of the tradition these parties stood and stand for. Thus, he offers a brilliant analysis of popular attitudes to the state – from laissez-faire

and self-help to the Keynesian consensus. Equally relevant to Liberals is his discussion of ethnic and national tensions within the UK, and between ‘native’ British nationals and immigrants – with Jews and anti-Semitism at the beginning of the twentieth century receiving particular attention.

Immigration became a major political issue again a century later, when, however, Britain’s Liberals were no longer in a position to contain the rise of xenophobia as they had done in 1906. And it is appropriate to conclude the present review with Pugh’s assessment of the reasons behind the party’s recent debacle:

For the Liberal Democrats there was nothing inevitable about the effects of coalition; they had recently worked with Labour in three Scottish coalitions and successfully kept their vote together. However, in Scotland they had implemented progressive policies whereas the 2010 coalition meant abandoning their opposition to drastic expenditure cuts and accepting higher tuition fees and plans to expose the

NHS to private companies, to which most of their supporters were opposed. This rightward shift was in fact consistent with Clegg’s strategy since becoming leader: he had attempted to refashion the Liberal Democrats as a liberal Conservative party [Pugh’s capitalisation] ... However, the link with the Tories proved to be toxic ... from April 2012 onwards he had completely lost credibility in the country ... Clegg’s mistaken strategy had virtually undone all the progress made since the Liberal revival of the late 1950s. (p. 493)

Eugenio F. Biagini is Professor of Modern and Contemporary History at the University of Cambridge, and has written on the history of liberalism, nationalism, religion and democracy, focusing on Britain, Ireland and Italy. His most recent book is The Cambridge Social History of Ireland (edited with Mary Daly, 2017), and he is the general editor of the Bloomsbury Cultural History of Democracy (six volumes, 2020).

Women in politics

J. Gottlieb and R. Toye (eds.), *The Aftermath of Suffrage: Women, Gender, and Politics in Britain, 1918–1945* (Macmillan, 2013)

Review by Ian Cawood

THE REPRESENTATION OF the People Act of 1918 had a greater impact on British politics than any other single piece of legislation since the Great Reform Act of 1832. The introduction of universal male suffrage and the extension of the franchise to most women aged 30 years and over significantly increased the parliamentary electorate, while a redistribution of constituencies increased the importance of large cities and industrial counties. Only one in four of the electorate in 1918 would have been on the electoral roll in 1910. In Birmingham, for example, the Act increased the electorate from 95,000 to 427,084 voters (165,000 of whom were women over 30). Across the whole of the west Midlands region the number of registered voters increased between 1910 and 1918 from 573,231 to 1,581,439. Despite this transformation, the political system created

by the Act of 1918 was remarkably stable, especially when compared to the rest of Europe.

While the causes of the decision to expand the franchise a hundred years ago have been long debated by historians of the First World War, historians of the suffrage movements and historians of the working class, the effects of the decision to quadruple the electorate and to remove all but the most basic residency qualifications have been largely overlooked. This excellent collection of essays, edited by Julie Gottlieb and Richard Toye aims to address this gap in the historiography of British political culture, covering issues such as the post-1918 career of Emmeline Pankhurst, the appeals to and depiction of female voters and some extremely innovative reflections on the impact of the enlarged electorate on inter-war foreign policy. The editors note, however, that the