

Trinidad and Bengal in the 1890s. Engaging with Jack Green's concept of "exclusionary empire"—that is, the denial of democratic rights to the colonized in Britain's "empire of liberty"—Wiener makes a convincing argument for the "complex and contradictory" nature of the empire (95, 103). The final five chapters comprise an eclectic selection that, claim Crosbie and Hampton, demonstrate a "decentering" of the British cultural world (11). They span pre-Opium Wars Canton (John M. Carroll); post-1949 capitalist Hong Kong and expatriate nostalgia for nineteenth-century liberal economic discourse in one of the last bastions of empire; F. R. Leavis, literary criticism, imperial academic networks, and the colonial public in the 1930s and 1940s (Christopher Hilliard); British "nabobs," their "collectibles" in late eighteenth-century India, and the influence of Indian material culture in England (Tillman W. Nechtman); and, finally, material culture, the civilizing mission, and "Afro-Victorians" in Sierra Leone (Bronwen Everill). Such contributions provide for readers with a broad interest in empire and culture.

Crosbie and Hampton have done a sterling job in trying to coherently thread together scholarly contributions from different branches of historical research, spanning a wide time frame and geographical scope. Individual articles will certainly stimulate academic debate and open up new lines of enquiry for researchers working in the specific areas that they address. *The Cultural Construction of the British World* will also be of use to postgraduate students studying imperial history and culture. However, as with many edited collections of conference papers (as opposed to specially commissioned articles), there is only the loosest coherence in terms of themes, approaches, and arguments, particularly in the second part of the collection. Despite the broad sweep of imperial time intimated in the title, the dominant focus is the nineteenth century, and much has already been written about the relationship between culture and empire in this period. Imperial history is now moving on from the preoccupations of the "new imperial history" to the complexities of the ending of empires. Moreover, as Christopher Bayly has warned, we must beware of decentering empire at the expense of downplaying the economic and political dominance of the imperial center (cited by Crosbie, 122). On balance, however, this collection has much to commend it in that it extends our understanding of the relationship between empire and culture beyond formal empire and deepens our understanding of the cultural bonds and networks spanning the British imperial world, working within frames of transnationalism and globalization.

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JULIE V. GOTTLIEB. *"Guilty Women," Foreign Policy, and Appeasement in Inter-War Britain*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Pp. 340. \$90.00 (cloth).
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CLARISSE BERTHEZÈNE. *Training Minds for the War of Ideas: Ashridge College, the Conservative Party and the Cultural Politics of Britain, 1929–54*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015. Pp. 276. \$110.00 (cloth).

The new political history has greatly enriched our understanding of the success of the twentieth-century Conservative Party. By broadening political history beyond biography, elections, policy manifestos, and party maneuvering, historians have argued for the importance of political culture, emotions, language and gender. Two recent books that focus on the interwar Conservative Party, *"Guilty Women," Foreign Policy, and Appeasement in Inter-War Britain* by Julie Gottlieb, and *Training Minds for the War of Ideas: Ashridge College, the Conservative Party and the Cultural Politics of Britain, 1929–54* by Clarisse Berthezène, have done an excellent

job in reinvigorating our knowledge of two particularly relevant topics of this period—the foreign policy of appeasement and the political dominance of Stanley Baldwin’s ideas.

Julie Gottlieb took an innovative approach to a well-studied subject in her earlier monograph *Feminine Fascism, Women in Britain’s Fascist Movement, 1923–45* (2004). Her new book, “*Guilty Women, Foreign Policy, and Appeasement in Inter-War Britain*,” also reexamines a familiar topic. Gottlieb puts women and gender analysis at the center of understanding the history of appeasement with a special focus on Neville Chamberlain’s government. She takes a multipronged approach and uses a rich array of sources that includes the memoirs, letters, and papers of leading politicians, statesmen, and feminists of the period, the records of party and activist organizations as well as pamphlets, and contemporary books. In addition to using the papers of well-known interwar figures such as Nancy Astor, Vera Brittain, Eleanor Rathbone, Winston Churchill, Neville Chamberlain, and Duff Cooper, she has also perused the personal papers of less popularly known feminist and pacifist figures such as Margaret Corbett Ashby, Kathleen Courtney, Maude Royden, and Mary Sheepshanks.

Throughout her book, Gottlieb deftly combines cultural history, political history, and gender history. Her starting point is to reexamine Richard Baxter’s now-forgotten misogynist 1940 polemic *Guilty Women* to consider why the history of appeasement has been so relentlessly male-centered and focused on the private maneuvers of statesmen. In its place, she presents a gendered history of appeasement as a “People’s Crisis” (7) in which public opinion (and particularly the views of women) played a key role. Gottlieb succeeds admirably in this task. A number of the key female players in appeasement are relatively well known, such as Lady Astor and the Duchess of Atholl. However, Gottlieb gives much greater prominence to Neville Chamberlain’s wife Annie and his sisters Ida and Hilda than previous historians. Chamberlain’s emotional reliance on his sisters is revealed through his private correspondence to them in the midst of the crisis. At the same time, Gottlieb is able to tap into public sentiment through a close examination of “Crisis letters” addressed to Chamberlain and his wife. Annie Chamberlain was a figure to whom the women of Britain reached out through personal letters as war seemed likely in 1938. By using this archive, Gottlieb is able to chart the role of public emotion during the Munich crisis and present the public opinion of appeasement as a “sex war” (173). Historians such as David Jarvis and David Thackeray have illustrated how successful the interwar Conservative Party was at garnering female electoral support. Gottlieb is able to show how Chamberlain was intensely aware of this support and how closely he relied on personal letters to gauge public opinion. Gottlieb does not take Chamberlain’s assumptions at face value but instead ruthlessly questions his presumptions of female electoral support for his policies. In fact, she shows that in the by-elections that fell between October 1938 and the declaration of war against Germany in September 1939, the policy of appeasement had mixed electoral success and that women did not universally vote as a bloc for candidates supporting Chamberlain’s government. One of the more innovative areas in her book is its examination of the gendered imaging of Neville Chamberlain by both his fans and detractors. Some of his most ardent female supporters are shown to be suffering from an Electra complex of sorts. Meanwhile, his critics, such as the cartoonist David Low, delighted in mocking the prime minister as a Victorian old maid or member of the celebrated “Shiver sisters” (180).

Julie Gottlieb has written the most interesting and innovative book I have yet read on the subject of appeasement, but I offer a few minor criticisms. Gottlieb might have improved her book even further with a more developed discussion of the traditionally gendered masculinity of foreign policy and a consideration of how concepts like national strength and prestige are masculinist constructs. In light of the much-maligned afterlife of Neville Chamberlain among future politicians, an afterword on his portrayal as a neutered figure would also have been useful.

Clarisse Berthezène's book, *Training Minds for the War of Ideas: Ashridge College, the Conservative Party and the Cultural Politics of Britain, 1929–54*, takes the history of Conservative ideas seriously. Long derided as members of “the stupid party,” Conservatives have often been shy at embracing any sort of intellectual tradition. Historians such as E. H. H. Green have challenged this lazy assumption. Following his lead, Berthezène looks at the interwar period as one in which the British middle class was being remade and in which the Conservative Party attempted to reshape British political culture and take a leading role in the battle of ideas. By focusing on a specific institution, the Bonar Law Memorial College at Ashridge, Hertfordshire (referred to throughout the book simply as “Ashridge”), and by asserting the importance of “middlebrow” culture (162), Berthezène illuminates the richness of Baldwinite Conservatism and helps explain the interwar hegemony of Baldwin's consensual ideas. Her book uses a fascinating mixture of sources including the papers of Ashridge College itself as well as the papers of leading interwar Conservative politicians such as Baldwin, R. A. Butler and J. C. C. Davidson and a wide range of published works by Conservative historians such as Arthur Bryant and Keith Feiling and Conservative-minded writers like P. G. Wodehouse and John Buchan.

Berthezène's study points to the desire of key Conservatives like Davidson to copy the success of the Fabians in setting the terms of political debate. Rather than allow political culture to be defined by the left, Ashridge was to help remake Britain's political culture. Unfortunately, many rank-and-file Conservatives could not grasp this larger project. The continual debate among Conservatives over whether education should triumph over propaganda is often repeated by Berthezène. In the minds of its founders, Ashridge had three objectives: “to play the role of a think-tank alongside the CRD [Conservative Research Department]; to be a centre for debate and a political training ground for Conservative members of parliament and party representatives; and as a centre for the study of civics for the general public” (79). Many Conservative activists had serious trouble comprehending this big picture. Ashridge became heavily tied to the Baldwinite tradition, and after the Conservatives' general election defeat in 1945, the college was rejected by the party and evolved into a school of management. The true value of Berthezène's book lies in its ability to show how the Conservatives entered the interwar battle of ideas as a “battle of the brows” in which middle-class “non-intellectual intellectuals” (154) were the key to forging Baldwin's national consensus. In doing so, she adds a vital dimension to the work of Philip Williamson and others who have looked for the intellectual foundations of Baldwin's political success.

In any history of ideas, defining the boundaries of the project can be tricky. Equally difficult can be the synthesis of various strands of thought and the establishment of their relative weights. The only two small criticisms I would give for Berthezène's work are, first, that she might tie developments in middle-brow thought and Conservative intellectual trends more directly to the interwar development of Ashridge College throughout the text. At times, it is uncertain how many of the ideas she references actually made it into the curriculum of the College. Second, she might have probed more deeply into the specific content of Stanley Baldwin's ideas. Baldwin plays a key part in the book as an inspirational figure for Conservatives. However, given his place as the architect of the interwar Conservative consensus, a more thorough discussion of his arguments and appeal would have been helpful.

Historians of interwar Britain and the Conservatives owe an immense debt to Julie Gottlieb and Clarisse Berthezène. They are able to bring key aspects of the new political history to bear on both the foreign policy of appeasement and the interwar Conservative hegemony. Never again can historians look at appeasement without considering gender, nor can they contemplate the interwar Conservative Party as one lacking a substantive intellectual tradition.

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