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Battle royal: the wars of Lancaster and York, 1450-1464, Hugh Bicheno (book review)

Kathleen McCallister

William & Mary, krmccallister@wm.edu

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ence where she could. Her contributions, however, would not have existed without the success of McDonald's and the fortune her husband left behind after his death. To understand Joan, readers must understand Ray. Napoli clearly addresses the flaws of these larger-than-life characters while also endearing them to audiences. **VERDICT** A great book that will cause readers to never look at McDonald's the same way again. [See Prepub Alert, 5/23/16.]—**Sonnet Ireland, St. Tammany Parish Pub. Lib., Mandeville, LA**

HISTORY

Bicheno, Hugh. *Battle Royal: The Wars of Lancaster and York; 1450–1464.*

Pegasus. Jan. 2017. 416p. illus. maps. bibliog. index. ISBN 9781681773063. \$27.95; ebk. ISBN 9781681773711. HIST

Historian Bicheno (*Rebels & Redcoats*) takes a leap back to the 15th century to examine the many threads that came together to weave the Wars of the Roses (1455–85). The first of a two-book series, this volume covers the period from the coming of age of Henry VI in 1437 to the essential midpoint of the York/Lancaster wars in 1461, when the ineffectual Henry was supplanted by Edward IV. Dividing the study of these events into two volumes allows Bicheno room to delve into the people, conflicts, and alliances that shorter works must skim over by necessity, though this occasionally results in a narrative slowed by a mass of personalities and details. Helpfully, the book includes numerous materials to assist readers in keeping the various players and their actions straight, including family trees, detailed maps, appendixes on peerages and titles, and a separate index of names with key information. **VERDICT** The plethora of facts and names might overwhelm those looking for a snappy treatment of the subject, but readers interested in a more in-depth examination should find this a solid choice.—**Kathleen McCallister, Tulane Univ., New Orleans**

Cesarani, David. *Final Solution: The Fate of the Jews 1933–1949.*

St. Martin's. Nov. 2016. 1056p. illus. maps. notes. bibliog. index. ISBN 9781250000835. \$40; ebk. ISBN 9781250037961. HIST

This posthumous release by Holocaust historian Cesarani (*Major Farran's Hat*) asserts that Nazi policy developed as a result of the events of World War II, an idea well within the mainstream of recent Holocaust historiography. More controversial is the author's argument that Adolf Hitler's tactics were initially predicated on the assumption of a quick victory that would enable the Nazis to expel the Jews beyond "German living space." The decision for genocide was, therefore, the result of a failure of Nazi

policy goals, rather than the result of Hitler's desire to create a racial utopia. Some scholars would counter that Hitler's quest for global hegemony would likely make it impossible to expel the Jews beyond German living space, and thus a massacre was inevitable under any circumstances. **VERDICT** This comprehensive account provides a good balance between the big picture of Nazi policy and the events of war, along with individual portraits of both victims and perpetrators. Cesarani's analysis is less convincing when describing the relationship between anti-Semitic ideology and the genocidal impulses of many Europeans. Recommended for libraries that specialize in the topic.—**Frederic Krome, Univ. of Cincinnati Clermont Coll.**

Davidson, Ian. *The French Revolution: From Enlightenment to Tyranny.* Pegasus. Dec. 2016. 336p. illus. maps. notes. bibliog. index. ISBN 9781681772509. \$28.95; ebk. ISBN 9781681772929. HIST

The French Revolution (1789–99) was undoubtedly a significant event that changed the country's path forever. Davidson (*Voltaire; Voltaire in Exile*) takes a new look at this complex episode, which affected different groups in several countries with varying results. Although influenced by

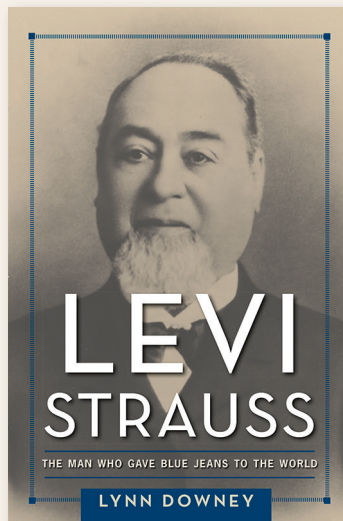
the American Revolution (1775–83), the French uprising couldn't have had a more opposite outcome. The sheer number of those involved in the conflict meant that it was sometimes unclear who stood for what, at any given time. What did the revolutionaries want in the long run? What did they fear? Davidson does his best to explain the decade-long affair. Casual readers may find that keeping track of dozens of historical figures can be overwhelming. **VERDICT** Davidson does a fair job of describing this period, but it is easy to get lost in the details. Best suited for readers interested in a thorough overview of the French Revolution.—**Rebecca Kluberanz, New York P.L.**

Hayes, Peter. *Why? Explaining the Holocaust.* Norton. Jan. 2017. 400p. illus. notes. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780393254365. \$27.95; ebk. ISBN 9780393254372. HIST

Few other historical events are as frequently analyzed as the Holocaust, yet too often these investigations present information that is not unique. Hayes (history, German, Northwestern Univ.) offers a refreshing examination of this World War II atrocity and why it was allowed to happen. As the chair of the academic committee of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Hayes expertly answers

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