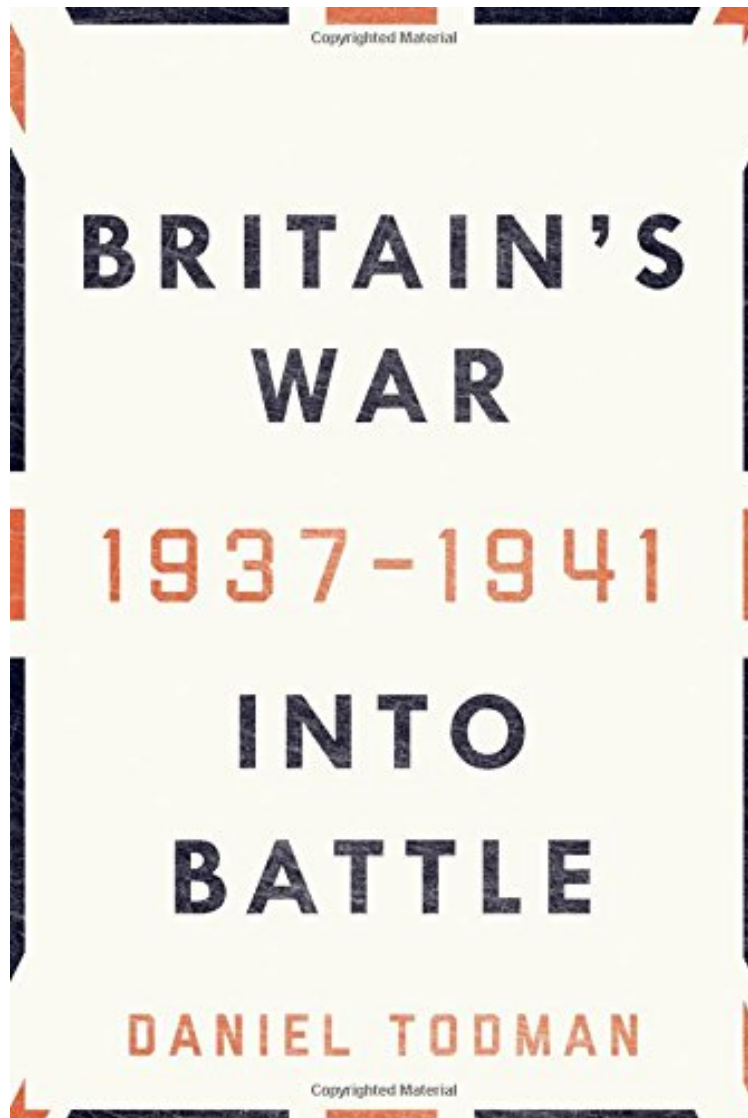


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Britain's War: Into Battle, 1937-1941

Daniel Todman

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Daniel Todman : Britain's War: Into Battle, 1937-1941 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Britain's War: Into Battle, 1937-1941:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Comprehensive Look at Britain Going to WarBy David ShulmanHistory professor Daniel Todman has written an encyclopedic look at what the effects were of the onset of World War II and its actual beginning on the people of Britain. Aside from the broad geopolitical history which is well known, Todman details the internal politics of both the Conservative and Labour parties as well as discussing the day-to-day lives of the British people. It is a long book for the lay reader, 816 pages in the print edition, but the reader is

rewarded. Still I would have preferred a shorter book, hence four stars, not five. Moreover for readers interested in a very accessible view into the lives of the average Brit during the war I would recommend the British television series, "Foyle's War" available on Netflix. Todman begins his book with the coronation of George VI in May 1937 and ends with twin debacles at the start of the Pacific War at Pearl Harbor and sinking of the prides of the British fleet off Singapore by carrier based Japanese aircraft in December 1941. It is a lot of history to cover and at home aside from the collapse of the old industrial regions of the north, the British economy was doing relatively well in the 1930s being governed by moderate conservative policies. For all practical purposes Labour was frozen out. However as the war clouds grow in Europe the British economy is put on a war footing increasing taxation and putting much activity under the command and control of the government. This is Labour's opening to power. With the collapse of France, Chamberlain resigns and Churchill becomes Prime Minister to rally the country after Dunkirk. The key Labour ministers in the government are Ernest Bevan and Clement Attlee. Their long term goals are to bring socialism to Great Britain. They succeed in 1945 so much so that their policies hold back the country for the next 30 years. (My comment, not the author's.) Churchill's goal is to preserve the British Empire; at this he fails. He also fails in the sense the liberal reform wing of the Conservative Party headed by Eden and Macmillan end up in control. Nevertheless he certainly wins the main fight in defeating the Nazis. Todman has given us an excellent work of history and for the real history buff I highly recommend it, a little less so for the average lay reader. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. London calling By Duckie Doc A comprehensive blend of military-political-sociological history of the prewar and early war years of the Second World War from the British perspective. What is unique to this rendering is the use of nascent public opinion polling to illustrate the sociologic dimension. It is a fresh and welcome perspective of the ordinary citizenry and their reaction to what they had to endure including the Blitz, impending invasion and the rationing. It is, naturally, a slanted and admiring view but does not spare criticism where needed. It is a bit of a slog and only covers the period of 1937-1941 in over 800 pages but I found it well worth the effort. Highly recommended for seasoned WW2 history freaks especially those who appreciate that Britain, for a while, stood alone against a totalitarian leviathan threatening to engulf the island bastion and the rest of civilization thereafter. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Really worth the read! By Dean S. Maclaughlin It's a long slog, but well worth it. There are many histories of this period dealing with the military aspects. This book has extensive coverage of the politics of the period as well, who got along with whom, etc. (Most of them didn't get along with each other.) The book starts before Munich and Chamberlain and mentions those in government who were willing to appease and later sue for a negotiated settlement to the conflict. It also covers the home front, the extent that the British government was willing to let the war effort impinge on the civilian economy. I am looking forward to the next volume which will cover the remainder of the war and up through 1947.

Great Britain's refusal to yield to Nazi Germany in the Second World War remains one of the greatest survival stories of modern times. Commemorated, evoked, and mythologized as it has been-chiseled and engraved onto countless monuments, the subject of an endless stream of books and films-its triumphant outcome was by no means predetermined. In December 1940, months after war was declared, the director of plans at the War Office in London was asked to draft a paper on how to win the war. He replied that he could only plan "for not losing." Britain's War: Into Battle, 1937-1941 is the first of two volumes in which Daniel Todman offers a brilliantly fresh retelling, an epic history to fit an epic story. "Opening with his discovery of some war medals sitting in a hearing-aid box that likely belonged to his grandfather, Todman realizes that despite it all a new generation seems unaware of what was truly at stake when Churchill invoked Britain's "finest hour." The war was far greater than any single heroic hour. For six years, Britain was at the dark heart of history, finding its way forward hour by hour, day by day, year by year. This volume spans the beginning and the end of the beginning, from the massive changes required to get the country onto a war footing, through the failure of appeasement, the invasion of Poland, the "phony war," the fall of France, the "miracle" of Dunkirk, the Battles of Britain, and the Blitz, ending with America's course-changing entrance into the conflict in late 1941. Todman's colossal project seamlessly merges economic, strategic, social, cultural, and military history in one compelling narrative. Rapid industrialization, social disruption, food rationing, Westminster politics, class snobbery, and the mobilization of a global empire are woven together with the major opening battles. Here, also, are key individuals-the politicians, industrialists, pub owners, housewives, the pilots of the RAF, and the sailors at Dunkirk-caught in the maelstrom that threatened to engulf not just a small island nation but the world itself.

"A decade ago, Daniel Todman made his mark with a decidedly revisionist book on World War I, *The Great War: Myth and Memory*. In his second major work of popular history, *Britain's War: Into Battle, 1937-1941* he aims to modify our perceptions of the United Kingdom's role in World War II. In this, the first of two planned volumes, he succeeds triumphantly." - Wall Street Journal "Todman's book seems deserving of high respect for the amount he has read, the fluency of his narrative, mastery of complex information and generally clear and shrewd judgments. The author brings to a new audience a mass of ideas and data familiar only to my own aging generation. This is an energetic, ambitious, provocative work by a young historian of notable gifts, which deserves a wide readership." - Max

Hastings, author of *The Secret War* "In the opening pages of this book, the first volume in a monumental new history of Britain's experience of the 'long' Second World War, Daniel Todman presents his own personal links to the world of the war through which his grandparents lived. This could have been a rather sentimental journey, but Todman tells their story with a light touch. As Todman demonstrates, one of the most remarkable aspects of Britain's war effort was the strong sense that the country would not be defeated and would, in the end, emerge victorious. EL The voices in Todman's book provide endearing evidence of such certitude and endeavour." - Richard Overy, author of *A History of War in 100 Battles* "Britain's War is a sharply focused account of the transition of government and people from peacetime routines to the practices of total war. Hugely if overwhelmingly informative, the book brings us up to date with accuracy and precision across a multitude of fields." - *The Times Literary Supplement* "Into Battle, the first volume of Dan Todman's new history of Britain and the Second World War, is a tour de force. Taking the story up to the end of 1941, Todman provides us with a judicious guide to the road to war and its catastrophic first phase, offering in addition a shrewd portrait of Churchill which is worth the price of the book alone. Total history at its best." --Jay Winter, Yale University

About the Author Daniel Todman is Senior Lecturer in the School of History at Queen Mary University of London. He is the co-editor of Field Marshall Lord Alanbrooke's *War Diaries, 1939 - 1945*.