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# Napoleon Bonaparte: England's Prisoner: The Emperor in Exile 1816-21

Frank Giles

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**Frank Giles : Napoleon Bonaparte: England's Prisoner: The Emperor in Exile 1816-21** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Napoleon Bonaparte: England's Prisoner: The Emperor in Exile 1816-21:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating research, wanting for a storyBy JabockMr. Giles gives

us a great work, obviously carefully footnoted with very meticulous references, full of very interesting tidbits about British perceptions of Napoleon's stay on St. Helena. I left it, however, wishing for more than the historical details, wanting for more color about the participants, their own stories and experiences. The character of Sir Hudson Lowe does not come through clearly, despite the book's stated goal of demonstrating his relative innocence in the supposedly cruel treatment of Napoleon. There are many details, but Mr. Giles leaves it to us, based on the facts presented, to muster an image of the gaoler. Perhaps that is his intention---perhaps that is good historical documentation. That said, his description of the Lord and Lady Hollands feelings, again based on thorough first hand information, is excellent and insightful, perhaps especially due to their ample and descriptive writings. For Napoleon buffs, this one is--if not a nail-biter---a good essay on one aspect of his life. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A decent read on Napoleon's final banishment

By A Customer This is quite a decent read on the treatment Napoleon received at the hands of his "...most consistent and generous foe, the British". A balanced account is what Mr Giles has stroved for and the coverage is generally admirable. Napoleon's jailer comes across as a more humane person than history has given him credit for. I din't care much for the last part of the book which focussed on various poems written by great men of letters to explain the Napoleonic myth as I felt that such coverage was either too narrow or irrelevant to the overall British perception of Napoleon. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Pretty good account of Napoleon's last years

By lordhoot I thought this was a pretty good account of Napoleon's last years when he was exiled to St. Helena. The book centered around the relationship between St. Helena's governor, Sir Hudson Lowe and Napoleon as they battled over protcols as if they were battlefields. In this book the author tries to paint out the much maligned governor, Sir Hudson Lowe in a more positive light. He seceeded only slightly to that goal. Sir Hudson Lowe, despite of Mr. Giles' best efforts, still ends up being a man of low imagination, petty minded and anal retentive individual who probably wasn't fit to supervised one of history's greatest figures. Its was Napoleon's misfortune that he was on an island governed by a jailer instead of a gentleman with a duty to perform. The book proves to be interesting because it reflects on the relationship between Napoleon and his greatest of all his enemies, Great Britain. Its almost amazing that someone with Napoleon's intelligence can be so naive as to think that his greatest enemy will go easy on him the second time around. The book also steered away from the conspiracy theory of Napoleon's murder as advanced in many of other books. Stomach cancer remains the cause of death in this book. I found this book to be well written and researched. Its not as detail as I hoped and its don't give us a good inside look of Napoleon's household during this period. There were a lot of interesting personalities at St. Helena while Napoleon was alive. Overall, this book proves to bit on the introductory level reading on Napoleon's exile to St. Helena and his life there. Easy to read and informative to a point, it should fill the void in any Napoleonic library until a more detail book comes out.

Napoleon Bonaparte never set foot on English soil, although he was held aboard a warship off the coast of Devon after his surrender to the Royal Navy in 1815. Nor did he ever admit to being a prisoner. With its focus on the last six years of Napoleon's life—from his arrival at Devon, where he became the object of massive English public interest, through his exile on St. Helena, where he died in 1821—this close study of Napoleon in captivity attempts to reconstruct an authentic portrait of the fallen emperor by examining contemporary documents and public records of opinion. As this judicious volume by journalist and historian Frank Giles shows, Napoleon worked hard at St. Helena to obfuscate the history of his tyranny in France with a legend that would elevate him as the architect of a federation of free European peoples—had it not been for the fears of reactionary monarchs and the envy of England. Many English citizens, most of them discontent Whigs, stood among Napoleon's collaborators in this legend, just as many of them joined in the condemnation of the British governor at St. Helena, Sir Hudson Lowe, as a petty, tyrannical bureaucrat and booby. Turning a scrupulous eye to the Hudson Lowe papers, Giles attempts to redeem Napoleon's jailer and guardian, reviled as he has been by critics on both sides of the Channel, from the judgment of history. What emerges is a more balanced view of both Lowe and Napoleon, condemned to each other on an island in the Atlantic for six years.

From Publishers Weekly Napoleon, Europe's 19th-century b<sup>^</sup>te noir, spent his final years as Britain's prisoner, in the custody of Sir Hudson Lowe on the isolated south Atlantic island of St. Helena. This esoteric addition to the vast assortment of Napoleonic literature concerns the adversarial relationship between the former emperor and his keeper and the controversy Napoleon's exile spawned in Britain. Giles, former literary editor of London's Sunday Times and author of *The Locust Years: The Story of the Fourth French Republic*, proposes that the historical view of Lowe as a "pettifogging, tactless, suspicious, tyrannical officer" was the result of a "ceaseless campaign of vilification mounted against him by Bonaparte." Readers will find Giles's descriptions of Napoleon in exile no longer battling Wellington over countries, but battling Lowe over the protocols of dinner invitations and his right to be called emperor are poignant and pathetic. Much of the book is devoted to the discord within English society generated by his captivity. Giles explores the opinions of Lord and Lady Holland, prominent Whigs who steadfastly argued Bonaparte's case against Lowe, as well as those of Byron and Wordsworth, and artists and historians. The controversy did not end with Napoleon's death. He was interred on St. Helena despite his wish to be returned to France upon his death; 19 years later, the French government, hoping to appease a restless French citizenry nostalgic for past "Imperial glory,"

requested that the English allow Bonaparte's remains to be removed there. Ironically, the English complied with the request in order to help cement ties between the two nations. Giles is a straightforward writer and a diligent researcher, but this narrow slice of history will draw only the most devoted students of Napoleon and his era. Illus. not seen by PW. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Giles's (The Locust Years: The Story of the Fourth French Republic) limited goal is not to add to the "countless biographies" and other works on the "much-studied personality" of Napoleon but rather to "re-examine the question of whether the British government of the day treated its prisoner...in an unjustifiably harsh and inhumane way." Giles's answer to that question is, in a word, "no." But what makes this study worth reading and what emerges most clearly from Giles's investigation is the fascinating variety of contradictory opinions about Napoleon. Certainly, the behavior of Sir Hudson Lowe, Napoleon's jailer and guardian on St. Helena during the six-year imprisonment, can be criticized (as it usually is) as well as condoned (as Giles does here). But as Giles satisfactorily demonstrates, perceptions about Napoleon's treatment on St. Helena were as often shaped by party politics as by a desire for justice. Giles favors the more realistic view that, given Napoleon's escape from Elba to resume his career as warlord, "What government in London...could do otherwise than to take the most stringent precautions to ensure that this time the cat was well and truly belled?" Recommended especially for academic libraries and public libraries with an interest in Napoleonic studies. Robert C. Jones, Central Missouri State Univ., Warrensburg Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. What emerges most clearly from Giles's investigation is the fascinating variety of contradictory opinions about Napoleon. . . . Recommended especially for academic libraries and public libraries with an interest in Napoleonic studies. --Library Journal Readers will find Giles's descriptions of Napoleon in exile -- no longer battling Wellington over countries, but battling Lowe over the protocols of dinner invitations and his right to be called emperor -- are poignant and pathetic. . . . Giles is a straightforward writer and a diligent researcher. --Publishers Weekly Will spark controversy about Napoleon's life and death on St. Helena. --History Today This is a lively, readable account, and its revisionist view rings true. --Kirkus s A judicious and well-researched contribution to this debate. --Sunday Telegraph