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Disraeli

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Robert Blake

Disraeli

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Synopsis

First published in 1966, Robert Blake's biography of Disraeli remains not only unchallenged but one of the supreme political biographies of the last one hundred years. Disraeli's story is an extraordinary one. Born in 1804, the grandson of an immigrant Italian Jew, he became leader of the Conservative Party and was twice Prime Minister (1868 and from 1874 to 1880). Famous for the 1867 Reform Act, his purchasing of the Suez Canal and his diplomatic triumphs at the Congress of Berlin, he was also the creator of the political novel and in *Sybil* wrote the major 'Condition of England' work of fiction. He was an outsider, a nationalist, a European, Romantic and Tory and, in Michael Foot's words 'He was without any rival whatever, the first comic genius who ever installed himself in Downing Street.' To say Robert Blake does justice to all this and more merely hints at the scale of his achievement; the reviews speak more eloquently. 'One of the very great political biographies . . .' John Vincent, *Observer* . . . This new book is by far the best. It is outstanding. Robert Blake is a great historian - sympathetic, exhaustive and with a light touch withal. He has not attacked; he has defended. He has portrayed, with delicacy and penetration, the most exciting and, in a curious way, the most modern of all Victorian statesmen. A great book.' Harold Macmillan 'An outstandingly successful biography . . . Disraeli has never been brought so vividly to life, and his consistent champagne-like sparkle, equalled only by that of Churchill, but unsurpassed by any statesman, invests these 800 colourful pages with a beguiling attribute of timelessness.' Sir Philip Magnus, *Daily Telegraph* ' . . . it is his emotional identification with his subject that makes this such a remarkable and sensitive work . . . a wholly satisfying biography.' Robert Rhodes James, *Spectator* 'A huge, scholarly and remarkably readable work which makes us revise vast tracts of our assumptions about nineteenth-century politics.' Sir Michael Howard, *Sunday Times* 'A book that people will still be reading in fifty years time and long after.' *Times Literary Supplement*

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Customer Reviews

"Robert Blake's biography is a triumph and may justly be pronounced a classic," beamed LJ's reviewer (LJ 2/1/67). Blake is triumphant on two levels: he sets the record straight on his subject's true political leanings, and he puts Disraeli's "unusual literary career into critical and historical perspective." A solid purchase for any biography collection. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Robert Blake (1916-2003) was the pre-eminent Tory historian of his day. In addition to his masterpiece, his biography of Disraeli, his books include Bonar Law: The Unknown Prime Minister

This was my first thorough-going biography of a great British statesman and remarkable literary figure as well. It goes thoroughly into all aspects of his life, politics and writing. I found it no hagiography, but an effort to show Disraeli warts and all. Highly recommended!

Great author and subject!

There have been more recent biographies (this one is more than 50 years old), but probably none better. Very well written, very judicious and balanced. And what a subject--Disraeli was a fascinating man, hugely important as a political figure and a major novelist to boot.

This is a good history of what Disraeli did throughout his life. I thought I knew a fair amount about British politics, but I found myself referring to other histories to find out, for example, what the contents were of the many proposed Reform Bills, or which party many not-well-known politicians belonged to. Unless you are expert, prepare to use a lot of wikis.

Very readable biography of Disraeli by someone of seemingly liberal (classical type, not modern progressive type) persuasions yet does a good job of seeing both sides of this rock of the practice of practical Toryism. Gives good background on both personal and political matters. Worth the read.

Blake's style is immediate and lively. His table of contents is very helpful, especially since his account of Disraeli's personal and professional life is so detailed and well sourced.

British Benjamin Disraeli's struggles were not unlike those of any modern-day young man in the U.S. with an eye for contributing politically. Captivating, encouraging.

Met expectations.

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