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**NEW TITLES**


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*History***A PERSONAL HISTORY**

by A. J. P. Taylor  
Atheneum, 1983  
278 pp. \$14.95

Taylor, 77, a British historian, has enjoyed both academic acclaim and general popularity during his lifetime. While some colleagues disparaged his success as a newspaper columnist and television debater, none could deny that he was a master of his profession. Taylor's 27 books are scholarly, readable and often provocative. In *The Origins of the Second World War* (1961), he argued that the Great Powers stumbled into a conflict because of diplomatic blunders on *both* sides. The story of his solitary and bookish life, from his Lancashire boyhood to his career as a Manchester and Oxford don, is less absorbing. But as a picture of mandarin irresponsibility, it is instructive. Taylor's reflections on the political events that shaped this century and his own life seem willfully iconoclastic: The man "who was never troubled by communism" believed that Stalin's first Five-Year Plan was nothing more than "socialism in action"; Britain's intervention in the Suez Crisis in 1956 was "comparable to Hitler's invasion of Poland"; the Soviet invasion of Hungary (1956) was all for the better. Taylor rehashes old academic squabbles and indulges in disingenuous self-mockery, claiming that he was regarded "as pretty much of a joke" in school, that he learned "precisely nothing" while a student at Oxford, and that he never became a great historian. But most of Taylor's works prove otherwise.

**LANDSCAPE  
TURNED RED:**

**The Battle of Antietam**  
by Stephen W. Sears  
Ticknor & Fields, 1983  
431 pp. \$17.95

On the sunny morning of September 17, 1862, George B. McClellan's Army of the Potomac met Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia outside the village of Antietam, Maryland. Twelve hours later, 22,719 Americans lay dead or wounded, casualties of a day of fierce, inconclusive struggle, a day that still ranks as the bloodiest in American history. Sears, a former *American Heritage* editor,