
Reviews

John Blewitt (ed.), *William Morris and John Ruskin: A New Road On Which The World Should Travel*, University of Exeter Press, Exeter 2019; 204pp; ISBN 9781905816279, £75.00, hbk; ISBN 9781905816347, £30.00, pbk

John Ruskin and William Morris were two of Victorian Britain's most important cultural figures. Ruskin was the preeminent art critic of his generation, the author of seminal works such as *Modern Painters* and *The Stones of Venice*, a philanthropist and an educationalist. William Morris was a poet, artist, writer, designer and entrepreneur. Morris was strongly influenced by Ruskin and acknowledged an intellectual debt to him.

Ruskin and Morris criticised Britain's industrial capitalism and both men influenced British socialism. Although Ruskin described himself as 'a violent Tory of the old school', his writings shaped the views of many labour movement activists, and he was the author mentioned most frequently in a survey of the books which shaped the views of Labour and 'Lib-Lab' MPs elected in the 1906 General Election. William Morris was a member of the Social Democratic Federation (SDF), Britain's first Marxist organisation, founded the Socialist League and later established the Hammersmith Socialist Society.

This volume has been published by the William Morris Society, established to develop knowledge of William Morris' ideas and work. The book commemorates the bicentenary of John Ruskin's birth in 1819, and is a collection of essays centred on the relationship between Ruskin and Morris. Contributors examine Ruskin's influence on Morris and the similarities and dissimilarities between the two men. The book's title is taken from Morris' preface to an edition of 'The Nature of Gothic', a well-known section of the second volume of Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice*, in which Morris wrote 'To some of us when we first read it ... it seemed to point out a new road on which the world should travel ...'

The book comprises an introduction and thirteen articles by different authors. Eleven of them have already been published on the *Journal of the William Morris Society*, while two contributions have been written especially for the book.

Several articles analyse Ruskin's thought. Ruskin has been accused of holding strongly patriarchal attitudes but John Brownell challenges this view. In 'John Ruskin; Patron of Patriarch?', Brownell points to Ruskin's

advocacy of improved education for girls, his patronage of the female social reformer Octavia Hill, and his championing of female artists and concludes Ruskin's attitude to women was progressive by mid-Victorian standards.

Sara Atwood's contribution, "'This link between the Earth and Man": Ruskin, Nature and Education' explores Ruskin's belief that the study of nature was an essential element in education and that knowledge of nature was a *sine qua non* for great art. Ruskin was passionate about protecting the natural world from industrial society and actively campaigned against proposed developments which he believed threatened the natural environment.

'Ruskin's Tory Paternalism' by John Blewitt analyses Ruskin's political and social philosophy. He did not believe in liberty and equality and opposed universal equal suffrage, advocating additional votes for those who were older or held positions of responsibility. Ruskin denounced the slave trade but refused to condemn all forms of slavery. He was a paternalistic Conservative and advocated a hierarchical society in which a benevolent ruling elite governed an obedient and deferential population.

A major aim of the book is to assess Ruskin's influence on Morris' views. In his article 'Ruskin and Morris', Peter Faulkner discusses the ways in which Ruskin inspired and impressed Morris. Morris was pivotal in founding the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and held Ruskin's comments on building restoration in such high regard that he had a passage from Ruskin's *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* incorporated in SPAB's statement of aims. Jacques Migeon argues persuasively that the design of the Red House, Morris' iconic house in Kent, was inspired by Ruskin's Edinburgh lectures on architecture and painting. In 'Morris and Pre-Raphaelitism', Peter Faulkner describes how Ruskin and Morris admired and supported the Pre-Raphaelites.

Christopher Shaw in his article 'William Morris and the Division of Labour; The Idea of Work in *News from Nowhere*' discusses Morris' utopian novel which depicts a future socialist Britain where the division of labour no longer exists. 'The Nature of Gothic', in which Ruskin wrote of the deleterious effects of the division of labour, deeply impressed Morris and inspired his vision of a utopia without the division of labour.

However, several contributors also look at the dissimilarities between Ruskin and Morris. In 'Laxey Mill: Ruskin's Parallel to Merton Abbey' David Faldet compares and contrasts Morris' textile and glass works at Merton Abbey with a textile mill which Ruskin established at Laxey in the Isle of Man and notes the differences in their roles. Ruskin never

actually visited the Laxey mill and his manager ran it, while Morris was actively involved in management and production at Merton Abbey and acted as both entrepreneur and artisan.

The most obvious divide between Ruskin and Morris was the political one between Ruskin's paternalistic conservatism and the revolutionary socialism Morris espoused in the 1880s. In 'From Art to Politics: William Morris and John Ruskin', Lawrence Goldman looks at their diverging political paths and is especially interesting on the political experiences which radicalised Morris. Both men supported the Eastern Question Association and SPAB though Morris was the more active. As a result of his involvement in the Eastern Question Association, Morris became deeply disenchanted with the Conservative government for supporting Ottoman Turkey's oppressive rulers and with the Liberals for ending their protests against this policy in response to jingoistic public sentiment. His work in SPAB convinced him that it was commercialism which threatened Britain's architectural heritage and this led him to socialism. After supporting the Liberals in the 1880 General Election, he became totally disillusioned with parliamentary politics because of the Liberal Government's failure to introduce social reforms and its policies in Ireland and Egypt. He severed all ties with the Liberals and in 1883 joined the Democratic Federation (which became the SDF). Goldman's account helps explain the origins of Morris' determined opposition to parliamentary activity when he was a member of the SDF and the Socialist League.

The book provides a stimulating account of the work of Ruskin and Morris and a cogent analysis of the relationship between them. The republished articles appeared separately between 1977 and 2012 but create a coherent picture of the intellectual development and cultural legacy of the men. Not all the diverse activities of Ruskin and Morris are covered in detail. Morris was a leading personality in the small British socialist movement of the 1880s and his socialist activism distinguished him from Ruskin but his participation in socialist politics is mentioned only briefly. Nonetheless, the book is a lucid analysis of the relationship between Ruskin and Morris and a thoughtful assessment of their importance in British cultural history.

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Duncan Bowie, *The Radical and Socialist Tradition in British Planning: From Puritan colonies to garden cities*, Routledge, Abingdon 2016; viii + 224pp; ISBN 9781472479020, £125.00, hbk; ISBN 9781138616561, £38.99, pbk; ISBN 9781315553672, £19.50, ebk

In 1909 the Liberal government passed the pioneering Housing and Town Planning Act. The idea of town planning was in the air. The journal *Garden Cities* renamed itself *Garden Cities and Town Planning*. The National Housing Reform Council had also renamed itself the National Housing and Town Planning Council. Raymond Unwin, who with Barry Parker had been one of the pioneers at Letchworth and New Earswick, published his *Town Planning in Practice* – perhaps the grandest example of the new literature of public advocacy of the ‘art of designing cities and suburbs’. It seems straightforward to locate these developments within the milieu of Edwardian progressivism, through Fabian Tracts, the New Liberalism, the London County Council and a wider public concern with natural amenity, the built environment and the democratisation of land use.

This will be familiar territory to many readers of *Socialist History*, and in the final chapters of this book Duncan Bowie provides a rich documentation which ties together numerous strands of advocacy and public activism. What, however, was the real revelation of Bowie’s survey, at least for this reader, was to see how far back the roots of this tradition can be traced. Beginning with the Puritans, Bowie takes the reader through a whole series of landmarks, some more familiar than others, including campaigns, treatises, utopias, land plans and social experiments as variously propounded (*inter alia*) by Benthamites, Owenites, Saint-Simonians, Chartists, Christian Socialists and a gamut of later socialists, reformers and labour movement activists. It would be quite wrong to see it only as a source book. Nevertheless, Bowie does draw upon a formidable range of primary sources and gives them space to speak for themselves. On many of the specific themes he considers, there is also an extensive secondary literature which he also draws upon extensively, with a note on sources following each chapter. Nevertheless, he also indicates significant gaps in the literature, including the absence of any study in English of the contribution of early nineteenth-century socialist theories to the politics of the built environment. In highlighting the democratic character of many of these movements, he also provides a sort of counter-narrative to those accounts stitched together from various examples of philanthropy and paternalism culminating in ventures like Bournville and Port Sunlight. Bowie states that one of his objects in writing the book was to give

planning students and practitioners a better sense of their own history. Nevertheless, anyone interested in the broader history of Britain's radical and socialist movements will learn a good deal from reading this book.

In some key aspects the account Bowie provides could perhaps have been developed further. The most obvious of them, which one feels sure must be down to the publishers, is the visual one. The often vivid textual extracts are crying out for images and line-plans complementing the text as they do in so many of the sources cited. Given the effort that has clearly gone into pulling together this material, the least it could have done with is a cover image and one would love to think that there might at some point be an illustrated edition. I would also have been interested to know more about the exchange of ideas across national boundaries. This isn't entirely absent from the book, particularly in its colonial aspects and in the fascinating chapter on the influence of the French utopian socialists. Nevertheless, if one glances at Unwin's *Town Planning in Practice*, the first thing one notices is its international frame of reference, with its German frontispiece and illustrations, and folded plans of Rothenburg and the Nuremberg extension plan, and references in later editions to town planning exhibitions of Berlin and Düsseldorf. Is this also a tradition that can be traced further back? Are certain political movements drawn towards particular international exemplars, or is there a shift in these over time – for example, from France to Germany? There are some interesting pointers in Bowie's account, like the example of the Germanophile Manchester planner T.C. Horsfall. Nevertheless, in the sequential treatment followed it is difficult to pick up these threads and they might have merited a separate chapter.

I should also be very interested to read the sequel which the book so clearly deserves. Bowie leaves the story with the institutionalisation of planning before the First World War. Perhaps that can also be viewed as the internationalisation of planning, looking ahead towards the international modern and Le Corbusier's Ville Radieuse. Bowie has some strong words regarding the relinquishing by modern planners of any real public good or public purpose. Against this he seeks to recover a pluralist, decentralising socialist tradition which can be set against what he describes as the dominant neo-liberal perspectives within contemporary planning discourse. To a very considerable degree he achieves his aim; and yet the reader is left somewhat in suspense as to what could have happened to that moment of promise before the First World War. I was reminded slightly of Ken Loach's film *The Spirit of 1945* where one is brought with a jolt from Attlee's hour to Margaret Thatcher's without any real sense of how we got there. Within its stated parameters Bowie has provided a fascinating

account that can be thoroughly recommended. Nevertheless, one would love to hear his further reflections on what became of this radical and socialist tradition in planning over the course of the twentieth century.

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Richard J. Evans, *Eric Hobsbawm: A Life in History*, Little, Brown, London 2019; 785pp; ISBN 9781408707418, £35.00, hbk

As Richard Evans remarks at the very beginning of his impressive biography, when Eric Hobsbawm died in 2012 at the age of 95 he ‘had for some years been the best known and most widely read historian in the world’. Even relatively less successful works were translated into several languages selling in tens of thousands. What many regard as his crowning achievement *The Age of Extremes* completed at the age of seventy-eight eventually appeared in thirty languages. In Brazil, where a visit by Hobsbawm made front page news, it topped the best seller list with no less than an astounding 265,000 sales. Amongst the thousand messages of condolence that flowed in on news of his death was one from the Brazilian president. The memorial meeting held in London in April 2013 heard a tribute from Eric’s friend Giorgio Napolitano, the President of Italy. Another memorial was held in New York.

Evans has reconstructed Hobsbawm’s life in meticulous and comprehensive fashion. To do so he has made full use of the extensive archive which filled the Hobsbawm home and much of which is now housed at Warwick University. It contains everything from the records of his literary earnings to family letters going back to the late 1920s as well as the private diary written in German through his teenage years, during the war and again as his first marriage was foundering. This invaluable personal archive is supplemented by material from public and college archives in Italy, France and the USA as well as England, in the many places that Hobsbawm left traces of his passage. In addition Evans conducted over twenty interviews with Hobsbawm’s family, friends, colleagues, former students and literary agents. Nor has he overlooked the now available files of MI5 which wasted time and public money following and – unknown to him – frustrating Hobsbawm’s army career; during the 1950s his conversations at Communist Party Headquarters and the Labour Research Department were systematically recorded by the spooks, who noted, alongside the weighty matter of ‘his slovenly dress’, the desirability of putting some pressure on the BBC not to employ him.

Hobsbawm's own autobiography, *Interesting Times: A Twentieth-Century Life* appeared in 2002. Despite the best efforts of his editor to persuade him to say more about his personal views, feelings and experiences the autobiography, as the title suggests, is much more about the times he experienced than an intimate self portrait. Evans certainly redresses the balance with personal details a-plenty. This is where to come if you want to know what Hobsbawm thought of his university history tutors (not much), why he felt he achieved nothing in the army except digging a few holes or what his students thought of him (a great deal). From his birth in Alexandria to a British father and an Austrian mother, both of Jewish extraction, to his final resting place in Highgate cemetery next to Karl Marx, Evans tells us much we might want to know about Hobsbawm's long and eventful life and some things we might not, correcting amongst other details his subject's recollection of where he lost his virginity. It is all here: the pain of a first marriage unwisely undertaken, the contentment that came with his second; between the two his liaison with a married woman resulting in the birth of a son who sadly would predecease him and a relationship with a young prostitute who shared his love of jazz and subsequently became a family friend; his journey from childhood poverty, domestic instability, and an itinerant existence (orphaned at the age of 14) to great affluence, the comfort of a six-bedroom home near Hampstead Heath and a settled if energetic lifestyle. It seems that Hobsbawm never quite got the hang of being well off; he was not keen on paying for a taxi and was known to comment on the cost of items of food bought by his wife. He also expressed some qualms, after years of being blocked for promotion, as the establishment took him to its bosom, wondering 'how to keep my bona fides as an old Bolshevik, itself now a very fuddy duddy and respectable role by the standards of the young insurrectionists' (cited p482). Elections to the British Academy and the Athenaeum Club in Pall Mall ('more Bishops anywhere in the world except the Vatican') were ultimately followed by the offer of a knighthood from Tony Blair. He turned down it electing instead to be a Companion of Honour because his mother would have wished him to do so, a decision apparently eased by the knowledge that he was following the example of the celebrated trade unionist Jack Jones. Hobsbawm was now a world away from the partly bohemian existence of his years before his second marriage in 1962. But his path-breaking 1959 study of *Primitive Rebels* remained his favourite book because of the pleasure that it had given him. Evans comments that Hobsbawm's preoccupation with pre-industrial, millenarian and anarchist forms of resistance was 'all of a piece' with his life among the marginal deviant and nonconformist denizens

of Soho clubs' and 'his critical appreciation of jazz as a form of unorganized and cultural rebellion' (p383).

The younger Hobsbawm was capable of a rather determined waywardness. During his wartime service in the army, first in the royal engineers and then the educational corps he was reprimanded for ill judged propaganda and forbidden to teach current affairs. MI5 decided that (unlike some Communists) he was unfit for the Intelligence Corps. The war over, Hobsbawm returned to Cambridge where he had previously graduated with starred firsts to embark on a PhD; but he nearly came to grief when the authorities, enquiring why he was not in residence, were shocked to learn that he had also been appointed to a lectureship in Economic and Social History at Birkbeck College. He was rescued from this irregular situation by the intervention of his supervisor, the eminent Professor of Economic History Michael Postan, and the University kept him on provided he gave up his college scholarship. Postan rescued Eric again when he failed to present his completed thesis in the correct format! Somehow he got away with it just as he did when the Communist Party leadership, though infuriated by his determination to continue working with former colleagues and comrades who had defected after the crises of 1956 to the hostile *Universities and Left Review*, shrank from expelling him because of his obvious talent. Evans with some justice observes that Hobsbawm wanted to have his Communist cake and eat it.

Otherwise, however, Evans does not add anything of substance to what is known about the leading role played by the party historians in opposing the leadership's handling of the crises which racked the Communist movement in 1956. Certainly the hitherto unused MI5 recordings of private conversations at party headquarters in which Hobsbawm's recalcitrance was pondered reveal a deep loss of trust and not a little animosity that lasted for some time. They do not however sustain Evans' assertions that intellectuals as such 'were still barely tolerated' within the ranks of the party (p462) or that 'the Party despised intellectuals' (p621). As an active member for over thirty years this is news to me. Hobsbawm himself did not suggest anything like that despite cautioning a friend against joining the party because he would waste much time arguing with Stalinists. Some of the Stalinists were intellectuals nonetheless, and Hobsbawm discusses one or two of them in his autobiography. It is true, as Evans underlines, that Hobsbawm, exasperated by the British Party's slowness to reform after 1956 found a more appealing intellectual milieu in the Italian Communist Party. Unfortunately Evans persistently refers to 'The' party in reified fashion as though it was a monolithic unchanging entity offering Hobsbawm only an

uncomfortable home. Even in the years when his relationship with the leadership had barely recovered from the aftermath of 1956 Hobsbawm did not simply take his bat home. In 1960 and 1963 after visits to Cuba and to Latin America Hobsbawm gave personal briefings to the party's International Committee, as Evans duly notes. Evans is less careful when he comes to 1968 and the fallout from the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Here he refers merely to the bitter debates within the party from which he says Hobsbawm distanced himself, only making clear his support for Dubček's model of democratic socialism a decade later. Unwary readers, ill-served by Evans' failure to mention that 'The' Party actually condemned the Soviet invasion, might easily infer that nothing much had changed since the crises of 1956. Evans also overlooks Hobsbawm's expressed view in 1984 that the British Communist Party had served the labour moment well and deserved to have a future. He may perhaps be forgiven for not knowing that some of the eminent historians who left the party in 1956 had by this time felt able to renew their ties with it.

Less acceptable is the credence which Evans gives to the idea that Hobsbawm was one of the intellectual founding fathers of New Labour. Neither his seminal lecture on the 'Forward March of Labour Halted' in 1978 – essentially an empirical survey of 'what had happened to the British working class over the past century' – nor the essays reprinted as the *Politics for a Rational Left* in 1989 pointed towards the Blairite third way; in the last edition of *Marxism Today* in 1998 Hobsbawm tore into Blair's Thatcherite conception of modernity and his acquiescence before the forces of globalisation. Where Evans is right is in stressing that in the 1980s Hobsbawm's prime concern was to promote the need for the broadest possible alliance of democratic forces and parties to defeat Thatcherism. This undoubtedly implied a rejection of the left sectarianism and entryism which was besetting the Labour Party; but there is absolutely no suggestion in the essays of a retreat from socialist objectives which he reaffirmed. Nor did his approach set him apart from the Communist Party; not only was the concept of broad democratic alliance embedded in its programme but as Hobsbawm acknowledged it was the party that had initiated and facilitated the debate through its journal *Marxism Today*. Evans's claim that 'in terms of practical politics Hobsbawm was always closer to the British Labour Party' (p661) does not really amount to much. True, he interviewed Neil Kinnock, who was leading the struggle against the sectarian left, for *Marxism Today* but only, as Evans notes, to be disappointed with the result. Unless Evans has held something back from his explorations of the Hobsbawm archive there is not a jot of evidence that, except

for a short period as a teenage member, Hobsbawm ever thought about joining the Labour Party even in the company of those comrades who did so after the CPGB was dissolved in 1991. It is perhaps worth adding that although the Blairite Labour Party did indeed make some positive moves towards an alliance with the Liberal Party they were not carried through; the 'broad church' proved to be much more about isolating the left rather than creating an anti-Thatcherite bloc as conceived by Hobsbawm.

The advice offered by Hobsbawm in the 1980s came almost directly from his experiences in the 1930s when his communism took shape, specifically in Berlin where he and his sister were dispatched after their mother's death to live with entrepreneurial but none too successful uncle and aunt. Although Hobsbawm lived in Berlin for less than two years before they all moved to London these were hugely significant ones as Evans shows in some of his moist vivid passages. With capitalism apparently on the brink of collapse, Hitler on the brink of power and growing political violence on the streets the young Hobsbawm was almost immediately drawn into the orbit of Germany's mass and youthful Communist Party. Inspired by Bertolt Brecht and *The Communist Manifesto* which he found in the school library, followed by an abortive attempt to read *Das Kapital*, he joined the Socialist School Students League, spent evenings in communist pubs debating the desperate political situation and in some trepidation stuffed leaflets through letterboxes. He took part in the Communists' last great public demonstration in January 1933 before the emerging dictatorship started killing them in their thousands. For the young teenager these were heady and exciting days. Just over three years later in much happier circumstances he travelled to Paris to share in the euphoria engendered by the election of a popular front government.

He went to a mass rally addressed by the Communist leader Maurice Thorez and sang revolutionary songs afterwards on the metro. The following day, Bastille Day, he recorded was 'the greatest and most impressive afternoon of my experience'. 'Can you imagine' he wrote to his cousin Ron 'a million people on the streets quite crazy with joy. Absolutely dead drunk with the consciousness of their unity and strength' (cited p102). The years of anti-fascist struggle were for Hobsbawm, as for so many others, critical in forging his commitment to the Communist cause, his sense of belonging to an international movement for human liberation. It was a commitment he retained until his old age even as the great hopes and movements of his youth were disappearing. What he also retained as a result of his early political experiences was the need for the widest possible unity of progressive forces against those of fascism and reaction.

Communist antipathy towards social democrats, often labelled social fascists, had contributed to disaster in Germany; his joyful celebrations in France would have been unimaginable had the line not been hurriedly reversed. Decades later both his historical and political writing revealed the enduring effect of these experiences.

Hobsbawm's youthful commitment to Communism did not come, however without considerable angst as he struggled to reconcile his sense of political duty with a desire to fulfil his intellectual potential. Despite being obliged to change both his primary and schools in Vienna before attending a Berlin *Gymnasium* (much devoted to the classics) the only criticism of his work appeared to be his handwriting. Arriving at the very public-school-like Marylebone Grammar in the spring of 1933 he had just the summer term to prepare for eight examination subjects he knew little about (though no sciences) and in a language he had never used at school. He passed everything gaining distinctions in both History and English. Even more revealing is the extraordinary breadth and quality of the youngster's reading. In 1934 he made a substantial list of Marxist classics he had got through including volume I of *Capital* and Lenin's *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*, more than enough to turn the average seventeen year old off Marxism for good. I hope he declared that 'I will grow so far into dialectical materialism that I don't come out of it' (cited p57). Equally impressive was his astonishing appetite for literature in English, French, German and Latin. Evans tells us in that in the last week of March and the first week of April in 1935 Hobsbawm's reading included Proust's *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, Thomas Mann's *Königliche Hoheit*, the first four books of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the first fifteen chapters of Boswell's *Life of Dr Johnson*, poems by Wilfred Owen, Donne, Housman, letters by Dryden and Pope and works by Jean Paul, Gotthold Lessing, Maupassant and others. He even read metaphysical poets on a cycling and camping holiday. Although he read little straight history he had more than a passing acquaintance with a galaxy of left wing historical heroes.

Despite his evidently exceptional abilities, well recognised by his school, Evans observes that Hobsbawm like a typical teenager 'felt aimless, uncertain of whether to plunge himself into some activity or retreat into an ivory tower' (p80). In addition he carried a heavy sense of political obligation and a precocious self-awareness. Was not being an intellectual, he asked his diary simply a way of concealing his "un Bolshevik" behaviour and his adherence to bourgeois convention? (p68) 'If one did not devote oneself completely to the destruction of capitalism' was one not a traitor? (cited p77) Fleetinglly he toyed with the idea of becoming a party

full timer although he did not think he would be a very effective organiser. His doubts about the course he chose continued to haunt him into the early years of his academic career. Although 'he shocked some of his conservative colleagues by dressing casually and wearing white gym shoes when teaching' he felt that his attachment to conventional society inhibited his commitment to change it (pp293, 301). Was it not just a luxury to pretend that being a good historian gives the party kudos? (p280) After all, intellectuals produced their best work when in touch with people. Retreat into ivory tower meant they produced nothing of worth (p302).

Eventually Hobsbawm calmed his demons and settled for being a middle class intellectual rather than a street fighter. Despite his youthful Bohemian side he was in some ways very much a man of his age and not of the 1960s about which he later wrote so brilliantly. His cultural attitudes as described by Evans remind me of those of my own Communist father who similarly joined the Party in the mid 1930s. Hobsbawm disliked the music of Bob Dylan and declared that nothing of the Beatles would survive in twenty years time, one prediction he got badly wrong! Like my own father he disapproved of the preoccupation of young radicals with sex. Pop music he regarded as a vehicle for the debasement of culture on behalf of big business and in 1960 he urged teachers to stem the tide by introducing folk and jazz into the classroom. Politically as well, Evans confirms that Hobsbawm was critical of much that many others considered progressive: he was impatient with identity politics, political correctness, the changing varieties of feminism and saw little potential in the student agitation in 1968 Paris. Although highly sympathetic to the New Left which emerged out of the crisis of 1956 he felt it was a shambles lacking an organised expression. Here perhaps lies an additional and very simple reason to explain why Hobsbawm maintained his membership of the Communist Party: a fairly straightforward conviction about the role of political parties.

By this time the Communist Party itself had become less demanding. It was no longer the all-consuming machine of the 1930s – vividly described in Hobsbawm's autobiography – and exclusive dedication to its cause became a matter of individual choice rather than expectation. This was fortunate for Hobsbawm, for History in all its senses as well as for the millions of his readers. Evans incorporates discussion of Hobsbawm's scholarly and political works *seriatim* as he takes us through the contrasting phases of his life. This has the advantage of placing his writing in its historiographical, cultural and political context. Evans's judicious and overwhelmingly sympathetic summaries of the reception given to each of the major works gives short shrift to nit-pickers and prejudiced reviewers and offers an interesting

approach for the academically minded. It is, however, not the easiest way to arrive at an overview of their cumulative impact. Their sheer scope epitomised by the four 'ages' books covering the history of capitalism but also everything else from a pioneering essay on 'The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century', to 'Social Banditry from Brazil to China', from essays on Marxism to a study of Jazz would make such an appraisal a daunting task. Evans wisely avoids it in what is essentially an exploration of Hobsbawm's fascinating life. But he is clear about a couple of things. The first is Hobsbawm's immense contribution to the 'historiographical revolution' which for the first time gave social history a presence at the academic table and moved university history away from its 'British insularity and the fact-clogged courses of most of the Dons' (p127) encountered by Hobsbawm at Cambridge. This endeavour was crucially helped by the success of *Past and Present*, founded by the Communist Historians in 1952 and whose editors, Marxist and otherwise, shared as Hobsbawm later observed 'a common hostility to the sort of articles which would get into the *English Historical Review*' (cited p317). Its remit was 'nothing less', says Evans, 'than to counter the leading historiographical trends of the post war era in Britain' by developing a broad comprehensive concept of history in touch with neighbouring disciplines, notably the social sciences. For many students of my generation, coming to university in the early 1960s, the journal was a beacon of light in a world where Stubbs' constitutional charters and suchlike were still an inescapable part of the curriculum. Secondly, of course, the impact of Hobsbawm's prodigious output goes way beyond British academia and Evans finds the right note on which to conclude. 'A major part of his global appeal, along with his vast breadth of knowledge', he observes, was 'his ability to illustrate historical argument with contemporary anecdote and quotation, and his gift for the telling vignette and the striking phrase' (p661). His works are assured of a worldwide readership for years to come.

David Parker

John Callaghan, Brendon O'Connor, Mark Phythian, *Ideologies of American Foreign Policy*, Routledge, Abingdon 2019; 196pp; ISBN 9780415474306, £120.00, hbk; ISBN 9780415474313, £32.99, pbk

Given the importance of the United States in the international arena, understanding what drives this global hegemon is vital. Indeed, some would argue it is essential not simply for the wellbeing, but the very survival of the rest of the world. John Callaghan, Brendon O'Connor and Mark Phythian have

written an invaluable study on the crucial and yet much misunderstood area of foreign policy. Written in accessible language, the authors bring clarity plus a coherent and balanced analysis of the role of ideology in the foreign policy of the United States from its emergence as a global force and its journey to becoming a world and then the hegemonic power. Good history as well as good political science, the authors begin from the premise that ideologies facilitate understanding via explanatory patterns and frameworks from which meaning can be derived. The authors insightfully probe and demonstrate the significance of ideas in US foreign policy by drawing on a range of US administrations, considering key speeches and doctrines, as well as private conversations. In doing so, the authors present a comprehensive account of how and why ideology was so important. They show how key sets of ideas, from anti-colonialism and anti-communism to realism and neo-conservatism, were crucial to the way in which specific presidencies projected and explained their foreign policy decisions and, moreover, how these were sustained through successive administrations.

Although many scholars have addressed American ideology, the authors point out that the role of ideology in US foreign policy is 'understudied and only poorly understood' (p1). Because the influence of ideas is difficult to measure with precision, academics, particularly in the field of political science, have rather avoided giving prominence to ideas in the study of foreign policy. Hence the authors devote their first chapter, supported by useful diagrammatic models, to an exceptionally helpful survey that addresses the question of ideology in general and then in direct relation to American foreign policy. The types of beliefs and traditions they examine are those associated with the notions of American exceptionalism, American idealism and ideas related to American greatness, values and myths at the core of American nationalism. These ideas frequent presidential speeches, especially inaugural and State of the Union addresses, most particularly in times of war. At the heart of US foreign policy discourse are expressions for support of democracy, often articulated in the language of freedom, the latter used to conflate the benefits of capitalism and democracy. Of notable significance was the Cold War era shift from an emphasis on democracy to an emphasis on freedom. The Cold War context required that freedom be presented as constantly under threat and America ever vigilant in its defence, determined to prevent it being overturned by the enemies of freedom.

As the book explains, America was of course imagined and, as expressed in the Gettysburg Address, created in homage to a proposition. During the eighteenth century, as national consciousness developed, the

idea of America was strengthened along with the concept of Americans as a chosen people, leading to the consequential conviction, an official creed in effect, of America as an elect redeemer nation. Born of an anti-colonial revolt, America adopted a political religion, eloquently articulated in its quasi-sacrosanct Constitution, which drew powerfully from the liberal Enlightenment and bequeathed a religious sense of its own innocence in a corrupt world. It was a foundation on which it was effectively to build in the twentieth century, the century of ideologies born in an earlier epoch – nationalism, socialism, communism, conservatism and liberalism. Fascism also derived from what came before.

The book addresses how Woodrow Wilson, with his ambition to re-make the world in America's self-image and belief that righteous nations held a special relationship with God, succeeded in identifying the US with peace, liberty and democracy. At a time when the world was mostly made up of colonies and dependencies, Wilson's merging of American self-interest with universal values, especially consent and equality, secured a global appeal that eclipsed the violent overthrow of imperialism advocated by the Bolsheviks. In the ideological Cold War battle for hearts and minds that followed the Second World War, the Americans successfully portrayed the Soviet Union as a 'ruthless, ideologically driven, totalitarian aggressor, bent on world domination'. It was a projection that depicted the Soviets as 'uniquely evil' and the Cold War as a Manichean struggle between good and evil (p41). The importance of securing the ideological contest was revealed in the, at the time secret, policy document NSC-68, drafted in April 1968 by Paul Nitze, Director of Policy Planning for the State Department. The authors stress the importance of NSC-68 as a defining document that framed the Cold War 'in almost purely ideological terms', arguing that the US saw in the Soviet Union a global challenge that meant: 'Even military victory, though war might be necessary, was no adequate substitute for ideological struggle' (p43).

A chapter is devoted to the 'bold and simplistic' ideology of anti-communism, the way in which it became 'fixed', its significance internally on domestic politics and its influence on the foreign policies of presidents Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy. The rise and fall of Joe McCarthy is examined along with the impact of 'McCarthyism'. It also looks at how anti-communism meant promoting reactionary versions of Islam (Saudi Arabia), supporting feudal states resistant to reform and progress (Oman), orchestrating regime change via continual coups (Syria amongst others), maintaining military presence in critical regions (the Middle East), and overt intervention in favour of the status quo. A chapter is also devoted to

the Vietnam War, considered by numerous scholars as the price America paid for its anti-communist ideology.

Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger are presented as replacing the ideological language of exceptionalism and moral purpose with Realism. However, as the authors point out, Realism itself is an ideological construct and there was clear continuity with previous presidential policies. Nonetheless, foreign policy under Nixon and Kissinger has come increasingly to be viewed as ‘anathema to American values’ (p125). It was Ronald Reagan, of course, with his simple freedom-loving worldview and belief in the moral superiority of the American system, whose rhetoric appeared to intensify the presentation of the Cold War as an ideological struggle, one in which there would be a winner and a loser. Reagan certainly presented the Cold War as a morality play with biblical overtones. His Manichean worldview had a significant impact on American foreign policy toward the Third World. The authors argue, moreover, that the Iran-Contra scandal was graver than Watergate and, had greater accountability standards been applied, could have led to Reagan’s impeachment and dismissal.

The final chapter provides an incisive analysis of the legacy of America’s ideological crusades. The authors argue that although the Cold War ended in 1991, the worldview it instigated continued, including the extensive use of religious imagery, reflected in the presidency of Donald Trump.

The authors effectively bring valuable new perspectives and fresh insights to the field. They most certainly achieve their aim of showing that all presidencies had an ideological character to them and persuasively demonstrate and explain ideological continuities across administrations, as well as the particularities of specific presidencies. This book is highly recommended for all teachers and students of American history, politics and culture, and a must for reading lists and libraries.

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Richard Lawrence Jordan, *Paisleyism and Civil Rights: An Ambassador Unchained*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 2018, 290pp; ISBN 9781527516434, £61.99, hbk

For a long time it was almost *de rigueur* to insist that the conflict in Northern Ireland, obliquely referred to as the Troubles, was not about religion. More recently, however, an increasing number of scholars are examining the religious dimension of the struggle and recognising that even if the conflict itself

was not about religion, the religious played a key role in it from beginning to end and at all levels. The most well known, and indeed the most notorious, was the Reverend Ian Paisley. Richard Lawrence Jordan's analysis quite clearly seeks to understand Paisley the man and the influences and forces that drove him. Jordan argues that Paisley's activism, particularly in the early part of 1972, the year when communal relations hardened into an irreversible sectarian conflict, thwarted attempts to resolve the escalating, sectarian divide. He also shows how in aggravating the animosity, Paisley courted martyrdom and conferred on himself prophetic status. Jordan seeks above all, however, to show that the Northern Ireland conflict was as much about theology as it was culture and politics, and that 'understanding the transatlantic connection between militant fundamentalists and civil rights adds an important dimension to the historiography' (p209).

Any author addressing the role of Ian Paisley in the Troubles and the subsequent peace process has to wrestle with his conversion to power sharing with his erstwhile adversaries. In his first book on Ian Paisley, *The Second Coming of Paisley: Militant Fundamentalism and Ulster Politics* (2013), Jordan conceded there was no obvious answer as to why the cleric-cum-politician agreed to share power with the very forces and people he had so ardently opposed throughout the Troubles. The second book, albeit concluding with a rhetorical question, seeks to suggest an answer. Compared to previous Paisley biographers, Jordan leans more toward the views put forward by the sociologist Professor Stephen Bruce, who treats Paisley and his followers with a discernible degree of empathy. In contrast stands the treatment accorded Paisley by the journalist Ed Moloney. Moloney discerned a great deal of opportunism in Paisley's theological approach, suggesting that Paisley was '... the only member of his own flock who never really or fully believed his own Gospel?' Paisley, of course, through a series of utterly irresponsible actions, had appeared determined to destroy the Good Friday Agreement. However, eventually he ended by supporting and promoting the 2006 St Andrew's Agreement, which paved the way for Sinn Fein and the Democratic Unionist Party to share power and work together. The St Andrews agreement was in many ways the equivalent of the Good Friday Agreement. Moreover, according to Moloney, in its defining elements the St Andrew's Agreement is indistinguishable from the 1974 Sunningdale Agreement, which Paisley had been instrumental in defeating.

Jordan examines how Paisley cultivated an image of himself as a prophet and of Northern Ireland as the last bastion of Protestantism in Europe, addressing in detail the actions and rhetoric that so outraged Paisley's critics. The thrust of the book is committed to explaining Paisley's

worldview and perspective and to take seriously the fears he expressed, and aroused, as genuine. Jordan examines how Paisley was a rowdy preacher whose anti-Catholic rants and predictions of Ulster's demise unquestionably served to inflame the Unionist community and provoke Loyalist violence. In addition, he carefully evaluates the evidence that suggests Paisley was deeply implicated with groups and individuals responsible for vicious, unlawful and consequential actions that exacerbated sectarianism. Jordan also shows how Paisley's indictments of Roman Catholics were matched by his indictments of mainstream Protestants. The latter he denounced as apostates, with ecumenical Christians coming in for particularly virulent condemnation and active opposition.

Jordan's treatment of the reverend gentleman inevitably covers a lot of the same ground as did his first foray into Paisleyism. There is a particular and distinct focus, however, on the influence of segregation on Paisley's militant and fundamentalist opposition to civil rights and the impact on him of the success of the American civil rights movement, which he personally witnessed during lengthy visits to his fundamentalist counterparts. Lawrence has carefully constructed an argument based on meticulous analysis of the transatlantic relationship that existed between Paisley and the likes of Bob Jones and Carl McIntire. Jordan argues this relationship is crucial to understanding Paisley's move from crusading opposition to republicanism to a remarkably cosy partnership with Sinn Fein minister Martin McGuinness, a former IRA commander. The two were disparagingly designated the 'Chuckle Brothers'. For Paisley's critics, the apparent friendship confirmed his opportunism. However, and interestingly, providing an element of support for Jordan's focus on theology, other research on religious personnel within Catholicism and mainstream Protestantism (see e.g. my website on 'Religious Voices on Conflict Resolution, War and Peace') reveals a conviction that the two men were each imbued with deeply spiritual outlooks that formed the basis of their ability to bond and work together despite all that had trespassed.

Jordan gives thoughtful consideration to the Calvinist theology that united Paisley and his Christian fundamentalist counterparts in America. He particularly emphasises how civil rights activism in both the US and Northern Ireland was believed to contradict the key Calvinist tenets of human depravity and Election and its conception of a Christian magistrate. America's militant fundamentalists despised the theology of the most celebrated African-American civil rights leader, the Reverend Martin Luther King. Notably, it was King's perceived opposition to a Calvinist magistrate that most upset them. Paisley, like his North American counterparts,

considered civil disobedience opposed Calvinism. They also detected in the dissenters an intent to overthrow lawfully constituted government, of deep concern because the militants linked both communism and Catholicism to civil disobedience. Jordan argues that Paisley's admiration for southern political segregationists encouraged his own emerging opposition to Northern Ireland civil rights and his choosing to launch a counter-crusade that would not abide political marches opposing Unionist misgovernment. Paisley argued that civil rights activists really wanted to 'overthrow the state and enslave Bible Protestants in a Catholic and socialist regime' (p153). Notably, Paisley exceeded the tactics of American fundamentalists such as Carl McIntire whose politico-moral demonstrations were non-confrontational. In his determination to defend God's plan for mankind, Paisley moved from verbal threats and intimidating 'moral' protests to direct and disruptive confrontation meant to provoke disorder. His tactics, particularly when taken abroad to disrupt international meetings, for example World Council of Churches' ecumenical gatherings, caused divisions with the International Council of Christian Churches, a global fellowship of militant fundamentalists established after the Second World War by McIntire to address global concerns, not least of course communism. Paisley's behaviour was seen by some as hurting the ICCC.

Paisley of course was unperturbed and undeterred and was to move further from a strict interpretation of Calvinist doctrine by personally engaging with electoral politics and founding a political party, the DUP. Jordan argues that Paisley's political outlook evolved and changed as civil rights led to IRA activism and the subsequent mayhem of the Troubles: Paisley and the Free Presbyterian Church re-interpreted Calvin's argument that Christ did not want his ministers to be civil rulers, and granted their moderator a dispensation ... In order to maintain vigilance for the Elect, a prophetic minister could intervene into profane affairs' (p209). In this, importantly, Paisley retained the support of North American fundamentalists, with McIntire and Bob Jones University supporting his political aspirations. Jordan concludes by noting that Paisley could have written theological discourses on the Troubles, but that he realised that his theological concerns about Bible Protestantism and the civil rights of the Elect would be better protected by secular politics than a traditional Calvinist magistrate. Jordan has brought a new perspective to the study of Paisley that adds to existing knowledge and moves forward the debates surrounding this still contentious figure.

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Jeffrey Leddin, *The 'Labour Hercules': The Irish Citizen Army and Irish Republicanism, 1913–1923*, Irish Academic Press, Newbridge 2019, 304pp; ISBN 978178855074, £21.00, pbk

As an armed organisation of Irish workers, and a body that played a pivotal role in the planning and execution of the Easter Rising in 1916, the Irish Citizen Army (ICA) has an undoubted claim to genuine historical significance and importance. Founded in 1913, and led at various points by both James Larkin and James Connolly, it has been described by Daithi Mac an Mhaistir as the world's first working class army (*The Irish Citizen Army: The World's First Working Class Army*, 2016), and arguably became one committed to the eradication of both capitalism and imperialism from Ireland. Yet, despite the organisation's importance and centrality to the most significant event in twentieth-century Irish history, the ICA has provoked very little interest from academic historians. For many decades, those wishing to learn about the organisation had to rely on slim volumes and reminiscences written by former members Sean O'Casey (*The Story of the Irish Citizen Army*, 1919) and Frank Robbins (*Under the Starry Plough, Recollections of the Irish Citizen Army*, 1977) and the socialist historian, R.M. Fox (*History of the Irish Citizen Army*, 1943). In recent years the situation has improved somewhat, with scholarly journal articles by, for example, Brian Hanley and D.R. O'Connor Lysaght, short monographs by Kevin Morley (*A Descriptive History of the Irish Citizen Army*, 2012) and Mac an Mhaistir, and, most significantly, a fuller work by Ann Matthews (*The Irish Citizen Army*, 2014), all adding to our knowledge of this organisation and this period in Irish history. Jeffrey Leddin's *Labour Hercules*, which is based substantially on a PhD he completed at the University of Limerick, is a most valuable addition to this field. Constructed largely from archival sources, some of which have only recently been digitised and made widely available, it is certainly the best researched work to date on this organisation.

An overview of the historiography on the ICA might have been offered to provide a context for this study, but Leddin begins with a discussion on the concept of the citizen army, and its place in international socialist thinking, before turning to Ireland, and the formation of one as a workers' defence force during the 1913 Dublin Lock Out. This was class struggle *par excellence*, a violent, sustained six-month attempt by the Dublin employers and their allies in the Dublin Metropolitan Police and Royal Irish Constabulary to break the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU) and bury the political ideas embodied by its leaders.

ITGWU General secretary, Jim Larkin, and Belfast organiser, James Connolly, were of course central to this leadership, and it was on the suggestion of the latter that the citizen army was established, in November 1913, initially under the command of Captain Jack White.

There was space for more focus on the political outlooks of both Larkin and Connolly, and their understanding of the needs of the Irish working class at that particular juncture. Leddin highlights Larkin's syndicalism, but Larkin was also a socialist republican who, like Connolly, albeit in a less worked out fashion, held to a two-fold conception of the Irish revolution, a socialist solution to the national question. Connolly's socialist republicanism is highlighted and it is dated to his first political involvements in Ireland, but the full implications of this are perhaps not fully teased out. Leddin seems to suggest a difference in the political outlook of the ICA before and after the adoption of a new constitution in March 1914, but I'm not so sure. Arguably, the socialist republicanism it espoused on its creation in 1913 continued long after that point. It is true, as Leddin argues, that with the ending of the lock out in January 1914, the ICA had lost its principal *raison d'être*. This was followed by a period of uncertainty over the future of the organisation, which in turn precipitated the re-launch and adoption of a constitution in March 1914. The constitution was amended two months later and it vested the ownership of Ireland in its people and committed the organisation to the establishment of an Irish co-operative commonwealth. Commenting on these developments, Leddin endorses an argument that, following the close of its pre-constitutional phase, the ICA 'became primarily a nationalist force distinguished from the Volunteers only by the working class nature of its members and its publicly more advanced republican aspirations'. But, leaving aside the reality that many Volunteers were also working class, the fact that the ICA aspired to a co-operative commonwealth – a term that had mainly been used by various hues of utopians and socialists, including Connolly, to describe a post-capitalist society – was important and suggests that the differences remained significant. Neither should the March 1914 adoption of the prefix 'Irish' to the title be taken as a dilution of a commitment to socialism; it represented something of a continuity for Connolly, who used that title on all of his Irish socialist organisations throughout his entire revolutionary career from 1896 onwards.

Larkin's departure to the USA in October 1914 left Connolly in control of both the ITGWU and ICA. This was a fateful year for Connolly, one in which he encountered a number of serious political challenges, the response to which would take him to the GPO in 1916. These challenges included the very real prospect of partition, and with it the dismemberment

of the Irish labour movement, and the outbreak of an imperialist war that threatened to devastate the European working class and destroy the international socialist movement. Leddin discusses this in depth in chapter six, offering in the process a very good and very clear exposition of Connolly's thinking and the rationale behind his actions throughout this difficult period. In this new scenario, the ICA became the most important organisation to Connolly, and much of his energy was devoted to building it into an army capable of mounting an insurrection against British imperial rule in Ireland. This transformation meant that arms procurement and military planning became the main tasks for ICA members. The inventiveness they showed here prompted Connolly on one occasion to say the ICA were true internationalists because they used French bayonets on German rifles in the fight for Ireland! As Leddin points out, this modification of weapons, which in the case of the French bayonets meant them being heated to melting point, then reshaped, in order to fit properly onto the German rifles, required ingenuity and expertise, as well as a real determination to use whatever resources they could muster to prepare for a rebellion. Liberty Hall, the ITGWU HQ and home to the ICA, was effectively turned into a barracks in the lead up to the Easter Rising, with armed guards on duty permanently from late March onwards.

The ICA would fight alongside the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) and the IRB-led Irish Volunteers in 1916, and the implication of this for the independence and identity of the organisation is one of the themes of the book. During the period, 1914–1916, relations between the ICA and Irish republicanism changed from suspicion and occasional hostility to eventual collaboration. Key developments here were the outbreak of war, followed quickly by the rupture in the Irish Volunteers after John Redmond's pro-British war speech at Woodenbridge on 20 September 1914, and also Connolly's accession to the ICA leadership. With both the rump Irish Volunteers – just 12–13,000 of the 170,000 members split from Redmond – and the ICA embarking on a similar path to rebellion, relations became somewhat more fraternal. In July 1915, the ICA was present at the funeral of former Fenian Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, a landmark occasion, at which Padraig Pearse made one of the most famous speeches in Irish history, when he lambasted the 'fools, the fools, the fools' who had left Ireland its Fenian dead. But tensions remained with Connolly unconvinced about the degree of revolutionary intent possessed by republicans, and the latter concerned at what it believed to be Connolly's reckless pursuit of a rebellion at all costs. These tensions would finally be resolved, following Connolly's sudden disappearance for three days in January 1916,

during which time he met with IRB leaders and agreed on a joint rising, set for Easter. Historians have long debated whether or not Connolly was kidnapped by the IRB, but Leddin offers evidence to suggest that this is a piece of post-rising nationalist mythology, designed to stress the centrality of the IRB to the planning and control of the Rising, and that the ICA leader took part willingly in these talks. Leddin argues that the ICA and the Irish Volunteers fought as a single army of the Irish Republic during the Rising and while this is true, less clear is the degree to which Connolly thought this arrangement would survive beyond the Rising. His comment to ICA members to 'hold onto their rifles' as they were out for both economic and political liberty has been corroborated by more than one witness and suggests there were limitations to this. It is highlighted by Leddin in this book, but perhaps understated in terms of its importance. We can of course never know what James Connolly would have done had he escaped the firing squad, but for this reviewer it is utterly inconceivable that someone with his political analysis and decades long commitment to socialism would have ended up as anything other than an opponent to the leaders of Irish nationalism and republicanism in the post-1916 period.

Three chapters of the book are devoted to the role played by the ICA during the Easter Rising. These focus on the engagements at St Stephens Green and the Royal College of Surgeons; Dublin Castle and its environs; and the GPO. These chapters are meticulously researched, with much valuable material gleaned from both the Bureau of Military History and the Military Pensions archives. The ICA is centred at all times in the discussion, and we get a full account of the activities of its members throughout Easter Week. My only criticism of these impressive chapters is the absence of more detailed maps, which would have allowed the reader to gain a better understanding of ICA movements throughout Easter week. There is a reprint of an ICA map of central Dublin in one of the introductory pages, but while this is welcome, many streets are unmarked and it might have been better had each of these three chapters had a fuller and more detailed map appended to it.

The ICA went through a re-organisation after 1916, but played very little role in the events of the Irish revolution thereafter. When it is considered that this period saw a guerrilla struggle against the British crown forces; unprecedented, widespread and intense labour militancy, which included the establishment of soviets and general strikes that rocked British imperialism to its foundations; and a bitter civil war between pro- and anti-Treaty republicans, this lack of input seems hard to explain. Leddin does offer much detail of ICA activity and its efforts in securing arms, many of which ended up with the IRA, but we might have had more explanation of why

an organisation that saw itself as the armed expression of the Irish working class was unable to intervene in this revolutionary situation to any effect. He does invoke Hanley's summation of the ICA's post-1916 failings, that they were the outcome of an organisation that was unsure of its military and political purpose and had no definitive and homogenous ideological drive, but this is a hypothesis that required greater excavation, and more consideration than was undertaken here. As a result, although we know that the ICA was anti-Treaty for the most part and fought in the Civil War alongside the IRA, before a wave of arrests crippled it in early August 1922, there is little examination of ICA thinking and analysis of these events.

The conclusion does not focus on the ICA, in terms of its political outlook, its achievements, and its role in Irish history. Such a conclusion would have allowed for a final consideration of some of the most important themes which are examined in the chapters. Instead, the author chooses to examine the organisation's legacy and the manner in which it has inspired successive generations of socialist republicans, from the likes of Roddy Connolly in the 1930s, who advocated a revamped ICA as part of the labour movement's response to the rise of Blueshirt fascism, to those within both the Official and Provisional IRA, who later turned to class as a means of building support for their political struggles. In many respects this final chapter is more about Connolly's legacy than the ICA, but is refreshing and well constructed. Overall, this is an excellent addition to the growing historiography of the ICA, and thanks to Jeffrey Leddin we now know a lot more about that organisation, and its role in the 1913–1923 period. Hopefully it will serve to stimulate and inspire more research into one of the Irish Left's most cherished organisations, and with it, further establish class as a legitimate and insightful means of exploring and evaluating the Irish Revolution.

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John Mulqueen, *'An Alien Ideology': Cold War Perceptions of the Irish Republican Left*, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool 2019; xviii+275pp; ISBN 9781789620641, £75.00, hbk

Since the 1980s, Irish historians have produced a trickle of publications on communism, left republicanism, anti-communism, and state intelligence. Socialist republicanism during the Free State era was the fascination initially. Subsequently, the caravan moved on to the years of the Cold War and

the Northern Troubles, encouraged by the release of state papers. Yet, the level of interest has been relatively small, compared, for example, with our endless obsession with who shot whom in 1916–23. And much of the work amounted to a subset of historical revisionism and the debate on whether socialism and nationalism were complimentary or contradictory. Not even the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the opening up of Russian archives, with their exotic nuggets on Ireland, generated much attention. While Moscow was the Klondike for historians in the 1990s, our academics and the burgeoning legion of post-graduates remained stubbornly parochial. John Mulqueen's book offers an admirable corrective by setting Irish events in the context of British, American, and Soviet intelligence.

Based on a PhD completed in Trinity College, Dublin, *An Alien Ideology* reflects the strengths and weaknesses of the genre, being well researched, but occasionally overwrought and over-referenced. The narrative is cluttered with name-checking and historians are cited to corroborate banalities like the Cold War leading to anti-communism in the west. Surprisingly, the choice selection of archives does not include any in Moscow. The ambiguous sub-title echoes an ambiguity in the content in two respects. First, Mulqueen defines his focus awkwardly as 'The strand of the Irish republican left which followed the "alien ideology", inspired by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ...' (p9). So, one supposes that his subject is going to be Official Sinn Féin, later Sinn Féin/the Workers' Party, and later still the Workers' Party (WP). (Its hopes of becoming 'the Party' were never realised). But he also includes Irish communism in its various iterations since the 1940s in his description, and has a few references to Maoists and Trotskyists too. Secondly, while his purpose is 'to analyse the evolution of Soviet-oriented Irish revolutionaries', within 'the wider area of militant republicanism', the emphasis is on perceptions, those of state agencies especially, and the narrative is written from the perspective of officialdom (p16). This would not be a problem if the author did justice to the political forces under scrutiny.

The communists come off worst. The first of seven chapters is devoted to 'Communists: Ireland's "Fifth Column"?'. On Soviet Russia's entry into the war in 1941, the Communist International decided that Ireland's neutrality could not be reconciled with a pro-war policy and had the Communist Party of Ireland (CPI) dissolved in Éire. Members were instructed to enter the Labour Party and work for a Labour-Fianna Fáil government that would take Éire into the war. There followed red scares and splits in the Labour Party and the Irish Trade Union Congress even before the Cold War began. When the comrades re-organised as the

Irish Workers' League in 1948, the Catholic Church had turned neurotically anti-communist and the League survived in *de facto* semi-legality. Meanwhile, the United Kingdom's phenomenal wartime enthusiasm for all things Soviet allowed Belfast communists to win lasting positions of influence in the trade unions, despite the severe contraction of the Communist Party in Northern Ireland after 1945. All of this is reasonably well publicised and Mulqueen could be forgiven for giving it a brief synopsis. His focus, after all, is on state surveillance. But to appraise the hunt, one needs to know the quarry, and the account treats the communists as incidental to what is more a history of anti-communism. The Irish Workers' League is dismissed as a 'cult', 'slavishly' following Moscow, which was how the Garda and G2 (Irish army intelligence) saw them. That the whole point of joining the League was to be part of a global revolution is not considered. Much more space is given to the activities of individuals cited in state files than to the social and political impact (or lack of it) of communism.

Communists and a God-fearing republican movement remained discrete in the 1950s. That would change over the next decade. Mulqueen's explanation for the transformation is fairly superficial and he concentrates on the men who took Sinn Féin to the left. The early 1960s is an excellent example of a good crisis being a good opportunity. Like all of the IRA's wars since July 1921, Operation Harvest, the 'border campaign' of 1956–62, had ended in crushing defeat. Constitutional nationalism too seemed discredited by repeated failure. Since the mid-1950s the Connolly Association had been arguing that the best way to undermine Stormont was to highlight sectarian discrimination. Now, with the help of some talented and prescient communist republican cadres, the strategy would evolve into the civil rights movement. The election of a Labour government was critical too, and Harold Wilson was a greater stimulus than Martin Luther King, despite the wishful thinking of the '68 generation. Mulqueen is excellent in presenting a concise and judicious analysis of the crisis of 1968–69. The civil rights movement began and ended on 5 October 1968, day one of the Troubles. Before 5 October it was not a movement. After 5 October it was no longer about civil rights. As Mulqueen observes, its anti-sectarian agenda 'went up in smoke' (p73).

'*An Alien Ideology*' gets into its stride after 1968. Sources become more plentiful, the confluence of communism and republicanism more substantial, and the threats to security, north and south, more real. The net effect is a more confident style, a brisk narrative, and a more coherent history. Prompted by republican fellow travellers, the communist parties in Northern Ireland and the Republic united as the third CPI in 1970, the IRA

and Sinn Féin divided between the Officials and the Provisionals, and new currents of Marxism, chiefly Maoism and Trotskyism, surfaced in Ireland after the ‘events’ of May 1968 in Paris. Mulqueen rejects the myth, beloved of the Officials, that Fianna Fáil split the republican movement to frustrate its evolving Marxism, but agrees that there were elements in the state apparatus who advocated this policy and encouraged it in practice. Ultimately, the fetishised Marxism, coupled with the assault on six-county nationalists, proved too much for the traditionalists. ‘Red scare’ would soon give way to ‘green scare’. Once the Officials began their internecine war against the Provos, they were welcomed by the establishment, even into the current affairs division of RTÉ. The last three chapters are often humorous in charting the WP’s descent into an obsession with reviling the Provos and clutching at the characteristics of a pro-Soviet party as if they were talismans. By the 1980s the CPI reckoned it had gone too anti-nationalist and objected to international fraternal recognition of the party. In the 1989 elections, the WP crowned two decades of incremental advance with five per cent of the vote. Months later came the ‘fall of the wall’, and in 1992 the WP split over internal demands for the abandonment of Marxism-Leninism and ties with the allegedly moribund Official IRA. It never recovered.

‘*Alien Ideology*’ is uneven as a study of Ireland’s pro-Soviet Marxists, and better for the post 1968 years than the earlier decades. But it’s sharp on international perceptions, and in distinguishing between the United States and the Soviet Union with their Cold War lenses on Ireland, the nuanced views of the British embassy, and the Irish government, which clung to its traditional analysis of ‘subversives’ while ‘playing a Cold War role in supplying high-quality intelligence to Washington’ (p105). As a history of state intelligence on Ireland’s far left, it’s original, engaging, and recommended.

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David Swift, *For Class and Country: The Patriotic Left and the First World War*, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool 2017; 256pp; ISBN 9781786940025, £25.00, hbk; ISBN 9781786948021, £25.00, ebk

There is no serious argument among historians about the overwhelming support for the Great War within the British working class and the Labour Party; it was recognised at the time – by socialists like Bruce Glasier, for example, mentioned by Swift in this volume (p75). But there is plenty to investigate about the nature of that support. Was it unconditional; did it

change over time; what were its many motivations; what forms did it take; how did the experience of war affect matters? The focus here is on the 'patriotic left' by no mean synonymous with the patriotic working class, most of which had nothing to do with Labour.

The study is at its best when it examines the nature of the Labour movement's war effort, as in the work of the Workers' National Committee – collecting information, exposing abuses, airing grievances, lobbying the government, demonstrating the value of the Labour Party at local level, keeping the various components of the party working together. It's clear that the simple patriotism of Labour activists assumed that Britain's role in the conflict (and the world) was virtuous. Militarism, bullying weaker peoples, invading innocent countries – these were German vices. Swift is probably right that the British tendency to think themselves culturally and racially superior had a lot to do with this, as did the relative contentment of the working class – with their leaders, institutions, and way of life (pp34–38). But the Germans were just as committed to the war effort. Fulminations against 'the Huns' as the 'enemies of humanity', one suspects, drew from outrage that Britain's place as 'top nation' was threatened by Germany. If the patriots of print – like Robert Blatchford – could imagine Germans filled with self-righteous anger against the greedy, bullying, hypocritical British, they didn't confess to it. They did imagine slackers, people not pulling their weight in the war effort. They were not the only ones to do so. Oddly, Swift makes no mention of the embittered class relations immediately succeeding the war – though Ross McKibbin has drawn attention to the evidence – one important aspect of which was middle class resentment that organised labour had done very well out of the war while the patriotic (middle class) backbone of the country had paid a very heavy price. Nor does he mention the hatred many veterans felt for patriotic civvies, as described by Paul Fussell in *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975). The war was fought in unity to a very large extent; the inter-war peace was full of division and doubt. But the Labour leadership emerged from the conflict even more securely in control of the party than it had been in 1914 – and it was the only socialist party among the belligerents in which this was true.

To make this study argumentative the author resorts to a good deal of speculation and some strange reasoning. Thus 'the tendency on the Left to see [the Second World War] as the "good" war, fought against an obvious evil, and the earlier conflict [the Great War] as an imperialist blunder, the result of backroom scheming, secret pacts, and a thirst for colonies' is deemed 'ahistorical' even though the negative view of the Great War took shape well before 1939 and the 'anti-fascist' dimension in the later conflict

justified it in the eyes of most socialists of the period (p1). We are lectured to the effect that ‘mainstream labour thought was well to the *left* of most working-class people’ in 1914 (p3). That would help to explain why Labour had less than fifty MPs, most by virtue of the pact with the Liberals of 1903 and why the vast majority of workers did not belong to a trade union, let alone vote Labour. G.D.H. Cole pointed out seventy years before this book was published that in August 1914 the three socialist societies had at most 65,000 members between them (Sidney Webb put it at 50,000 in 1918) and the Labour Party itself had some sort of local organisation in only 158 areas, most of them trades councils designed for industrial rather than political work. It is the author who engages in flights of fancy at intervals throughout this text, as when he says ‘it is a contention of this book that labour patriotism during the First World War had the effect of bringing the mass of the working classes towards the labour movement ...’ (pp3, 81-82). When? Apart from the problem of how one would demonstrate such a causal connection, one would want to ask why the alleged attraction took so long to manifest itself in voting behaviour? Given the support for the war of the Conservatives and Liberals why was Labour’s patriotism so special? It was the Conservative Party that enjoyed governmental office for most of the time between 1916 and 1945, obtaining over half the working-class vote on occasions – as in the 1931 and 1935 general elections. Yet Swift is quite sure that those like E.D. Morel who believed the war would create a worse world were wrong; ‘Not only did Labour patriotism ensure that the Labour Party was not toxified in the eyes of the working class; labour participation in the war laid the foundations for a world unimaginable in the 1900s ...’ a world of prosperity no less! (p70) One is reminded of the one-eyed optimism of Pangloss.

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Matthew Taunton, *Red Britain: The Russian Revolution in Mid-Century Culture*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2019; 302pp; ISBN 9780198817710, £55.00, hbk

‘England’ wrote Arthur Ransome from Soviet Russia in 1918, ‘seems to be a vast nightmare of blind folly, separated from the continent, indeed from the world, by the sea, and beyond that by the trenches, and deprived, by some fairy godmother who was not invited to her christening, of the imagination to realise what is happening beyond. Shouting in daily telegrams

across the wires from Russia I feel I am shouting at a drunken man asleep in the road in front of a steam roller’.

It is a pity that Ransome is not mentioned in *Red Britain*, which might be described as an attempt to measure the effect of the Bolshevik steam-roller on intellectual opinion in Britain. As a non-Communist, Ransome’s enthusiasm for the Revolution says a good deal about the impact and range of its initial appeal.

But there are surprisingly few enthusiasts for the Revolution in *Red Britain*. While Taunton wisely eschews the usual lists of incriminating statements by credulous *poputchiki*, he has perversely chosen to construct the book around the lengthy discussion of six well-known *anti*-communist texts: *Animal Farm*, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *Darkness at Noon*, *The Golden Notebook*, Dorothy Richardson’s *Pilgrimage*, and – somewhat bizarrely – Spender’s 1938 verse play *The Trial of a Judge*. This is because, he argues, ‘anti-Communist voices have proved so much more influential (for better or worse) in the British reception of Russian and Soviet politics and ideas. The work of writers such as George Orwell and Arthur Koestler ... was fundamentally shaped by their engagements with Communists and Communist ideas. This was not simply a debate between two homogenous rival camps, but a deeply interconnected and polycentric cultural constellation’.

This makes for a very odd book indeed, less a study of the presence of ‘1917’ in British intellectual life than a book about ways in which a few famous writers sought to ensure its absence.

While opponents of the Soviet Union were generally motivated by the same *a priori* arguments (internal democracy, civil liberties, free markets, artistic and religious freedoms), those who admired the Soviet Union from afar – communists and non-communists alike – did so for different reasons at different times. In the 1920s there was the excitement of the Revolution, the decisive blow against War, Capital and the old regimes, then industrialisation and planning (1930s), the defeat of Fascism (1940s), post-War reconstruction (1950s), the space programme (1960s), Moscow’s support for Third World liberation movements (1970s), Gorbachev, perestroika and glasnost (1980s).

One of the weaknesses of this book is that the specificity of historical moments are lost, blurred by the idea that (like the long Cold War, the short twentieth century or the newly elongated 1930s) we need to understand the Bolshevik Revolution as a ‘long 1917’. The result is a strangely un-political study of ideas cut loose from their histories – like the use of the word ‘red’ in the title (not many British communists called themselves ‘red’ after 1933).

The strength of *Red Britain* is that instead of the usual story about the

‘doomed romance’ between the British intelligentsia and Communism, it provides an account of some of the ways in which ‘the characteristic modes of a Romantic, humanist English socialism established in the nineteenth century were overlaid with a harder and more utilitarian socialism emanating from Russia’. There are chapters about the impact of Soviet ideas about the future, about planning, the law, agriculture and literacy. Taunton offers a very good summary of the unresolved and antagonistic appeals of Tolstoyanism and collectivisation, played out in Britain between followers of Morris and the Fabians, and of the ways in which the Soviet Union simultaneously represented the modernising effects of literacy *and* romanticised ideas of pre-literate folk traditions. The book is good on early Soviet science fiction, there’s a fascinating discussion of Soviet mathematics, and a very interesting account of John Rodker’s translations from Russian.

In many ways it’s a dazzling study, drawing on an extremely wide range of sources, from Auden to Zoschenko, Arendt to Žižek. But why discuss Soviet maths and not Soviet sport (Olga Korbut, Lev Yashin)? Why Soviet jurisprudence but not Soviet chess (Petrosian, Tal, Spassky). Why is there nothing about Soviet travel-books (Alan Sillitoe, Ethel Mannin, Jack Lindsay, Alaric Jacob), when there are so many pages devoted to Orwell (who never visited the place)? Why so much attention to Nabokov, but no mention of those artists who in the middle decades of the twentieth-century represented Soviet culture on the world stage (Shostakovitch, Grossman, Sholokov, Khachaturian, Ehrenburg)?

Unlike enthusiasts for the Third Reich, most British admirers of the Soviet Union never visited the place (this is arguably one of the reasons why it retained its utopian character for so long). Restricting this study to the published record of professional writers, intellectuals and journalists unavoidably restricts the reach of the book’s arguments. Taunton does not explain why he makes no use of opinion polls, of Mass Observation archives, or newspapers. He has nothing to say about the complex sociology of Russophilia in Britain (Chopwell *and* Hampstead, Mardy *and* Stepney). And there is no discussion of those moments when it seemed that the Russians really were coming – for example, the visit of Dynamo Moscow to Stamford Bridge in 1945, or of Yuri Gagarin to Manchester in 1961. For a book concerned with the impact of Soviet science and science fiction in the UK, it is strange that there is no mention at all of Gagarin or Tereshkova – or Laika.

To argue that ‘the cultural effects of the Bolshevik Revolution are broader and more wide-ranging than is commonly assumed’ and that ‘the cultural resonances of the Russian Revolution are more far-reaching

and various than has previously been acknowledged' seems a remarkably unambitious conclusion to a book costing £55.

Andy Croft

Ahmed White, *The Last Great Strike: Little Steel, the CIO, and the struggle for labor rights in New Deal America*, University of California Press, Oakland CA 2016; 416pp; ISBN 9780520285606, £70.00, hbk; ISBN 9780520285613, £25.00, pbk

On March 13, 1937, the United States was rocked by the news that the industry giant US Steel had signed a collective bargaining agreement with the recently formed Steelworkers Organizing Committee (SWOC). In a written statement, the SWOC President Philip Murray said this marked 'an epoch in the history of industrial relations' and was 'mystifying to the casual observer'. To the steelworkers, however, he added, 'they represent a realization by steel management that this is 1937 and not 1919 or 1892'. The outcome, he predicted, 'will be constructive leadership and real industrial progress. We expect it will bring about complete unionization of the entire steel industry'. Events would soon challenge Murray's assertion.

The major independent steel companies were appalled at US Steel's betrayal and vowed to never recognise the union. As a result, Bethlehem Steel, Jones & Laughlin (J&L), Republic, Youngstown Sheet and Tube, Inland, National (Weirton) and American Rolling Mills (ARMCO) took their stand as 'Little Steel'. The man who would lead the Little Steel onslaught against the SWOC and the New Deal would be the head of Republic Steel, Tom Girdler, who would come to personify Little Steel's recalcitrance. The strike was called for 26 May 1937. The next day Chicago police opened fire on an unarmed crowd outside the gates of Republic Steel's South Chicago mill. Ten were killed that day. The Memorial Day incident was to set the tone for a violent summer.

The Little Steel Strike is the bloodiest strike between the post-World War I era to the present time. The strike embodied class conflict on a scale and intensity which has yet to be repeated in American history. What is surprising is that the Little Steel strike has received relatively little attention as an event in itself, and tends to be studied in the context of the broader histories of the New Deal era. Both Ahmed White's work and Michael Dennis' more localised works, *The Memorial Day Massacre and the Movement for Industrial Democracy* (2010) and *Blood on Steel: Chicago Steelworkers and The Strike of 1937* (2014), go a long way to correcting this

void. Traditionally the strike was understood as a modest setback for steel workers – a minor setback on the way to eventual victory. The reviewer of this work was very much of that opinion. White does an excellent job at casting doubt on this assertion.

The work is divided into three sections. Part I describes the background of industrial relations in the steel industry from the Homestead Lockout of 1892, through to the Open Shop era, the New Deal and the dawn of the Little Steel strike.

Part II deals with the strike itself. It is here that the author masterfully brings us through the sequence of dramatic and violent clashes. One such flashpoint occurred at Monroe, Michigan, a small semi-rural town halfway between Toledo and Detroit. On 10 June the SWOC's lead organiser, Leonides McDonald, was ambushed by company loyalists when leaving the post office. His badly beaten body was left by the roadside to be rescued by union supporters where he was taken to the hospital in Toledo. After an attempt to break the picket line was repelled earlier in the day, at around noon a combination of up to hundred special police armed with gas and clubs, and a few hundred company loyalists launched a coordinated assault. The attack began with a flanking action by the company who fired gas behind the picket line. As the gas scattered the picketers, the company loyalists rushed forward beating and chasing strikers, and later smashing and burning picket installations and automobiles. Surprisingly there were no casualties.

19 June saw another flashpoint this time at the Stop 5 gate to Republic Steel's Youngstown, Ohio works. Women had been picketing at the gate, when a city police captain Charles Richmond, following a verbal altercation with the picketers, threw several tear gas grenades at the women's feet. This in turn started a riot as nearby union people started throwing bricks at Richmond's forces. Two unarmed men died that night. A Croatian immigrant named John Bogovich and a Czech immigrant named James Eperjesi died on the morning of 20 June. Both had been shot and had worked at the Youngstown Sheet & Tube plant.

A further extraordinary event occurred at Republic mills in Warren and nearby Niles, when aerial plane battles occurred between aircrafts hired by Republic steel to resupply employees loyal to the company who had stayed inside the plant, and planes hired by SWOC. Local SWOC organiser, Gus Hall (who unlike many accused of being one was an actual communist), even ran a campaign of sabotage on rail tracks feeding the mills. The fatalities of Fulgencio Calzada, (shot in the back of the head) and Nicholas Vathiaz (shot through the pelvis), following a police assault on the night of 11 July

on the Union hall in Masillon, Ohio brought the number of fatalities to sixteen. Ahmed White is correct in stating that violence was seldom random or irrational. It originated in attempts by the union to set up pickets, and in the efforts of the steel companies and allies to counter this.

Part III deals with the aftermath of the strike. White is shrewd in his analysis that the companies' victory was based not only on suppression but also on the success in which it managed to integrate the episodes of violence with skilful manoeuvring in the fields of politics, law, and public relations, all the more drawing on its considerable economic advantage. All of this was aided by shortcomings in the way in which the strike was conducted by the SWOC, as well as by the actions of radical organisers and militant rank-and-filers.

The author also skilfully navigates through much of the counterfactuals and the conjecture which have since accompanied the failure of the strike, and raises important issues regarding the relationship between SWOC leaders and radicals during the course of the strike and its aftermath.

What we can say with relative certainty is that Phil Murray and the CIO essentially misapprehended the function that the police, the National Guard, and government officials would play in the strike. As historian Melvyn Dubofsky has rightly stated, the chief goal of public policy-makers was political stability and social peace. This made administrations extremely wary of all forms of unruliness and uncontrolled mass upheavals, which is what this strike was. The state was never going to implement policies which were going to harm capital. While New Deal legislation like the Wagner Act did protect and promote collective bargaining, it did so by appealing to the expediency of commerce, not of freedom of assembly or freedom of speech.

One of the many highlights of this work is White has marshalled all of the scattered archival sources, to examine the Little Steel strike in its wider historical context. His legal analysis of the various aspects of New Deal legislation was a further highlight. White paints a vivid picture of the aftermath of the strike, and draws attention to the despondency of the workers, their frustration and slight disenchantment with the leadership of the SWOC following the defeat.

Where the book differs from the work of Michael Dennis is that this takes into account the strike in its entirety, and how the strike was and has shaped labour law and labour relations. It is here where White's legal background has really come to fore. This book is a *tour de force* and a must for those who have an interest in American labour history.

Liam Diskin