

communities who neither knew nor cared that it was a forgery but who were willing to make the letter available to right-wing interests opposed to the Labour government and its Russian policies" (253). Although she admits that this is not an altogether satisfactory verdict, it is "the best that can be done based on the evidence" (253–54). Her ultimate conclusion is that there can *be* no ultimate conclusion, although she offers some hope that further archival findings, perhaps in the Baltic states, might help us to come to a clearer view of what actually happened.

These are entirely sound conclusions; but the book has other virtues, too. Bennett is particularly interesting on her own role as an "official" historian, making the point that "my search for the Zinoviev letter in 1998 was restricted not by access, but by what had survived in the archives" (219). She makes good points about the ways in which the British culture of secrecy, which until the 1980s stretched to blanket official denials about the very existence of the intelligence and security services, hindered serious investigation of the events of 1924. She also shows how the greater openness of the 1990s changed matters: indeed, the investigation that led to the 1999 report was itself intended, in part, by Tony Blair's Labour administration as a political demonstration of its commitment to open government.

There are few criticisms to be made. Perhaps one is that there could have been more explicit discussion of the extent to which the Comintern in the period around 1924, even at headquarters level, was capable of pursuing more than one line simultaneously, although the point is hinted at in her shrewd comment that there was confusion in both London and Moscow in 1924 (222). And, overall, this is an excellent analysis of a subject of perennial interest. It repays the attention of anyone interested in interwar British politics and intelligence, as well as the wider, fascinating, and occasionally murky world of the postrevolutionary Russian diaspora. It is a significant work.

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Thatcher's Progress: From Social Democracy to Market Liberalism through an English New Town. By *Guy Ortolano*.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. Pp. xvi+302. \$39.99 (cloth); \$32.00 (Adobe eBook Reader).

The New Enclosure: The Appropriation of Public Land in Neoliberal Britain. By *Brett Christophers*.

London: Verso, 2018. Pp. xviii+362. \$29.95 (cloth); \$19.95 (paper); \$9.99 (e-book).

Milton Keynes lies halfway between Oxford and Cambridge, and is known to historians driving between the two universities for its succession of roundabouts, its concrete cows grazing beside the road, and huge distribution warehouses. If they think of history, it is Bletchley Park—the home of the wartime code breakers—that is subsumed in the new town. They hurry on to their idyllic destination with a sigh of relief that they do not live in this arid and soulless dystopia. But as Guy Ortolano shows in his outstanding book, they should pause and reflect on what the development of Milton Keynes shows about wider political process in late twentieth-century Britain.

Mrs. Thatcher herself visited on September 25, 1979, to open Europe's largest shopping center. After lunch, Denis Thatcher gestured to the center and remarked, "Isn't it wonderful what the private sector can do?" (Ortolano, 253)—a muddle-headed response to an impressive state-funded, publicly managed development. Soon, the Thatcher government

started to sell off council housing, to privatize public utilities, and to transfer public land to the private sector. Milton Keynes was no exception. Brett Christophers notes that about 18,000 acres were acquired for the construction of the new town, and much of it was returned to private ownership through the government's "right to buy" public housing at a discount of up to 30 percent. Social democracy was turned into market liberalism.

The initial idea for a new town in Buckinghamshire came from the county council and its planning officer, Fred Pooley. His vision of North Bucks New City was a new town for affluence, the motor car, and modernity, with a free monorail system linking fifty or so neighborhoods of 5,000–7,000 to central shops and leisure facilities. The "monorail metropolis" would be planned for the motor car without allowing the car to destroy the city, and looked to Disneyland and Wuppertal. Pooley's plans were accepted by Conservative-controlled Buckinghamshire County Council in 1964, which bought into a social democratic vision that was both inspired by and influenced international thinking. Pooley wanted to show that Britain, far from declining, could still lead the world. But his vision collided with the new Labour government elected in 1964.

Other new towns were the creatures of the central government and autocratic development corporations whose budget and membership were set in London—and the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, the imperious Evelyn Sharp, had no intention of allowing any exception. The great thing about development corporations, she insisted, was that "they can get on with their job without consulting public opinion" (Ortolano, 60). In 1967, control passed to a development corporation chaired by a socialist businessman, Jock Campbell, whose family fortunes came from sugar plantations in British Guiana—a different indication of global reach. Campbell realized his fortune had been based on slavery, indentured labor, and exploitation, and he aimed to redeem himself by a commitment to people over profits both in the empire and at home. The welfare state replaced the empire—and he was not alone, for ten general managers of new towns had been colonial officials. Campbell was joined by the planner Richard Llewellyn-Davies who sat on the Labour benches in the House of Lords and whose family was part of the "intellectual aristocracy." Rather than Pooley's vision of Brasilia in Buckinghamshire, Llewellyn-Davies's vision was mini-Los Angeles—a motor city based on dispersal, mobility, and open-ended planning or an "indeterminate architecture" system of grids, roundabouts, and parks that could be expanded in a flexible manner. His vision owed much to the Berkeley futurologist Melvin Webber who argued that urbanism must change in response to the rise in services, education, knowledge, and affluence. Webber stressed that urban forms should be based on indeterminacy and networks, on "community without propinquity." The planning of Milton Keynes was inspired by international thinking, and Llewellyn-Davies then took an international role for nationalized Britain. He opened an office in New York in 1967 and expanded into the Middle East, above all in replanning Tehran. And in Milton Keynes, the Development Corporation recruited modernist architects such as Norman Foster to build in "welfare state modernism" of nontraditional materials and flat roofs, free from the constraints of the market.

This social democratic vision gave way to market liberalism that is captured in the shift from about 75 percent to 25 percent of housing being in the public sector. Ortolano shows that the change was carried through by social democrats who did not necessarily change their minds but had to adjust their behavior. Funding cuts after the IMF crisis of 1976 forced the Development Corporation to look for new ways of securing revenue—including creating a consultancy to advise on new towns in Saudi Arabia and Nigeria. Social democracy did not die; it remained dynamic in its response to market liberalism until, in the end, it internalized the priorities of market liberalism. The only way to continue the social democratic ambition was to encourage owner occupiers to come to Milton Keynes—and the only way to ensure the would-be purchasers had access to loans was

to drop “welfare state modernism” in 1981 for traditional, salable housing acceptable to lenders and would-be purchasers. Architectural style reflected market liberalism, as the Development Corporation struggled to show success in the new metric of owner occupation. Social democrats struggled to succeed in the new world of Thatcherism and “the logic of survival transformed Milton Keynes into an avatar of market liberalism” (Ortolano, 200).

Ortolano’s book has wide implications for Britain’s postimperial history as it struggled to find a new international role, for changes in urban form and architecture, for notions of community and affluence. It is a pleasure to read. Brett Christophers is more tightly defined and more engaged (even enraged). He shows that it was not only the public land of Milton Keynes that was sold—other land owned by public bodies from the Ministry of Defence to National Health Service changed hands. Although precise estimates are difficult to produce, Christophers plausibly suggests that public landownership after the Second World War was around 12–14 percent of the land of the United Kingdom, which expanded to about 20 percent—mainly as a result of purchases for social housing—by the time Mrs. Thatcher assumed office. Since then, about 10 percent has been transferred to private hands (Christophers, 96, 117, 248–49). This “new enclosure” has led to surprisingly little scrutiny and protest, in part because it has been piecemeal, in part because it has reputedly benefited former tenants of council houses and wider share ownership in the privatized industries.

Christophers’s analysis lacks the subtlety of Ortolano’s nuanced account of the rise of market liberalism, but his account of the ways in which land has been transferred from public to private ownership since 1979 is compelling. His concern is not with the transfer of land as the incidental result of privatization of, say, the National Coal Board or public utilities that accounts for about 20 percent of the total transfer. Rather, he focuses on the privatization of land *qua* land, and in particular from local authorities that accounted for around 60 percent of the transfer, much of it through the sale of council houses. The case for privatization of land was that the public sector had a surplus of land that was used inefficiently, and that if it were transferred to private owners, they would build more housing and encourage economic growth. Christophers shows that these propositions were not tested against land use by private owners, or by different criteria of social use than profit. Many councils did not wish to sell, or public owners might prefer to transfer land between themselves to meet the demand for new hospitals or schools or housing. Christophers convincingly shows how the central government closed down options by setting space-utilization targets, creating registers to identify “surplus” land, devising accountancy methods that gave public land a market value that prioritized sale, and then introducing constraints and incentives that made sale to private owners virtually certain.

The transfer has not had the promised desirable consequences of additional housing or growth. In Milton Keynes, 71 percent of council apartments sold to tenants passed to private landlords, the highest rate in the country—and tenants of private owners receive more housing benefit than in the denuded social housing sector. The state now spends about twenty times as much on housing benefit as it does on building affordable social housing. The transfer of social housing to tenants did at least provide some benefit to workers: as Massimo Florio showed in *The Great Divestiture: Evaluating the Welfare Impact of the British Privatizations, 1979–1997* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), it was the only privatization with any claim to have a progressive impact on distribution. He found no evidence that privatization benefited the consumer, workers, or the taxpayer; the gains went to shareholders as a result of underpricing and out-performance (in contrast to most public offerings that are overpriced and then under-perform) and to managers and financiers. Christophers finds a similar outcome in land transfers that have benefited large property firms that are hidden behind opaque corporate structures. By contrast to the pressure on public owners to

make their ownership transparent, the ownership of private land can only be discovered by assiduous investigative journalism such as Guy Shrubsole in *Who Owns England? How We Lost Our Green and Pleasant Land and How to Take It Back* (London, 2019).

Christophers is writing in the tradition of great historians such as R. H. Tawney and E. P. Thompson on the seizure of monastic land and the enclosure of the common fields—something for our historian to contemplate as she navigates the roundabouts in Milton Keynes. And she should not deride the cows as she proceeds between the two universities. The Development Corporation aimed to build community as newcomers arrived, above all from inner London. The social development department met new arrivals with a cup of tea and a friendly face, and also embarked on “animation.” In 1977, Jack Trevor arrived as the first creative writer in residence, and animated the scene by suggesting the town needed a creative psychiatrist, and that his aim was “to corrupt students” so that imaginative four-year-olds were not turned by the educational system into “pricks” (Ortolano, 167). Less abrasive was his neighbor Liz Leyh, the first artist-in-residence who arrived from New York. Children joined her in animating the new town with a huge giraffe, an installation inspired by the Wizard of Oz, concrete snowman, hippopotamuses, ice-cream cones—and of course, the cows that were her parting gift to the town. Her aim was “to define community arts as the participation of an artist *with* other people or an art form which enables different people to participate with each other” (Ortolano, 169). The cows now inspire derision from passing motorists who do not understand the cultural world in which they were created. Ortolano’s brilliant book allows us not only to grasp that cultural world, but more generally to appreciate how the construction of Milton Keynes illustrates fundamental changes in British society that allowed Denis Thatcher’s mistake to be taken as truth.

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A New World Begins: The History of the French Revolution. By *Jeremy D. Popkin*. New York: Basic Books, 2019. Pp. viii+628. \$35.00 (cloth); \$19.99 (e-book).

If ever there was a scholar well positioned to write a new history of the French and Haitian Revolutions, it is Jeremy Popkin. Widely known among students of the French Revolution for his *Short History of the French Revolution* and *History of Modern France*, the first in its seventh edition and the second its fifth edition, as well as his widely assigned *Facing Racial Revolution: Eyewitness Accounts of the Haitian Revolution* and *You Are All Free: The Haitian Revolution and the Abolition of Slavery*, Popkin succeeds in seamlessly integrating the history of the anti-slavery movement and the founding of the first independent black nation in the Americas in *A New World Begins: The History of the French Revolution*.

Popkin’s almost 600-page narrative of the French Revolution traces the chronologies of the world-altering insurrections through nineteen chapters, each focused on a successive phase of the decade-long, rolling cacophony of movements, regimes, clubs, laws, and regimes. The narration begins in Kentucky with an anonymous poet’s assertion that the French Revolution matters, not just to the French, but to everyone the world over who believes in the rights of man. Popkin admits that making sense of the controversial and sprawling French Revolution was challenging to him writing in his study in Lexington, just as it was to the anonymous poet publishing his verses in 1794. Popkin also shares

His second book, *Thatcher's Progress: From Social Democracy to Market Liberalism through an English New Town* (Cambridge, 2019), follows the Prime Minister on a driving tour through the planned city of Milton Keynes - a journey that reveals a dynamic welfare state during the decade of its purported crisis. Ortolano is now working on the ways that British history has figured in conceptions of world history since David Hume; a first installment, on British history and American modernization theory, was named winner of the Walter D. Love Prize from the North American Conference on British Studies. From Social Democracy to Market Liberalism through an English New Town. Search within full text. Get access. Ortolano situates a seemingly provincial moment of British planning in a distinctly global context. In *Thatcher's Progress*, Ortolano has produced one of the stand-out studies of urban history in the last few years. This is precise, stimulating material that showcases the characteristic thoughtfulness and precision of the author's work. This book deserves to be read widely and will likely find a market beyond the academy. James Greenhalgh Source: *Urban History*. *Thatcher's Progress: From Social Democracy to Market Liberalism through an English New Town*. By Guy Ortolano. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. Pp. xvi+302. \$39.99 (cloth); \$32.00 (Adobe eBook Reader). *The New Enclosure: The Appropriation of Public Land in Neoliberal Britain*. By Brett Christophers. London: Verso, 2018. Pp. xviii+362.