

and agitation which was inspired by the Land League and its apparent success in gaining legal concessions, such as the 1881 Land Act. Of particular interest here is the land court which resulted from the 1881 legislation, ‘the first rent control in the world’. After presenting a generic picture of a Land War march — including the ubiquitous ‘Land for the People’ banners — Guldi depicts three other ‘parades’ as spiritual successors to the Land League (these being: protests promoting ‘Homes Fits for Heroes’ in London in 1946; marches (again in London) in 1968 supporting Hugo Blanco’s land reform agitation in Peru; and Vinoba Bhave’s *Bhoodan* pilgrimage on behalf of landless labourers in India in 1951). *The long land war* also presents, *inter alia*, the Mexican Revolution of 1910–17, Sun Yat Sen’s planned agrarian reforms in China and reforms in Egypt in the 1950s as part of its wide-ranging narrative.

The Egyptian reforms were linked to the increasing influence of the F.A.O., and it is this organisation and its work that forms a significant pillar of Guldi’s narrative. The F.A.O. was formed in 1945 (moving its operations to Rome in 1948) with the goal of providing U.N. member nations with the tools and knowledge to increase efficiency in food supply. Somewhat idealistic British administrators within the F.A.O., familiar with the histories of Ireland and India, took the opportunity to further the process of decolonisation by attempting to create stable and (relatively) egalitarian economies in the newly emerging nations. These administrators included the Scot, John Boyd Orr, and the English-born (although apparently with Fenian ancestors) economist Doreen Warriner. After some impact and initial optimism, the F.A.O.’s role started to wane in the 1960s. Guldi refers to ‘the seizure of international policy’ by the World Bank, which she characterises as the ‘Assassination of Land Reform’. This, she later argues, has direct relevance for the present day, as international campaigns for equality shift from colonialism to climate justice. The reader is, therefore, challenged to ponder whether the fight against man-made climate change is best led by supranational global institutions or by corporations and large nations.

Guldi condenses a huge amount of research into *The long land war*’s narrative, and although it is rather dense in places as a result, her lively and engaging writing style makes the book highly readable. In an Irish academic context, *The long land war* will probably find its home in global history, development studies and macroeconomics classes rather than Irish history. However, while there is little about Irish history here which will be new to students, it gives a very important insight into the possible global historical significance of the events of the 1880s.

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SOCCER AND SOCIETY IN DUBLIN: A HISTORY OF ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL IN IRELAND’S CAPITAL.
By Conor Curran. Pp 352. Dublin: Four Courts Press. 2023. €35.00.

Conor Curran’s *Soccer and society in Dublin: a history of association football in Ireland’s capital* is part of a burgeoning historiography of the world’s, and for that matter Ireland’s, most popular sport. Much of this work as it relates to Dublin and Ireland has been done by Curran himself across monographs, journal articles and edited collections. The output heretofore has been somewhat over-specified, covering narrow topics from which it can be difficult to glean an overall sense of the historical processes at play. However, Curran’s latest monograph acts to correct that situation. It treats of the beautiful game in the capital from many angles, and presents rich detail concerning the organisations, groups, and personalities involved. The book is broken down into eight chapters dealing with topics such as the origins of the game in the city, the development of clubs and competitions to the end of the twentieth century, the place of the game within the education system and elite players in professional leagues overseas and within Ireland.

The chapters on elite players represent, in part, a Dublin-specific output of Curran's wider research into Irish soccer migrants. He does not shirk from addressing off-field issues such as anti-Irish attitudes in England or homesickness on the part of young men sent to Britain. However, the thorny question of the optimal age at which players should move is avoided. The chapter on semi-professional football in Ireland is particularly worthwhile, although given the title of the book, more attention might have been paid to the specifics of the club scene in Dublin city itself. Likewise, while Curran offers a sympathetic treatment of the difficulties faced by semi-professional players in balancing their day jobs with football, this ought to have been expanded by more discussion of amateur play by adults.

The treatment of the development clubs and competitions within the city is very strong, particularly with respect to the first two-thirds of the twentieth-century. This section is laid out across four chronologically arranged chapters, that are themselves divided thematically. Curran relies quite heavily on the existing historiography, particularly Neal Garnham's work, for the earlier periods. However, the decades after 1924 were uncharted historiographical territory. Curran has done outstanding work to piece this story together and offer a rigorous academic account that expands the boundaries of our knowledge considerably. This is also largely true of the chapters on the education system and Dublin football's connections with clubs overseas. Although, while the latter does offer some useful insights, it also weighs slightly too heavily on the word count.

There are some issues around how the material in the chapters is presented. At least some tables and maps ought to have been used to present the detail of fixtures, seasons, meetings and experiences. Although the facts rendered are, given the topic at hand, far from recondite, their seemingly endless itemisation might give certain passages a slightly jejune feel for all but the most committed reader. On the other hand, a committed reader might find the relatively large number of minor errors somewhat irritating. For example, Galway United did not lose the 1985 F.A.I. cup final to Sligo Rovers and the attendance at such a fixture (had it taken place) would make for a rather odd measure of the health of live professional football in Dublin.

Indeed, the elliptical coverage of the atrophy of the League of Ireland in the city, and the concomitant rise in the support for English clubs, is one of the book's only serious flaws. By way of example, the rise of Drumcondra F.C. is dealt with at length, but the death of the club is barely mentioned. The decline of Dublin clubs within the domestic game is evidenced by the fact that no Dublin team won the League of Ireland between 1965 and 1975. However, that fact does not adequately capture the scale of the issue. In 1965, five Dublin clubs finished in the league's top seven positions; in 1975, that figure was one. There were many reasons for this fall from grace, but the ultimate factor, the watching of English football on television, indeed televised football *tout-court*, is not covered satisfactorily. This process deserved much more attention than the disparate adumbration accorded by the author since it is the origin of Dublin's unique path to footballing modernity, at least in comparison to other similarly sized cities in Britain and western Europe.

Still, there is much to admire. It will be a long time before someone writes any scholarly history of association football in Dublin without mentioning Conor Curran or this book. The author largely follows the methodology for sports history first laid down by Tony Mason. That is the use of newspaper sources combined with the archival records of sporting organisations. Excellent use is also made of interviews Curran conducted with retired professional footballers. These interviews and the book's publication were funded as part of a legacy project connected to the proposed hosting of a Euro 2020 game at the Aviva Stadium. But it must always be remembered that it is not simply the hordes flocking to Lansdowne Road for big matches that defines Ireland's capital as a football city. It is also the quotidian-level engagement of hundreds of thousands of Dubliners with the game in grounds, parks, pubs, and living rooms. Conor Curran has done much to document all this and, thus, enhance our understanding of modern Ireland and its culture.