

invincibility, perhaps contributing to his political isolation in later life; his views on home rule were somewhat ill-defined, thus leading to confusion among contemporaries as to where he stood on the matter.

As such, one finds it difficult to escape the image of the O’Conor Don as an isolated figure, charting ‘a somewhat torturous and often isolated course in Irish politics’ (p. 135), in the Ireland of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Against a backdrop of increasingly polarised alignments of political affiliations and confessional allegiances — Catholic nationalism and Protestant unionism — ‘the hybrid nature of O’Conor Don’s liberal Catholic and unionist outlook gradually became impossible’ (p. 210).

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THE LONG LAND WAR. THE GLOBAL STRUGGLE FOR OCCUPANCY RIGHTS. By Jo Guldi. Pp 577. New Haven & London: Yale University Press. 2022. £30.

In Irish historiography, the idea of a ‘long land war’ has developed in recent years, although its precise span has been rather flexible. The shorter, traditional timescale — roughly encompassing the life of the Irish National Land League from 1879 to 1882 — has come to be seen as a starting point for a much longer period of tension between landlords and tenants in Ireland. The Plan of Campaign would take the story into the early 1890s, and Fergus Campbell has developed this by dating the long Land War from 1879 to 1909, incorporating the Ranch Wars of the early twentieth century. More recently, the work of Terence Dooley and Robert O’Byrne on the burning of the big houses has led Roy Foster to suggest that the Irish revolution itself was the culmination of a long land war. The land agitation has also been expanded spatially, as well as temporally in the historiography, with comparative and transnational perspectives supplementing the national paradigm. Thus, even within the last decade, Ely M. Janis’s *A greater Ireland* (2015), Carla King’s *Michael Davitt after the Land League* (2016), Niall Whelehan’s *Changing land* (2021), and Andrew Phemister’s *Land and liberalism* (2023) all deal to some extent with the transnational origins, activities or consequences of the Irish National Land League and the (shorter) Land War period.

Jo Guldi’s ambitious transnational history of modern land redistribution, *The long land war*, takes the Irish Land War as a starting point, but develops into a century-long account of what she refers to as ‘state-engineered “land reform” projects’. Although the book is arguably too short in its scope to be considered genuinely *longue durée* (despite some useful context in the introduction), it develops from Guldi’s concerns (most notably articulated in *The history manifesto* (2014), which she co-authored with David Armitage) about ‘parochial perspectives and endemic short-termism’ (p. 125) within the history profession. Moreover, *The long land war* itself can be considered a radical political intervention. There is plenty of self-reflection in the author’s observations, and in her analysis of the work of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (F.A.O.), in particular, she demonstrates faith in the power of global institutions and social scientists to influence human societies for the better. By the end of *The long land war*, historical and contemporary issues of land occupancy and the rights of indigenous peoples have very much merged with the urgency of addressing climate change (indeed, Guldi herself situates the book at ‘the interface between the environment, inequality and democracy’).

As a genuinely global study, *The long land war* does not dwell too much on national specificities, and as a result it is the long-term context and impact of the Irish Land War, rather than any details of that agitation itself, which will be of the most interest for historians of Ireland. In the introduction, Guldi notes that ‘Ireland’s land war would bring an empire to its knee’. This was the result of ‘marches, rent strikes, boycotts, arson, and even assassination’, tactics which were ‘rapidly copied by individuals in other places’. Ireland’s case, then, provides the common thread that runs through Guldi’s narrative: a typology of protest

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.