

the region justified special attention from London. From 1941, studies on the economy, fiscal and banking policy, and German population policy outlined the major issues in the Ostland. Analysts reported on German authorities recruiting local auxiliaries in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. These reports allow for an interesting glimpse of life in occupied Europe. Open source intelligence became London's "window into the East." Although the Foreign Office customers varied in their appreciation of the reports—from "stupendously dull" to "very useful"—the careful reading of the German press and neutral newspapers furnished the analysts with remarkably accurate and precise information (90). Covering topics such as personalities, control of the press, transport, and communications, Pares's reports provided an exhaustive picture of affairs in Northeastern Europe.

In addition to newspaper sources, the Foreign Research and Press Service enhanced reports with memoranda from Baltic underground groups, offering additional insight into Allied knowledge of the Holocaust. For example, in mid-1942, the service concluded that the Nazis had murdered 170,000 Jews in Lithuania (157). Indeed, Ultra decrypts of German police communications had, by this time, given Whitehall a good idea of the "Holocaust by bullets." But Wheatley's study suggests that good open source intelligence was reaching similar conclusions within the space of weeks, at a fraction of the expense (179).

Interestingly, the number of Ostland studies decreased from the end of 1943 as it became clear that Britain would no longer be challenging postwar Soviet influence in the region (113). Publicly, Churchill referred all these matters to a postwar peace conference. But internally, the British leadership acquiesced in the Soviet reoccupation of the Baltic region. Therefore, the government was no longer interested and declined to answer or acknowledge protest notes from Baltic representatives. Wheatley outlines the contribution of Foreign Office Research Department to the struggle to prepare for the postwar period. The initial reports underscored the devastation suffered by the USSR and concluded that Moscow would not constitute a threat for the next five years (185). However, other voices, in particular the chiefs of staff, soon disagreed, considering the Soviets to be "the greatest potential danger we have ever faced" (189). Soviet actions on the ground in 1945–46 provided more fuel to the fire of the chiefs' school of thought.

With this study Wheatley delivers an interesting and valuable insight into open source intelligence during the Second World War. His book is a welcome contribution to our understanding of intelligence and the relationship between open source and human intelligence.

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DANIEL C. WILLIAMSON. *Anglo-Irish Relations in the Early Troubles 1969–1972*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. Pp. 248. \$102.60 (cloth).
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In *Anglo-Irish Relations in the Early Troubles 1969–1972*, using British, Irish, and American archives, Daniel Williamson examines British-Irish relations from the onset of the political crisis of the Northern Irish state in the late 1960s to the British government's decision to impose direct rule on the fractious province in March 1972. During this period, the death toll from political violence rocketed from 19 in 1969 to 497 in 1972. When British troops

arrived on the streets of Londonderry and Belfast in August 1969, they were welcomed by Catholics, angry and suspicious of the local state's security forces because of their involvement in recent outbreaks of communal violence. In 1972, however, 108 British soldiers died, largely at the hands of the Provisional Irish Republican Army, the paramilitary force that had its roots in the same Catholic working-class communities that had looked to the Army as its protector three years before.

Williamson argues that spiraling events in Northern Ireland were decisive factors in the evolution of the often-spiky relationship between the British and Irish governments. He tends to attribute key significance to the escalating IRA campaign of bombing and assassinations, though he also recognizes that a heavy-handed response on the part of the security forces, and in particular the Army, did much to radicalize a section of the Catholic working class, particularly its youthful members. He is critical of the initial responses of London and Dublin to the worsening situation in Northern Ireland from late 1968. Harold Wilson's Labor administration, facing its own difficult domestic agenda, was reluctant to be drawn back into Irish politics—it had become a parliamentary convention that matters devolved to the Northern Irish parliament should not be discussed at Westminster. Wilson pressured the Ulster premier, Terence O'Neill, and his successor, James Chichester Clark, to remove the most flagrant examples of discrimination against the Catholic minority, particularly in areas of local government and housing. However, issues of civil rights and democratic reform were inextricably linked in the minds of many Catholics and Protestants with the issue of the very right of the state to exist.

At the core of the Northern Ireland issue in both Irish and British politics were two fundamental questions. First, could the issue of democratic reform be addressed without at the same time affecting the constitutional status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom? It was the belief of liberal unionists at the time and since that this was indeed possible, though Williamson questions that faith. Second, was the continuation of some sort of Northern Ireland state inevitably a recipe for continued violence? Many said yes. This was the argument of leaders of the Provisional IRA in the early 1970s and continued to be their claim up until the IRA cease-fires of 1994 and 1997. The subsequent evolution of republican politics and the "peace process" have demonstrated that while sharp political contention over the constitutional status of Northern Ireland has continued it has not, at least for the vast majority of Irish republicans, meant the continuation of support for "armed struggle."

One way of approaching the history of this period, one favored by Williamson, is to argue that the eventual pacification of Northern Ireland had its roots in attitudes and structures prefigured by the more far-seeing members of the Irish and British political elites in the early 1970s. Thus, after expressing a dismissive attitude toward the possible role of Dublin in any settlement in Northern Ireland, both Harold Wilson and his Conservative successor, Edward Heath, accepted that there had to be an "Irish dimension" to any deal, and that the deal would also involve some form of power sharing between Unionists and Nationalists. In Dublin, where the violence in the North had stimulated an upsurge of militant and interventionist opinion within the governing Fianna Fail party, with some party members willing to sponsor and arm Catholic insurrection in Belfast and Londonderry, the saner gradualism of the Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, prevented the real danger of an armed incursion into Northern Ireland.

Yet Wilson and Heath were both willing to meet with or allow others to meet on their behalf the leadership of the IRA in quixotic attempts to negotiate with those irreconcilable to any "solution" that did not involve a British withdrawal, blithely ignoring the likely revanchist and bloodthirsty Protestant response. As to Lynch, while ridding himself of ministers whose behavior threatened sectarian civil war, he continued to link reform of the North to the ending of partition, thus stoking fires of unionist reaction and the murderous activities of loyalist terrorists.

This is an excellent book, exhaustive in its use of archival material and on top of the scholarly literature in the field. If there is a weakness it is Williamson's tendency, inherent in the field of

diplomatic history, to treat events on the ground as secondary even when, as here, it is clearly recognized that the unfolding of events in Northern Ireland and the Republic played a major role in how Anglo-Irish relations developed. An understanding of the evolution of Irish politics, North and South, demands a more totalized view in which the often negative dialectic between events on the streets and high politics is explored in detail.

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CHARLES W. J. WITHERS. *Zero Degrees: Geographies of the Prime Meridian*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017. Pp. 322. \$29.95 (cloth).
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Intellectual history tempts us to think of the history of space/time as a series of moments that mark irreversible epistemic shifts—the invention of the magnetic compass, the “discoveries” of new continents, the ability to measure longitude. With *Zero Degrees: Geographies of the Prime Meridian*, his wonderful new book on the long and uneven history of the Prime Meridian, Charles Withers teaches us that changes in how we understand our spatial and temporal world can be heterogeneous, uncertain, sometimes faltering, and always poised between alternative understandings of global identity. For geographers, “the world,” as Withers notes, “depended on where you started from” (64), and, despite its claim not to be producing a history of modernity, Withers’s expert and thoughtful marshalling of a multitude of official reports, commentaries, maps, and charts ably demonstrates how modernity is always a series of different starts and different geographical positions.

Withers tells the story of the Prime Meridian from early attempts to regulate global space (including many competing national meridians) to the International Meridian Conference of 1884, in Washington, DC, that eventually decided on the Greenwich Meridian, and on to that decision’s “afterlife” in which the instabilities and idiosyncrasies of global measurement persisted—it was not until the early twentieth century that Paris gave up its own claim. Despite the lure of scientific precision and the neutral ring of the phrase “degree zero,” the final triumph of Greenwich came about more through the gradual rejection of other possibilities than through its intrinsic merit, and after a long stretch of time in which there were many different local meridians amid many different ideas of geographical form.

The book is deeply and impeccably researched, and immensely detailed, but it is always a fascinating and compelling read as Withers takes us into the complex negotiations and competing ideas that eventually led to the 1884 Washington conference. Withers has always paid close attention to how knowledge is formed in and between specific places, events, institutions, and movements of material texts. In this new book, his ability to move between micro-historical observations and world-historical ideas furnishes the story of the Prime Meridian with a great number of practical concerns amid its intellectual history. The attempt to measure the globe was not just political or mathematical; it faced such matters as the visibility of sighting stations, the way operatives got on with each other, even the conditions of the weather. National differences in units of measurement had to be accounted for, and local differences resolved within nations (local and customary measurements were not abolished in Britain until 1835). Thus, as Withers demonstrates, the pursuit of “accuracy” was at once scientific, political, and contingent. Like much of Withers’s previous work, *Zero Degrees* shows how books matter—how meridians were used in teaching texts, or how “nautical almanacs” worked to establish the correspondence between navigational practice and astronomical prediction.