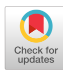

of the immediate post-war era. Eaton painfully lays bare the interaction between the Soviet regime and the remaining German citizens, and should be praised for her efforts to show how the mentalities of the occupiers shifted from personal animosity to uneasy cohabitation.

Yet Eaton never truly puts her thesis to the test. The assorted statements of people like East Prussia's Gauleiter Erich Koch or the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin do not amount to a story of entanglement. Rather, both regimes actively tried to 'unweave' the region's cultural tapestry (to use Donald Bloxham's term), ignoring, rather than incorporating, the other's historic presence in the area. Presenting this as 'competition for the same geopolitical space' implies a sophistication in the political process for which little evidence exists. As Stalin had already told Churchill and Truman at Potsdam in July 1945: 'If a German administration were to pop up in Königsberg, we will drive them out. Drive them out, no matter what.' The book inevitably ends on a sombre note, with Eaton reconstructing in great detail how the decision to evict the entire native German population from Kaliningrad *Oblast* eventually won out over attempts at reconciliation or permanent cohabitation.

To initiated readers, especially those able to speak German, the book does not necessarily offer many new insights. But simply leaving it there does not do this work justice. This is the first scholarly endeavour to plot a course through the two most turbulent decades in the history of Königsberg/Kaliningrad. All major actors get their say, every event that would come to shape the region's history is given its due. Eaton has written a book that is deeply insightful and empathetic, and the work will surely find its place among a growing body of scholarship dedicated to Eastern Europe's transition from war to peace.

Bastiaan Willems
Lancaster University
b.willems@lancaster.ac.uk

Brent Cebul, *Illusions of Progress: Business, Poverty, and Liberalism in the American Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2023. 432pp. 10 halftones, 3 maps. 1 table. $39.95 hbk.
doi:10.1017/S0963926823000743

Writing at a time when urban scholars frequently address the ill effects of neo-liberalism, whether or not the actual term itself is applied, Brent Cebul manages to give the phenomenon of the private exploitation of public goods a novel and compelling interpretation. Tracing what he labels supply-side liberalism back to the New Deal, of all places, he demonstrates in fine detail how liberal initiatives aimed at social uplift and empowerment helped enrich and entrench conservative business and political interests at the expense of those most in need. Even as the federal commitment to justice and equity deepened in the second half of the twentieth century, communities of colour, in particular, suffered. Policy-makers in both parties, Cebul contends, nonetheless 'remained confident in their public–private, local–national illusions of progress' (p. 22).

Usually considered the opposite of modern conservatism in its embrace of federal activism, the New Deal nonetheless relied for fiscal and political reasons on local agents to execute its growth agenda. Given the means to offer relief, local elites seized

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the opportunity to advance their own agendas without allowing federal funding to upset existing social and political arrangements. So too, even as the presumably conservative Eisenhower administration accepted the Keynesian premises behind New Deal spending, it fostered local investments that damaged people of colour, not the least through the federal highways that ran through their communities. Lyndon Johnson's mid-1960s War on Poverty briefly disrupted the comfortable alliance of government and business interests, but significantly Jimmy Carter, having built his successful political career through the kind of regional public–private partnerships that had proliferated throughout the South during the New Deal and its aftermath, restored the approach during his presidency. When Democrats faltered politically during the Reagan years, 'New Democrats' led by a group of young southern politicians, not the least Bill Clinton, crafted their own programmes in progressive terms but executed them with the same neoliberal effect, culminating in the termination of Aid to Dependent Families, the prevailing US welfare system.

Cebul's account, like Gary Gerstle's 2022 volume *The Rise and Fall of the Neoliberal Order*, encompasses a broad sweep of modern US political history. To ground his account in urban policy, however, Cebul illustrates his broader theme through consideration of the mid-size city of Rome, Georgia, and Cleveland, Ohio. While constituencies in the two locations differed considerably, he nonetheless shows how federal funding lifted the fortunes of the business sector at the expense of the largely black working class. 'Local elites', he asserts, 'implemented increasingly sophisticated ways of managing poor people's "participation" in new rounds of development projects incorporating the ethic of participation less to solicit meaningful input than to seek acquiescence in community disinvestment and extraction' (p. 21). While he cites some examples of protest in Cleveland particularly, the overall picture is of a structure weighted throughout the federal system to the detriment of social change. A key result over time, not surprisingly, was a sharp decline in minority voting participation, a situation that continues to the present.

Among the important urban topics Cebul covers are urban renewal, which he describes as the Democrats' primary post-industrial policy, and revenue sharing, which the Republican Richard Nixon advanced to replace it. In the first instance, poorer, largely Black neighbourhoods gave way to new office and housing complexes and highways designed to reverse the effect of white flight to the suburbs. The subject naturally flows from the important online site, Renewing Inequality (https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/renewal/#view=0/0/1&viz=cartogram), which Cebul helped create to document levels of displacement in communities across the United States. Revenue sharing dispersed funds to a much wider number of communities, assuring that those most in need would find no easier access to resources than they did during the New Deal.

Cebul's deep research widens the scope of urban policy formation, not the least by recounting the unfamiliar but important role of chambers of commerce, assessors and other business and local government agents in shaping the acquisition and application of government funding. It is a complex story, and consequently the writing is dense. But a close reading is worth the challenge. In effectively revealing how deeply embedded the biases of US political culture are and how difficult it has been to move the nation's cities toward greater equity, his book goes a long way in showing why inequality has remained for so long, as he says, 'national rather than

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regional, structural rather than exceptional, embedded in and reproduced by the evolving liberal state' (p. 185).

Howard Gillette
Rutgers University–Camden Emeritus
hfg@scarletmail.rutgers.edu

Arbella Bet-Shlimon, *City of Black Gold: Oil, Ethnicity, and the Making of Modern Kirkuk*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019. xviii + 275pp. $19.60 hbk.
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Oil is typically assumed to have ruinous ramifications on cities in the Global South. For that reason, it would be easy to imagine that the present crisis in Kirkuk, an oil city in Iraq, is all about oil. Not so, according to *City of Black Gold*. This book is, therefore, unusual and original. With written sources largely unavailable because they were deliberately burned or buried, neither documented sources nor archival research in Kirkuk yields much. Theoretically, interviews with Kirkukis abroad could provide the necessary information, but not in practice. The circumstances leading to their sojourn persist: trauma has a long life and potential Kirkuki interviewees say little, if anything, about their experiences. Written works, both 'works of memory' and those based on documents, exist; but facts are often laced with fantasies. The book's careful, painstaking, multi-sited and rigorous historical investigations are, therefore, tonic.

City of Black Gold demonstrates that the crisis in Kirkuk – reflected in the contradictions between ethnicity and economy – is hardly a simple case of the fortuitous presence of oil or any other zero-sum framework for that matter. Kirkuki identities – an embroidery of Kurds, Turkmens and Arabs – over which wars have been fought are more fluid than are often assumed. Historically, these questions of identity were always present, but the imposition of Britain as a neocolonial power, roughly from 1920 to 1932 (pp. 36, 51, 43–4) calcified them. British patronage politics along with divide and rule tactics in Kirkuk led not to more hybridization in the city, but to visceral divisions and discontent for Kirkukis. Simultaneously, Britain extracted substantial rents from its urban social engineering, contradictions that metastasized into acrimonious conflicts with the discovery of oil.

At the behest of the Iraqi Petroleum Company (IPC), oil housing estates were patterned after the same ethnic divisions cleft in the city between 1946 and 1958 (pp. 108–9). Oil-based housing development was established to prevent labour unrest and audition the wonder of capitalism. Yet, this ideology institutionalized ethnic divides because minorities, especially Kurdish people, were marginalized in the urban development and housing projects (pp. 116–17).

Throughout this period, Kurdish people were excluded, both at work and at home. White workers were favoured. The city existed and flourished before oil, and the post-oil boom would not have been possible without the contributions of ordinary Kirkukis. And yet, IPC siphoned most of its resources away from Kirkuk with the tacit claim that these were profits by a business entity. Baghdad, the Iraqi capital, was not really an ally, certainly not in the sense of obtaining more rents for Kirkuk. In fact, Baghdad, too, drained resources from Kirkuk. Accordingly, when the IPC was

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