

an effort to provide political actors with practical intellectual resources for governing states in an international society. But to think about the history of international society through the late modern dichotomy of pluralism and solidarism, as Buzan does, is more instructive about the intellectual predilections and limitations of contemporary International Relations than it is about the history of international society or its political thought.

Buzan is undoubtedly right to say that the English School offers “a well-developed and intellectually lively approach” (185) to the study of international relations. The book certainly conveys much of the recent and ongoing “conversation” in which English School thinking has engaged, even if much of the historical conversation has been elided. Whether Buzan’s book will be able to enrich the conversation about international relations between an American social science and the English School is something only time will reveal.

–Richard Devetak
University of Queensland



Michael Walzer: *The Paradox of Liberation: Secular Revolutions and Religious Counterrevolutions*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015. Pp. xiv, 172.)

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“What happened to national liberation?” (xi) is the question animating Michael Walzer’s account of three divergent historical, sociocultural, and political moments of national liberations. This question, however, is a component in a broader lament in which Walzer partakes: “what happened to the secular democratic left?”

The Paradox of Liberation offers a comparative narrative of India and Israel in 1947–48 and Algeria in 1962 and the moments they attained self-determination. The movements that constitute the focal point of analysis are the Indian National Congress, Labor Zionism, and the Algerian FLN (National Liberation Front). It is a narrative about the shortcomings of secular liberationist national movements. A movement was liberationist when it combined the anticolonial nationalist agenda with an impulse to overcome the conservatism of tradition, especially assigned gender roles and stratified structures of society, but also political quietism as in the case of Zionism. Walzer laments that the democratic and secularist commitments inherent in these movements gave way within three decades after independence to extremist or so-called fundamentalist religion. Importantly, in each

case a different religious tradition offers the resources from which exclusivist agendas are formed. This lessens the plausibility of inflammatory arguments that attribute radicalism and illiberalism to specific religious traditions. Instead, what is at stake is the inherent paradoxical logic of liberationist nationalism.

The book contains four chapters that address some of the complexities and chronologies of each of the three cases. However, *The Paradox of Liberation* is not where readers who are unfamiliar with those cases might find their starting point. Chapter 1 unpacks what the author means by the paradoxical nature of national liberation. The paradox resides in the fact that the liberationists' agenda—to free their peoples from their state of being “backward, passive, mired in superstition and ignorance” (18)—was out of touch with the traditional ways and worldviews of those they claimed to be liberating. Hence, the liberationist movements' elitism and secularism blocked the fulfillment of their objectives. Their elitist nature also translated into marginality once independence was achieved (23).

Likewise, liberationists' cultural production of national imaginations (pantheon of heroes, commemorative rituals, literature, poetry) eventually lost traction because “the newness was too artificial, too recently constructed, and after a couple of generations, the heroes lost their aura, the commemorations lost their charm” (29). The secularist revolutions failed not only because of their elitism but also because of their inability to produce a coherent democratic secular culture (98). For Walzer, this failure is at the heart of the religious takeover. This may be especially the case with secular Zionism, where “the old religious culture was not overcome [while] the new secular culture isn't thick or robust enough to sustain itself by itself” (63). Hence, one of the responses to his framing question about the religious reversal of secularist liberationist ideas is the failure of the dominant voices within each movement not only to critically interrogate the traditions within which they operated but also to negotiate with them constructively (32).

Like many disillusioned Zionists, Walzer mentions that the proposals of cultural Zionists were overlooked by the Zionist leadership, much to its detriment. The discussion in chapter 2 of Zionism and its tension with Judaism brings to the fore the limits of the comparison between the three cases and the bigger thesis about the failures of secular liberationist efforts. Walzer's narrative is fairly conventional in that it traces the emergence of Zionist teleology as a subversion of traditional Judaism's “politics of deferred hope” (37) and as a movement for the creation of the New Hebrew. The problem that Walzer is trying to mitigate, as in his earlier important work on the Jewish political tradition, is the negation of tradition upon which many revolutionaries relied in articulating their objectives. Of course, it was not the case that “all the new Jews [were] heroic pioneers, working the land, as in Zionist legend” (51). Likewise, Zionism as a secular movement deployed messianic motifs even as it “naturalized and tamed” them (59) to be historically rather than metahistorically relevant to political formations. This ambiguous secularization of

the messianic impulse in Judaism explains, Walzer contends, the subsequent radicalization and religionization of Israeli nationalist discourse.

However, it does not explain it all. The limits of the comparison are evident here, because positing Zionism as an anticolonial struggle that shares certain characteristics with the FLN and the Congress Party needs to be defended, especially in a context that renders Zionism intricately connected with (but not reduced to) the colonialist discourse. Similarly, Walzer's allusion to the American case in his postscript cannot proceed without also mentioning slavery and the genocidal implications of the liberationist "voyage across the Atlantic" (135). This is precisely where the schematic accounts of the three cases reach complications that call for structural and sociological analyses as well as broad exposition of ideological content. Walzer's account would be strengthened by taking into consideration the extensive work done on religious "resurgence," religious politics, and religioethnic national conflicts, as well as the ever-expanding field of "secularism studies." Other comparative studies (for example, Scott W. Hibbard, *Religious Politics and Secular States: Egypt, India, and the United States*) offer the necessary interrogation of the social-scientific and humanistic study of religion and political transformation from greater secularism to religioethnic exclusivity and violence (direct, structural, and cultural). There are also specific works in each of the cases that critically trace those developments while resisting the religious-secular dichotomy that assumes incorrectly the sociocultural and religious emptiness of secular political spaces (Joyce Dalsheim, *Unsettling Gaza: Secular Liberalism, Radical Religion, and the Israeli Settlement Project*).

Since Walzer makes an argument about the need to negotiate the secular contextually in order to reverse the narrative of loss he associates with the liberationist moment, considering such literature would have helped him intervene more effectively in this debate. Such a consideration of other scholarship on the same puzzle would especially have strengthened Walzer's engagement with Marxist critique (chapter 3) and with postcolonial lenses (chapter 4) to illuminate the paradoxical patterns and underlying assumptions of liberationist nationalism. From a Marxist perspective, secularist liberationists were simply not secular enough; their paradoxical need of religious and traditional crutches explains their later misfires in cultural reproduction and eventual takeover by religious radicals (77). "The absolutism of secular negation... best accounts for the strength and militancy of the religious revival" (109). Indeed, it was already alluded to that Walzer's proposal for a way forward includes recognition that the objectives of liberationist movements (including those pertaining to gender equality, the eradication of marginalizing policies on the basis of class/caste, and other democratic virtues) can still be pursued but necessitate a critical engagement rather than negation of religious and sociocultural traditions. Secularist liberationist nationalism as mere antithesis of tradition carried with it an unreconstructed interpretation of secularism as "Archimedean" (110). The "Archimedean" approach overlooks the need for the secular to be negotiated contextually. Most critically, the tension

between secularist liberationist agendas and religious revivalism and critique revolves around gender equality (115) and this constitutes a conflict zone. Hence, Walzer underscores the need to seriously cultivate indigenous reworking and negotiating of tradition. One example of such cultivation he cites (118–21) is the work of the Indian feminist scholar Uma Narayan, who illumines the limitations of “secularism” and antinationalist feminism as the only mode of challenging traditional repressive practices against women. Here a systematic consideration of the literature on religion and the emergence and reproduction of modern nationalism, from Benedict Anderson’s observation of the philosophical poverty of nationalisms to Geneviève Zubrzycki’s comparative discussion of Catholicism and the production of nationalist imaginations in the divergent cases of Poland and Montreal, could have amplified the effectiveness of Walzer’s theoretical interventions on the questions of the coimbrication of religion and nationalism as those relate to the so-called resurgence of religion.

–Atalia Omer
University of Notre Dame



Mark Wenman: *Agonistic Democracy: Constituent Power in the Era of Globalization*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xvii, 334.)

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The concept of agonistic democracy has been around for some time but has often suffered from underdetermination. This is partly due to the fact that it is commonly defined in contrast to deliberative democracy. Deliberative democracy prioritizes consensus and mutual understanding; agonistic democracy acknowledges the role of conflict and contestation in the public sphere. This sort of thin differentiation is not particularly satisfying and became even more problematic when it was clear that deliberative democracy did not, or did not have to, exclude conflict and contestation. If agonistic democracy is to offer a real and significant alternative to mainstream accounts of democracy, it has to be about more than consensus versus contest. Marc Wenman’s book offers a great deal more. Rather than presenting agonistic theory as a response to other conceptions of democracy, Wenman reads this tradition in a stand-alone way that conveys the power and significance of agonism as a rich tradition in its own right. Of course, Wenman does employ comparison and contrast. There is an excellent chapter laying out various models of democracy in relation to agonistic theory. The first and