

out today. But Bell's book is also a major step along the way to decolonizing those liberal imperial imaginaries within which we are still enmeshed.

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JOHN BEW. *Clement Attlee: The Man Who Made Modern Britain*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. 670. \$39.95 (cloth).
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With *Clement Attlee: The Man Who Made Modern Britain*, John Bew presents a fresh, bold, lively, and favorable biography of Attlee that enhances the recent re-appreciation of the prime minister whose governments “made modern Britain.” This work has many strengths, although it provides no significantly new information or interpretations on political history, the ground having been covered ably by the early major 1980s biographies, numerous more recent shorter ones, and many articles and monographs on facets of Attlee's career. Bew praises several of those works in his prologue.

Bew's first major strength is his incorporation of those extensive primary and secondary sources, including the very recent ones, wide-ranging memoirs, and especially contemporary press articles. Even though the prologue and epilogue have such historiographical sections, Bew effectively uses the contemporary press or participants' memoirs to provide contrasting views on key episodes.

His second virtue is that he is a marvelous storyteller. Many episodes become vivid: Attlee's East End during the Blitz; Attlee's wartime trips into Western Europe; and his campaign tours in 1945, 1950, and 1951. Moreover, for many political crises Bew provides easily readable background coverage. The book's structure is usually successful. It offers perceptive synthetic analyses in the prologue, first chapter, and epilogue. Each chapter begins with a literary quotation (or political cartoon) with commentary, followed by a chronological narrative and a brief conclusion linking the literary introduction to the narrative. Bew accents that Attlee's voracious readings had a significant impact on his life.

Bew's third and most important major goal is to explain how Attlee's “belief system, values and ethical code [infused] ... his political thought” (20). Bew continuously focuses on Attlee's guiding principles: citizenship (linking the individual to the state); patriotism (imbibed through his family upbringing, his public schooling at Haileybury, his military experience); respect for the common people (especially those in London's East End, his wartime soldiers, trade unionists during his public career, and voters in political campaigns); practicality (never an ideologue, he pursued tangible goals); and advocacy for ethical socialism (greatly expanded social services, including the National Health Service, full employment, adequate housing, educational opportunities, and others). Bew also stresses that Attlee respected and liked Winston Churchill, not just during the wartime coalition and during their retirement, but throughout their entire careers.

Bew writes that Attlee never rejected the values instilled through his upper-middle-class upbringing in a late-Victorian family, his public school patriotism, and his fundamental respect for common people. Attlee always stressed that British socialism grew from British experiences, not from the ideologies of Marx and Marxists. Bored with his lackluster incipient legal career, he soon began social work in London's East End. His interest in the people and their living conditions led him to seek changes, become a socialist, and engage in local political action.

Determined to do his duty throughout the Great War, Major Attlee afterward entered into local and then parliamentary politics, becoming a mid-range Labor member in the 1920s and gaining leadership positions in the 1930s. The 1940s was Attlee's great decade. Remarkably, Attlee led a unified Labor Party into, through, and beyond the five-year wartime coalition. He generally supported and defended Churchill's wartime military and foreign policies (not imperial policies) and helped move the wartime coalition to some postwar domestic planning. Significantly, Attlee ensured that Labor MPs more insistent on wartime reforms or pledges did not break up the Labor Party or the coalition government. Moreover, Attlee's closest ally became Ernest Bevin, the powerful trade unionist whom Attlee appointed as postwar foreign minister. Maintaining strong Anglo-American ties was always important. Attlee considered that the post-World War II move from "empire to commonwealth" was not the rejection but the fulfillment of the Victorian imperial process. Bew recognizes Attlee's handling of withdrawal from India was more praiseworthy than from Palestine. Bew considers Attlee's efforts on domestic issues quite successful: both on party platform goals (nationalization of industries and expanded, universal, and coherent social services, including the National Health Service) and on postwar contingencies (such as demobilizing service men, expanding exports, dealing with the sterling crises). And Bew considers Attlee as an effective leader of the opposition in the 1950s.

Although covered but less emphasized by Bew, other themes could have received more attention. Through his competence, diligence, and loyalty, Attlee built upon and never lost support in three key areas. Through his pre- and post-Great War social work and grassroots political work in Stepney (including as mayor and alderman), he had a strong local political base, which (rather than luck) allowed him to retain his parliamentary seat in the disastrous 1931 general election. Next, he gained support in the small Labor parliamentary opposition, 1931–35, enabling him to emerge as party leader before and after the 1935 election returned more experienced, well-known Laborites. In the 1930s he gradually won influence and respect in the wider extra-parliamentary Labor movement—the national party apparatus and trade union movement. Although generally good, the chapters on the 1930s are Bew's least successful ones, for Bew has an insufficient understanding of the Labor Party (as reflected in one of his factual errors: Harold Laski was not yet "Labour Party chairman" in 1940 [260–61]), and his sources and notes indicate no research in the Labor Party archives. As wartime deputy prime minister (unofficially and then officially) and then postwar prime minister, Attlee expanded his influence and power to include many governmental appointments and governmental policy. Attlee significantly influenced the structures of the small war cabinet and its many committees, chaired the cabinet effectively during Winston Churchill's many absences, and of course as is well known (which Bew does effectively describe) successfully managed his postwar cabinets.

As Bew acknowledges in his prologue, this biography is not the key source for understanding what Attlee did in party or governmental actions. It does, however, provide a perceptive and thorough exposition of Attlee's core values and beliefs which affected why he approached issues as he did and made him, as Bew asserts and his subtitle claims, the man who made modern Britain.

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ALAN BEWELL. *Natures in Translation: Romanticism and Colonial Natural History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017. Pp. 393. \$60.00 (cloth).
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With *Natures in Translation: Romanticism and Colonial Natural History*, Alan Bewell has written an important book that links literary and natural history to the colonial experience