

Workers' Party is inexcusable in a book that sets out to provide a basic education for the left.

The publicity material tells us that this is "a major study of politics in the Irish Republic from the formation of the Free State right up to the present day". The jacket tells us that we will be reading "the first overview of politics in the Irish Republic ... based on an examination of the state's social foundations". Past experience of their previous excellent work tells us that the authors are well able to give us these things. For these reasons, the book was eagerly anticipated, but it does not live up to its promise. If there are members of the British, European and American left who need a basic text on Irish politics, and I am sure that there are, most of them should be grown up enough to start with one of the conventional histories, making the ideological adjustments to which they will have become all-too-well accustomed when reading bourgeois history or political science.

Irish politics today is another kettle of fish entirely – though still a didactic one. It is an unpretentious 120-page introduction to Irish politics for British sixth formers, part of a series of "Politics Today" books published by Manchester University Press. It is short and it is basic – World War 2 gets eight lines – but it is meant to be so. While it covers many of the topics in which the young presumably need to be instructed, its main drawback as an introduction is the shortage of additional reading cited. Maybe the publishers insisted on this but, except for the Northern Ireland chapter, there really is very little for someone who got bitten by the Ireland bug to follow up on. Interested neophytes should have been left with more loose ends to fiddle around with. As a consequence, the book has a tendency to present itself as "all you need to know about Ireland (if you don't need to know very much)".

Beaming myself into the brain of a sixteen year old who had just been given two days to find out about Irish politics for a project, I would be rather pleased to come across this 120-page encyclopedia entry in the local library. Knowing nothing when I started out, I would certainly know a lot more by the time I had finished. But those sadists among us who believe that effective mental exercise involves at least a modicum of misery may find this book a little too bland. By offering too many answers and posing too few questions, this book inflicts too little pain for my taste.

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Murray Forsyth (ed) *Federalism and nationalism* Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989; 284 pp; GBP25.00

Are federalism and nationalism compatible? Since the political slogan of nationalists is "one nation, one state", whereas that of federalists is "unity in plurality", the two doctrines are not necessarily contradictory. Nationalists may embrace federalism, if the territory of the federation coincides with their perception of the "home-

land"; and federalists are usually nation-builders, employing federal institutions to forge national identity and/or unity. However, according to its editor *Federalism and nationalism* was commissioned to answer a more difficult question: are federal institutions capable of reconciling multiple nationalisms within one state structure?

Given that this review is being composed in the first week of the second Lithuanian republic the editor's question has a sensational topicality. Nonetheless it might have been put in another way, "when, if ever, will nationalists accept a federal democratic state based upon multiple self-conscious nationalities?", a query which would differentiate democratic from authoritarian federations. The disappointing news is that the diligent reader will not find a clear answer to these tough and interesting questions, nor be able to equip herself to act as a federal consultant to Gorbachev.

The editor's brief introduction falls well short of a synthetic review of his contributors' case-studies of Belgium, Canada, Corsica, Ireland, Nigeria, South Africa, Spain and Yugoslavia. What we "learn" from the editor's overview is that federal structures "can and have grown out of deep ethnic differences within states and can help to manage these differences"; and that an unnumbered and unranked list of factors – including "the external situation in general" (*sic*) – would appear to be critical in the successful federal management of ethnic conflicts. Since ethnic conflicts are not synonymous with nationalist conflicts, although they can become so, the editor's answer by-passes his own question, and therefore frustrates his readers.

The book's organization also has many of the hallmarks of conference papers in search of a publisher. In Part 1, "The unitary state under pressure", we are treated to an essay on Belgium, another on Corsica and two on Spain. Since Belgium, France and Spain are not constitutionally federal it is not obvious what pertinence these otherwise competent essays have for the central question posed by the collection. The fact that the Belgian case shows that ethnic conflict can be managed under an extensively decentralized unitary state does not lead the editor to conclude that formal federalism is redundant as a conflict-regulating practice. It is also premature to decide whether or not Spain has successfully regulated its national conflicts through quasi-federal decentralization formulae; and the Corsican case does not tell us anything at all about nationalism and federalism.

Part 2, "Federal systems and the problems of ethnic cleavage", which provides essays on Yugoslavia, Nigeria and Canada, does partially address the key question, but rather obliquely. Christopher Binns demonstrates that genuine as opposed to pseudo-federalism is a recent phenomenon in Yugoslavia. Moreover, many Yugoslav "federal practices" appear to be of a precarious consociational rather than federal character; and their prospects of survival in the more open multi-party regime now promised do not seem very bright – especially with Serbian "hegemonism" once more showing its customary historical potency. Martin Dent's essay passes rather lightly over the failures of federation in Africa, and displays a heart-warming con-

vidence about Nigerian federalism in view of his sound appreciation of historical evidence. Dent is one of the last of a stranded platoon: the post-colonial generation of Africanists driven by optimism of the intellect, and by even more optimism about other people's wills. If historians in 2020 write of the miracle of Nigerian democratic federalism remind me to donate a sum of money to a federalist charity of Dent's choice. The Canadian essay in the collection would appear to provide the sole confirmatory case-study: a functioning federation which in Alain Gagnon's words has "managed" if not resolved Canada's national cleavages. However, his awkwardly-written essay does not reveal the secrets of the Canadian miracle, although it does have the two juiciest quotes in the book: Lévesque's description of Canadian federalism as "two scorpions in the same bottle" and Cairns's alternative formulation of Canadian intergovernmental relations as "eleven elephants in a maze".

Part 3, "Federalism and contemporary problems", offers prognoses on federalist prospects in South Africa and Ireland. The authors are very sane about federalist panaceas, although David Welsh is unaccountably more upbeat about the prospects for federalism in South Africa than Richard Jay is about similar developments in Ireland. Jay reviews the relative dearth of federalist ideologies in the history of the British Isles, examines the exogenous and endogenous sources of conflict in Northern Ireland, evaluates whether or not the appropriate motivations for federation exist, and concludes in the light of the disastrous experience of two-unit federations that a federal solution to Ireland's conflicts would not last very long – even if we were generously to assume that a federal bargain could be negotiated in the first place. However, Jay remains a critical supporter of the Anglo-Irish Agreement which he sees as "the best agreement that we have". His is also the best essay in the collection because he distinguishes federal, confederal and consociational practices – unlike most of his co-contributors who are conceptually prolix. A minor criticism of Jay's analysis is that it pays insufficient attention to two increasingly salient developments: the tentative "con/federalizing" of the European Community and its potential consequences for Northern Ireland and British-Irish relations, and the re-birth of the devolution/regionalist debate in Britain – which will be more than academic matters if there is a Labour government in the 1990s.

The reader of this collection will not know whether federalism is either necessary or sufficient to manage multiple nationalisms in a democratic order. The critical role of political parties in sustaining democratic federations – like Canada and India – will also not have been clarified. However, the contributors do imply that multi-national as opposed to multi-ethnic empires have a poor survival-record in modern times – especially when they democratize – and provide no reason to suppose that the federalization of such empires will hold off an eventual "springtime of the peoples", or, if you prefer, multi-national carnage.

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Michael Gallagher and Michael Marsh (eds) *Candidate selection in comparative perspective: the secret garden of politics* London: Sage, 1988; 294 pp; GBP27.50
Herbert Alexander (ed) *Comparative political finance in the 1980s* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989; 274 pp; npg

Political science has come a long way from the days when Maurice Duverger wrote of a lack of comparative data on party organisations. These two books bridge some significant gaps, in particular giving us a greater insight into that part of party activity involved with what could be called the "Jiban-Kanban-Kaban" rules of electoral success (Japanese for localism, candidate fame, and campaign finance – see p. 182 in the Gallagher-Marsh volume). The Gallagher-Marsh volume provides us with the first ever cross-national study of candidate selection, consisting of nine case studies (Belgium, Britain, France, FRG, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway) topped and tailed by two comparative chapters by Gallagher which include information on a host of other cases. The parameters of the study are carefully set out in the introduction, well adhered to in most of the case studies (though why is there not tabular presentation of data in the French chapter?), and the findings are collated and assessed comparatively in the conclusion.

A predominant theme in the party literature generally is of the growing centralisation of party organisations as borne out by such factors as new campaign styles, membership trends, and developments in party finance (see the Alexander volume). It is therefore surprising that one of the findings of the Gallagher-Marsh volume is that candidate selection remains quite decentralised, and that "in a slight majority of countries the centre ... has little if any power in the candidate selection process" (p. 245).

The book attempts to delineate environmental factors which may influence candidate selection, such as political culture, the electoral system and party types. In Gallagher's chapter on Ireland we see how localism limits the extent to which party headquarters can impose candidates on constituencies. Carpetbagging or *parachutage* appears to be prominent only in Britain. Electoral systems are not as influential over candidate selection as is often perceived. The German case of two electoral systems proves a disappointing testing ground due to the common practice of candidates running for both ballots. The switch to proportional representation in France in 1986 did result in some increase in central control of candidate selection but this was probably short-lived as the French have since reverted to the two-ballot system (unfortunately the chapter was written before the most recent French parliamentary elections). Some variations were noted between parties. Examples are the difficulty faced by the French UDF, as a confederation of parties, in co-ordinating candidate selection; the effects of faction-fighting in the Italian DC or the Japanese LDP; the Italian PCI's practice of candidate turnover after two parliamentary terms. In general the effects of environmental factors are found to be unpatterned: "To some extent