

much of their success to earlier efforts. This is not simply in terms of inheriting established, more or less successful tropes and lines of attack; they also built on actual reforms. A case in point is Denmark, much lauded for securing a relatively pure polity as early as the mid-nineteenth century, when it adopted a liberal parliamentary constitution. And yet, ironically, the 'path to Denmark' might have proved decidedly more tortuous had it not been for the disciplined culture of public officialdom established in the previous century by Denmark's absolutist monarch (ch. 13). A relatively 'clean,' liberal culture of governance was built on decidedly non-liberal foundations.

Liberalism, of course, is also distinguished by a commitment to free markets; and though the precise amount of freedom that should extend to markets has proved a constant source of debate, liberalism has always retained a belief that economic self-interest has its place and function within a progressive society. But as some of the chapters suggest, this is also one reason why modern anti-corruption reforms have proved so ineffective, or at least failed to institute anything like regulatory clarity. Simply put, there has always been a tension between liberalism's commitment to open, public-spirited governance on the one hand, and its commitment to market-driven capitalism on the other.

Two chapters contained in the final part of the volume provide splendid examples of this. James Moore's chapter on Britain shows how public contracts with private enterprises became a significant source of anxiety – and occasionally scandal – at both local and national levels during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (ch. 18) A similarly murky interface between the worlds of business and public service is presented in Ronald Kroeze's chapter on the post-war Lockheed and Flick affairs in the Netherlands and West Germany. Both scandals were a product of public officials and politicians interacting all too complacently and freely with business people, to the point where they accepted gifts (or bribes, as critics had it); but such encounters were born of a sense that there was nothing intrinsically wrong with public office holders mixing with business people and considering their interests – and indeed there isn't; but the risks are clearly great (ch. 19).

The point is sharpened in Jen Ivo Engels' contribution – one of the more

provocative and theoretical contained in the collection – which seeks to explain what he calls the 'never-ending fight against corruption' (p. 177). As he argues, though modern definitions of corruption turn on a strict division between public and private interests, in practice this distinction has proved difficult to maintain, simply because economic interests, of various sorts, have to be managed and mediated by officials, ministers and politicians. Temptations for abuse abound; and if public office holders do not always succumb, mere contact with these interests invariably taints and smears. Certainly in the case of Britain, the shadow of corruption has always loomed large over successive governments, of whatever party-political stripe; and it could be that this is an inevitable feature of any liberal polity that seeks to combine free elections and free markets, public service with the play of private interests.

Ultimately, *Anti-corruption in History* raises more questions than it resolves. If anything, corruption emerges from this volume still more complex and multifaceted than we had previously thought – still more tenacious and hydra-headed. But posing the right kind of questions is the first step towards finding better answers; and this is certainly the case when it comes to understanding the genesis and limitations of anti-corruption efforts in the modern period, the time when liberalism came of age.

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Lloyd George condemned

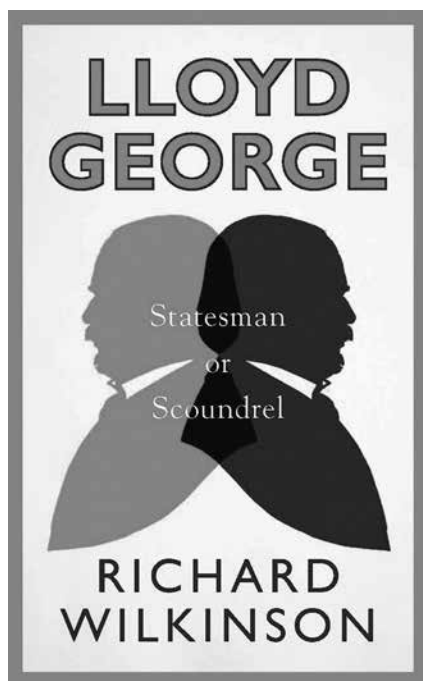
Richard Wilkinson, *Lloyd George: Statesman or Scoundrel* (IB Tauris, 2018)

Review by Alan Mumford

THE CLICHÉ HAS it that you should not judge a book by its cover. In this case we are presented with a stark question in the title. But we are also given a double image of LG in profile, where the images are the same in reverse. Any uncertainty about the focus of the book may then be removed by a declaration on the inside cover: this states that Lloyd George was 'vain, cruel, capricious and dishonest, at times his notoriously corrupt nature threatened to damage the British political system.'

This powerful accusation is preceded by a more judicious statement about his impressive contribution to the welfare state. In the text Wilkinson says that Lloyd George's record as a social reformer 'was flawed' but does not illustrate this. In fact, this is characteristic of the book: fierce attacks in immoderate language are followed by some much less colourful rehearsal of some of his achievements. The question of balance is obviously crucial in assessing anyone's life, the more so in the case

of Lloyd George because he aroused in his life – and has continued to arouse in subsequent biographies – strongly different views about his achievements. However, any apparent balance achieved through these statements is also put in question by the volume of attention the author gives to particular subjects. The Marconi scandal is given two repetitive half pages. In contrast Wilkinson claims that 'historians tend to be reticent about Lloyd George's sex life.' Here we have around seven pages devoted to various infidelities, excluding in that calculation the pages he devotes to Frances Stevenson; Crosby gave eight,¹ Hattersley ten.² There is clearly no comparability between the impact of infidelities on Lloyd George's political life and the impact of the Marconi Affair, which placed a permanent question mark over his honesty and caused Asquith to offer an unqualified defence. While fair attention is given to Lloyd George's development of those policies now considered the origin of the welfare state, nevertheless these are still given much less



coverage than reviewing Lloyd George's failures as a war leader. Just as with the over-attention to sex, Wilkinson devotes a massively different amount of attention to Lloyd George's *War Memoirs* and his *Peace Treaty* volumes. Certainly, it is important to record what Lloyd George was saying about events and to show, where appropriate, the differences between his version of what went on and the accounts of others. Again, 24 pages – in a book of 225 pages – on these volumes is disproportionate and his attack would be more convincing if the author's references were accurate.

Of the issues arising during the war, the most arguable and argued has been Lloyd George's attitude to Haig and the other generals. Wilkinson is severe in saying that Lloyd George lacked the moral courage to sack generals. This would be a more reasonable point of view if he suggested any solution to the difficulties that would have occurred as a result, wholly unsupported as Lloyd George would have been by his Tory colleagues and the king. Of course, the most potent issue, as it turned out for the Liberal Party, was the Maurice debate. Wilkinson accuses Lloyd George of lying about the figures. In fact, it is not actually known whether Lloyd George saw revised figures before the debate – we merely have the interesting story of Frances and another secretary actually destroying the relevant papers some years later.

One of Lloyd's George's acknowledged skills was oratory, and we are provided with detailed illustrations

of the content of some of his most significant speeches. But then we are also treated to Wilkinson's assessment of them. On a 1907 speech: 'what a performance. In its blubbery hyperbole and shameless exploitation of his audience's emotions'. While the author's disapproval of Lloyd George's infidelities and his frequent seduction of women at different levels of society may be shared by many, his disparagement of the speeches will not receive such wide support. He seems to draw a parallel here between the kind of seduction Lloyd George exercised over an audience and his seduction of women. His criticism of the famous speech in Queen's Hall at the beginning of the war is well founded (interestingly, a speech not referred to in Lloyd George's memoirs); his general disapprobation does not arouse support in this reviewer. On the Queen's Hall speech, the author's judgement is that it was 'brilliant, if you were impressed by challenging rhetoric verging on moral blackmail.' While accepting Wilkinson's judgement that the speech produces a queasiness in a reader nowadays, it would surely have been appropriate for him to record how successful the speech was, not only in the hall, but in the thousands of copies subsequently sold. Perhaps its effectiveness makes it even less praiseworthy

– but an acceptance of its significance at the time is surely necessary. There is no understanding in his comments of the different context of those times – no radio, no television, so the power of direct communication was much more significant. It is indeed a relief to read these speeches again and to be excited by their content, in comparison with the flat TV sofa experiences we endure today.

There are, at several points, incomplete references: i.e. an author, but a simple statement 'page unknown'. Towards the end of the book, a number of references appear in the text but disappear entirely on the reference pages: extraordinary errors from a reputable publisher.

As with all books about Lloyd George, issues of balance, weight and significance are matters of opinion; there is quite a lot of material here which enables the reader to make his or her own decision.

Alan Mumford has written about Lloyd George and Churchill for this journal. His most recent book is David Lloyd George: A Biography in Cartoons (Troubadour, 2014).

- 1 T. Crosby, *The Unknown Lloyd George* (IB Taurus 2014)
- 2 R. Hattersley, *David Lloyd George: The Great Outsider* (Little Brown 2010)

The long march of British history

Martin Pugh, *State and Society. A Social and Political History of Britain since 1870* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017)

Review by **Eugenio Biagini**

MARTIN PUGH IS ONE OF THE most widely read and influential historians of modern Britain. His books – including his study of Lloyd George, the Primrose League, the women's 'long march' to the vote, the British Union of Fascists, and *The Making of Modern British Politics* – have shaped the views of generations of students and academics on both sides of the Atlantic. The extraordinarily long shelf life of his work – through frequent reprints and new editions – is in itself a witness to their enduring significance. *State and Society* is now in its fifth edition – having first appeared in 1997. It is structured in five parts, each consisting of a variable

number of chapters – with each chapter articulated in various sections devoted to a specific question in modern British history. This structure makes *State and Society* not only a pleasure to read, but also easy to use as a reference work. The titles of its five parts convey a sense of Pugh's overall interpretation: Part I is about 'The loss of confidence, 1870–1902'; Part II surveys what Pugh calls 'The Reorientation: the emergence of the interventionist State, 1902–1918'; Part III is about 'The period of confusion: collectivism versus capitalism, 1918–1940'; Part IV explores 'Consensus: the age of the benign state, 1940–1970'. Finally, Part V is about 'The era of reaction and