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Book Review: Richard Lawrence Jordan, *The Second Coming of Paisley: Militant Fundamentalism and Ulster Politics* (Syracuse University Press, 2013)

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The Second Coming of Paisley: Militant Fundamentalism and Ulster Politics, by Richard Lawrence Jordan. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2013, 328 pp. \$39.95 hardback. ISBN: 9780815633136

Despite stepping down as Member of Parliament for North Antrim in 2010, Ian Paisley, 'the Big Man', continues to cast a long shadow over the political landscape of Northern Ireland. The reactions to his two-part interview with journalist Eamonn Mallie, broadcast by the BBC in January 2014, show that Paisley still has the ability to divide opinion. In his old age, Paisley's acrimony is directed less towards his former nationalist and republican opponents, and focused more on his former friends within the organisations he used to lead: the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and the Free Presbyterian Church.

Over the last decade, Paisley and 'Paisleyism', the loosely defined politico-religious platform associated with him, have increasingly attracted scholarly attention. Existing works of research on Paisley include a lengthy monograph by Ed Moloney (2008) charting the cleric's political journey, and Steve Bruce's (2007) more sociological engagement with Paisley and his religious support base across Northern Ireland. A forthcoming study of the DUP, (Tonge et al., 2014) will also shed considerable light on Paisley's political career, particularly his term as First Minister of Northern Ireland and its aftermath, as well as insights into the attitudes of the DUP membership.

Robert Jordan's recent study, however, attempts to situate Paisley (or perhaps, more accurately, 'Paisleyism') in a much wider context. In particular, Jordan chronicles the influence of American-style fundamentalism on Paisley's personal life and political career. The book bases its findings entirely on archival sources, augmented by a trawl of both Christian and secular pamphlets, newspapers and periodicals. The bibliography also demonstrates an extensive engagement with Paisley's own published writings. In so doing, Jordan draws attention to the book's use of the relatively under-researched material on Paisley in US archives, including material held in the controversial Bob Jones University, and documents in the Carl McIntire collection at Princeton Theological Seminary (p. 16).

The opening chapters, in part one of the book, provide an overview of historical developments in both Irish and American Protestantism, and the links between Irish and American 'revivalism'. Detailed context is also provided on the development of political Protestantism in the British Isles since the Reformation. Paisley's career, Jordan argues, 'exemplified this confluence of religiosity and political activity' (p. 90). Whilst Jordan's exploration of these under-used sources and his attempt to situate Paisleyism in a much wider context is welcome, Paisley himself seems something of a peripheral figure in the early part of the book.

The remainder of the book is split into a further two parts. Part two discusses the 'premillennial Paisley', the protest figure who opposed the reforms of Terence O'Neill, ecumenism, and what he regarded as the creeping influence of the Vatican.

Part three of Jordan's study explores Paisley's journey from premillennial fundamentalist 'into an amillennial politician', particularly following the establishment of the DUP in 1971 (p. 219).

In the course of the analysis, Jordan recounts some of Paisley's more bizarre protest activity during the 1960s. Some of these events appear almost humorous with hindsight, but no doubt reflected Paisley's sincerely held beliefs at the time. Such activity included his letter to the United Nations protesting that a flight with the then Pope on board had diverted into Northern Irish airspace due to bad weather (p. 150). Jordan is not uncritical of Paisley, not least when considering his association with Bob Jones University, an institution whose controversial racial policy was widely known (p. 198).

These later sections of the book are undoubtedly interesting, but not unproblematic. Jordan contends, not unreasonably, that, from June 1966, there was little that Terence O'Neill's government could do to halt 'the rise of Paisleyism, the onset of a Catholic civil rights movement, and the collision between both movements.' However, his assertion that, because of this, 'it can be argued that the Northern Ireland Troubles began that month' is unlikely to gain widespread acceptance (p. 154).

The book's final chapter contains numerous points of contention. These points centre on the chapter's structure, the nature of Jordan's arguments, and the historical accuracy of the material he presents. The chapter appears somewhat out of place in the wider context of the book. It reads more like a conflated, and somewhat confused, account of the recent history of Northern Ireland than a close engagement with Paisley's political journey. Consequently, much of the material tends to oversimplify the political developments in Northern Ireland since the 1970s, which could cause problems for those readers less familiar with the region's history.

His discussion of the positions of the DUP and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) towards devolved government is a case in point. His contention that the UUP 'advocated integration with Great Britain as the best way to protect Ulster Unionist control of Northern Ireland' does not capture the overall support among UUP members for a return to majority rule (Stormont-style) devolution (p. 235). As Graham Walker's work on the UUP illustrates, integration was supported by some, but not all, of the UUP elite, and encountered much resistance among the rank-and-file. And the integrationist lobby was arguably dealt a fatal blow following the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985.

However, Jordan rightly notes that, over the course of three decades, the British government 'consistently pushed' for a political settlement in Northern Ireland based on power-sharing, and some form of Irish dimension, which the DUP 'constantly rejected', until the relatively recent decision to share power with Sinn Féin. But only

after the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) had decommissioned its weapons and agreed to support the Police Service of Northern Ireland (p. 237).

There are also some factual inaccuracies in the final chapter. These include the misdating of the Ulster Workers' Council strike, which occurred in May rather than June 1974 (p. 238), and mixing-up the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster and the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury (p. 248).

In the conclusion, Jordan reflects on Paisley's decision to enter a power-sharing arrangement with Sinn Féin. He argues that if we accept that Paisley was driven by militant fundamentalist, but sincere, religiosity, (and he argues there is no reason not to), we must also accept that he believed he was doing God's will (p. 262). Cynics, however, might conclude that it was a happy coincidence for both Paisley and the DUP that he did not feel compelled to share power with Sinn Féin until after IRA decommissioning and the decimation of the Ulster Unionist Party, his main political adversaries.

In conclusion, *The Second Coming of Paisley* is an interesting, but challenging book. It will, perhaps, be of most interest to political studies scholars and sociologists of religion, since anthropologists may lament the absence of participant observation or interview data with either Paisley or his followers. However, as a work of history, or an analysis of political Paisleyism, the book is not unproblematic. Nevertheless, by attempting to situate religious Paisleyism in a wider transatlantic context, the book will undoubtedly contribute to scholarly debates about the politics of Christian fundamentalism in Ireland and further afield.

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