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Matthew Worley. *The Foundations of the British Labour Party.* Farnham: Ashgate, 2009. xiv + 260 pp. $124.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7546-6731-5.

Reviewed by Jerry Brookshire (Middle Tennessee State University)
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Wandering within the British Labour Party–Walking through a Vibrant English Garden

The identities, cultures, and perspectives during the formation of the British Labour Party were not static as if within a mosaic, but as in an English garden, they were varied, ever-changing, and generally complementary. More untidy and ragged than in an ideal garden, the various components nevertheless coalesced into a strong, successful political force in the interwar period. This volume of essays explores many diverse facets and their somewhat intertwining contributions to the foundations of the British Labour Party as a whole, not specifically to the party in parliament.

The book is well structured. Matthew Worley's fine introduction surveys the party's history and its historiography and outlines each contributor's essay. Approximately twenty pages in length, each chapter includes its own introduction and conclusion, puts its contribution in historiographical perspective, and analyzes its subject's impact or contribution to the party's foundation. The twelve contributors range from junior academicians to renowned scholars and authors. Footnotes (not endnotes) greatly aid the reader, especially in the historiographical sections.

Accenting the importance of trade unions to the party, three pertinent essays begin the book. Robert Taylor's clear, well-written opening essay explores J. R. Clynes's early career in which he, as both a trade union leader and a party leader, viewed the movement's two wings as mutually supportive. He was an advocate of all workers, unionized or not, and of all Britons, not just the working classes. Gerald Crompton effectively summarizes the diversity and importance of the different railway unions and their increasing strength during and following the Great War. His nuanced essay concludes that those railway unions perceived the Labour Party as their political tool. Andrew Taylor's clear treatment of the mineworkers accents their general belief that reforms beneficial to miners and the union would best come through the parliamentary system and that the union recognized the party's primacy in electoral policy and political plans.

Chris Wrigley's exploration of British Labour and continental socialism before 1920 describes how the party benefited from continental contacts through literature, the Second International, trips and conferences, continental speakers at May Day celebrations, and so forth. The British generally refrained from Marxist and class-warfare theories and concentrated more on practical, moderate approaches. Perhaps understandably, Wrigley comments little on British Labour's meager contribution to the continental socialist experience. Laura Beers, studying the subsequent years 1918-39, examines the party's response to the Conservative Party's "anti-socialist" propaganda. Its intensive, vitriolic, and partially successful attempts to paint Labour in extremist terms–"socialist" (linking it to bolshevism), anti-family, and anti-private property–helped influence but did not cause the Labour Party to drop unpopular proposals such as the capital levy and to emphasize its own policies of parliamentary democracy, gradualism, practicality, respectability, and nationalization. Labour asserted that it was a party for the whole nation and not just of trade unionists. Both essays demonstrate how essentially British was the Labour Party.

Three essays are on the Independent Labour Party (ILP) and the Co-operative Party. Gidon Cohen essentially provides a fine historiographical essay about the early ILP–its myths, institution, personalities, and ideas. Warning against a wholesale rejection of early interpretations or myths about the ILP, Cohen finds that all those segments responded to varying circumstances and challenges affecting the ILP and the Labour Party, but fundamentally the ILP provided Labour with a structural model, key early leaders, and an openness to explore visions and policies which were well-grounded in eth-