

Mike Makin-Waite, *On Burnley Road: Class, Race and Politics in a Northern English Town*, (London: Lawrence Wishart, 2021). 274 pp. ISBN 9781913546021

Although the process of deindustrialisation in Britain has received some detailed analysis in recent years, the impact of the process on Lancashire's former cotton towns has received little attention. Burnley, along with Bradford, Leeds, and Oldham erupted into race riots in 2001 over seemingly disparate and trivial local issues, framed by outsiders as 'defensive nativism', (p.14) but also romanticized by some (p.21). The events were part of decades-long succession of failed national socio-economic policies. Within two years of the riots, Burnley had elected eight British National Party local councillors. Ian Makin-Waite's book is a timely account of the problems faced by Burnley as well as a detailed contextual study of the dynamics of race, belonging and identity in modern Britain. Makin-Waite carefully weaves a passionate analysis of the failure of central government to confront the issues faced by local communities, the responses of local government, and wider societal issues together with his own personal reflections of leading the Community Cohesion initiative in Burnley. There are clear links to current discussions of 'Red Wall' areas, and a strength of the book is that it gives detail and analysis where so little consideration of the nuances between even neighbouring towns is common. What *On Burnley Road* does so successfully is study Burnley on its own terms, but it also includes personal insight from someone on the 'front-line' of local government at the time. The relationship between the local and wider shifts nationally also underpins much of the book's strengths.

Makin-Waite's personal background and political affiliations are important in the framing of the work but do not detract from the analysis. Indeed, the author goes to great lengths to explain their own political affiliations and how these have changed (and why). His role in leading Community Cohesion gives a unique insight into many of the problems that led up to, and still exist after the riots. The introduction offers a broad overview of the book's contents and situates the study in a political and academic context. The first chapter gives a brief socio-political history of Burnley. At times it lacks the level of detail to adequately analyse the complexity of working-class opinions in the town and surrounding areas, but as a brief overview it serves its purpose, and utilises a sensible range of historical and sociological studies. Chapter two begins to highlight the book's strengths, by offering a focussed local study that is situated within broader national events, with personal insight adding extra weight to the analysis. The relationship between local communities and the New Labour project is especially illuminating to those interested in shifts in working-class politics from Thatcherism to Brexit. The chapters that follow build on this and detail the development of the British National Party around the area, and the riots. The fourth chapter examines the aftermath of the party's success in local elections. Together, these offer unique perspective on the events, but also offer a fascinating insight into the pervasion of far-right rhetoric, racial tensions, and suspicions towards mainstream political actors from within communities, into mainstream society. Chapter five examines the role of New Labour policies locally and in a national context, specifically the Community Cohesion initiative, whilst chapter six focusses on local political actors and their responses to rising Islamophobia, and the alienation of certain portions of the town's white working-class amidst job losses and economic decline, what Makin-Waite succinctly summarises as a 'battering of pride' (p.170). Chapters seven and eight detail the attempts to address the local issues, which offers a positive note, although chapter nine then skilfully highlights the

continued relevance of the events in Burnley by highlighting how much of the discourse and political tactics seen in more recent political events were 'incubated' in Burnley (p.224). The final chapter offers a roundtable discussion, held during the lockdown period of 2020 between the author, the chief executive of a cohesion and integration charity, an MP, and an academic. It is a passionate discussion that brings some of the key themes, such as the relationship between Britain, Empire, community and society, out with some wider input.

On Burnley Road is passionate, and in some parts angry. But, Makin-Waite has channelled this into a fascinating study that will appeal to a wide range of readers. It is written in a clear, straightforward way, that shows great skill in weaving the local, national and personal narratives into an engaging account of race, community and identity in Lancashire. Furthermore, it raises questions around the balance between local and central government that will remain pertinent for the foreseeable future. It is a book that I will return to for both research and teaching.

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