

these composers has been contested historically, despite their ongoing prevalence. Guthrie's reading of Peter Maxwell Davies's *O Magnum Mysterium* in chapter 6 is cogent and captivating as an analysis of middlebrow modernity while raising the question of why such close musical readings are absent in the other chapters and what the analysis of musical texts within the project as a whole really achieves—that is, is the very act of providing a close reading of *O Magnum Mysterium* itself a contemporary (re)enactment of middlebrow pedagogical principles?

Finally, the short epilogue incorporates the first sustained examination of an arguably more popular musical example (in this case, the influence of hip hop in Gabriel Prokofiev's *Concerto for Turntable and Orchestra* at the BBC Proms in 2011), underscoring timely debates about how the middlebrow intersects with contemporary issues of cultural appropriation, race, and gender (female YouTube commentators are quoted as source material, for example). The sudden incorporation of a more diverse range of voices at this final stage retrospectively exposes the comparative absence of such perspectives in the main chapters. I do not intend this to be a criticism, as much as a comment on the lack of an intersectional diversity within the existing archive of the musical middlebrow in twentieth-century Britain: Guthrie's subjects and sources are overwhelmingly white men, promoting the music of white men as a way to mediate between conflicting cultural hierarchies and technologies that were, undeniably, gendered and racialized, both then and now. This archival fact is revealing, highlighting the possibility that the roots of twentieth-century middlebrow culture did not create sufficient space, by definition, for female or ethnic minority agents to lead the cause of inclusive music appreciation efforts in Britain. As such, the leap to cultural pluralism in the epilogue poses crucial and relevant questions about *why* and *for whom* certain genres have been traditionally classified as highbrow, lowbrow, or in between, and how the middlebrow might serve to confront and repair such hierarchical imbalances.

I look forward to seeing the conversations that will be inspired by Guthrie's excellent research. Her closing challenge, that value-laden aesthetic hierarchies “remain constitutive of Britain's musical culture” today (218), will be relevant for years to come.

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KARL HACK. *The Malayan Emergency: Revolution and Counterinsurgency at the End of Empire*. Cambridge Military Histories. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. 530. \$34.99 (paper).  
doi: 10.1017/jbr.2023.50

Karl Hack's much-anticipated book, *The Malayan Emergency: Revolution and Counterinsurgency at the End of Empire*, provides the fullest treatment of the Malayan Emergency published to date. Issued as part of the nascent Cambridge Military Histories series from Cambridge University Press, Hack's monograph is a well-balanced narrative that blends the perspectives of the many agents who had an impact on or were affected by the emergency period, ranging from British military strategists and Malayan Communist Party insurgents to members of Malaya's local and urban village communities. Hack ultimately offers a fresh approach to the study of the Malayan Emergency and the book will be a welcome addition to the historiography on a broad range of subjects, including military history, British imperial history, Southeast Asian studies, and the history of decolonization.

*The Malayan Emergency* is organized into ten chapters that proceed in a roughly chronological order. While the introduction and conclusion place the monograph in conversation with

the robust literature and many debates related to the Malayan Emergency, the book's body chapters then guide readers through the series of distinct phases that Hack argues existed in this period. In chapter 2, for example, Hack examines the period between 1947 and June 1948, focusing not only on the outbreak of the emergency in Malaya but also the broader international context that gave shape to the conflict. In chapter 3 he evaluates the short but eventful period between June 1948 and January 1949, before, in chapter 4, bringing readers up to February 1950, just prior to when the British counterinsurgency policy known as the Briggs Plan was first introduced in the region. Following this, chapter 5 provides an in-depth analysis of the Briggs Plan and the application of what Hack calls "geodemographic" forms of population control across Malaya (197), culminating with a revisionist account of the October 1951 assassination of the Federation of Malaya's High Commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney. In chapter 6, Hack shifts perspectives by examining the political and military strategies of the Malayan Communist Party between October 1951 and 1954, before, in chapter 7, refocusing the narrative back on British military tactics, this time analyzing the role of Sir Gerald Templar, who took over as High Commissioner of Malaya in February 1952 and who, in Hack's accounting, oversaw the "optimisation" of Briggs's "hearts and minds" counterinsurgency policies (340). The book closes with two thematically oriented chapters—entitled "Optimising Counterinsurgency" and "Politics, Decolonisation, and Counterinsurgency"—that each cover the longer stretch of time between 1952 and 1960, assessing a host of topics related to the emergency period that range from propaganda and resettlement to the role of the conflict in Malaya's efforts to decolonize in the late 1950s.

The monograph provides much of value for scholars interested in the history of the Malayan Emergency. Hack's blending of perspectives—"government, insurgent, and local," as Hack labels it—allows for a more balanced and nuanced account of the emergency than most other general histories published about the conflict, particularly those focused exclusively on British counterinsurgency tactics in Malaya (432). Hack's consideration of local perspectives during the conflict is especially welcome, and sections focused on local conditions in Sungei Siput in chapter 1 and Kajang and Sungei Jeloh in chapter 4 provide particularly compelling evidence that the local, just as much as Cold War politics or high-minded military strategy, mattered to how the emergency was lived and experienced. In addition, Hack's parcelling of the emergency into distinct phases delivers a useful and pragmatic way of imagining how the conflict changed over time. Rather than being a singular event, Hack's structuring of the book reveals how the emergency was always in the making, with the first phase between 1948 and 1949 representing one of "terror, counter-terror and pressure" (79), the second phase from 1950 to 1952 denoting a move toward "geodemographic" control (197), and the final phase beginning in 1952 signifying one of "optimisation" (340). Hack may argue that the labeling of these stages is merely "heuristic," but they provide a much-needed dose of historicism regarding the emergency period, showing how nothing was inevitable about how the conflict was imagined or fought on either side of the battlefield (432).

Nevertheless, there are a few issues worth noting, particularly for the general reading audience. The first involves periodization. Even though the emergency period itself is covered in great detail, and though one of the concluding appendices features a timely discussion of the emergency's impact on politics and memory in postcolonial Malaysia, Hack's nearly exclusive focus on the period between 1948 and 1960 means that readers with little background on the emergence and longer history of British colonialism in Malaya may struggle to make sense of many of the social, cultural, economic, and political issues at stake in the region after World War Two. Relatedly, and while the empirical and borderline forensic approach of Hack's narrative provides a wide-ranging accounting of the emergency's many people, events, and shifts, the level of detail in certain sections of the book—particularly when discussing legislation, legal codes, troop movements, and other minutia—may frankly overwhelm the nonspecialist audience at times, distracting from the overall strength and originality of the book's broader contributions to the literature on the Malayan Emergency.

Despite these very minor concerns, there is little doubt that Hack's monograph, published on the heels of nearly a dozen peer-reviewed articles that he has written on the subject over the past few decades, is required reading for any scholar interested in the Malayan Emergency. Hack's attention to detail as well as the balancing of perspectives offers the most comprehensive account of the conflict yet published, and any future histories written on the subject will no doubt owe a debt of gratitude to Hack for providing such an empirically rich study on this important moment in British imperial history.

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JOSEPH HARDWICK. *Prayer, Providence and Empire: Special Worship in the British World, 1783–1919*. Studies in Imperialism. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021. Pp. 296. \$120.00 (cloth).  
 doi: 10.1017/jbr.2023.52

The “special worship” of Joseph Hardwick's *Prayer, Providence and Empire: Special Worship in the British World, 1783–1919* is a technical term that will be unfamiliar to many readers of this journal. Do not be put off: this is a fascinating, wide-ranging study. Hardwick addresses imperial subjecthood, colonial nationalisms, the environmental history of settler colonialism, the relationship between church and state, the public status of institutional religion, the respective authority of religion and science, and more. But what is special worship? The term refers to the tradition of calling the entire community to prayer, outside the usual rhythms of worship, to mark a specific public event. The community might give thanks for a blessing (such as a good harvest) or invoke God's intercession in a crisis (such as, most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic). The practice raises many questions. Who had the authority to prescribe communal worship? How was the community in question defined? And what exactly was prayer supposed to achieve?

With *Prayer, Providence and Empire*, Hardwick builds on the work of the ongoing state prayers project, which until now has focused on metropolitan Britain (<https://www.special-worshipbritainandempire.com/>). Using material from twenty-two archives in four countries, Hardwick extends the project's focus to Britain's settler colonies: Australia, Canada, and southern Africa. In Britain itself, special worship grew controversial in the nineteenth century, opposed both by religious voluntarists and those who held that prayer was a distraction from the practical solutions that public calamities demanded. Yet in the same period special worship flourished among settler colonizers, who, despite their “confidence, mobility, violence and rapaciousness,” retained an “enduring sense of crisis, anxiety, vulnerability, and guilt” (231). In this environment, collective worship allowed these increasingly democratic societies to imagine themselves as “unities and communities” (228). While much scholarship on these colonies emphasizes the new, Hardwick's focus is on the role of “traditional practices, ideas and institutions” (5) in the construction of modernity.

Hardwick repeats his arguments across six thematic chapters. In chapters 1 and 2 he examines the civil and ecclesiastical leaders who issued calls to prayer; in chapter 3, the communities who participated; in chapter 4, the sermons given; and in chapters 5 and 6, the two most prevalent causes, drought and royal occasions. Several important themes emerge. First, Hardwick denies that the growth of democracy and religious pluralism in colonial societies pushed religion out of the public sphere. On the contrary, the endurance of special worship indicated a belief that these societies were “spiritual communities” and “moral beings” possessing a