activities grew steadily. Trade promotion, for instance through the Tasmanian International Exhibition in Hobart in 1894–95, or efforts to improve the popular image of Russia, mostly in cooperation with various Eastern orthodox churches, became more important. Until the Russo-Japanese war, Russia was seen as a potential threat to the British Empire in the Asia-Pacific region. By contrast, Russian weakness coupled with the rise of Japan after 1905 as the dominant power in the geopolitics of the region changed perceptions of Russia in Australia. This was not lost on the then consul-general, Matvei Matveevich Gedenshtrom (not to be confused with the Russo-Swedish explorer of Siberia of the same name): 'The enemy is Britain's ally Japan' (doc. no. 100).

From 1914–17, with the British and Russian empires now allied against the Central Powers, Russia's last consul-general at Melbourne, Alexander Abaza, busied himself facilitating the return of Russian subjects to Russia or their enlistment in the Australian forces. He also sought to extend Russian official protection to Austro-Hungarian 'Slav subjects' resident in Australia. Abaza, who hailed from a Moldavian noble family, readily continued to serve the Provisional Government after February 1917 but resigned at the end of the year on the Bolshevik seizure of power in Petrograd. He was the last official Russian representative at Melbourne until Australia and the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations under the very different conditions of the next world war in 1942.

This is a very useful and expertly edited collection of diplomatic sources — complemented by a detailed introduction on the sources, their selection, transliteration and on Russian civil service ranks — that will be of use to anyone studying imperial Russian policy in the Pacific region or Australia's internal development in the late nineteenth century.

School of History T. G. Otte
University of East Anglia

Zysiak, A., Śmiechowski, K., Piskała, K., Marzec, W., Kaźmierska, K., Burski, J. *From Cotton and Smoke: Łódź — Industrial City and Discourses of Asynchronous Modernity 1897–1994*. Wydawnictwo Universytetu Łódzkiego, Łódz and Kraków, 2018. 308 pp. Illustrations. Figures. Tables. Notes. Methodological appendix. Bibliography. Index. Zł44.90: $60.00: £47.00 (paperback).

Two years ago I visited Łódź, which I had remembered from the early 1990s as a grey and rather depressing place. Since then the city has changed tremendously. As a newcomer its interplay of historical traditions appealed to me — as predatory industrial hub described in Reymont's *Promised Land*,

as the epitome of plan-oriented and monumental socialism and shambles of post-1989 capitalism and gentrification of the recent past. But the people I met — a taxi driver, a local grocer and inhabitants of a rotting tenement house — confused me as they all elaborated on the compromised past, and having learnt where I come from, expressed their envy of my hometown Gdańsk, which they perceived as far more attractive. Citizens of the 'Polish Manchester', and the former 'city of cotton', seemed to be tired of the Sisyphean task of rolling a boulder up the modernity hill.

This remarkable city is the focus of a group of sociologists and historians who have carried out extensive research on press discourses about urban development and the drive for modernity from 1897, when the city was recorded as the fifth largest in the Russian empire, to the early post-Soviet years. Łódź, located right at the geographical heart of contemporary Poland, stands out from most European cities, being both insular and hyper-modern. This study seeks to demonstrate how global ideas combined with Poland's idiosyncrasies, the violent historic turns of the twentieth century, local policy-making and mass readership to produce principal concepts at ground level. The book comprises four chapters, each one following discourses from different pioneer periods, from late nineteenth-century industrial development through to Polish independence and the beginnings of a socialist city, to post-1989 capitalism. Despite some repetitions and minor inconsistencies, the book is surprisingly cohesive both in concept and narration. It is well-based in the current methodology of historical sociology and intellectual history, and the historical contextualization is impressive in its clarity.

Implementing the metaphor of 'asynchronous modernity', the authors demonstrate how the aspiration of creating a better future and 'becoming modern' stumbled over specific problems in East-European urban history, forging the city's overall sense of inadequacy. For instance, the founding of the university in 1945 set into stark relief the harsh conditions of female textile workers, whose plight invoked nineteenth-century working class exploitation rather than an imagined 'socialist modernity'. The first chapter analyses press discourses on the rampant growth of a musty multicultural industrial hub inhabited by alien German and Jewish '*Lodzermensches*' as it struggled to form a new identity, despite the paternalistic opinions of Warsaw's elites and the neglect of its Russian administrators. The second chapter traces how the independence of Poland and a period of 'ideological inflation' spurred rival discourses of national capitalism and municipal socialism, rediscovering urban polity and creating new avenues for future growth. Post-1945 Łódź, a temporary Polish administrative centre, discussed in the third chapter, hosted a surprisingly modest vision of 'building socialism', with some exceptions such as *osiedle*, the innovative socialist urban unit. In the last chapter, the city

appears as a backdrop for the symbolic and material deprivation of both the working class and local urban policy-makers, and for the concurrent victory of market capitalism and the factory owner, who had returned from the age of iron and steam in full glory. It looked like history had come full circle.

I would have hoped for a wider discussion of the facets of modernity in terms of structural crisis, with more topographic and historical examples of its development — for example, the city's living conditions, urban planning and economy. The case studies here seem dominated by a concept of modernity epitomized by politics and social turmoil, which is also at odds with the data presented in one of the figures (p. 268). I also wonder how, and if, the structural crisis of 'heavy modernity', which led to the demise of industrial jobs and the gradual disappearance of a modernizing aspiration, was conceptualized at ground level in homogenous socialist hubs. Such questions do not, however, undermine the numerous merits of this book, such as its persuasive argumentation, carefully chosen caesura and citations and, last but not least, the exceptional history of the city itself.

Department of History P. Perkowski
University of Gdańsk

Pattie, Susan Paul. *The Armenian Legionnaires: Sacrifice and Betrayal in World War I.* With a chapter by Varak Ketsemanian. I. B. Tauris, London and New York, 2018. xxii + 266 pp. Maps. Illustrations. Timeline. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. £25.00.

Between 2014 and 2018, there was an avalanche of publications and commemorative events surrounding participants in the First World War and its bloody aftermath. This book is part history, part collection of documents, part celebration of the heroism of the men who joined the Armenian legion, loosely tied to both British and French forces during the war. The men of this unit fought in Palestine, helping to break the last elements of Ottoman resistance in September 1918. Some of them wound up attached to French occupying forces in Cilicia after the Armistice. There they helped Armenians who tried to rebuild their communities and their lives after the genocide of 1915–16.

The tragedy of this story is that by siding with the British and the French, the Armenian Legionnaires took the brunt of Turkish hostility to the imperial carve up of their country. The Treaty of Sèvres, signed in August 1920, created the Republic of Armenia in the north and placed Cilicia under French control. For Armenians, linking the two, possibly under a League of Nations mandate, would ensure the protection of the survivors of the genocide.