This valuable book discusses the role of European and, more specifically British left-wing organisations in its understanding of and opposition towards fascism between the inter-war years. Interestingly, it challenges an acceptance that a sole left-wing analysis claims natural legitimacy in the critique the rise of fascism.

This discussion does not focus on any single left-wing organisation, such as the Labour Party or Communist Party of Great Britain. Rather it encompasses an eclectic range of organisations in the historical narrative. This interesting approach provides a useful insight into the plurality of left-wing movements who opposed the fascist ideology, as well as the political agendas of other left-wing groups. A possible criticism could be that a consequence of this approach is that the book does not entirely recover from the lack of focus such an approach creates, but this does not detract.

Hodgson's analysis would be of most interest to those seeking to develop their existing knowledge of anti-fascist movements in the inter-war years. It would also be of significant value to advanced students of European, British and social political movements as it examines the positions of a series of specific under-researched political groups. Its appeal would be to historians with a political slant given its discourse of political and social history. However it has potentially a wider ranging scope for interest across scholars with varying areas of interest such as British and European history.

Hodgson has successfully presented a needed discussion of the role of the left in opposing fascism. The book boasts an analysis that is framed by an evident period of interesting primary research. Despite occasional typing errors, it is an enjoyable book to read despite the undoubted gravity of the subject. It is worth noting, however that not all left-wing groups carried with them the same level of impact in their opposition; some were effectively 'pilot fish' and so to elevate them to the same scale of importance as the Labour movement may be a negative consequence of an analysis drawn from this book.

However, it must be noted the scale of the task which the author has set is extremely vast. He has completed this task by presenting arguments built throughout his work towards the conclusion that left-wing opposition to fascism is more diverse than simply a Labour-centred movement and that the relevance of other groups must be considered significant, if not all encompassing, in their scope.

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But were these coalitions united more by their fear of fascism than by their love of democracy - were they, in effect, marriages of convenience? Historians have profoundly disagreed on this issue. Some have emphasized the prior loyalty of Communist Popular Frontists to the Stalinist regime in the USSR, and others have noted the gap between the democratic rhetoric of Communist leaders and the revolutionary temper of their working-class followers. 

In the years between the two world wars, the parties of the left had to confront new and frightening movements which were intent on their complete destruction. Fascism triumphed in Italy, Germany, Spain and elsewhere, coming to power after intense struggles with the labour movements of those countries. Yet in Britain, the left was able to confront the challenge of fascism effectively by understanding the nature of the threat, and by evolving tactics. 

The author argues that the British left has been largely overlooked in the few specific studies of anti-fascism that exist, with the focus being disproportionately applied to its European counterparts. Fascism and war.