

## REVIEWS / COMPTES RENDUS

**Christo Aivalis, *The Constant Liberal: Pierre Trudeau, Organized Labour, and the Canadian Social Democratic Left* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press 2018)**

IN ACADEMIC CIRCLES, the argument that Pierre Trudeau was firmly and consistently committed to liberal democracy, rather than socialist democracy, will not constitute an especially controversial thesis. However, Christo Aivalis' book, *The Constant Liberal: Pierre Trudeau, Organized Labour and the Canadian Social Democratic Left*, serves a much deeper purpose than what its title might otherwise suggest. Aivalis' meticulously researched work helps students of Canadian politics, history, and labour studies, to better understand why Trudeau ultimately chose liberalism over socialism after decades as an ally and fellow traveller of the Left in Quebec. The author's highly readable narrative – spanning five decades – focuses on a series of key policy areas and ultimately delivers a thought-provoking social democratic analysis of the politics of Pierre Trudeau. In fact, the book reveals as much about the ideology and politics of the social democratic left as it does about Trudeau. Aivalis' work is a welcome addition to the growing bodies of literature on Trudeau and social democracy in Canada, respectively.

Despite sustained engagement with labour unions and the CCF-NDP throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, Trudeau first ran for office, and won, as a Liberal in

1965. He went on to become prime minister in 1968 and had a significant impact of Canadian politics, from the imposition of wage and price controls to patriation of the Constitution with a Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Throughout it all, Aivalis contends that Trudeau did not undergo an ideological transformation, despite the oft heard critique that Trudeau lost his left-wing ideals as a Liberal in government. Rather, according to Aivalis, Trudeau was a constant Liberal who, while welcoming of many social democratic ideas, ultimately embraced liberalism because he saw it as a more inclusive, catch-all, political project that could subsume the best parts of left-wing thinking.

In order to make sense of this decision, Aivalis sets out to explore Trudeau's ideological roots and argues that while democratic socialists like Harold Laski, Eugene Forsey, and F.R. Scott influenced his thinking, Trudeau's own thinking was consistently focused on the defence and promotion of narrow democratic and political rights rather than a class-based approaches to rights, freedoms, or politics more generally.

Focusing on Trudeau's complex relationship with the labour movement, Aivalis' analysis helps readers understand how Trudeau's central role in labour education and legal support for unions in Québec in the 1950s and 1960s was as much, if not more, about building a bulwark against Premier Maurice Duplessis' repressive and undemocratic Union Nationale regime, than it was about helping workers' struggles. In other words, his

support for striking workers and unions (most famously in the Asbestos strike of 1949) was not class-based, but rather driven by his desire to build a coalition capable of defeating the Union Nationale and pushing Québec towards embracing a more liberal democratic form of politics.

According to Aivalis, Trudeau's quest to build a broad coalition of forces in opposition to government repression is what ultimately led him to join the Liberal Party rather than the NDP. Despite close ties to many important figures in the CCF-NDP in Québec, and despite repeated overtures and attempts to recruit Trudeau as a candidate, he instead opted to run for the Liberal Party. While sympathetic to many NDP policy positions, Trudeau saw the CCF-NDP as alien to, and thus unelectable in, Québec. Moreover, he was repelled by what he saw as a desperate and misguided attempt by the party to appeal to growing nationalist sentiment in Québec by adopting a "Two Nations" approach to Canada. Trudeau also reasoned that the NDP's emphasis on class-based politics would cut off a rather large constituency of voters who did not identify with such an approach.

Trudeau easily won his seat in the 1965 election and in 1968 captured the leadership of the Liberal Party to become Canada's fifteenth prime minister. Once in power, Aivalis reveals a prime minister who was big on rhetoric, but fell short when it came to implementing his vision for a "Just Society," particularly on the issues of progressive taxation, social spending, and income redistribution. On these issues, Aivalis demonstrates how Trudeau generally deferred to his Bay Street-connected finance ministers who showed little interest in pursuing left-wing policy prescriptions. More pointedly, Aivalis zeros in on Trudeau's unsuccessful attempt to enshrine private property rights into the new Canadian

constitution to demonstrate the prime minister's commitment to liberal over socialist values.

Aivalis, however, is also careful to deal with instances where Trudeau's policy positions seemingly rejected the "liberal" label. For example, Trudeau's support for economic nationalist measures in the 1970s, like the establishment of the National Energy Program and Canada Development Corporation, and the creation of Petro-Canada as a crown corporation in the wake of the 1970s oil crisis, seemingly belied his liberal ideological commitment to free trade. Aivalis deals with such instances nimbly, demonstrating that Trudeau was not above compromising his ideological approach in an effort to address a pressing political issue or impending crisis. Aivalis is quick to point out, however, that many of Trudeau's compromises were aided and influenced by the small NDP caucus in Ottawa who held the balance of power in a minority parliament between 1972 and 1974.

On the constitutional front, Aivalis argues that while patriation of the Constitution with a Charter of Rights and Freedoms was Trudeau's greatest political accomplishment, it was flawed insofar as it excluded positive social and economic rights, including specifically enumerated workers' rights. This argument is pursued to underscore, once again, Trudeau's commitment to liberal over socialist democracy.

Aivalis' use of the federal NDP and labour movement as comparative anchors from which to assess Trudeau's political and ideological orientation is interesting and somewhat helpful in tracking trends in post-war liberalism and social democracy. In most cases, the comparison reveals substantive differences between Trudeau's Liberals, on one hand, and the federal NDP and its union allies, on the other.

Aivalis' choice of comparator, however, does bring with it analytical pitfalls. Like Trudeau, individual New Democrats, unions, and labour leaders, vacillated in terms of both public policy preferences and ideology. While Aivalis does a good job at explaining why these policy shuffles occurred, the shifting power bases within both the NDP and the labour movement sometimes make comparisons with Trudeau analytically tricky to sustain. This is especially true in assessing Trudeau's politics in relation to NDP premiers in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

While NDP Premiers Ed Schreyer and Alan Blakeney are not ignored in the book, federal NDP leaders get much more attention from Aivalis. While in one sense that seems reasonable given that federal NDP leaders were going toe to toe with Trudeau on Parliament Hill, it is also true that federal NDP leaders never seriously had to wrestle with questions about how to implement their social democratic agenda in government. An primary comparative focus on NDP premiers in Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and Manitoba, rather than the federal NDP, may have been more revealing because it would have helped to flesh out how being a governing power influences and shapes the ideological positions of labour-sympathetic politicians, be they Liberal or New Democrat.

Take, for example, the issue of wage and price controls. As Aivalis himself points out, both Ed Schreyer and Allan Blakeney supported Trudeau's wage and price control legislation over massive opposition from both organized labour and the federal NDP. The latter considered governments' attempts to control inflation and unemployment by legislating wage controls as a direct attack on workers' rights. If we are to judge Trudeau's commitment to liberalism based, in part, on his legislative interventions, is his position on wage controls best analyzed in relation to the

opposition of the Federal NDP, or in relation to support from two NDP premiers who wielded much more power and influence than any New Democrat in Ottawa?

Similar questions are raised in relation to Aivalis' analysis of Trudeau's role in the patriation of the Constitution with a Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the early 1980s. Aivalis argues that Trudeau's lack of support for the inclusion of positive economic and social rights in the Charter provides more evidence of Trudeau's consistent support for a liberal rather than socialist human rights framework. While Trudeau was clearly disinterested in enshrining positive social and economic rights (like the right to a job, housing, or a clean environment) in the Charter, the same is also true, more or less, of the NDP and its labour movement allies. In fact, no social democratic leader in Canada, at either the federal or provincial level, was championing the inclusion of positive social or economic rights in the Charter, and none made them a condition of support for Trudeau's constitutional package. Most unions were not even promoting constitutionally-protected labour rights. Aivalis acknowledges these historical truths that seemingly frustrate his comparative analysis, but it's not always entirely clear what conclusion the reader should draw from them.

These comparative analytical issues aside, Aivalis' book represents an important contribution to the field. His careful reading of Trudeau from a social democratic perspective is a must read for political scientists, historians, and labour studies researchers interested in Canadian electoral politics.

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**Patrizia Gentile, Gary Kinsman, and L. Pauline Rankin, eds., *We Still Demand! Redefining Resistance in Sex and Gender Struggles* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press 2017)**

THIS BOOK TAKES its name from the 1971 “We Demand” movement which contended that Pierre Trudeau’s Bill C-150 decriminalizing certain sexual acts between same sex couples failed to eradicate larger systemic violence against, and marginalization of, gays and lesbians. The movement culminated with a demonstration on Parliament Hill attended by over 100 gay and lesbian-identifying people and their supporters. Participants targeted the limitations of the Criminal Code reforms by protesting the ongoing violence, discrimination, and police brutality against gays and lesbians. Like these protests, this collection of essays by various Canadian activists and scholars brings to light themes of activism and resistance that contest the rights-based, state-centric agendas that dominated sex and gender-based activism and histories. The authors also highlight how sex and gender-based activism has created solidarity amongst activists within different communities, and built and sustained movements that aim to transform society as a whole. This collection is a must-read for queer and sexuality theorists and historians alike. It juxtaposes rights-based movements, such as the crusade for gay marriage legalization, against the more marginalized liberationist endeavors that the essays bring to light.

This book is divided into two main parts. Part One is devoted to maintaining the memories of past movements as acts of resistance. The first essay, “Liberating History” by historian Elise Chenier, explores gay couples Chris Vogel and Richard North, and Michel Girouard and Regeant Tremblay’s use of same-sex marriage in the early 1970s as a “radical tactic”

to contest heteronormative assumptions around marriage. (32) In getting married, these couples intended to challenge heteronormative society at large, rather than conform to its ideals of monogamy and middle-classness. Chenier contextualizes the liberationist approach that these couples use against better-known fights for gay marriage. In doing so, she effectively problematizes rights-based approaches as inherently heteronormative and therefore oppressive.

Other pieces in Part One address how rights and liberation-based movements often co-exist while complementing and contesting each other. Mathieu Brulé’s “Seducing the Unions” calls into question the “natural” association between labour movements and gay liberation activists in the 1970s and 1980s. (51) This association was based on the premise that the problems labour movements faced were also encountered by those within gay liberation movements. This supposedly coincided in a natural or inevitable partnership between the two. In contrast to this assumption, Brulé notes that union members often displayed discriminatory attitudes against queer activists. However, these movements also formed mutually beneficial alliances, whose members worked together to combat gay and lesbian-based discrimination. These efforts included Toronto’s Gay Alliance Toward Equality’s (GATE) efforts to assist with motions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation within municipal employment. Brulé marks this as a pivotal moment in which gay liberationists and labour movements officially worked together to make advances in gay and lesbian workers’ rights. He then uses oral and textual sources to trace these groups’ intersecting and mutual interests in both human rights and liberationist-based struggles.

Some of the essays take a retrospective approach in highlighting sex and

gender-based struggles that were in danger of disappearing from memory. For instance, Nicholas Matte, the Toronto-based Project Manager of the LGBTQ Oral History Digital Collaboratory, traces in “Rupert Raj, Transmen and Sexuality” how historical unearthing of gender activism can enable trans people to come to the forefront of sex and gender activist efforts and movements. He focuses on Raj’s accomplishments in the 1980s as a leading trans-man activist and founder of the trans-man-focused *Metamorphosis Magazine*, while also problematizing Raj’s use of trans-normative initiatives in his attempts to “influence medical and state policies.” (118) Matte emphasizes the importance of “unearthing” past sex and gender-based resistances in a manner that honours the book’s central theme of keeping the memories, and movements, of these marginalized resistances alive.

Part Two of the book is concerned with contesting and stretching the boundaries of activist efforts, as well as how resistance is defined. The essays in this section point to emerging research paths, looking at both historical forms of resistance and modern movements that deserve attention. Interesting essays include Fabien Rose’s “A History of That Which Was Never Supposed to Be Possible.” Rose politicizes the history of gender passing and encourages the reader to view passing as a political act of resistance that complicates binary-based means of understanding gender identities. Rose uses historical examples of people who passed in order to complicate this legacy.

Two other contributions, by Shawna Ferris and Annalee Lepp, examine sex worker activism through historical perspectives. They highlight sex worker movements that mainstream sex and gender discourses often disdain and censor. Ferris focuses on organizations such as the Sex Workers Alliance of Vancouver (SWAV), which uses online-based activist

mechanisms to combat stigmas around sex work. Lepp focuses instead on debates around sex-trafficking, particularly how migrant sex-workers resist and contest anti-trafficking efforts imbued within nationalist discourses. Her “Collateral Damage” examines workers’ roles in the Canadian Supreme Court’s 2001 decriminalization of sex work.

Cynthia Wright’s “Nationalism, Sexuality and the Politics of Anti-Citizenship” examines how heteronormative assumptions about citizenship are used to “cut out” queer refugees seeking asylum in Canada. She also provides examples of resistance to these agendas, including the efforts of the Toronto-based grassroots group No One Is Illegal in 2012 to stop the deportation of gay asylum seeker Alvaro Orozco. The organization used initiatives such as press conferences and demonstrations to centre family and community, in order to associate Orozco with localized, community-based values, against the perceived callousness of the state.

Overall, the essays contained in Part Two provide valuable documentation of marginalized subjects and movements that contest dominant laws and discourse. The piece by Rose, however, seemed somewhat misplaced, as it is unclear how it contributes to the collection as a whole. Rose aims to complicate conventional readings of gender passing, and also attempts to activate an important and increased understanding of gender as lived and complex. Nonetheless, I felt he failed to provide concrete examples of trans peoples’ passing as actual activism throughout his article, instead focusing on how feminist theorists, such as Marjorie Garber, characterized passing in the last century as sites of resistance. The essay lacks the consistency of the books’ other chapters, which provide more in-depth and concrete examples of conscious resistance and activism.

Ultimately, this book provides a valuable overview of previously forgotten and marginalized sex and gender-based activism and struggles. The editors also acknowledge the lack of contributions from Indigenous and Two-Spirit scholars. They additionally cite Scott Lauria Morgensen in creating a “politics of decolonization through deep self-reflexivity,” which calls on “non-Native” activists to recognize the ways in which Two-Spirit organizing and activism calls out and challenges conventional notions of power in settler-based contexts and movements. (9) In doing so, the editors highlight Canada’s fascinating history of queer and Two-Spirit-based activism, which richly deserves to be included in a collection devoted to bringing marginalized movements to light.

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**Gregory S. Kealey, *Spying on Canadians: The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Security Service and the Origins of the Long Cold War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2017)**

GREGORY S. KEALEY’S *Spying on Canadians* is a collection of nine essays about searching for and accessing information. It covers the history of surveillance by police agencies from the 1860s to the Cold War. Together these essays, a collection of Kealey’s work (articles, conference papers, and addresses) written between 1988 and 2003, examine the creation of the Secret Service in Canada – a branch of the RNWMP (Royal North West Mounted Police) and later the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police). In these essays Kealey illustrates how policing in Canada is intrinsic to the history of the country itself and how police agents have targeted immigrants, labour, and the Left as threats to the nation. *Spying on Canadians* tracks the changing study

of surveillance in Canada and contributes to the field both by expanding the historical context and presenting Kealey’s own experience accessing restricted documents. As an authority on policing, surveillance, and security in Canada, Kealey provides readers with studies on the processes of spying, being spied on, and uncovering the history of surveillance.

*Spying on Canadians* is part of an ever-growing field of research. Over the last two decades, historians such as Steve Hewitt have studied the inherent anti-communism within the RCMP proving that police surveillance of leftists was not a product of the 1950s “Red Scare” but grew from earlier fears of Bolshevik uprisings and labour unrest. Kealey expands this history by going farther back to the years leading up to Confederation. By doing this, he demonstrates how distrust of the radical left and fear of ethnic threats exists within the fabric of Canada’s origins as a country. The Secret Service, therefore, came into being with Confederation rather than grew from it. *Spying on Canadians* provides depth to the earlier history of policing that was not fully explored in *Secret Service: The History of Political Policing in Canada from the Fenians to Fortress America* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), the otherwise comprehensive text on police surveillance in Canada written by Kealey, Reg Whitaker, and Andrew Parnaby. Kealey uses the 19th century to explain the origins of Cold War spying. To have a comprehensive history of police surveillance beginning in the 1860s and leading into the Cold War is significant when much of the scholarship on policing is centred on the second half of the 20th century.

In addition to providing greater historical scope to the subject of police surveillance, *Spying on Canadians* includes a personal angle. Kealey begins the collection describing his own inquiry into

police surveillance of academics at the annual meetings of what were then called the Learned Societies. The fear of the spectre of Marxism spreading through academia combined with student radicals during the 1960s and 1970s led the RCMP to watch specific organizations, such as the Labour History Group, and certain academics including Kealey. Beginning his book in this manner, Kealey effectively demonstrates what police surveillance means to him as a historian and as a Canadian.

Kealey divides *Spying on Canadians* into three parts to facilitate his wide scope. The first section explores the 19th century roots of the Canadian Secret Service and how political policing in this era, from the Fenian raids to the *Komagatu Maru* affair, was tightly linked to fears of radicalism and anti-imperialism. The second section looks at the origins of the Cold War beginning with the Winnipeg General Strike as well as other acts of labour unrest following World War I and ending with civilian internment during World War II. The third section focuses on the archives and public access to restricted files. What is so fascinating about this book is how Kealey draws these sections together through the theme of labour. Work is at the heart of this collection. Kealey's background as a labour historian allows for a compelling examination of surveillance in Canada and its indisputable ties to work.

Kealey presents the theme of labour in three ways. First there is the target of police surveillance: labour, the Left, and the working-class immigrant. Chapter 6, "Spymasters, Spies, and Their Subjects: The RCMP and Canadian State Repression, 1914-39," explores the police attention to the Left and the "foreign-born" dissenter. In this essay Kealey also presents the theme of labour in a second way: spying as police employment and work. Here, as in many of the other essays,

Kealey takes care to accentuate the effort and labour behind the effective management of a spying network. A third application of the labour theme is found in Kealey's discussions about the archives. He discusses the ways in which police files were compiled and provides insight into how researchers gain access to this restricted material. One of the main strengths of this book is Kealey's focus on the ATIP (Access to Information and Privacy) process and the history of the Privacy and Access to Information Acts (1985). In the final chapter, "The RCMP, CSIS, the Public Archives of Canada, and Access to Information: A Curious Tale," Kealey candidly discusses *his* work as a researcher and the struggles he faced gaining access. Through these essays, therefore, Kealey not only provides historical context for Cold War spying but also illustrates how the increased availability of this information has changed the scholarship over last three decades. With access to information scholars are able to research the history of security and surveillance in Canada and have, in turn, demanded that more information be made publicly accessible.

As with any collection of essays there is the inevitable overlap between chapters that gives a sense of repetition. Ultimately this overlap is good as the chapters can stand independently from one another. The collection, seen as either a series of independent essays or a cumulative history, is attractive to both professional scholars and students of police surveillance, security studies, and the Cold War. *Spying on Canadians* is also excellent course reading for graduate and senior undergraduate students in classes with post-Confederation themes considering Kealey's attention to the broader topic of Canada's nationhood. Kealey brings the process of uncovering restricted police records to the centre of his discussion of police spying providing readers with a

better understanding of the importance of doing history and the extent of surveillance. As he states in the conclusion to Chapter 8: “While this may appear to be only one historian’s whining, the point, of course, is that it is absolutely crucial in a liberal-democratic society that citizens have access to sufficient information to allow us to judge the behaviour and impact of our secret police.” (226)

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**Ian Thomas MacDonald, ed., *Unions and the City: Negotiating Urban Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University 2017)**

THIS BOOK PROVIDES a more optimistic account of labour’s influence on North American cities than readers might expect. In the process, its authors show commendable restraint eschewing any temptation towards wishful triumphalism. Instead, the essays in this uniformly strong collection present a highly nuanced account of successes and setbacks of union campaigns to shape the direction of two changing cities: New York and Toronto.

To be sure, hard times have befallen labour in these and other cities across the continent in recent decades. Symptoms abound in both plummeting and rising trend lines: declining union density, workers’ collective action, and real wages; increased precarious employment, work insecurity and income inequality.

This timely work shifts the focus from class relations at the workplace to union efforts to shape the urban landscape in labour’s interest. Exploring union efforts to influence urban land use, regulations, and services, the book illuminates the local state as a significant terrain of labour activism. A key theme is whether union campaigns to define urban landscapes can renew and revitalize the labour

movement. It doesn’t help that workers themselves are largely missing in action from these union urban struggles.

This book advances the intersection of labour and urban studies. It turns from the more familiar ground of municipal worker strikes, or citywide minimum wage campaigns, to lesser studied contestations over urban space. As capital relentlessly strives to remake the city in its image and interest, this book looks at labour’s rejoinder in all its commitments, coalitions, and contradictions. Editor Ian Thomas MacDonald succinctly conveys the collection’s aspiration to “serve as a road map toward both a stronger labor (sic) movement and a socially just urbanism.” (1)

The collection itself is a well-designed symmetrical construct. Case studies explore and compare how unions are contesting four dimensions of the post-industrial city in each of New York and Toronto. Paired chapters examine struggles to define “the hospitable city” (tourism, attractions, hotels), the “creative city” (film production), “the sustainable city” (a green economy) and “the caring city” (child care) in New York and Toronto. The focus on these cities retrieves them – from more familiar designations – as leading labour cities, past and present.

Ian Thomas Macdonald’s opening case study examines the successful recent campaign of unions in the New York hotel sector to block proposed redevelopment in Midtown Manhattan which would threaten existing unionized hotels with new hotels known for lower wages and antipathy to unions. Ambiguities surface with the recognition that building trades unions supported redevelopment, while key property owners allied themselves with hotel unions to block neighbourhood change.

Steve Tufts provides a sophisticated study of a failed bid by Toronto’s leading



hotel sector union to promote a downtown casino. For Unite Here, the casino proposal was “about getting the local government to prioritize postindustrial development as a means of reproducing middle-class jobs.” (72) More potent was a diverse array of forces aligned against the proposal, including influential downtown residents, competing gaming and real estate corporations, and other unions opposed to the casino.

The second pairing of essays examines “creative city” impulses through the lens of film production. In both instances, unions in the film sector succeeded in extracting favourable commitments from their city government. Maria Figueroa and Lois S. Gray examine the campaign to secure tax incentives for filming in New York, while Thorben Wieditz perceptively charts the progressive and problematic dynamics behind a successful campaign to preserve film studio space from redevelopment in Toronto. Both cases saw labour partner with local film industry employers. Both essays suggestively question whether union efforts were fuelled by union narrow self-interest or by broader social objectives.

The next essay thematic – “the sustainable city” – sees a turn from unions waging largely defensive preservationist struggles, to labour adopting a more pro-active stance. It is the front on which unions have the least to show for their efforts. Maria Figueroa shows that New York construction sector unions have promoted retrofitting and green jobs as employment, environmental and social justice advancement. She notes that making common cause could be challenging: “Unions have a hierarchical structure, while the environmental movement’s structure is rather horizontal.” (126) In Toronto, James Nugent provides a sobering assessment of labour’s inability to secure support for transforming a large factory closing site into a green centre of

excellence incubator. Ultimately, unions lacked the capacity to attract capital and green investment to their vision. Yet these campaigns produced some of the book’s most creative examples of union innovation and coalition-building.

The final pair of essays explore union efforts to enhance “the caring city” by advancing child care on three fronts: quality, accessibility, and workers’ wages. In New York, Susanna F. Schaller, K.C. Wagner, and Mildred E. Warner identify a two-pronged labour strategy: advocacy coalition-building and renewed union organizing of child care workers. Simon Black persuasively contrasts a successful labour campaign to oppose closure of municipal child care centres in the central core City of Toronto, with a failed similar effort in an outlying suburb of metropolitan Toronto. This closing case nicely captures the import of urban and suburban spaces for labour.

Taken together, the accounts in this collection reflect an activist, at times creative, urban orientation of labour. Results, as MacDonald notes, are mixed, including “successes of a defensive sort, defined in trade union goals, along with some failures, and modest cases of unions advancing their workplace and institutional interests within the terms of an urban social justice agenda.” (210) Yet often, the authors show, even union gains result from class alliances framed within neoliberal, new urbanist modalities which do more to reinforce than to unsettle prevailing power imbalances.

Readers will learn much from this book about union engagement with urban space, policy and politics. Considerably less evident is the nature of workers’ engagement in these efforts. Union members and workers make scant appearance in these pages. This reflects the institutionalized, hierarchical nature of most campaign interventions discussed in this book. Yet this top-down,

non-mobilization of workers needed more explicit naming and discussion in a work rightly committed to labour revitalization.

Additionally, the book could more explicitly attempt to tease out a comparative assessment of the extent to which national (US/Canada) and urban (New York/Toronto) contexts frame “Unions and the City.” For starters, an idiosyncratic reviewer would recommend consideration of a grammatical distinction. Half the essays here are written by Canadian labour scholars about Canadian labour. The homogenized rendering of the word “labor” throughout, itself seemed to convey a certain insignificance of place. A rather jarring signal for a very fine book so attuned to the spatial dynamics of union engagement. Let both labor and labour be known in their own name.

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**Sophie Dubois, *Refus global. Histoire d'une réception partielle*, (Montréal, Presses de l'Université de Montréal, Collection «Nouvelles études québécoises», 2017)**

Y A-T-IL ENCORE quelque chose de neuf à dire sur *Refus global*? À lire l'impressionnant ouvrage de Sophie Dubois, il semble bien que oui. À la croisée de la littérature, de l'histoire et de la sociocritique, Dubois refait avec énormément d'érudition et de finesse l'histoire de la réception d'un *Refus global* que tout le monde connaît, mais que très peu de personnes ont lu. Pour éclairer sa démarche, elle se sert de la métaphore de l'autoroute : pour elle, l'histoire des discours critiques formulés sur les œuvres chemine sur plusieurs voies, mais une voie finit toujours par être plus congestionnée ou engorgée que les autres, ce qui relègue certains discours à

occuper des *voies secondaires* ou à rester dans des *angles morts*. Selon elle, *Refus global* n'a pas échappé à ce destin. Il a été lui aussi victime d'*accidents de parcours*. Il est désormais emprisonné dans une «réception partielle», qui occulte ou obstrue les autres interprétations possibles.

Le problème, c'est qu'on a réduit le recueil de textes et d'illustrations au texte «Refus global» rédigé par Paul-Émile Borduas et cosigné par quinze artistes du groupe automatiste, puis on a fait de ce texte, après le renvoi de Borduas de l'École du meuble, un raccourci pour décrire le Québec intransigeant ou simplement frileux de l'ère duplessiste. On a ainsi écarté de la réception à peu près tout de ce qui faisait la richesse et la complexité du document initial, sauf en quelque sorte le bandeau rouge qui servait d'annonce publicitaire et sur lequel était écrit en lettres majuscules le simple mot «manifeste». On a ainsi atrophié la polysémie de l'ensemble du document collectif, et même laminé le sens du texte de Borduas lui-même.

L'explication ne tient pas seulement à des causes extérieures. Déjà, importante source de confusion, le recueil et le texte de Borduas portent le même titre. De plus, le recueil, que l'on nomme indifféremment lors de sa parution «manifeste», «ouvrage», «texte», «cahier» ou, en anglais, «folder» ou «portfolio», est caractérisé par une forme «écartelée», pour reprendre ici l'expression de Julie Gaudreault. Ensuite, l'œuvre est le fruit de sept créateurs (Borduas, Gauvreau, Cormier, Sullivan, Leduc, Perron et Riopelle), sans mentionner les signataires du texte éponyme. Le ton et le genre des textes diffèrent grandement : manifeste, pamphlet, lexique, théâtre, poésie, essai, etc. En autres, on ne sait pas très bien si les textes de Gauvreau sont des «poèmes», des «pièces dramatiques», des «sketches», des

« dialogues symboliques » ou des « mots imaginaires ». Les composantes visuelles empruntent à la photographie, à la lithographie, à la peinture, à la sculpture, à l'aquarelle, à la mise en scène, à la chorégraphie. Les disciplines principales qui structurent *Refus global* sont les arts visuels, la littérature, la danse, la psychanalyse et la photographie. Bref, par sa présentation matérielle, la pluralité de ses contributeurs, sa forme générique et sa multidisciplinarité, *Refus global* ressemble à tout, sauf à un livre ordinaire vendu à la librairie Tranquille ou Deom. On sent que ses premiers « lecteurs » ne savent pas trop quoi en faire.

Le public québécois francophone était pour d'autres raisons encore mal préparé à recevoir *Refus global*. Sophie Dubois insiste sur l'absence, dans les années 1950, d'autonomie du champ culturel face au champ du pouvoir et sur le fait que le milieu artistique demeurait soumis aux normes du pouvoir. D'un certain point de vue, elle a tout à fait raison : l'art québécois restait alors inféodé à une visée morale. Mais d'un autre point de vue, il aura fallu sans doute faire une remarque inverse dans le cas de *Refus global* : le scandale de sa parution vient aussi de que des artistes se mêlaient de politique et de religion (s'arrogeant un droit de regard qui n'était pas le leur, les artistes devant supposément se consacrer exclusivement à l'art) et cherchaient à soumettre la société aux principes qui guidaient leur propre recherche esthétique. Ce qu'on aimait de Pellan, signataire du manifeste Prisme d'yeux (lui aussi paru en 1948), c'est justement qu'il ne se mêlait pas de vouloir faire la révolution... sauf dans ses toiles et dans les classes de l'École des beaux-arts. Borduas paiera de sa personne sa volonté de brouiller les frontières de l'art et de la politique.

Par son contenu et par sa forme, *Refus global* était irrecevable, insaisissable. Il

suscita donc surprise et incompréhension. On préféra ne pas en parler et il fut poussé, en quelque sorte, dans une voie de garage. On se braqua plutôt sur « Refus global », dont on tira quelques bouts de phrase (dont le célèbre « Au diable le goupillon et la tuque! ») pour illustrer, dans les années 1940 et 1950, une position idéologique intenable et absurde, avant que par un renversement complet, le texte ne devînt le symbole même de la supposée « entrée du Québec dans la modernité ». Les années 1960 se mirent à célébrer « Refus global » pour « toutes les raisons qui l'avaient précisément fait condamner en 1948 » (Julie Gaudreault, citée p. 243). Mais, dans un cas comme dans l'autre, c'est-à-dire quand il était fustigé ou quand il était encensé, *Refus global* avait disparu du discours, et « Refus global » lui-même ne servait plus que de « point de référence utile, voire de prétexte, aux critiques pour aborder des questions plus générales » (p. 154). Les polémiques alimentées par les automatistes ne firent rien pour éclaircir les enjeux soulevés par le recueil, leurs multiples interventions publiques n'aidant guère à « recentrer le discours sur l'œuvre. ».

Dès 1949, *Refus global* (recueil ou texte) est devenu, pour un peu tout le monde, le manifeste dont Borduas est le rédacteur. La facilité à se procurer le texte de Borduas, et la difficulté à consulter le recueil intégral (imprimé à environ 400 exemplaires en 1948, puis réédité à 2000 exemplaires en 1972) facilitèrent l'effacement de *Refus global* de la mémoire commune. Cet effacement permit une sorte de réification d'un canevas héroïque dans la deuxième période (1950-2008). Encouragé par trois acteurs principaux (le témoin Claude Gauvreau, l'essayiste Pierre Vadeboncoeur, l'universitaire François-Marc Gagnon), s'est ainsi instauré un véritable « verrou » analytique qui privilégie le paradigme de la rupture sociohistorique et bloque les autres

virtualités interprétatives – les remises en cause du «mythe» n'ayant fourni, au fond, que des occasions d'asseoir encore plus solidement le «récit canonique» dans la mémoire collective. Encore et toujours, *Refus global* était ravalé au «Refus global», le «Refus global» à Borduas, Borduas à son renvoi, son renvoi à Duplessis, et Duplessis à la Grande noirceur.

Dans une des dernières sections du livre, «Lire les composantes marginales : sortir du mythe, relire l'histoire», Sophie Dubois cherche des moyens de redonner une place au recueil et à ses composantes marginales. Elle croit d'abord qu'il faut les sortir de l'ombre trop encombrante de Borduas. Le texte de Borduas occulterait les autres contributions de *Refus global* et son parcours en viendrait à teinter forcément tous les regards que l'on jette sur le recueil, comme si les interprétations sur les autres composantes de *Refus global* devaient se jouer dans le destin du peintre de Saint-Hilaire. Mais, rappelle Dubois, il ne faut pas avoir peur d'«emprunter des voies parallèles et des routes secondaires».

Ce que Sophie Dubois nous fait découvrir dans ce stimulant et passionnant ouvrage, c'est une autre façon de concevoir non seulement le document *Refus global*, mais son sens et sa portée. Elle veut nous aider à sortir de certains jugements univoques qui bloquent la pleine compréhension du geste posé par les seize signataires en 1948. Elle réussit pleinement dans sa tentative de nous convaincre de désengorger «l'autoroute de la mémoire culturelle». Il reste cependant un immense chantier devant nous, pour la réalisation duquel, j'espère, Sophie Dubois prètera main-forte : écrire cette histoire purgée du mythe et des notions-valises qui l'accompagnent, comme celle de modernité.

JEAN-PHILIPPE WARREN  
Université Concordia

**Matthew Barlow, *Griffintown: Identity and Memory in an Irish Diaspora Neighbourhood* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press 2017)**

OVER THE PAST two decades Montréal's landscape has undergone a profound physical transformation. At the forefront of this transformation are numerous real estate developers who refashion old working-class neighbourhoods, opting to erect glassy condo towers where low-rise buildings once stood. Griffintown is one of those neighbourhoods. Seen by promoters as occupying an ideal property location, bordering both Downtown Montréal and Lachine Canal, it has been at the centre of such transformations in landscape.

Stemming from a dissertation completed in 2009, Matthew Barlow's 2017 book demonstrates how memoryscape has shaped the past and the current identity of Griffintown. Part of UBC Press' *Shared: Oral and Public History* collection, Barlow's work navigates through Griffintown's most distinguished and outspoken community – Irish-Catholics – and how our understanding of Griffintown cannot be disassociated from their legacy. Tracing the dynamic history of Irish involvement in Griffintown from the dawn of the 20th century to the early 21st century, Barlow demonstrates how the Irish-Catholic community forged four main cultural spaces for itself: the Catholic Church, local politics, the Saint Patrick's Society, and organized sport. While community leaders actualized the sense of place and connection to the landscape, built symbols like St. Ann's Parish were foundational monuments to the locality of Irishness in Griffintown. Over time, the attitudes, goals, and influences fluctuated along with the Irishness of the neighbourhood.

From the start, Barlow writes candidly about his personal relationship to

Griffintown and its community, affectionately referring to the neighbourhood as the *Griff*. Barlow's historiographical intervention comes as "the only study of the Irish in Griffintown or Montréal as a whole that examines the twentieth and twenty-first centuries." (8) Influenced by a spanning literature on the Irish diaspora, memory work, and ethno-religious identity, Barlow uses a historical approach to demonstrate how we may understand Griffintown's Irish community through a threefold process. According to Barlow this was first forged out of social and class identifications, followed by a change in the local landscape and outmigration toward more affluent communities, and finally the projection of an imagined history of Irishness to formally carve out a space for the diaspora within Montréal's urban, political, and cultural scene. Barlow does well to demonstrate Griffintown's complicated ethnic, religious, and political landscape. However, I cannot help but question how Barlow evaded important questions related to Montréal's local governing context while also largely dismissing Québec's unique position in the Commonwealth, which oftentimes overlaps with the interests of Irish nationalists.

Barlow elaborates his study chronologically through five chapters. Chapter 1 looks at Griffintown and the persistent connections that Irish-Catholic migrants had to Ireland as they settled in Griffintown. Chapter 2 follows this storyline by monitoring the competing identities and loyalties that seen in Griffintown during World War I and shortly thereafter. This is the most transnational of Barlow's chapters as the author simultaneously grapples with the international context with the outbreak of World War I, nationalist fervour for Irish independence, and the local dynamics in Griffintown. We also learn that the neighbourhood gained a reputation

as "one of the most radical [Irish] nationalist places in all of North America." (79) Barlow is at his strongest here, as he highlights the Irish competing identities and loyalties. Chapter 3 examines the Depression and World War II period when patterns of property ownership shifted fundamentally as approachable landlords were replaced by either absent counterparts, banks, or insurance companies. Though Griffintown continued to be a bustling neighbourhood, the post-war years gave way to deindustrialization and modernist municipal plans that ripped the fabric of the community and "combined to render the neighbourhood all but uninhabitable." (104) Chapter 4 focuses on the dwindling community between 1945 and 1970 and, according to Barlow, during this period the three levels of government "conspired" to deconstruct the neighbourhood due to its slum-like attributes. Though the author constantly challenges the slum stereotype (with reason), he somehow continues to employ the term. This reader could not quite figure if it was used in an ironic fashion or, rather, to give textuality to the neighbourhood – thereby reinforcing this stereotype. The final chapter looks at Griffintown's renaissance through the Griffintown Commemorative Project. Between 1990 and 2010 the community bloomed as a site of Irishness memory paralleling the reinvigoration of the Irish diaspora worldwide and the economic boom in Ireland itself. Barlow does well to distance himself from this public history, offering a critique on their whitewashing historical narrative stating, "the removal of dissent and the romanticization of hard times, unemployment, alcoholism, and especially violence in the Griffintown landscape shape the narrative." (151)

Regulars of *Labour/Le Travail* will be disappointed to learn that though Barlow often characterizes the Irish-Catholics of Griffintown as working-class, his book

missed an opportunity to define their labour conditions. We do not gain insight into the working conditions of the factory floor, nor into the relationships between employers and their Irish-Catholic employees. We very quickly get into a pattern of memoryscape that echoes various known memories of Griffintown, but which does not seek to unearth silences. Perhaps an immediate case-in-point is the gap in sequence between the years 1975 and 1991, which remains unexplained. Moreover, while I am sympathetic to the reality of transforming a dissertation into a book, I was also disappointed with the book's disengagement with recent scholarship, especially pertaining to Montréal's historiography.

Though Barlow misses the mark on certain issues, we should commend his activism, mediatic appearances, and ability to forge a lasting relationship with the community. He demonstrates how historians can produce activist critiques of their environments, while participating in their future destinies. This is a laudable feat. It is genuinely inspiring and pushes us to consider how to write histories which can have a relative impact in our communities. It is in this light that I understand Barlow's selection as the 2018 winner of the Canadian Historical Association Clio-Québec book prize.

MATTHIEU CARON  
University of Toronto

**Catherine Carstairs, Bethany Philpott, and Sara Wilmshurst, *Be Wise! Be Healthy! Morality and Citizenship in Canadian Public Health Campaigns* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press 2018)**

CO-AUTHORED BY Catherine Carstairs and two of her former Master's students, *Be Healthy, Be Wise* follows the evolution of a Toronto and Ontario-centric public

health organization that had ambitions to become a national voice for public health education. The Canadian National Council for Combatting Venereal Disease emerged at the end of World War I to become the Canadian Social Hygiene Council in 1922, finally morphing into the Health League in 1935. Dr. Gordon Bates (b.1885), an expert in the diagnosis and treatment of Venereal Disease (VD), led these organizations until his death in 1975. He was instrumental in rejecting the predominant focus on the environmental causes of illness in favour of the individual's responsibility to take proper preventative measures to ensure health. Clearly influenced by eugenics, these organizations pushed the idea that changing individual behavior could prevent disease. Included in this expectation was the responsibility of the individual to seek out medical expertise, to have regular checkups, and to follow medical advice. Thus "health citizenship," a concept the authors derive from the work of British historian, Dorothy Porter, became an individual's responsibility. In Bates' view health education provided the answer not only to physical health but also to mental, moral, and social health. In promulgating his vision of a national preventative health strategy, Bates recruited wealthy business and professional men as well as politicians to his cause, many of them medical professionals. Some prominent women also participated in core committees but the National Board of the Health League was 90 per cent male. Despite these connections, the Health League was often short of funds and its attempts to enroll subscribers to its magazine and other projects often fell short. Bates' dislike of joint funding strategies also cost him financial support as did controversy over some of the League's campaigns.

Successful campaigns emerged in the late 1920s and into the 1930s to vaccinate against diphtheria which was a leading

cause of death in children and to require pasteurization of milk. With the assistance of public health officials in Toronto and the province, Bates and his organization mounted a campaign in the press and on radio to convince parents to vaccinate their children, although he totally ignored the role that poverty played in illness. Schools and churches also worked with the Toronto Diphtheria Committee to increase vaccination rates resulting in dramatic drops in death rates in Toronto and Ontario by the late 1930s, which was not the case in the rest of the country. Similarly, but more slowly, pasteurization of milk became a cause for concern as tuberculosis could be spread through milk. Medical experts urged milk consumption as a "protective" food especially for children. While Ontario passed compulsory legislation in 1938, as Toronto had done in 1914, exemptions were allowed for more remote areas without proper facilities. Indeed, the authors note that economics were equally important in encouraging pasteurization as the milk lasted longer.

World War II witnessed an increased emphasis on VD education and prevention; in contrast to World War I when men were blamed for spreading the disease, women were targeted, a trend noted by Ruth Pierson in her study, *"They're Still Women After All"* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986). The Health League primarily viewed VD as a moral problem thus alienating public health officials' support. Furthermore, Bates feared that the availability of penicillin would only encourage immorality. Post-war campaigning focused on pre-marital testing for syphilis but by the mid-1950s only the three prairie provinces and Prince Edward Island passed and enforced compulsory testing.

World War II also encouraged greater attention to the health of adult men, especially in the areas of nutrition, exercise,

and prevention of chronic disease. Men in the armed forces and workers in industry became special targets in wartime. Regular medical exams and healthy eating would improve Canadians' efficiency at work and in the services. The war years witnessed a concern with eating the right kind and amounts of food as a patriotic duty; women were to be educated on the best foods and preparation methods under the guidance of Canada's Food Rules (later Canada's Food Guide) and in conjunction with municipal and provincial nutrition campaigns. In the post-war era, obesity became a target and the Health League's magazine intensified attention on exercise featuring middle and upper class white male bodies as the ideal. As the authors note, women's health was rarely addressed and little attention was given to class differences or the limitations imposed by poverty on people's ability to afford healthy food, exercise, or leisure activities.

One chapter does focus on the workplace and illustrates how national health was connected to World War II. In 1940 the League created an Industrial Health Division which encouraged employers to hire doctors and nurses in the campaign to keep workers healthy. Health education was the focus as part of a plan to cut down absenteeism and potentially quash discontent. Major conferences on industrial health took place from 1943 to 1946, posters and pay cheque inserts were produced to encourage workers towards healthy behavior and to consult company doctors about problems. A few labour leaders' participation is noted by the authors but readers learn very little about their contributions. Indeed, the thrust of the League's efforts were aimed at employers who were urged to engage health experts, to provide nutritious food in company cafeterias, and to integrate returned veterans, especially the disabled, into the labour force. The League

hoped to develop an employer membership scheme to fund its activities but like other initiatives there was little take up. Significantly, the workplace itself never figured as a source of ill health in the League's propaganda.

The penultimate chapter focuses on the controversial postwar campaign for water fluoridation, a process that promised to lessen the incidence of tooth decay. Opposition came from a variety of sources: those who opposed it as harmful to health, insufficiently tested, a violation of civil liberties, too expensive or as a communist plot. Gordon Bates was a prominent defender of the practice, arguing that fluoridation would lessen ill health; the latter, he often asserted, caused the poverty and discontent found in communist countries and thus promoting health through fluoridation would provide a bulwark against communism. The League mounted a vigorous campaign involving citizens' groups as well as professionals to press for legislation in the 1960s. The divisiveness of the campaign, however, was partially responsible for the League losing a significant proportion of its funding from Toronto's United Community Fund so that by the late 1960s, it became "a shadow of its former self." (180)

In many respects this is a "rise and fall" study of a voluntary organization that at times wielded influence on public health issues, though primarily in Ontario. The moralistic leadership of Bates is central and the analysis rightly points to a male, middle and upper class leadership that valued medical expertise and failed to understand working-class and immigrant concerns. Speaking for the League, Bates opposed Medicare, a position which ignored the health needs of most Canadians and underlined his focus on individual responsibility for health. The positions taken by Bates and the League were, on occasion, partially progressive.

Speaking up for hiring disabled veterans and later, older workers, reflected his own predilections including his personal rejection of retirement. This reader appreciates the treasure trove of hundreds of archival boxes the authors investigated at Library and Archives Canada but that singular institutional focus leaves us with the exclusive perspective of Bates and the Health League.

LINDA KEALEY

University of New Brunswick

**Keri Leigh Merritt, *Masterless Men: Poor Whites and Slavery in the Antebellum South* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2017)**

IN 1857, A WHITE North Carolinian named Hinton Rowan Helper published *The Impending Crisis of the South*, a blistering assessment of the damages he saw wrought upon the South by the institution of slavery. To Helper, slavery retarded the economic and cultural development of the region relative to the free states, and he laid the blame for those limitations squarely at the feet of oligarchic elite slaveholders who falsely asserted that slavery served the interests of all white people. In fact, Helper concluded, slavery actively oppressed nonslaveholding whites by devaluing their labour and keeping them impoverished, ignorant, degraded, and without future prospects. Indeed, Helper insisted that poor white southerners effectively lived in a "second degree of slavery." (1)

Examining the circumstances of the nearly one third of white southerners in the antebellum era who owned neither land nor slaves, Keri Leigh Merritt maintains that in important ways, Helper was right. Slavery enriched slaveholders and it exploited poor white people, reducing demand for their work such that it was nearly worthless and pushing them to



the economic margins with almost no hope for upward mobility or accumulating capital. Slaveholders in positions of power piled on. They used both legal authority and extralegal power to monitor, constrain, and control poor whites lest they create disorder, fight back politically, or even forge alliances across racial lines that could threaten slavery itself. Poor whites, in Merritt's account, lacked the privileges of whiteness that slaveholders often insisted slavery delivered to all white people whether or not they owned slaves. Moreover, poor whites knew it and they resented it, creating fissures in the supposed proslavery consensus among southern white people before and during the Civil War.

Merritt's depiction of the social positions and material lives of poor white southerners is utterly unsparing in its bleakness. She describes a southern world of severe economic stratification that only became more so over time. As slaveholders consolidated control over land and labour in the late antebellum period, they left poor whites mostly with the options of tenant farming, sharecropping, or competing with slaves for dangerous and poorly paid wage work. Poor whites faced sporadic employment and the constant need to be on the move to obtain the means of survival, all of which undermined the stability of their families and led a not small number of them to alcoholism, crime, or withdrawal from society altogether. Desperately poor women sometimes turned to prostitution, poor children sometimes ended up as bound labourers vulnerable to abuse, and as a class poor whites led lives of intense deprivation and ill health. Their existence was also suffused with a great deal of violence.

Getting out of what was effectively a cycle of poverty, meanwhile, was nearly impossible and, by Merritt's reckoning, it was designed as such. She argues

that slaveholders preferred the masses of white people undereducated, and that they had no interest in creating a system of public schools that might have provided poor whites with avenues of advance, or at least the ability to write their own names. They also preferred poor whites politically impotent and disengaged, and therefore engineered something less than a true white democracy by making voting difficult, limiting the terms of political debates, and crafting apportionment schemes that were slanted toward the wealthy.

There were dangers involved with having such a large underclass. Merritt demonstrates how slaveholding elites systematically policed poor white people to keep a lid on any disorder. They especially sought to limit the potential disruption of slavery that they feared from an interracial underground economy and other activities by poor whites that crossed the colour line. Poor whites were special targets of vagrancy laws, and they suffered rates of arrest and incarceration far higher than the general white population. They were sometimes subjected to humiliating corporal punishments typically reserved for enslaved people, left imprisoned without trial or for failure to pay fines, and they occasionally even found their labour auctioned off to cover their debts. Ultimately, Merritt concludes, poor whites lived in "a police state, with no economic standing and virtually no civil rights" and "they simply had no recourse for their many grievances." (283)

Not that they did not try. Merritt argues that as time passed, poor white labourers, especially in growing industrial sectors of the economy, became increasingly militant. They formed nascent unions and demanded that their wages be protected and that Blacks be kept out of certain jobs. Ultimately, they implied that their loyalty to slavery was not

absolute. In the end, Merritt argues that unrest among poor whites helped drive slaveholders toward secession, as elites worried they might lose the support of nonslaveholders altogether at a moment of political crisis and touted secession as a move that would aid all southern whites by preventing the prospect of emancipation. Dissent persisted through the Civil War itself, however. Widespread anti-Confederate and Unionist sympathies among poor whites could never be entirely contained, no matter how forceful the appeals to white supremacy or how coercive the efforts to enforce the draft and round up deserters.

Merritt's argument has deep contemporary resonance. In her depiction of the social, economic, and political circumstances of southern poor whites, it is not hard to see glimmerings of our own structures of mass incarceration, political disfranchisement, and systemic generational poverty for which the poor themselves are blamed. Such was the case under slavery as well, as antebellum elites often claimed poor whites were poor mostly because they were lazy, immoral, and criminal degenerates.

Merritt's argument about the relationship of poor whites to their own whiteness, however, is not entirely convincing. It is undeniable that poor white southerners realized few, if any, material or political benefits from slavery, and that slavery in fact went a long way toward entrenching their poverty. But Merritt treads a difficult line when it comes to the relationship among poverty, freedom, and race. Merritt acknowledges that, of course, poor white people were not actually slaves and that racism was widespread even among the lower classes of white southerners. At the same time, though, she argues that the freedom of poor whites was "conditional," (17) that they had a "nominal, quasi-freedom," (65) and that they "lived in a constant state of *qualified* freedom." (220)

Had poor whites had greater access to education, information, and the abilities to organize and engage politically, Merritt repeatedly suggests, they might well have seen their way toward electoral antislavery or perhaps even an alliance across racial lines, as they "increasingly came to realize that their own livelihoods were somehow intertwined with those of the slaves themselves." (26)

Putting aside whether the divide between slavery and freedom was firmer than Merritt sometimes implies, this is somewhat wishful thinking. The benefits of whiteness certainly played out in class-specific ways. But material and political alternatives that might have made them less so would have given poor whites improved access to those benefits, and there is little to signify that whatever hostility existed toward slavery among poor whites would have survived such a turn of events. In a way, Merritt's own conclusion indicates as much. When emancipation came, she observes, freed Black people got pushed to the bottom of the southern sociopolitical order, and poor white people gained at least some of the privileges of whiteness. Merritt writes that as the embrace of whiteness took in poor whites, "their anger toward blacks seemed to become more apparent and more vicious." (336) But arguably, what changed was not the anger. What changed was the power to act upon it.

Ironically, one might point to Hinton Rowan Helper himself as the best demonstration of how the worldview of poor white people was deeply bound up in their racial identity, whether they reaped the rewards of that identity or not. Despite the limited sympathies Helper expressed toward the enslaved in *The Impending Crisis*, his hostility toward Black people was always deep-seated and extreme. He could only imagine the colonization of Black people in the event of emancipation, and the books he wrote

once emancipation did come betrayed a racism whose virulence was pathological even by the standards of the 19th century. Believing Black people to be the dregs of humankind, he looked forward to what he was sure would be their eventual extinction from the earth.

JOSHUA D. ROTHMAN  
University of Alabama

**Mark Lause, *The Great Cowboy Strike: Bullets, Ballots, and Class Conflicts in the American West* (London and New York: Verso 2017)**

MARK LAUSE, who has published extensively on eastern labour movements and the working class in the post-Civil War era, turns his attention to the US West in *The Great Cowboy Strike: Bullets, Ballots, and Class Conflicts* in the American West. As Lause argues, the western extension of the battle between corporations and their workers that emerged in the post-bellum era is a natural, albeit relatively untouched area for labour and working class historians to investigate. The persistent and romanticized myth of the cowboy has obscured the reality of their struggles to wrest a living, and Lause argues that cowboys and the cowboy strike needs to be understood within the context of labour insurgency during the post-Civil War era. His thesis is clear: "One cannot discuss labor struggles – or political insurgencies – in the West during these years without encountering the reality of coercive violence, recognition of which clarifies much about the progression of cowboy strikes and insurgent movements generally." (xi) Indeed, themes of violence, coercion, and class conflict connect the cowboy insurgency with other working-class efforts throughout this work.

The preface, introduction, and first two chapters provide labour history

background and context for the cowboy strikes. Lause introduces readers to the emergence of immediate post-Civil War groups who presented political challenges the powerful: Patrons of Husbandry (Grange), Industrial Brotherhood (which became the Knights of Labor), and the Farmer's Alliance, while arguing that corporate and political powers chose to protect "their property, profits, and prerogatives" through violence and coercion rather than give in to workers' demands. (xii) The introduction sets the context for the rise of the cattle industry in the West, discussing the rise in national demand for beef, and the Red River War of 1874 against Texas Native Americans, who, once defeated and placed on reservations, opened immense territory for large-scale corporate ranching. Lause introduces the reality of cowboy work, countering a romanticized view with depictions of low paid working-class cowboys kept in line by corporate ranch owners, and concludes by discussing the role of the railroad and the development of western towns after 1869, the development of stockyards, and of large cattle drives to Kansas railheads. Chapters 1 and 2 discuss in more detail the rise of post-Civil War labour organizations such as Grangers, International Brotherhood, and Lause relates these organizations to the difficulties and insecure employment Texas cowboys endured. Cattle ranchers' increasing concern with the bottom line of their commercial-scale operations encouraged them to criminalizing longstanding traditions, such as branding mavericks, which had traditionally allowed workers to rise out of wage labour into ranch ownership. Thus the stage is set for a labour conflict between cattle ranchers and their hired hands.

Chapters 3 through 6 get to the heart of the topic, as Lause describes the high ranch profits and stagnant wages of cowboys that initiated the strikes. Guidance

from cowboys and sympathizers familiar with insurgent labour movements in the East, combined with knowledge of when ranchers would be most vulnerable, led to successful strikes. But as Lause argues, while cowboys won strike battles, especially during the years 1883 to 1886, in the long run they lost the war for improved wages and job security. By failing to organize into a union, cowboys involved in strikes found themselves blacklisted or facing violent retribution from hired guns employed by ranch owners. Lause pays a great deal of attention to labour organizations, events, and leaders in the East, often to make just a brief connection to the story of the cowboys' situation in the West. The discussion of the Great Cattle Die-Up of 1886 and 1887, which Lause connects with Theodore Roosevelt and the elite ranchers in Montana, had a promising start to explain the difficulties cowhands faced, although more detail on the declining cattle industry's effect on cattle hands overall would have been welcome.

The remaining chapters shift focuses to labour history in general. Chapter 7 does not mention cowboys or their strikes, but focuses on the checkered fate of the Greenback and other labour parties, detailing how carefully controlled political violence by major interests – corporate and political – successfully put down challenges from groups supporting the working classes. Chapter 8 reinforces themes of violence, albeit dipping into events prior to 1883, for example Mormon movement into Utah, the OK Corral shootout, and lynchings as unresolved issues of Reconstruction. The last half of the chapter takes up Wyoming's Johnson County Range War. While Lause states that "Developments in Wyoming brought the connections between cowboy discontent, range wars, and political insurgency into clear focus," that connection is not entirely obvious. (232)

Growing antagonism between ranchers, cowboys, and small-scale ranchers and farmers in the region rested on a number of interwoven factors; the connection to political insurgency needs to be more clearly articulated. For the conclusion, Lause takes readers on fast-paced journey through the emergence of western myth, beginning with Frederick Jackson Turner in 1893 and continuing up through the contemporary era. This long-term project of construction of an American Western myth, he argues, has obscured the prevalence of violence, white supremacy, and class conflicts in the region. His parting message is that we must unearth the truth of our past before we can understand the present.

The parts of Mark Lause's *The Great Cowboy Strike: Bullets, Ballots, and Class Conflicts in the American West* that focus on context for the cowboy strikes and the strikes themselves are quite good. Lause offers insightful connections between eastern and western labour movements, as well as providing a realistic picture of cowboy lives and work experiences in the 19th century. His expertise in the area of eastern labour history, however, tends to overshadow the story of the cowboy West. The amount of information on labour history provided leads to a breathless skimming over material in some places, extensive detail of seemingly inconsequential particulars in others, and, in some places, information is presented in ways that could be interpreted as misleading. If the book intended for a general audience, then these diversions may provide readers with interesting insights. For scholars of the American West, the central chapters will be most useful for an understanding of the connection between eastern and western cowhand radicalism.

RENEE M. LAEGREID  
University of Wyoming

**Jane Little Botkin, *Frank Little and the IWW: The Blood That Stained an American Family* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press 2017)**

THOSE FAMILIAR WITH the arc of labour history in the American West know the story of Frank Little well. He was the famous (and infamous) Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) agitator who criss-crossed the region on behalf of radical labour and ultimately met his death under a railroad trestle in Butte, Montana – lynched there in the early hours of 1 August 1917. His murder’s legacy lives on not just in labour lore but beyond (for example, the note that vigilantes left on his body included the inscription “3-7-77,” which today is included in the crest of the Montana Highway Patrol, for them a modern symbol of law enforcement). In *Frank Little and the IWW* Jane Little Botkin revisits Little’s story and give us a long overdue comprehensive look at an underappreciated but woefully important figure in working-class history.

Botkin, a great grand-niece of Little’s, set out to tell the famous labour martyr’s story in part because of this family connection and the years of family history – and mystery – that surrounded him. The book intends to be a “chronicle of ordinary Americans who did extraordinary things” within the context of a turbulent time in American history. (xviii)

Indeed, the work is an episodic look at the moments and the places where Little made his mark. Botkin starts at the end, and recounts Frank Little’s last moments, when he was abducted from his Butte hotel room, the tragic moment that would make his name famous for generations. After this quick retelling, readers are dropped into Little’s life and activism at a number of sites during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The story begins with Frank’s upbringing in Oklahoma, where his family participated

in the famed 1889 land runs. The young Little witnessed right away the power of ethnic and class distinctions and marginalization, particularly with American Indians in the Territory. The Little family even had outlaw connections prior to their time in Oklahoma, evidenced by a perhaps curiously included chapter that steps back to their run-ins with the Doolin-Dalton Gang. The family’s labour connections in some ways began with Frank’s older brother Fred and his wife Emma in Cripple Creek, Colorado, in 1893–1894, where they started lifelong commitments to organizing, although sometimes with less efficacy and more relationship turbulence, we later find out, than the more famous family member.

Frank Little appears in earnest in Part II of the book, beginning with his sometimes uncertain working-class life (Botkin, perhaps because of lack of sources, is forced to say that he “could have,” “might” and “perhaps” often about where he worked or lived). Still, we know that he made it to Bisbee, Arizona Territory beginning in 1903 and embarked on a career of organizing. Around this time, he became a member of the Western Federation of Miners and the Socialist Party of America, soon giving May Day speeches in Globe, organizing Mexican mine labour in Clifton, working on behalf of the free speech movement in Missoula, Spokane, San Diego, and Fresno, where he was arrested five times during what the author calls his “defining chapter.” (169) Just as in Fresno, Little’s work landed him in jails across the West and on several occasions left him beaten and scarred.

As Botkin makes plain, he had undoubtedly committed himself to his life’s work: an ideology and organizing of radical industrial unionism. His grass-roots organizing efforts for IWW locals bore fruit, and his notoriety among Wobblies swelled, placing him on the General Executive Board in 1911. Little would

participate in union work in fights in Kansas City and Drumright, too, leaving him “well known in the world of labor by 1914.” (215)

By 1914, for many parts of the labour community and those like Little on the political Left, World War I proved a significant challenge to their causes. By this time the Chair of the IWW’s General Executive Board, Little did not waver in his opposition to the war. The lop-sided case of Joe Hill, for Botkin, marked the canary in the coal mine for the Wobblies and, perhaps Little. When the US formally entered the war in 1917 he was physically broken yet determined – despite a lack of consensus with IWW leaders like Big Bill Haywood – in his antiwar convictions.

The book, and Little’s story, reaches its dramatic height by his arrival in Butte, Montana in 1917. Botkin is able to describe the pulse of Butte well, in her words a “city of widows and cemeteries” in the wake of harsh labour conditions and recent tragedies like the Speculator Mine disaster. (276) A union town with a Socialist mayor, Frank Little sided with the more radical labour elements there, still committed to direct action and urging new colleagues in the reformed Butte Miner’s Union to embrace the same in several fiery speeches. His last days left him at odds with Haywood and Wobblies and at the same time with more moderate labour forces more in line with American Federation of Labor’s brand of trade unionism. More than that, he received death threats, and those turned out to be more than idle. In the coming days after anonymous vigilantes abducted Little from his hotel room in the middle of the night Little became a martyr for the labour cause, symbolized by his being the largest funeral procession in Butte’s history. His death, naturally, became a rallying point for labour activists, well after

the Bureau of Investigation abandoned the case.

*Frank Little and the IWW* is a well-researched and compelling story, told, at many points, with deserving and admirable engagement. Some readers may wonder about not only the broader national and labour contexts surrounding Little, but also some of the more on-the-ground and in-between moments of his transient life. While there may be more to uncover about Little, his various contexts and broader significance, Botkin has taken on this biography well. Despite unavoidable mystery and uncertainty surrounding him, the author has been able to construct a narrative that finally tackles this important tale, and often compellingly so.

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**Matilda Rabinowitz, *Immigrant Girl, Radical Woman: A Memoir from the Early Twentieth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2017)**

MATILDA RABINOWITZ (aka Matilda Robbins) is the only woman, other than Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, who was known as a paid organizer for the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) during its heyday in the early 20th century. Rabinowitz played an important role in the Little Falls, NY textile strike in 1912, and organized in many lesser-known areas, from Shelton, Connecticut to Greenville, South Carolina.

Unlike Elizabeth Gurley Flynn’s memoir, written with an eye for posterity, Robbins’ memoir had a much smaller intended audience: her descendants. Written in the 1950s, her brief memoir was never published in her lifetime. In this volume her recollections of her life exist side by side with illustrations done by her granddaughter, Robbin Légère Henderson.

Henderson also plays the role of tour guide through Matilda's life. Each chapter of the memoir is followed by a reflection by Henderson, which describe memories of her grandmother or research that she has done on her life. While sometimes these afterwards simply summarize what Matilda has written, at other times they provide a fascinating interplay between past and present and help us to read between the lines of Matilda's words.

One such example is a personal scandal during the Little Falls strike, which Robbins describes in a few sentences as if it had happened to someone else. Robbins had a multi-decade relationship with Ben Légère, an actor and organizer for the IWW (though he wasn't very successful at either occupation), who was married when the two first met. While Légère was jailed for strike activities, love letters that had been passed between him and Matilda were published in the local newspaper, causing much personal embarrassment. If we had only Robbins' words to go on, we may not have known she was at the centre of the scandal. Henderson provides transcripts of the letters from the local paper, adding depth to our understanding of the story.

For a historian, the most fascinating aspect of Robbins' writing is in the details of daily life. The story of her migration to the United States, for example, gives the reader an appreciation for what a leap of faith it was for Jewish people in Russia to take on the journey, passing from agent to agent on a trek that took over two months to complete.

For those of us who are trying to understand how organizations like the IWW functioned, Robbins' eye for detail is invaluable. Her discussion of the Little Falls strike explains how exactly a Wobbly strike ran on the ground. She lists her daily schedule as an organizer, the needs during the strike, and how they were met. For example, in explaining how food and

supplies were organized: "although it was the women strikers alone who toiled long hours in the kitchen, both men and women worked in the adjoining shop to clean and repair the arriving donations of clothing. Two Italian cobblers did wonders with worn shoes." (119)

Robbins did not shy away from revealing how she felt about many of the well-known personalities of the IWW. On Big Bill Haywood, Robbins spent several pages criticizing him as a person and the role he played in Little Falls. "To me he seemed to lack repose, concentration, patience. Criticism upset him, and he defended even his small mistakes heatedly ... There must have been times and situations that created Bill Haywood's famed personality and revealed his unique talents. I did not find them. I could not draw strength from his past exploits. It was the present that challenged. And in the present his approach lacked vigor and his methods realism." (123) In contrast to her disappointment in the "Great Man," she has much praise for those Wobblies unknown to history who did the hard tasks of keeping the strike running. She also has kind words about Vincent Saint John, "The Saint," General Secretary of the IWW during the strike. "He was an efficient executive, a shrewd labor organizer, a sensitive social thinker – an intransigent revolutionist." (125) But she had negative things to say about Carlo Tresca's visit to Little Falls: "He talked, he ate spaghetti, and drank wine, and we paid the bill. When he left I was relieved and greatly disappointed." (142) These anecdotes help to humanize figures that can feel almost mythological at times. Robbins faults the IWW as an organization for hiring organizers who were better speakers than teachers, not good with bookkeeping or laying the groundwork for the union to survive after the strike was over.

In addition to her life as an organizer, the other threads through the memoir are Robbins' tumultuous and abusive relationship with Légère, and her love for the daughter she had with him. Henderson rather loosely uses the term "free love" to describe the ideal that kept Robbins in the relationship even though Légère was unfaithful. To many radicals during this period "free love" was more about not having to solidify your commitment to your partner in the eyes of the church or the state, not necessarily that everyone should be free to have as many partners as they wanted in the 1960s connotation of the term.

One of the most moving aspects of the memoir is Robbins' description of motherhood and life with her daughter. She very knowingly chose to be a single mother, at a time when that was uncommon. She continued to work, occasionally having to send her daughter to others for care, only visiting her on weekends. An appendix includes an unpublished article that Robbins submitted to *The Nation* in 1927 about the trouble of finding decent affordable childcare that would not be unfamiliar to any working mother today.

Robbins' memoir is recommended to anyone interested in labour organization and women workers in the early years of the 20th century. The ease of reading, illustrations, and Henderson's additions make it an ideal book for assigning to undergraduates. While Henderson's annotations are sometimes repetitive and sometimes illuminating, they would help students to understand what's missing, unsaid, or underplayed, which could lead to fascinating discussions about autobiographies as historical sources.

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**Howard Means, *67 Shots: Kent State and the End of American Innocence* (Boston: Da Capo Press 2016)**

**Craig S. Simpson and Gregory S. Wilson, *Above the Shots: An Oral History of the Kent State Shootings* (Kent: Kent State University Press 2016)**

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY of the killing of four students and the wounding of nine others by Ohio National Guardsmen at Kent State University will be marked on 4 May 2020. Despite the abundance of books on the subject, until recently the work of historians has been limited to oral histories, scholarly articles, and chapters in anthologies. The year 2016 saw a surge in the publication of books on the subject. Thomas M. Grace's excellent *Kent State: Death and Dissent in the Long Sixties* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), reviewed in *L/LT's* issue 78, marked the first monograph on the subject by an historian. The two books reviewed here – Howard Means' *67 Shots: Kent State and the End of American Innocence* and Craig Simpson and Gregory Wilson's *Above the Shots: An Oral History of the Kent State Shootings* – both rely heavily on oral history. Only the latter, however, adds anything meaningful to our understanding of the events at on 4 May 1970, and even then, only minimally.

Means falsely attempts to create a moral dichotomy between those US troops killed in action that day in Indochina and the students killed in Ohio. He describes the former as having died while committing "small acts of bravery." (2) The latter, in contrast, were foul-mouthed arsonists who threw bags of human excrement at, taunted, and sometimes even assaulted Ohio National Guardsmen. The obvious difference between the two groups of fatalities, which appears to be lost on Means, is that only one of them was armed.



Means' basic narrative of the events at Kent State on and around 4 May 1970 is for the most part accurate: the United States invaded Cambodia on the Wednesday, President Nixon announced it on Thursday, students demonstrated at Kent State (and around the world) on Friday, and that night there were disturbances in downtown Kent. On Saturday night students attacked the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) building on campus, which burned to the ground later in the evening, just in time for the arrival of the Ohio National Guard. The following evening Guardsmen dispersed an impromptu demonstration at the campus gates with tear gas. (Means fails to mention that between three and eight unarmed students were bayoneted in the process. [Grace, 212]) On Monday at noon Guardsmen dispersed another demonstration, this time with firearms, killing four and wounding nine. Means uses the best secondary sources available on the shootings at Kent State. These include *The Report of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest* (New York: Arno Press, 1970), Peter Davies' *The Truth about Kent State: A Challenge to the American Conscience* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1973), Joseph Kelter and James Munves' *The Kent State Coverup* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), and Carole Barbato and Laura Davis' edited collection of essays *Democratic Narrative, History and Memory* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2012). It is Means' cherry-picking of outrageous, unsubstantiated statements by participants, often anonymous, indeed often anonymous former Ohio National Guardsmen, found in the Kent State Shootings Oral History Project that makes the book the irrelevant work that it is. He assumes the veracity of these sources without question or analysis. An example of this is a statement by Ellen Mann, an area resident who worked on campus at the time:

"Just killing four white students, four white kids, was enough to stop the whole antiwar movement." (214) It didn't. A reading of any of the vast body of literature on the anti-Vietnam War movement clearly indicates the opposite. Cambodia and Kent State breathed new life into the movement. (Charles DeBenedetti and Charles Chatfield, *An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era* [Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990], 278; Tom Wells, *The War Within: America's Battle Over Vietnam* [New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994], 403).

Means attempts to place the events at Kent State not into the context of the antiwar movement, but into a cultural war between adults and youth. His tone is triumphalist, evocative more of the present day than the period of which he writes. "The Age of Aquarius had played out," he says, "in the bad clothes, loose tits, shocking language, Woodstock and protest marches. And now payback had arrived." (125) Ultimately, *67 Shots* is more histrionics than history. It is a vulgar, sensationalist, and inaccurate screed.

Craig Simpson and Gregory Wilson's *Above the Shots: An Oral History of the Kent State Shootings*, attempts to expand readers' understanding of the events at Kent State through the use of oral history. Unlike Means, both authors are historians. Simpson was formerly the curator of the Kent State Shootings Oral History Project at Kent State. Wilson specializes in US, Ohio, and public history. The authors have included previously unheard voices, which they refer to as narrators. "We as historians have sought to stay above the din and present a multitude of perspectives respecting (if not always agreeing with) the views of the narrators." (8)

The authors have divided their book into five sections. The first addresses historic town/gown tensions between the

town of Kent and Kent State University prior to 4 May 1970, culminating in 1969 with the arrest of several members of the local chapter of Students for a Democratic Society and the subsequent revocation of that organization's charter in the spring of that year. (43) That fall 3,500 antiwar protesters marched from campus to downtown Kent as part of the Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam, America's largest national antiwar campaign of the era. (46) Both subjects – SDS and the Moratorium – cry out for further scholarly investigation.

Part Two focuses on the period from the US invasion of Cambodia on 29 April to the fated demonstration of 4 May. It is here where the reader first experiences the inherent contradiction of the authors' reliance on oral history to develop the narrative. Early in the book they explain, "We tried to maintain a balance between letting the narrator speak and intervening with the authoritative voice." (16) What remains unsaid is that the "authoritative voice" is the document-based narrative that has emerged over the years, starting with the publication of *The Report of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest* in 1970. This contradiction is further exacerbated in Parts Three and Four, which discuss people's memory of the shootings and how that memory developed over time. The best example of this concerns the death of Jeffrey Miller, whose corpse appeared in John Filo's Pulitzer Prize winning photo of a young woman kneeling in front of him with her arms upraised. The authors relate the eye-witness account of Eldon Fender, who claims he saw Miller throw at least ten rocks at Ohio National Guardsmen from a distance of fifteen to twenty feet before Guardsmen fatally shot him. The authors devote three pages to this account, only to invoke "the authoritative voice," to establish that Miller was in fact several hundred yards from the shooters.

*Above the Shots* is rife with such instances, raising the question, why include so much previously unknown misrepresentation only to debunk it?

Simpson and Wilson add little to the narrative of events surrounding Kent State on 4 May 1970. The book's value is contained in its discussion of the contested memory and the struggles of memorialization of the Kent State shootings. These are the subjects of Part Five, by far the most original and interesting aspects of *Above the Shots*. The authors rely on the theoretical framework of Kenneth E. Foote, who analyzes the relationship between landscape and violence in his book, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003). Foote outlines four stages that sites of violence go through. *Sanctification* occurs when "events are seen to hold some lasting, positive meaning." *Obliteration* usually "results from particularly shameful events people would prefer to forget." *Designation* is "the marking of a site," and *reification* involves "removing the signs of violence and tragedy and returning a site to use." (180-181) Early signs of sanctification at Kent State include the annual walk and candle-lit vigil that have taken place every evening of 3-4 May since 1971. Later examples of both sanctification and designation during the 1990s and up to the present day include the opening of the May 4 Memorial, the permanent closure of the four parking spots where the students were killed, an annual scholarly conference, the oral history project, and a self-guided walking tour to name only a few. In 2010 the May 4 Visitors' Centre opened.

Prior to the 1980s, however, the university was more intent on obliterating the memory of the shootings. The 1977 decision to build an athletic centre – euphemistically called a "Gym Annex" – over part of the land on which the shootings

took place, and the movement that arose against it, marked a profound struggle between the forces of obliteration and sanctification. If there is criticism of this section of the book, it is that this discussion should be greatly expanded.

Part Five also includes the process that went into the establishment of the May 4 Memorial. In 1983 the university finally began to take ownership of 4 May and initiated a design contest for a Memorial. Michael G. Faher and Ian F. Taberner won, but the latter was disqualified when it was discovered that he was Canadian. According to the former Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Kent State Taberner's nationality was a cause of national scandal. The University offered the prize to Faher alone, but he declined and so Bruno Ast, the runner up, was awarded the prize. Due to financial considerations, however, only a scaled-down version of the Ast memorial was built. From a scholarly perspective, no discussion of the contested memory of Kent State would be complete without mentioning Simpson's predecessor at the Kent State Shootings Oral History Project, Kathleen Siebert Medicus. Until 2005 the events that unfolded at Kent State in and around 4 May 4 1970 had been listed by the Library of Congress under the subject heading "Kent State University – Riot, May 4, 1970." It is thanks to the quiet petitioning of Medicus that in 2005 the Library of Congress changed this subject heading to "Kent State Shootings, Kent, Ohio, 1970." (2)

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**Steve Early, *Refinery Town: Big Oil, Big Money, and the Remaking of an American City* (Boston: Beacon Press 2017)**

IN *REFINERY TOWN*, Steve Early calls our attention to Richmond, California, one of the most polluted towns you've probably never heard of. Standard Oil of California drew workers to the city beginning in 1905 and for the next 100 years its subsidiary Chevron spent billions to retain control of local politics. Over the course of seven chapters, Early gives an engaging account of present-day community resiliency and activism working to combat pollution, urban decay, and corporate control by one of the world's largest oil companies.

Early's first chapter sets the stage for contemporary political battles. He gives a history of Richmond industrialization, looking at the social and economic legacy of concentrated industrialization. Early discusses Big Oil's multifaceted corporate philanthropy programs that won the hearts and minds of employees and residents. He pairs this with a description of efforts to prevent labour organizing at Richmond refineries. Company unions such as the Standard Oil Employee Representation Plan and the farming out of maintenance staff prevented effective labour organizing through the 1930s. After discussing the city's history of racial segregation and worsening urban blight after World War II, Early tracks Bay-Area student activism in the 1960s and the rise of a multiracial liberal coalition in the city.

Throughout the rest of the book Early uses this history to contextualize the actions of a coalition of progressive activists as they attempt to fix the city's many problems. After discussing refinery strikes and worsening pollution throughout the 1940s and into the 2000s, Early narrates a 2012 refinery fire after which

the city sued Chevron for \$2 billion in damages. In this fight Early sees the emergence of, “an unlikely group of Greens, Latinos, progressive Democrats, African Americans, and free spirits” uniting to form the Richmond Progressive Alliance. (39) This group, spearheaded by mayor Gayle McLaughlin and epitomized by police chief Chris Magnus are the clear underdog heroes of the narrative.

According to Early, the Progressive Alliance’s desire to improve the lives of local residents – often at the expense of the city’s largest employer – made them many enemies. Chevron was supported by a mix of local officials entrenched within a corrupt Democratic party machine and conservative union members – most notoriously the local building trades and the police union. Early teases out the motivations driving this group. For some it was personal profit, for others it was political inertia, for yet others it seemed to be pride or tradition. Such a discussion allows Early to explore the majority-minority city’s complicated racial politics. The Richmond Progressive Alliance was up against an entrenched system of political patronage that left many of the city’s African American leaders complicit in the corporate status quo. This is not simply a story of segregation and racial oppression. Rather Early demonstrates shifting alliances between members of the Black community, working-class whites, and more recent Latino arrivals, some of whom saw Chevron as an important source of employment or an opportunity for personal profit.

While the title might imply an environmental justice focus, this is not a story about pollution in a fenceline community. The narrative explains how left-wing, grassroots activists were able to win elections in a blue-collar city dominated by a single industrial employer. The majority of the book delves into local efforts to address contemporary social

issues including police brutality, growing gang violence, gentrification, housing reform, and corporate control over local policy. Early’s discussion of police chief Magnus’s attempts to combat violent crime and to improve relationships between the majority-minority community and law enforcement is compelling. Magnus’s efforts to involve locals in maintaining the safety of their own neighborhoods resonates at a moment of worsening police violence nation-wide.

Early writes as a member of a community he deeply cares about. His insider knowledge of political alliances, community dynamics, and the city’s colourful personalities shines through. However, perhaps due the authors close relationship with his subjects, the book lags in the later chapters, dragging through a litany of city council debates and local elections in 2014 and 2015. Infighting at city council events and local public relations stunts are detailed extensively. Due to the focus on local election talking points, at times the book reads like a laundry list of hot-topic political issues rather than as a linear narrative. Clunky, mid-chapter transitions between social issues at times add to the jarring effect.

Scholars of US labour or environmental history are unlikely to find much new in this book. While the legacy of environmental contamination is briefly sketched out and famous names such as Bernie Sanders and health and safety activist Tony Mazzocchi appear throughout, the longer history of 20th-century labour activism and industrial pollution is not the focus of this work. While I commend Early for a singular focus on his case-study community, it would be interesting to get more context for events in Richmond. A longer work which included Chevron’s national and global history of political exploitation or broader union efforts to combat worker exposure to toxins would give this case study wider

historical significance. Further, the relationship between industrial Richmond and nearby San Francisco seems like an important, and under-utilized, piece of this story.

Despite such criticisms, the work will be valuable to readers interested in contemporary California politics as well as an asset to community organizers building grass-roots movements. Early is very effective when discussing the ins and out of community organizing strategy and his issue-focused structure gives readers an assessment of what strategies appealed to working-class minority voters. This focus is clearly intentional. Early understands his story of activists in Richmond, California as a “timely and compelling case study of what it takes to overcome big money in politics in our post-Citizens United era.” (6) To this end, Early provides readers with an online bibliography containing further works on labour history and community organizing.

In his epilogue, Early reminds his readers that there is “no single map for social change.” (193) However, Richmond seems to be indicative of broader trends across the US. Despite new challenges in the wake of the 2016 US presidential election, scholars have increasingly identified city-level organizing as offering real possibilities in the fight to combat pollution, corporate greed, and racial injustice. For example, after the Trump administration’s refusal to sign the Paris Climate Agreement, over 30 US cities vowed to implement stringent pollution remission policies. Similarly, urban municipal governments are at the forefront of protection and services for undocumented immigrant communities. In early 2018 the city of Richmond, California joined several other industrial cities to sue 29 oil companies, including Chevron, for their culpably in instigating and exacerbating global climate change. If Early’s story is

any indication, it seems possible their case will succeed.

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**David Rolf, *The Fight for \$15: The Right Wage for a Working America* (New York: The New Press 2016)**

HOW DID THE American Dream, where hard-working Americans could attain good jobs and a pathway to middle-class stability, turn into a nightmare of perverse inequality and precarious work? And what are workers and unions going to do to put workers on the road from poverty to prosperity?

These are the two questions David Rolf sets out to answer in his book on the Fight for \$15. Rolf, the president of the powerful Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 775 in Seattle, makes the case that raising the minimum wage to \$15 is one of the defining working-class issues of our time. The book is structured into three parts: explaining the rise of low-wage work and inequality, telling the story of how workers and unions are organizing the Fight for \$15 campaign, and debunking common myths the campaign is bumping up against.

Rolf’s examination of the rise of inequality and precarious jobs in the United States treads familiar territory. Hewing closely to the analysis of Joseph Stiglitz and Robert Reich, Rolf dates “the war on the middle class” to the mid-1970s. He argues that right-wing ideas, like tax cuts and deregulation, began to take hold amongst segments of the working class spurred by rising unemployment and inflation. The right wing through the 1980s and 1990s was thus able to further their longstanding dream of eroding the power of unions and working standards.

The decline of the middle class was followed by the rise of “new work” which is

fissured, flexible, and insecure. Workers are atomized in the workplace and their collective power and solidarity have been eroded. Rolf paints a damning picture of work today, with its proliferation of subcontracting, part-time, temporary, and freelance work. Rolf also notes there are now more workers in the United States who have no legal right to form a union than workers who do.

Rolf's analysis of the changing workplace is useful, though it underplays the role the attack on the welfare state has played in undermining workers' confidence and security. For instance, the rise in post-secondary education fees for students has been a major reason why part-time work has proliferated. Likewise, the gutting of welfare entitlements in the 1980s and 1990s fed a sense of insecurity amongst low-wage workers. This erosion of social programs and public infrastructure contributed to a sense of isolation and economic fear amongst the working class. The political defeats suffered by the working class are not only as important as the setbacks endured by workers in the workplace, they are interlinked.

Understanding that the ideological shift in workers' confidence and sense of collective power is the result of both the restructuring of employment relations and political defeat is important to grasp the true measure and impact of new work. Workplaces and work are changing in the 21st century, but as Kim Moody and Kevin Doogan have written it is important not to overstate this claim or assume the working class is either a moribund concept or a powerless political force. In his most recent book, *On New Terrain* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2017), Moody argues that precarious work did grow as lean production methods were ramped up in the early 1980s, but precarious work has not expanded further over the last 30 years. Workers feel more insecure and wages have stagnated, but the

nature of work has not been dramatically upended over the last several decades.

The most interesting aspect of Rolf's book is when he shifts gears from a broader analysis of the American economy to a narrative about how a \$15 minimum wage was won in Sea-Tac and Seattle. Sea-Tac, a small suburb outside of Seattle that includes the city's airport, was the first jurisdiction to enact a \$15 minimum wage in the United States. The airport, which once provided many middle-class jobs, is now the site of many outsourced low-wage jobs. This restructuring corresponded with a dramatic shift in working-class demographics in the community, including the growth of a substantial racialized immigrant population.

Organizing efforts at the airport were linked with the wider Fight for \$15 campaign launched by the SEIU in 2012. SEIU organizers along with other union staff and local activists aimed to push for a \$15 starting wage and a union at numerous subcontracted companies prevalent at the airport. The strategy they eventually settled on was a municipal ballot measure for a \$15 minimum wage. Rolf describes this effort, but leaves out many of the tensions and political debates that the former SEIU at Sea-Tac organizer Jonathan Rosenblum describes in his book *Beyond \$15* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2016). Rosenblum critiques the focus that Rolf and others in SEIU had on making the fight a purely ballot measure effort with little thought or resources going into building union power in the long-term.

The massive mobilization for the municipal victory in Sea-Tac, which knocked on thousands of doors and beat a well-funded employer campaign, created the Fight for \$15's first legislative victory in the country, while informing the movement's subsequent strategy and inspiring new layer of activists. As Rolf notes, the initial intention of the Sea-Tac campaign was to win union recognition in order to

bargain for wages, “instead they ended up writing a de facto union contract directly into city law.” (121) While Rolf does not adequately develop this point further, this notion of treating employment standards as collective bargaining for non-union workers is one of the key strategic insights the Fight for \$15 has highlighted in this period of legislative and judicial attacks on union rights. Rolf’s solution is for unions to push for better bargaining models than the Wagner model, such as sectoral bargaining, that better reflect the current realities of work. This analysis largely misses how turning the economic struggles into broader political fights is a way for workers to turn the tables on employers and break down sectoral barriers that often stand in the way of broader worker solidarity. Raising the minimum standards can help collapse the gap between unionized workers and non-unionized workers, allowing the former to set the bar of workplace standards even higher.

Rolf, who was a key player in the Fight for \$15 in Seattle, describes how the campaign used the momentum of the Sea-Tac victory to push for and win \$15 in Seattle. He explains this victory was the product of an inside-outside strategy. Socialist Alternative and its allies pushed and kept the issue on the spotlight while Rolf and his allies leveraged that outside pressure to get a deal on the inside. Rolf’s good cop bad cop narrative about how Kshama Sawant’s election and formation of the \$15 Now coalition created the impetus for rational members of the business community and union leaders to hammer out a compromise flattens and distorts the real lessons of the Fight for \$15. This is not simply a story about coming to a rational compromise with employers from which everyone benefits or showing bosses there is another way. The power of the Fight for \$15 is about crystallizing class anger and injustice into a demand

that strikes at the heart of inequality and stirs people to action.

The limits of Rolf’s work and book stem from his emphasis on policy formation, legislative change, and backroom negotiating. Rather than address the root causes of inequality and precarious work, he longs for labour to bring back the middle class of yore. His goal in the book and in the movement is to re-forging working-class prosperity within capitalism. What this perspective undervalues is the tradition and role of radical working-class politics in animating and organizing for reforms that seek to go beyond the confines of liberal capitalism, where the interest of workers is finely balanced with interests of businesses to earn healthy profits. The Fight for \$15 is an inspiring movement and the book does a fine job in outlining the case for raising wages; what is missing however, is the broader political significance of this movement for the working class.

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**Teishan A. Latner, *Cuban Revolution in America: Havana and the Making of a United States Left, 1968–1992* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 2018)**

THE INTERNATIONAL reception of the Cuban Revolution, including its intellectual, political, and cultural impact on the global Left, has become the focus of rich new scholarship. Teishan Latner’s, *Cuban Revolution in America: Havana and the Making of a United States Left, 1968–1992*, currently generating a buzz in US History circles for its fascinating account of encounters between the US multiracial left and revolutionary Cuba, is part of a literature that includes Anne Garland Mahler, *From the Tricontinental to the Global South: Race, Radicalism*

and *Transnational Solidarity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), Dirk Kruijt, *Cuba and Revolutionary Latin America: An Oral History* (London: Zed, 2017), and Renata Keller, *Mexico's Cold War: Cuba, the United States and the Mexican Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015),

Cuba may hold a “singular place in the U.S. radical imaginary,” (6) one powerfully shaped by Cuba’s extraordinary revolutionary cultural production, but historical studies of the US Left and Cuba remain uncommon. Exceptions include Van Gosse’s, *Where the Boys Are: Cuba, Cold War America and the Making of a New Left* (London: Verso, 1993), but Gosse largely ends his study with the humiliating 1961 defeat of US-backed mercenaries at the Bay of Pigs and the FBI’s destruction of Fair Play for Cuba. Latner’s focus is broader; he opens the book with 1968, the year that saw the creation of one of the US Left’s most important and enduring institutions, the Venceremos Brigades, and concludes with a fascinating chapter on African-American radical exiles and fugitives living in Cuba today. Indeed, Latner extends the chronology indicated by the book’s subtitle to consider the unresolved and unfinished issues in the long relationship between Cuba and US radicals.

Broadly, *Cuban Revolution in America* studies the relationship between the US Left and Cuba through the lens of solidarity travel, hijacking, and political exile. Case studies include the Venceremos Brigade, now nearing its 50th anniversary (Chapter 1); the lesser-known Cuban-American Antonio Maceo Brigade (Chapter 4); the dozens of hijackings to Cuba carried out by US citizens between 1968 and 1973 (Chapter 3); and African-American exiles, fugitives, and ex-pats in Cuba (Chapter 5). The long history of solidarity with Cuba on the part of African-American radicals is one key thread

running through the entire narrative, and Latner also explores the openings between left-wing Cuban-Americans and Cuba, a frequently buried story now receiving new research attention. Both of these stories are part of a broader analysis of how race, ethnicity, and nation shaped the encounter between US radicals and Cuba. Also central to Latner’s analytic is revealing how “left-wing American encounters with Cuba created a counterpoint to U.S. power while influencing U.S.-Cuba diplomatic relations.” (20) Diplomacies by non-state actors sometimes facilitated secret talks between the US and Cuba, and hijacking became such an issue that it led to a rare diplomatic opening: the signing of a 1973 hijacking agreement between the two states.

But in the eyes of the US state, “Cuba’s relationship with American radicals posed an internal security threat” of serious proportions. (9) As Chapter 2 explores, heavy surveillance aimed to smash links between Cuba and US radicals; the Venceremos Brigade and the Black Panthers, not surprisingly, were key targets. Not for nothing does Latner observe that, “FBI files are undertheorized in their function as historical archives, and the FBI has been underscrutinized in its role as archivist and historical biographer.” (79–80) As Latner notes, the FBI archive on the Venceremos Brigade is in fact far larger than the “official” one, and he makes innovative use of declassified CIA, FBI, and US State Department files, as well as extensive archival research.

For its part, the Cuban state prioritized relationships with the US Left as one pillar of its resistance to US attempts to isolate Cuba diplomatically, attack it militarily, and destroy it economically through blockade and sabotage. Refreshingly, Latner engages in greater depth with Cuban sources and standpoints than is typical of many similar studies, although there is room for debate



about how best to do this in a study that, while focused on the US left, aspires also to be transnational. Access to post-1959 Cuban archives in many cases remains very difficult for international scholars. Research designs therefore need to incorporate, as Latner's does, strategies such as extensive oral histories with Cuban actors and detailed work in Cuban print literature.

There are, however, some howlers in *Cuban Revolution in America*. For example, Venceremos brigadistas trying to avoid surveillance did not travel to Cuba via St. Johns, Ontario but rather St John, New Brunswick. The claim (originally made by Eldridge Cleaver) that Cuba trained members of the Black Panther Party in rural Canada to escape FBI and CIA surveillance strains all credibility. More importantly, this suggests a missed opportunity to explore more closely how Canada and Mexico, the only two states in the hemisphere that maintained diplomatic relations with revolutionary Cuba despite US pressure, figured in the stories of US citizens who transited through them to evade the travel ban. All three countries engaged in heavy surveillance of travellers and fugitives on their way to Cuba, and African-Americans were among the most heavily surveilled.

This book will appeal to many readerships, including people interested in the global reach of the Cuban Revolution; the US multiracial left; race and revolution; methodologies for international history from below; Cold War history; and theories and practices of solidarity. As the Cuban Revolution approaches its 60th anniversary, the punishing US blockade of Cuba continues, as does the ban on individual travel and tourism to the island. While many US Black radical internationalists, for example Angela Davis, have maintained a decades-long commitment to Cuba, the Cuban Revolution clearly no longer occupies the same place

in the US radical imaginary. Moreover, despite often glib statements by some observers about what is regarded as a romantic commitment to Cuba on the part of the Left, the reality is that there were always areas of political tension between the global Left and Cuba, including US Leftists, and Latner does not avoid speaking to many of them. For radical African-Americans, tensions over the reality of racism in post-revolutionary Cuba was often a flashpoint. At the same time, the thousands of US nationals who have defied the travel ban with the Venceremos Brigades have formed, as Tom Hayden and Ricardo Alarcón have observed, the often unacknowledged core of support for normalization of US-Cuba relations, including the end of the travel ban and the blockade. Teishan Latner's fascinating *Cuban Revolution in America*, with its focus on histories of travel, hijacking, and exile across Cold War barriers, is an important intellectual weapon against both the ban and the blockade.

Meanwhile, contemporary Cuba continues to face serious social, economic, and political challenges in a global conjuncture deeply inhospitable to the revolutionary aspirations of the 1960s and 1970s. In such a difficult context, important new scholarship that engages the archive of the Cuban revolutionary experiment – with all its problems, possibilities, and profoundly internationalist character – can provide us with some of the critical intellectual tools for re-imagining anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, and anti-racist feminist global futures.

CYNTHIA WRIGHT  
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**Marc Steinberg, *England's Great Transformation: Law, Labour, and the Industrial Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2016)**

IN *ENGLAND'S GREAT TRANSFORMATION*, Marc Steinberg challenges the traditional narrative of the emergence of free labour markets in England during the 19th century. He observes that a number of industries relied heavily upon the law and local institutions of justice to control labour markets and discipline their workforce. Of particular interest are master and servant laws, a body of statutes that permitted justices of the peace to summarily enforce contracts of employment. These laws were characterized by a double standard of sanctions, which treated the failure of workers to fulfill their contracts as a criminal matter, but offered only mild civil remedies for the broken promises of employers. Steinberg adds to recent research showing that during the 19th century masters made use of these laws much more frequently than workers. Master and servant statutes, enforced by justices who were increasingly likely to be employers of labour themselves, allowed employers to compel the specific performance of labour contracts against the threat of imprisonment. Steinberg uses three case studies to explore the social, political, and economic circumstances, as well as factors in the production process, that encouraged some regional industries to turn these laws to shape labour markets and maintain control of the workplace. He also examines the effects this reliance had upon the development of these industries, the organization of production, and the law itself. By examining the use of the law by employers in the pottery industry in Hanley, Hull's fisheries, and Redditch agriculture and needle manufacture, Steinberg theorizes about the operation of labour markets and the relationship of the state to workplace

control and class struggle. It is a welcome contribution that will be of great interest to honours and graduate level students in history, sociology, labour studies, and social and political thought.

In Hanley there was a heavy concentration of the pottery industry, which was reliant upon skilled workers and craft-based production. The trade had witnessed very little mechanization prior to the 1870s. After a bitter labour dispute in 1836–37, the victorious masters imposed a highly one-sided annual contract which gave them great authority to set the conditions of work. To enforce compliance with this annual bond, employers turned to master and servant law enforced by the local bench of magistrates, nearly half of whom were pottery manufacturers themselves. Prosecutions by employers became more frequent in boom periods of high industrial demand, and the masters were nearly always successful before the courts. These laws allowed employers to resolve problems of absenteeism, leaving work before the term of service had expired, conflicts over the quality of work, or bad behaviour in their favour quickly and cheaply. Imprisonment was relatively rare, as the more desirable outcomes for the capitalists were orders to return to work combined with fines, wage abatements, or sureties. Steinberg suggests that the effectiveness of this regime might have contributed to the slow development of mechanization and alternative methods of labour control in the industry.

The law was also utilized to control a much different labour force in the Hull fishing trade. Smack (a fishing trawler) owners staffed their boats with parish apprentices and child labour, who worked under terrible and dangerous conditions for minimal remuneration. As these workers gained experience, many sought to flee their situation for better paying work at sea. Smack owners turned to the

Borough Courts to hold onto these young workers. Although fishing employed only 3 per cent of the male workforce in Hull, it accounted for the lion's share of the master and servant prosecutions before the local court. Apprentices felt the coercion of the law, facing high rates of imprisonment and compulsion to complete their service on unfavourable terms.

Steinberg's third case study is Redditch, Worcestershire, a more rural area that was home to agriculture and needle making. Master and servant cases represented a much higher proportion of the total business of the Redditch Petty Session than the national average, yet there was a marked contrast in how the law was used by farmers and employers in the needle trade. The highly sub-divided and localized needle trade suffered from chronic labour shortages and poor industrial relations. Here employers deployed master and servant law enforced by magistrates (many of whom were needle manufacturers) to make workers to complete the terms of their contracts. As in Hanley, imprisonment was a rare sanction for needle workers in master and servant cases because their employers wanted them to complete their work more than for them to be punished. Magistrates used the threat of imprisonment to force needle makers to return to work on their masters' terms. Smaller masters were more likely to turn to the law than larger manufacturers, making this the one case study that conforms to Daphne Simon's much challenged assertion that master and servant law was the weapon of the small employer. The use of master and servant law by farmers in the area sheds light on the changing nature of agricultural service. Annual hiring of servants in husbandry was still common here, but farmers were abandoning many of the paternalistic obligations toward those in their charge. Farmers prosecuted servants in husbandry most frequently for

disobedience or affronts to their authority, and often sought to end contracts and abate the wages of difficult employees. This chapter has a number of descriptions of specific master and servant cases, and thus provides more insight into how individual employees experienced master and servant law and how it affected their working lives than the other case studies. It also has the most extended consideration of gender and the experiences of female workers of any of the case studies. All three of Steinberg's case studies demonstrate the ways in which law, local politics and hierarchies, and the organization and control of work are deeply intertwined with one another.

The title of Steinberg's book is a nod to Karly Polanyi's *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (1944). He reworks Polanyi's narrative of the rapid emergence of unrestricted labour and *laissez-faire* capitalism in the 19th century which led to a countermovement in response demanding greater regulation and protection from the state. In fact, the law remained deeply embedded in the workplace and labour markets in ways that made workers deeply suspicious of state involvement and desirous of a de-juridification of employment relations. I am skeptical of this last point, as in my own work I have found a number of contexts in which workers and unions sought greater state involvement in the workplace and their lives, including efforts to end truck wages, workplace fines, and unfair deductions. This quibble aside, *England's Great Transformation* is a fascinating and thought-provoking work of historical sociology.

CHRISTOPHER FRANK  
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**David Smith, *For Class and Country: The Patriotic Left and the First World War*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 2017)**

WITH THE ELECTION of Ramsay MacDonald's first Labour government in the United Kingdom in 1924, the British political system experienced a fundamental realignment, the Labour Party replacing the Liberals as the alternative to the Conservatives. Since then Britain has experienced a two-party system of alternating Labour and Conservative governments.

Because of this realignment and the fundamental changes it made to British political life, scholars began almost immediately to examine the causes that led to this transformation. David Smith's *For Class and Country: The Patriotic Left and the First World War* is the latest contribution to this already long historical discussion. Smith, in fact, details and describes much of this literature in his introduction, providing a useful synopsis of this scholarship for historians not already familiar with it.

Where Smith differs from much of this scholarship and where his greatest contribution lies, is in his examination of how Labour's experience of World War I contributed intimately to this transformation of British politics. Though he does not necessarily discount the other factors previously examined by scholars of the British left, Smith argues, fundamentally, that the embrace of a patriotic position and Labour's involvement in supporting the British war effort created a common purpose and established and strengthened relationships with the British working class. He points out, as others have, that until the war the majority of British workers had been remarkably resistant to the political program of the Labour Party. As Smith notes, historians of the British working class too often operate under

the "presumption that holding 'left-wing' views is inimical to patriotism," yet most of the members of the working class who participated in the war effort "did not agonize over whether their loyalties lay with their country or their politics." (2) By embracing this labour patriotism, the Labour Party was able to connect with the working class in ways it had been unable to before.

Smith follows this argument through six thematic and somewhat chronologically oriented chapters. Chapter 1, "'If this is to be a jingo, then I am a jingo' – Labour Patriotism before 1914" explores Smith's contention that too much of the scholarship around the left and the early 20th century is overly focused on the anti-war stance of Labour's intellectual and elected leadership. In fact, Smith argues, Labour in the early 20th century was also home to a solid bloc of nationalist members who easily reconciled "left-wing and nationalist sentiment." (23)

In Chapter 2, "'I'd sooner blackleg my union than blackleg my country' – Labour Patriotism 1914–18," Smith, though discussing the pacifism that informed some of Labour's early opinion on the rightness of World War I at its outbreak, argues that the majority of Labour members and the unions and other affiliated groups which made up the Party's support, were quick to rally to the colours and found justifications for their involvement and support of the British war effort in their political and social principles. Though as Smith notes, "*enthusiasm* for the war amongst the labour movement was rare, there was a general consensus that, once begun, it had to be seen through." (24) There was also widespread hope that, once the war was over and the emergency met, the world in which this World War was possible would be transformed.

While focusing on the role of labour patriotism in his first two chapters, in Chapter 3, "'Middle-class peace men?'

– Labour and the Anti-War Agitation,” Smith addresses the issue of anti-war sentiment within Labour directly. While Smith is careful to recognize that “agitation against conscription, shop floor strikes and the anti-war movement ... were an important part of left-wing wartime experience,” (80) he does question the way in which the historiography of the British left and World War I privileges this viewpoint.

After setting out his general arguments and some of the historiographical debates, it’s in the second half of this book that Smith makes his most important contribution. In these three chapters Smith discusses how the experience of the war contributed to Labour’s growth in the 1920s.

In the fourth chapter, “‘Our Platform is Broad Enough and Movement Big Enough’ – The War and Recruits to Labour,” Smith discusses the irony that by having room for both anti-war pacifists and labour patriots within the structure of the Labour Party and the left more broadly, Labour was able to appeal to a wide variety of new members, holding different viewpoints, in the immediate post-war period. Not only could Labour attract former Conservative voters within the working class, among farmers and in the commercial classes based on a shared sense of values and patriotism hearkening from the collective project of winning World War I, Labour could also attract anti-war activists who found a home in Labour’s pacifist wing. In fact, Smith argues that “having proved its patriotism over the war – the party could show a more radical face over Ireland, India, and disarmament.” (81)

Chapter 5, “‘The experiments are not found wanting’ – Labour and the Wartime State” continues this line of thought. By actively participating in the numerous boards, committees, and corporations that were created in order to

run the war effort, Labour representatives were not only able to show that Labour could be an effective government, Labour members were also able to demonstrate the power of the state in effecting social change. Smith, like others before him, reiterates that many of the ideas that were later to underpin the post-World War II welfare state were first attempted during World War I. Smith also notes that by participating in government, both national and local, Labour members were brought into increasingly close contact with Britons looking for advocates and collaborators in their dealings with the wartime state.

Finally, in the last chapter, “‘The greatest democratic force British politics have known’ – Labour Cohesion and the War,” Smith examines the impressive cohesiveness of the Labour Party and organized labour despite allowing for differing points of view on the war itself. Not only did this cohesiveness allow Labour to come through the war without significant loss or division, it also allowed Labour to use the war and its end as a springboard for an evolution and expansion that directly contributed to its plurality in the 1924 general election and the election of Ramsay MacDonald as Britain’s first Labour prime minister.

Smith’s argument is stronger in that he avoids one of the dominant tropes that often appeal to left historians. Rather than focusing on the morality of Labour’s wartime positions or exploring this history through an ideological lens, Smith examines labour patriotism and the result of its embrace during the World War I from a more functionalist perspective. Instead of lamenting the waning strength of antiwar sentiment within Labour, for example, Smith explores the way in which, by dispensing with ideological purity and uniformity, Labour was able to use its wartime experience to create a home for those who supported the war as

well as those who opposed it. This pragmatism provided the basis for a postwar compromise that resulted in effective Labour governance for a significant part of the last century.

This history is also important in how it seeks an understanding of how historical events and contingencies allow social democratic political parties to undermine establishment politics. For Canadians on the left, 2019 will be for us what 2017 was for Canadian nationalists and conservatives. Not only is 2019 the centenary of the Winnipeg General Strike, the summer of 2019 will also mark the 75th anniversary of the election of Canada's first Co-operative Commonwealth Federation provincial government in Saskatchewan in 1944 and the 50th anniversary of the election of Canada's first New Democratic Party provincial government in Manitoba in 1969. One of the things we should examine is how these governments and successive NDP provincial governments were able to break through seemingly monolithic politics and transform themselves into important players in Canadian politics. Smith provides a potential template for this, encouraging us to focus not only on failed struggles, but also on our successes and the historical factors that underpinned them.

JONATHAN WEIER  
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**Lewis H. Mates, *The Great Labour Unrest: Rank-and-File Movements and Political Change in the Durham Coalfield* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2016)**

AT THE BEGINNING of World War I, the Durham Miners' Association (DMA) had more than 100,000 members and was a major affiliate of the powerful Miners' Federation of Great Britain (MFGB). Dominated by John Wilson,

founder member and Liberal member of Parliament, it was always seen as a bastion of Liberalism in the County Durham even after the MFGB affiliated to the Labour Party at the beginning of 1909, with Wilson remaining a staunch Liberal until his death in 1915. Yet by 1921 the DMA was committed to the abolition of capitalism, some form of class consciousness having been formed by the eve of war with an awareness that the interests of miners and mine owners were different, thus allowing Labour to win ten of the eleven county parliamentary seats in Durham in the 1922 general election. To Mates, this transformation was caused by the Great Labour Unrest of 1910 to 1914 which saw the industrial demands of trade unionists interlinked with the political fortunes of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) and the Labour Party. In essence, this book is an immensely detailed account of these changes focusing upon activities of the ILP, the syndicalists, and other left-wing groups in the context of industrial relations of the Durham coalfield and how these interlinked to reduce the influence of Liberalism and encouraged the growth of socialist and ILP/Labour Party support.

Mates offers four main arguments. First, he argues that the Liberals were depleted by the attacks of the left, particularly between 1910 and 1914. Secondly, he establishes that industrial and political developments were intertwined, encouraging the move from Liberalism to Labour. Thirdly, and adding to this, he argues that the most active challenge to the Liberals came from the campaign for an individual minimum wage. The 1912 National Minimum Wage Strike and the clear DMA support for it was a key watershed moment. Two thirds of the Durham miners voted in favour of an individual minimum wage in what was seen as a denial and a rejection of the Liberal tenet that wages should be linked to profits.

Mates compares this decision with the Hauliers' Strike of 1893, in which the DMA refused to be involved. In other words, by 1912 there was clear evidence of a move from Liberal economic and social ideas to a more class-based situation in the Durham coalfield. And fourthly, he argues that ILP were partly influenced by syndicalist ideas but that it acted to undermine the development of syndicalism for much of the period between 1910 and 1914. Indeed, syndicalism was refracted through the prism of local politics and the ILP to produce a class consciousness favouring ILP and Labour politics rather than syndicalism itself.

In an impressive historiography, Mates controversially suggests both that the major questions about the Great Unrest have been ignored in favour of methodological disputes and that mainstream politics has been ignored in favour of what Lenin referred to as left-wing communism. This is followed by a chapter on the economic, industrial, and political context of the mining community of Durham, and then by four detailed narrative chapters on the various movements and campaigns for industrial changes in the Durham coalfield, and by a reflective and perceptive conclusion.

The main challenges to Liberalism, it would appear, came from three individuals and one organization. Jack Lawson, author of the autobiography *A Man's Life* and an ILPer who later became a member of Attlee's first Labour cabinet, George Harvey, the "Wardley Lenin" named after the pit village in which he worked, and Will Lawther, an ILPer who became one of the greatest of the trade union and political figures of the 20th century. They provided the radical and socialist leadership to challenge Wilson and his hold over the DMA through their rank-and-file campaigns. All were influenced by being students at Ruskin College, Oxford, where they came into contact

with socialist and Marxist ideas, and they were committed to revealing the inadequacy of Liberal economics, with its emphasis upon the shared interests of capital and labour. They worked through the, hitherto, barely known Durham Forward Movement, which was committed to reforming the DMA and, apparently, almost exclusively to the campaign for the minimum wage. From Mates' argument, it is difficult to trace the direct lines of their success except that, over the four years of the Great Unrest, there had been a switch of political opinion from the Liberal Party to the ILP/Labour Party in the Durham coalfield and that the 1912 vote on the minimum wage can be seen as a crucial turning point. It is also not always easy to detect the importance of syndicalist views in all this and, indeed, Mates has to admit that the "revolutionaries remained on the periphery, largely isolated from the ILP-led mass rank-and-file movements and working instead on the Herculean task of building their own revolutionary alternatives." (231) Indeed, syndicalism was marginalized by the ILP. Nevertheless, the importance of syndicalism in the North East, alongside South Wales, is established – as is the ILP's ability to adapt and modify it for their own cause. John Wilson's Liberal rigidity did slow the development of the socialist challenge, not least in terms of their representation within the DMA. But equally his intransigence and opposition to the minimum wage gave the ILP activists hope, support and, ultimately, success. Above all, then, Mates demonstrates the complexity of events and the roles of individuals of all political persuasions in the emergence of a new political and industrial order in the Durham coalfield.

Mates' work clearly offers an important case study to give a perspective on the industrial and political turmoil in Edwardian Britain. However, it is a narrow perspective which does not touch upon

those other features in the Edwardian crisis – women’s suffrage, Ireland, and railways and other industrial conflicts. Also missed is the opportunity to compare this research with *The Derbyshire Miners: Study in Industrial and Social History* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1962) written by the late J. E. Williams, which is surely worth more than a brief reference for it offers a comparable situation to the Durham coalfield in the period of the Great Unrest. The discussion on the historiographical debate on the rise of Labour and the decline of Liberalism is also less fixed than portrayed by Mates in the Historiographical Introduction.

Nonetheless, this is an impressive and important addition to our understanding of the impact of the Great Unrest and the Edwardian crisis in Britain on the eve of World War I. Mates reflects that the “rise of Labour debate” is one of the largest historiographical debates in modern British history but “it is remarkable how little we know about the dynamics of political change in many of the most significant geographical/industrial battlegrounds.” (285) He is right and his immensely detailed and nuanced regional study certainly adds considerably to our understanding of how political allegiances can change rapidly and of the influence of talented radical activists.

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**Rowan Bain, Hanne Faurby, Jenny Lister, Anna Mason, and Jan Marsh, *May Morris: Arts and Crafts Designer* (London: Thames and Hudson 2017)**

SOCIAL HISTORIANS of art have recently renewed research into the economic side of artists’ lives and art work to assess the role of individuals within the art world. *May Morris: Arts and Crafts Designer*, a substantial volume re-examining the

work of William Morris’ younger daughter, May Morris (1862–1938), is just one example of the advantages of this research. Until the 1990s, May was overshadowed in the historiography by her father’s achievements, but now she is seen as a leading figure in the Arts and Crafts Movement. In her case, an examination of the business side of Morris and Co. has established her central role and prodigious output as manager of the company’s embroidery department from 1885 to 1905. Jan Marsh’s scholarship into the women in the Arts and Crafts movement in 1986 and Linda Parry’s reappraisal of May in 1996 and 2013 began the process, and now with this volume May takes pride of place in our understanding of women’s leading role in the movement.

*May Morris: Arts and Crafts Designer*, with contributions by five curators of art from the William Morris Gallery in London and the Victoria and Albert Museum, was published to coincide with an exhibition of artwork at the Gallery between 7 October 2017 and 28 January 2018 entitled *May Morris: Art and Life*. It is a weighty volume consisting of six essays, 226 pages, and 210 illustrations accompanied by extensive explanation of the visual material. One is immediately struck by the sheer beauty and quality of the embroidery designed and executed by May Morris and her department as one looks through the pages of this book. Jan Marsh’s opening biography entitled “A Well-Crafted Life” immediately situates May at the centre of the socialist movement of the day among individuals such as Annie Besant, Eleanor Marx, George Bernard Shaw, and Henry Halliday Sparling, and at social and political events organized by the Socialist League (later the Hammersmith Socialist Society) and the New Drama movement of the day. More than just an exercise in art history, this volume skilfully examines May’s work for the Morris firm in



the context of the Arts and Crafts revival and the socialist movement of the day, as well as establishing May's role as a New Woman in the period between 1890 and 1910.

May Morris was an accomplished socialist, designer, embroiderer, exhibitor, author, editor, and teacher who was responsible for all embroidery department orders, customers, and employees at Morris and Co. She became head of the department in 1885 at the age of just 23, remaining in the position until 1905, and continued to design and embroider until her death in 1938. The essays written by Rowan Bain and Jenny Lister examine the hand-written ledgers by May Morris for Morris and Co.'s embroidery department and inform us that she took on 453 orders for a total of 670 items between 1892 and 1896, most of which were embroidered designs on fabric. These were invoiced for a total of £1,186 over these four years (the equivalent of £70,000 today) and contributed to the Morris firm's profits. A decorated portière, which could sell for as much as £95 to the American market, was accompanied by a small portable embroidery kit of the same design which sold for as little as £3. In this way May expanded the market for Morris and Co. designs and found a solution to the problem that generally existed between the arts and crafts ideal of individually hand-crafted items and the resulting higher price of that creative product.

May Morris' areas of work then form the five other chapters of the volume including her contributions to drawing and painting, wallpaper and embroidery, book covers and designs, dress and costume, and jewellery and metalwork. In the spirit of the Arts and Crafts revival movement, May Morris researched late 16th and early 17th century English historic stitches known as *opus anglicanum* or "English work" at local museums and advocated their use in place of the

more repetitive cross-stitch, Berlin wool work, and tent stitch which had become Victorian pastimes. While much of her embroidery was executed in the Morris and Co. style known most popularly for its acanthus, pomegranate, and honey-suckle designs, May developed her own style based on her botanical sketches of English meadow plants and cottage garden flowers. As Rowan Bain and Jenny Lister have revealed, May and her co-workers, including Lily Yeats, W.B. Yeats' sister, worked eight-hour days in the embroidery department, accompanied by regular breaks, rather than the twelve-hour days which were the norm in the trade. In this way they were part of the progressive labour movement of the day.

The women in the embroidery department worked with a broad range of historic stitches including stem, satin, herringbone, French knot, pistol stitch, split stitch, fly stitch, speckling, to Bayeau and chain stitch. Their output was prodigious and included embroidery to decorate room and fire screens, portières and wall hangings, cushions, bags, chair covers, mats, and table cloths. It was a veritable workroom. However, it emphasized individual production and artistic creativity because May believed that the modern division of labour which emerged with industrialization was undermining embroidered design. This style then proved profitable as well as distinctive and fit in well with the ethos of Morris and Co. In 1893 May wrote her own guidebook to embroidery entitled, *Decorative Needlework*, in which she advocated the expressive and original use of stitches, accompanied by high technical facility, to take the place of the less individually produced and more repetitive stitches of the day.

By the 1890s, May took centre stage as a teacher, exhibitor, and writer in the Arts and Crafts movement. Jan Marsh and Rowan Bain discuss her role as a

lecturer at the Birmingham School of Art in 1895 before she engaged in more formal teaching there in 1899 as well as at the Leicester and Hammersmith art schools. The authors also discuss her role as an active member of the Women's Guild of Arts, which she founded in 1907 to compensate for the exclusion of women from the Art Workers' Guild. She was joined here by other women associated with the movement including Mary Seton Watts (née Tytler) (1849–1938), an artist, designer, and campaigner for women's suffrage, and Pre-Raphaelite painters Marie Stillman (1844–1927), and Evelyn De Morgan (1855–1919). From 1888 until World War I she became a regular exhibitor at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society and a regular contributor to arts and crafts publications. In her later years, she spent a substantial amount of time securing the legacy of her father's work. Between 1910 and 1915 she edited the *Collective Works of William Morris* in 24 volumes, and in 1936 published her father's political, social, and artistic writings in two volumes entitled, *William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist*.

The authors of *May Morris* examine the conservation work that May engaged in as part of the later Arts and Crafts movement. After World War I, May Morris began working to save Red House, the family home featured in William Morris' volume *News from Nowhere*, in Bexleyheath, Southeast London, which had been designed in 1859 by architect Philip Webb and William Morris (it was finally purchased by the National Trust in 2003). She then welcomed many socialists to visit with her at Kelmscott House, her family's country home in the Cotswolds, and bequeathed the 16th century manor house to Oxford University on her death. The university turned the house over to the Society of Antiquaries in 1962 and the venue now holds exhibitions about the Morris circle and is open

to the public. May also spent her later years expanding her repertoire of design to include jewellery and metal work and lived a frugal but self-sufficient life, without electricity, piped water, or central heating, with her companion Mary Frances Vivian Lobb, a Land Army volunteer at Kelmscott, with whom she resided from 1917 until her death in 1938.

The authors of *May Morris: Arts and Crafts Designer* have stepped forward in the scholarship of this remarkable and self-effacing artist to elevate her status to a level she enjoyed in her own life-time before revisions in history downgraded embroidery from a serious commercially viable art form to a domestic craft. The sheer volume and quality of her work is evident in every page of this book. The five author/curators have collaborated well and created a breadth that might not have played out so well in a single-authored book. Not surprisingly, Jan Marsh provides an especially solid biography and survey of the literature on May. Subsequent chapters provide valuable examination of the labours of May Morris and her companions in the embroidery department of Morris and Co. This research, including the work aspects and economic considerations of the subject, has opened up new avenues for study of the labour history of the women artists, designers, and embroiderers in the Arts and Crafts movement.

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**John Tutino, *The Mexican Heartland: How Communities Shaped Capitalism, a Nation and World History, 1500–2000* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2018)**

JOHN TUTINO'S most recent book, *The Mexican Heartland*, is a work of love and a fascinating study of the valley of Mexico

and its immediate surroundings, covering over 500 years of history. By weaving, local, national, and global strands in a complex narrative including political, cultural and economic perspectives, this book is simultaneously illuminating and profoundly stimulating.

*The Mexican Heartland* is no short-term analysis. It draws extensively on Tutino's lifelong studies of Mexican social history and is in constant dialogue with the rest of his work. The book also draws on a breathtakingly extensive bibliography, both in English and Spanish. Moreover, especially for colonial times, Tutino also builds on substantial archival work.

The book's local → national → global narrative is a powerful instrument and is probably its most enticing dimension. In many ways, *The Mexican Heartland* seems inspired both by Ferdinand Braudel's *La Méditerranée et le Monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1949), and Immanuel Wallerstein's *The Modern World System* (New York: Academic Press, 1974), simultaneously demonstrating the Mexican heartland's global historical clout and its political and economic subordination as a (critical) periphery to world capitalism.

Tutino's argument is especially convincing for the colonial period and the Mexican war of independence. Thinking counterfactually, had there been no silver in Mexico, how would the world have been different? The history of silver capitalism in the Mexican heartland shows us that it would have been a very different place; neither Spain and England or China and India would have been the same.

Unfortunately, Tutino's coverage of the 20th century is less engaging and does not depart substantially from other histories of Mexico. To take an example, a deeper, more detailed study of Zapata and his heritage – actual and symbolic

– would be extremely illuminating, especially when set in the book's local → national → global narrative, comparing Zapata's strongholds in Morelos to his limited influence in the Mezquital and analyzing the effects of these developments far beyond.

Rephrasing the question above, had there been no Zapata, how would the world have been different? Completing the proposed analysis would certainly yield a much longer book. Once again, Braudel's long books come to mind. Nevertheless, I think this effort is necessary to address its ambitious goals, even more so as the existing literature does not engage with this issue.

By linking local history to national and global dynamics in a two-way analysis, Tutino engages in theory-building. The main argument is that as long as political, economic, and cultural autonomies hold, local communities can withstand and even prosper while capitalism develops through the establishment of symbiotic domination processes, marked by powerful equilibria.

If capitalist forces are weak, communities take the upper hand and may even give rise to "plenty without profit," (183) such as the Mexican heartland experienced during much of the 19th century. If there is a disequilibrium, conflict festers and can explode in violent confrontations (i.e. the Mexican War of Independence and the Mexican Revolution). If autonomies disappear, symbiotic domination is impossible and gives way to all-out capitalist exploitation, penetrating all dimensions of social life, as seems to be the case today.

Tutino notes the critical place of gender relations in this process, but unfortunately this dimension of the analysis is rather weak and dependent on secondary sources. Nevertheless, Tutino's discussion of patriarchy, its social and political effects, its challenges and

transformations – most notably the paradoxical ways patriarchy sustains community autonomies – is tantalizing and invites further investigation.

Another seductive theme in the book is the evolution of labour relations in the Mexican heartland, which features prominently in the analysis. Tutino underscores the thin, sometimes invisible lines between free and coerced work in colonial times and later on between formal and informal labour, the essence of which persist until this day. Labour, however, is not the central argument of the book. As the essential counterpart of capital in building capitalist economies and societies, I believe it deserves a much greater place in the analysis.

Yet another seductive line of argument that would benefit from deeper research is the role of judicial adjudication in maintaining and legitimizing capitalist domination. As Tutino argues, this perspective allows us to reflect upon the ways state mediation is constructed despite scarce resources – both labour and capital – and allows for the emergence of symbiotic forms of domination. As the Mexican War of Independence and the Mexican Revolution show, both symbiotic exploitation and open revolt are framed in conceptions of justice and depend on their realization on the ground. The collapse of the colonial judiciary system after independence and its spotty recovery thereafter appears as one of the great tragedies of 19th century Mexico. Tutino briefly presents the archival sources and refers to a substantial secondary literature, but refrains from delving in them in any great depth.

A final critique of Tutino's book has to do with the evolution of cultural autonomies. The creation of a Spanish-speaking Mestizo nation-state – an aspiration during the 19th century, a major realization of the revolutionary regime in the 20th – was as important an onslaught

on community autonomies as the abolition of economic or political autonomies. Cultural autonomies – couched in terms of religious heterodoxies and multiculturalism, but also in terms of language and tradition – have become one of the main arenas in the fight against neoliberal economies and societies. *Subcomandante Marcos* and the neoZapatistas in Chiapas seem to have understood this – it is worth exploring the situation of the Indigenous communities still living in the Mexican heartland.

In conclusion, Tutino's *The Mexican Heartland* is a great book, both timely and provocative. While the literature on Mexico is enormous and ever-growing, Tutino's ambitious time frame (five centuries!) and even more far-reaching perspective (from local to national to global) covering cultural, economic and political dimensions make it stand out in the crowd.

If the book has significant shortfalls, it is nonetheless extremely stimulating and, following Tutino's lifelong practice, opens the way to many a new research project, as much for himself as for emerging scholars. In the end, *The Mexican Heartland's* most important contribution might be precisely the fact that it offers many more questions than answers.

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**Ralph Callebert, *On Durban's Docks: Zulu Workers, Rural Households, Global Labor* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press 2017)**

AT A TIME WHEN scholars have been increasingly drawn to the writing of oceanic histories and the mapping of global connections between port cities, Ralph Callebert's fascinating historical study of Durban's African dock workers looks not to cosmopolitan Indian Ocean networks

but rather to the rural hinterlands of these predominantly Zulu migrant workers. But what at first glance seems to be an unfashionable return to the relatively neglected field of South African labour history proves to be a highly illuminating study which explores not only the world of dock work in Durban but also the rural households and livelihood strategies that sustained these workers.

Callebert's narrative is rooted in the secondary literature and based on a range of official archival and newspaper sources, but the documentary backbone of this study, and the source of its most original insights, lies in 77 interviews with former dock workers who started work in Durban between 1939 and 1959, and with women in dockworkers' households. These interviews shore up the central arguments and provide the basis for a critique of the hitherto standard history of Durban's dock workers by David Hemson (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 1979).

Where Hemson charts the rise of a relatively uncomplicated working-class consciousness among Durban's dock workers (remarkably, they went out on strike as early as 1874), Callebert argues that the label of radical proletarians ill-fits the *onyathi* (buffaloes), as dockworkers were popularly known. On the contrary, Callebert detects a far more complex consciousness amongst dock workers in which militant action in defence of their interests as wage earners (most noticeably in strikes and stayaways, especially during the 1940s and 1950s) sat happily with their defence of the interests of African petty traders. How does one account for this apparent contradiction? The short answer is that most dock workers were not strictly wage labourers. The longer explanation, which is the subject of *On Durban's Docks*, lies in the exploration of workers' livelihoods and households. Callebert's approach recognizes

the close links between urban and rural economies and, following Amartya Sen, internal bargaining and cooperative conflict within households.

Supported by evidence from oral testimonies, Callebert argues in Chapter 2 that, while all dock workers invested in agricultural production in rural homesteads in Natal, Zululand, and the Eastern Cape, they did so in two broadly different ways. Some sought to maximize their wages by working extra shifts, while others (perhaps more than half) engaged in petty trade to hasten their return to rural households. This latter group engaged in small-scale commercial enterprise selling *dagga*, cigarettes and cheap consumables in the city (often with a female friend as partner) along with goods pilfered from ships or retrieved from wharf-side spillage. Critically, these goods were also sold by workers' wives in reserves. Dock workers' households were thus reproduced in three discrete sites: at the docks, in the rural areas and in the growing African areas (and later, townships) on the outskirts of Durban. These livelihood strategies were facilitated by the fact that most African dock workers were, at least before the demise of casual labour in Durban in 1959, *togt* (casual) migrant labourers who worked shifts and frequently returned home.

This discussion provides the basis for the following three chapters which develop the theme of dock workers and rural households. Chapter 3 maps urban and rural linkages and offers a nuanced conceptualization of the household while Chapter 4 explores gender and generational relations within these households. Perhaps the most original part of the book is to be found in Chapter 5 which explores how pilferage and the bribery of supervisors by dock workers became a way of combining wage labour with small scale entrepreneurialism – a central theme of the book. While Callebert

never denies that Durban's dock workers had the capacity for militant action, as an industrial working class he argues that their combination of formal wage labour and informal enterprise had important implications for their political consciousness. This is the subject of Chapter 6 which returns to the history of dock workers' political involvement and industrial action initially examined in Chapter 1, and which is especially valuable in illuminating the career of Zulu Phungula – Durban's most famous, but enigmatic, dock worker leader.

Although nowhere acknowledged by Callebert, his monograph can be read as a creative response to two issues raised by Frederick Cooper in his classic study of Mombasa dockers, *On the African Waterfront* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987). The first was Cooper's suggestion that scholars "explore the place of dockwork in the lives of people who at times did other things, and in the wider context of family, village and regional life." (xiii) The second was Cooper's reflection on the potential value of interviews even though his work is not an oral history. (Cooper used seven interviews, only one of which was with a dock worker.) Callebert has evidently taken up this dual challenge and as "an Africanist writing back to dominant approaches to labour history," (16) he makes a persuasive case for broadening our concept of labour to include informal, reproductive, and redistributive forms of work, amongst others.

*On Durban's Docks* is an impressive contribution to African labour history even if the best South African scholarship shares more of Callebert's concerns (the complexity of livelihood strategies, class and racial identities, the imbrication of rural and urban livelihoods, scepticism about modernist teleologies) than he is prepared to concede in his critique of "southern African exceptionalism." In

some respects, however, Callebert pays a price for the way in which his narrative ranges over time and space. For example, while his interviews provide illuminating evidence of livelihoods which is largely lacking in the official record, very few of these oral histories reach back before 1950. For his discussion of the period 1910 to 1940 one might have expected the author to mine the archive more thoroughly but he tends to rely on the sometimes patchy secondary historical literature on Durban. So, while Callebert is good at identifying and analyzing critical moments and turning points he is a little less successful in exploring continuity and change in Durban between the 1910s and 1950s. As an historical narrative, then, the book reads unevenly at times.

Callebert recognizes that to do urban African labour history is also to do rural history. Some readers might, however, complain that when workers travel from wharf to countryside in Callebert's account they return to areas which he seldom identifies and where households remain part of an undifferentiated and unhistoricized rural landscape. (Addressing this shortcoming would, admittedly, demand a much bigger book.) Two further themes that are central to this study might also have benefited from closer scrutiny. First, the precise nature of dock worker entrepreneurialism which Callebert characterizes through a variety of terms ("petty capitalist," "informal sector," and "microenterprise") might have been better understood if analysed in relation to the rise of an African "entrepreneurial petty bourgeoisie" (158) in Durban in the 1940s and 1950s but whose history is unevenly charted in the secondary literature upon which Callebert relies. Second, one of the more, if not the most, important of the multiple identities which dock workers asserted at various times was their sense of Zulu ethnicity.

Yet the author's discussion of this subject remains puzzlingly abridged – an omission made more curious by the fact that the book has the words “Zulu workers” in its title.

These criticisms take nothing away from the originality and importance of *On Durban's Docks*. This is not a long book but it is an admirably ambitious one and it marks a welcome return to labour history in South Africa but on new and challenging terms. One hopes that it will encourage other scholars to look with fresh eyes not simply at the history of one of Africa's most important port cities but to revisit a debate about labour on the subcontinent and globally which some might have thought had run its course and to which Ralph Callebert's book stands as an imaginative, intelligent, and provocative guide.

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**Peter Cole, David Struthers, and Kenyon Zimmer, eds., *Wobblies of the World: A Global History of the IWW* (London: Pluto Press, 2017)**

A BRITISH FOREIGN Office report prepared during World War I characterized the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) as “the most lawless labour movement which has ever existed.” (69) The meaning of this back-handed acknowledgement is addressed in *Wobblies of the World*, which seeks to correct misperceptions about the radical labour union. This rich collection of essays confronts the near-total lack of attention to the IWW's international activities in the first three decades of the 20th century. Contributors treat overlapping themes, including transnational influences on the IWW, Wobblies' own international activities, and their engagement with larger events. The contributors eschew

the tendency in IWW historiography to focus on the United States and English-language sources. Points made by essayists both confirm and supersede established literature.

Wobbly organizing in the United States and repression during World War I are familiar subjects dealt with from new perspectives. David M. Struthers holds that Wobblies practiced “on-the-ground internationalism” in the US Southwest. (74) Mexican and Indigenous workers were part of this process, as Wobbly organizer Frank Little recognized by (inaccurately) claiming Indigenous heritage. Wobblies participated in the “Baja raids” in support of the Mexican revolution. Beto Alonso shows Spanish anarchists were committed to a “single global union” of maritime workers, initially from within the conservative International Seamen's Union, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. (98) This included participation in strikes on the Philadelphia waterfront in 1913. The First Red Scare destroyed cultural networks. In adapting the French Confédération Général du Travail's notion of sabotage, Dominique Pinsolle contends, American Wobblies opened themselves to wartime repression which conflated the concept with treason, a perception that also came to be held on the US left. Both US authorities and the Soviet Cheka also employed anti-sabotage rhetoric.

Moving to Canada, Saku Pinta argues Finnish IWW organizers in northern Ontario split with conservatives in the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) and the Finnish Socialist Organization of Canada. IWW influence was evidenced by the 1916 Work People's College Support Ring and a 1918 log drivers' strike. In World War I, the government banned the IWW and declared Finnish an “enemy language.” (150) Mark Leier studies “practical transnationalism” in British Columbia with its multi-ethnic work

force. (157) At least one lumber worker local had a large Indigenous membership.

Essays deal with individual Wobblies. Peter Clayworth focuses on Patrick Hodgens Hickey, an itinerant New Zealander. Having joined the WFM in Utah and later helping to organize the New Zealand Federation of Miners, Hickey advocated revolutionary industrial unionism *and* political involvement. He gradually came to see the IWW as the enemy of a unified working class. Heather Mayer writes about Edith Frenette, a "rebel girl" in free-speech fights in the Canadian-US borderlands. (228) Frenette faded from view after the 1916 Everett Massacre. Paula de Angelis' subject is syndicalist Tom Barker. After working in English-speaking lands and being president of a Marine Transport Workers Industrial Union (MTW) local in Buenos Aires, he went to Europe and the Soviet Union after World War I. He backed a scheme to establish a commune jointly run by the IWW and the Soviets. Johan Pries studies P.J. Welinder, who favoured "short bursts" of direct action over building state institutions in interwar Sweden. (266) Bucky Halker surveys the dissemination of Joe Hill's songs from Hill's lifetime to folk music circles today.

A remarkable group of essays examine episodes during the world revolutionary wave of a century ago. In her study of Jim Larkin and James Connolly, Marjorie Murphy argues these revolutionary socialist leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising tailored what they had learned from the American IWW to Irish conditions. Direct action was met with harsh violence by security forces and "children's campaign tactics" modeled on the 1912 Lawrence strike were condemned by the Roman Catholic Church. (244) Preparations for armed struggle against Britain entailed collaboration with conservative Republicans and German

authorities. Focusing on MTW members in the Spanish Civil War, Mathew White observes although Wobblies supported the syndicalist *Confédération Nacional del Trabajo*, they fought in Communist-controlled International Brigades; some joined the Communist Party. MTW members staged strikes on US waterfronts against ships bearing supplies to the Spanish fascists. The war was the MTW's "death blow." (224)

Essayists address debates within left-wing circles. In his analysis of the American radical press, Kenyon Zimmer argues anarchist immigrants influenced the American IWW's stress on social struggle in global terms. Wayne Thorpe covers the evolution of IWW international policy. By the 1930s, independence from the Socialist, Communist, and Syndicalist internationals became official. In her treatment of Australian Wobblies, Verity Burgmann argues Labour Party conservatism compelled IWW locals to reject De Leonist support for partisan politics in favour of the Chicago IWW. Itinerant Wobbly organizers were respected in the Australian labour movement. Whereas US Wobblies experienced "privatized retribution," Australian suppression was strictly "state-sponsored." (182)

The IWW was tied to events in resource-rich regions. Kevan Antonio Aguilar argues Wobblies, Communists, and anarchists opposed state capitalism, neo-colonialism, and suppression of revolutionary socialists in Tampico during and after the Mexican Revolution. (128) Aguilar acknowledges the importance of revolutionary women in Tampico. Applying world-system theory to IWW work in South Africa, Lucien van der Walt concentrates on white workers between 1908 and 1913. He analyzes tramway strikes in Johannesburg. Syndicalists opposed the South African Labour Party's promotion of white supremacy.



Wobblies saw the connections between imperialism and white supremacy. Tariq Khan writes about the California-based nationalist Ghadr movement. Its Indian revolutionary socialist leaders collaborated with the IWW, the Partido Liberal Mexicano, and Sun Yat-sen. Mark Derby focuses on the relationship between Wobblies and New Zealand's Maoris. The country's small Wobbly group continued organizing work with Maoris begun by the New Zealand Shearers Union. A self-taught student of Maori ethnography and Marxist theory wrote Maori-language articles in the Wobbly newspaper. New Zealand Wobblies were suppressed during the war. The IWW never incorporated Maori concerns into its program.

Curiously, van der Walt does not go into detail about Indigenous South African revolutionary socialists mentioned in his magisterial *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism*. (Oakland: AK Press, 2009). Pries does not clarify which Swedish socialist federation Welinder belonged to after 1928. De Angelis does not give information about Barker's birthplace.

These are minor complaints, though, for a collection that complements recent studies (Lucien van der Walt, *Workers of the World: Essays toward a Global Labor History* [Leiden: Brill, 2008]; Leon Fink, ed., *Workers Across the Americas: The Transnational Turn in Labor History* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2011]; Elizabeth McKillen, *Making the World Safe for Workers: Labor, the Left, and Wilsonian Internationalism* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013]).

*Wobblies of the World* is testimony to the complexity of left-wing movements in the early 20th century, an era of global revolutionary activity strangely under-rated in academic circles and studiously ignored by mass media. After reading

this multi-faceted book, it will nevertheless be difficult for labour historians to discount the historical importance of the IWW.

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**Nancy L. Green and Roger Waldinger, eds., *A Century of Transnationalism: Immigrants and their Homeland Connections* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 2016)**

IN *A CENTURY of Transnationalism*, historian Nancy Green and sociologist Roger Waldinger marshal a collection of essays that they hope will put to rest any pretense that transnational phenomena in migration are "new." On the contrary, they argue in their introduction, social scientists who discovered the "novel" phenomenon in the 1990s overlooked countless histories of people and politics that ricocheted across borders in multiple directions since at least the late 19th century. Though historians did not begin labeling such phenomena "transnational" until after anthropologists popularized the term, some historical works written before the 1990s and even more written since then have identified circulations that were largely comparable to more recent transnationalism. Indeed, Green and Waldinger posit, "the technology of long-distance communication and travel has been in constant change throughout the migrations of the past two hundred years." (6) The invention of the Internet thus marked just one of many such changes, not a definitive break from the past.

The collection features historians, sociologists, and a geographer who have applied transnational concepts to their historical research. Notably, the use of translators brings together a uniquely

international and multilingual group of scholars based in Europe and North America, giving Anglophone readers access to academic conversations usually conducted in not just English but also French and Portuguese. In general, the essays document changes in transnational practices over long periods of time in a given migrant circuit, rather than focusing on just a few decades of history. They examine Italian, Portuguese, Lebanese and Syrian-Arab, Algerian, Russian-Jewish, Mexican, Indian, Japanese, and Chinese migrants' political and social relationships with their homelands through various time periods since the late 19th century.

The book is divided into two sections, beginning with pieces that emphasize transnational practices driven by states (top-down) followed by those that emphasize processes driven by migrants (bottom-up). In practice, most chapters explore the interplay between states and migrants, sometimes with exquisite sensitivity. For example, France-based historian, Marie-Claude Blanc-Chaléard's chapter analyzes oral history interviews with migrants who have constructed lives between the Souf region of Algeria and Paris' Nanterre *banlieue*. Blanc-Chaléard shows how French and Algerian legal regimes and state projects have increasingly circumscribed migrants' lives over time. Most poignantly, she writes of the *chibanis*, Algerians who worked for years in France but have since retired to the Souf Valley. Antipathy from Algerian officials makes it difficult for them to draw their French pensions in Algeria, thus many work to keep their French resident cards valid by spending at least half the year in France. Yet Blanc-Chaléard notes that these state strictures often provide *chibanis* needed "breathing space," justifying a transnational lifestyle that many actually prefer. Said one such man, "You never know what might happen. You have

to keep the connection, the papers. And then, I've spent nearly all my life over there." (250) The story is just one of many in the book highlighting migrants' creative strategies to live the best lives possible in the face of the countless restrictions and discourses that states of origin and destination have thrown at them.

As the case of the French-Algerians also shows, several of the authors emphasize the limits and restrictions on transnational migrants in a world of nation-states – a reality, they and the editors correctly argue, that the first wave of transnational anthropology ignored. As Green and Waldinger write in their introduction, "Some migrants may behave just as described in *Nations Unbound*," the seminal 1994 book that established the subfield of transnational migration anthropology, "but not all do." (3) Indeed, the editors helpfully historicize that initial vision of transnationalism, noting that it emerged in a decade of relative global stability after the end of the Cold War. This borderless ideal seems particularly naïve from the perspective of 2018, but scholars have been critiquing it for several years. *A Century of Transnationalism* should really be the closing salvo in this debate, for its case studies incorporate copious evidence that borders have, and still do, really matter.

For example, French-Brazilian historian Mónica Raisa Schpun writes of a more than a century of Japanese-Brazilian history in which "the often brutal demands of the two nationalisms in play" severely curtailed but never eliminated migrants' abilities to shape their own lives and identities. (102) These demands were perhaps most severe during the mid-20th century. First, Getúlio Vargas' Estado Novo pursued its hyper-nationalist agenda in part by prohibiting foreign funding of schools and decreeing that only native Brazilians could serve as teachers in agricultural settlements. Japanese schools in such

settlements, which had relied on support from the Japanese government, could not survive these measures, leaving Japanese immigrants to pursue their Japanese educations secretly in private homes. The start of World War II only intensified the anti-Japanese sentiment that migrants in Brazil confronted. Indeed, there was nothing “unbound” about the Japanese and Brazilian nations between which these migrants lived.

On the other hand, scholars of state formation will note with interest the ways that several chapters historicize the “de-territorialized” conception of the nation most famously explored in recent times by scholars of Mexican consulates and state-driven efforts to promote remittances and transnational political participation. (20) France-based historian Caroline Douki documents the Italian government’s extensive attempts to encourage return migration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These efforts included the promotion of Italian education and identity abroad, encouragement of remittances via specific banking mechanisms, and a system of free repatriation transportation instituted via mandates placed on ships landing in Italian ports. US-based sociologist David FitzGerald offers a 150-year sweep of transborder politics between Mexico and the United States, arguing that “emigrants and exiles have been involved in every major violent conflict and political transformation in Mexico since the 1860s.” (107) His narrative unfortunately misses several key examples of this politics due to its reliance on two-decades-old historical research. Nonetheless, the chapter joins with several others to offer an intriguing window into the ways nation-states and emigration have grown up together through the 19th and 20th centuries.

Interestingly, these *longue durée* histories, when taken together, speak more to sociological questions

than world-historical ones. Both the Introduction and the individual contributions carefully categorize different forms of transnationalism: transnationalism “from above” or “below”; consulates’ roles as alternately supportive and oppressive; transnational identities as scaled ethnically, locally, nationally, or internationally; possibilities for transnational community circumscribed by international relations or the agendas of sending or receiving states. Authors illuminate a dizzying array of possibilities for how transnationalism has worked, or not worked, in different times and places. In her formative essay on comparative history in the edited volume *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2004), Green wrote that “juxtapositional” comparisons, such as conference panels and edited collections, can often leave readers unsatisfied since “specialists tend towards monologue rather than dialogue.” (48) That particular caveat does not apply to *A Century of Transnationalism*, as the chapter authors do engage with each other, often directly, likely continuing conversations they had begun at two in-person conferences.

Yet as an historian with global interests, I still did find myself wanting more – perhaps a pitfall, as Green herself had noted, inherent to the edited collection genre. *A Century of Transnationalism* helpfully parses a series of shared categories and concepts, but does not attempt to establish a shared chronology or overarching narrative of transnational practices and orientations over the course of said century. Such a narrative could never be more than provisional, modified by a series of exceptions. Still, I ended the book wanting to map the chapters onto a big piece of butcher paper to see if, taken together, they might add up to a larger story. That work will be left to another scholar, whose job will be easier and

conclusions enriched by the case studies and analytical frameworks offered here.

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**Eileen Boris, Dorothea Hoehtker, and Susan Zimmermann, eds., *Women's ILO: Transnational Networks, Global Labour Standards and Gender Equity, 1919 to Present* (Leiden: Brill 2018)**

THE INTERNATIONAL Labour Organization (ILO) will celebrate its centennial in 2019. Studies by scholars and ILO functionaries of this long-lived and uniquely structured affiliate of the League of Nations and United Nations abound, but the role of women in shaping its policies has received only sporadic attention. Such neglect is not surprising because, until recently, women have constituted a very small percentage of the members of the ILO governing body, or of the delegates and technical advisors sent by individual nations to the yearly ILO conferences. Yet this edited collection of fourteen essays makes a convincing case that women have played an important role in shaping the ILO's policies toward women workers and in ensuring the ratification and implementation of ILO conventions governing women's work in diverse national contexts.

The book is divided into two overlapping sections. The first section primarily considers the role of transnational women's networks in shaping debates and policies within the ILO; the second focuses on the ways in which ILO standards were negotiated and implemented within particular nations, regions, and populations of workers. In an important opening chapter of the first section, Dorothy Sue Cobble explores the neglected role of women in the "origin story" of the ILO. (27) The blueprints for the ILO were first drawn up by the all-male Commission

on International Labour Legislation at the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919. Fearful of the growing contagion of Bolshevism and other forms of labour radicalism in the aftermath of World War I, they recommended an innovative tripartite structure for the ILO: the yearly conferences would include national delegations of government, business, and labour representatives, and the governing body would also include representatives from all three groups. These groups were charged with working together to raise labour standards in order to prevent the injustices and poverty that caused social unrest and threatened world peace. A coalition of women's groups visited the commission to voice their concerns and several women's organizations asked that representation for women also be mandated as a component of the tripartite structure of the ILO. Instead, the Commission required only that the ILO's director appoint women to the ILO staff and recommended that national delegations include at least one woman in an advisory position.

Of the 40 nations that sent delegations to the founding convention of the ILO in Washington, DC in the autumn of 1919, none appointed a woman as a voting delegate and most included only a few female advisors. The US and British-based Women's Trade Union League, however, responded by staging their own International Congress of Working Women (ICWW) in Washington, DC at the same time as the ILO convention. Their meeting included over two hundred women from nineteen nations, some of whom were also advisors to their national delegations at the ILO convention. The ICWW prepared a set of resolutions and policy statements that were then championed by the women advisors at the ILO meeting. The ICWW recommendations proved particularly important in shaping the ILO's Maternity Convention

to include a far-reaching demand for six weeks paid benefits for women before and after childbirth. ICWW proposals were also taken into consideration in debates over conventions on child labour and the prohibition of night work for women.

Subsequent articles by Françoise Thébaud, Kirsten Scheiwe, and Lucia Artner highlight the way women continued to influence debates over labour standards for women during the interwar period through the ILO's Correspondence Committee on Women's Work and its dedicated staff members. The Cold War, as Eileen Boris demonstrates, complicated the quest for international labour standards as the ILO's protective legislation for women came under attack by feminist activists from Communist bloc countries as well as legal equality feminists based in the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Silke Neunsinger explores the complexities of adopting and encouraging ratification of an ILO Equal Remuneration Convention designed to prevent employment discrimination based on sex during the Cold War era. Also creating new problems for feminist activists within the ILO during the Cold War were national liberation movements in Africa and Asia. After largely ignoring the problems of the global South for many years, the ILO created an African Advisory Board in the late 1950s and began working with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) to improve labour standards there. As Yvette Richards documents, a women's network from the ILO/ICFTU in turn emphasized the need for the inclusion of women in development strategies in Africa well in advance of many economists and development activists. Yet their initiatives were underfunded and among the first to be cancelled when funding disappeared. A new generation of African women leaders, however, has begun to build on their legacies.

An article by Chris Bonner, Pat Horn, and Renana Jhabvala details the ILO's efforts in recent years to help home-based women workers from the informal sector of the world economy. To gather information on this neglected subject, the ILO reached out to grassroots groups such as the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India. This outreach work culminated in the 1996 Homework Convention and the Domestic Workers Convention of 2011. These changes have correlated with a gradual expansion in the number of women delegates in the ILO, as highlighted by an article by Marieke Louis on gender representation in the ILO over the past 100 years.

In the shorter second section of the book, Susan Zimmermann explores how racialized assumptions and colonial politics influenced the implementation of gendered labour standards in the global South from 1909 to 1947. Ironically, the ILO sought to incorporate protections for women into special conventions dealing with so-called "native" labour in colonial areas even as increasing numbers of feminists emphasized the need to do away with special protections for women. The Forced Labour Convention exempted women but not men from coerced labour for so-called "public purposes" in "non-self-governing territories" established under the terms of the Mandate system of the League of Nations (231-232). This emphasis, however, proved short-lived as it was replaced by developmental paradigms in the aftermath of World War II and national liberation struggles. Three detailed and illuminating case studies by Paula Lucía Aguilar, Eloisa Betti, and Akua O. Britwum, on women and ILO standards in Argentina, Italy, and Ghana, respectively, demonstrate the importance of what Aguilar calls the "situation 'on the ground'" in shaping the ratification and implementation of ILO conventions in specific national contexts. (275) An article by Sonya Michel explores

the recent efforts of the ILO to cope with the problems faced by migrant women caregivers. Mahua Sarkar, in a final article, considers how the ILO might help to regulate the rapidly expanding commercial surrogacy industry.

Taken collectively, these articles offer a rich portrait of women's role in shaping and implementing ILO policies. A minor weakness is that the book might further explore a range of broader debates that have emerged within both labour circles and scholarly literature about the ILO that have relevance for the themes raised here. In the aftermath of the Versailles Peace Conference, for example, a diverse range of labour critics complained that the structure proposed for the ILO was fundamentally undemocratic, concerns that intersected in important ways with those of labour feminists. The discussion of gender and the ILO during the Cold War could also use more historical and scholarly context. These omissions aside, this book makes a substantial contribution to scholarly understanding of the role of women in shaping the ILO and to the importance of the ILO in shaping working women's lives through international labour standards.

ELIZABETH MCKILLEN  
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**Prabha Kotiswaran, ed., *Revisiting the Law and Governance of Trafficking, Forced Labor and Modern Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2017)**

AS NEIL GAIMAN admonished: "the law is a blunt instrument." Transnational scholar Peer Zumbansen notes that violence and vulnerability accompany the law. Still, discourses of human trafficking – popular, political, and scholarly – tend to focus on the law, almost invariably on criminality and enforcement.

Prabha Kotiswaran's latest contribution to much-needed scholarship on trafficking, forced labour, and contemporary slavery readily acknowledges the "sheer ineffectiveness of anti-trafficking law." (6) Blunt in airing a usually unstated anxiety in anti-trafficking work, Kotiswaran identifies the paucity of outcomes of anti-trafficking law as fundamentally problematic to its continued prioritization. But are these not statements against interest for a book on human trafficking law? No. Kotiswaran's project is to "de-centre" (7) trafficking from the law.

An edited work, Kotiswaran's goal is to produce a volume of "socio-legal" (5) analysis of the law and policy related to trafficking, forced labour, and modern slavery. To navigate the "chaos" (6) of the anti-trafficking landscape that features weak institutionalization; poor direction; symbolic compliance; dysfunctional definitional discord; and the conflation of trafficking with both slavery and forced labour, Kotiswaran strives to articulate a transnational legal lens beyond criminal and international law approaches and traditional global geographies.

Kotiswaran's formulation of a pluralist transnational law approach provides a valuable analytical tool that encompasses a multiplicity of the tense and impactful factors – e.g. public and private legal process; informal and "soft law" sources; and action by non-state actors – that simultaneously cause, reproduce, and combat human trafficking. In so doing, Kotiswaran moves beyond simply referencing the tensions inherent in anti-trafficking inquiry, acknowledging – and seeking to take on – the "mess," "paradoxes," (5) and buried issues in anti-trafficking work.

To this end, Kotiswaran's book is presented in five parts. Part I provides an historical context of international law – including its difficulties – to address human trafficking. Part II offers a legal realist critique of anti-trafficking law.

Part III canvasses the role and influence of non-state actors and the move of anti-trafficking regulation from government to governance. Part IV focuses on the role of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in producing data on trafficking and the ILO's influence in concluding the 2014 *Protocol on Forced Labour*. Part V examines the political economy of labour and evaluates anti-trafficking frameworks for domestic workers. Kotiswaran concludes the book by offering an agenda for research on mobility, migration, and the potential of the law.

While intended to provide a work on trafficking, forced labour, and modern slavery significant for its non-legal range, the book does primarily engage the transnational legal order and a transnational legal approach. In this way, it seems to fall somewhat short of the very ambitious extra-legal project set out in its Introduction.

The book certainly contains brilliant (re-) thinking of much of the speculative intuition that motivates human trafficking law and policy responses and data collection. However, somewhat restrictively – albeit helpfully – the book focuses on definitional issues and debates, migration, and domestic work, tending to present, if not privilege, these features as the core of the contemporary labour trafficking transnational legal order.

Also, while providing valuable insights into the law and effects of forced labour, trafficking, and slavery, the book's goal of interrogating trafficking from an interdisciplinary perspective to ensure a full critique seems not fully realized. The book succeeds in highlighting the multi-dimensional nature of trafficking, especially beyond the criminal law, and its contributors' diverse perspectives fulfill the book's stated ends of "mapping the ... paradigms" (46) of trafficking and re-examining the fundamental assumptions of trafficking law. However, a still broader

and more intentionally applied interdisciplinarity and inclusion of additional theoretical perspectives – environmental, Indigenous, anti-colonial, Marxist – would have amplified the book's scope and originality, and ensured the expectations raised in its Introduction were unarguably met, if not exceeded.

In terms of methodology, while the book does include instructive case studies and ethnography in interviews recounting the experiences of trafficked workers, for the most part it employs traditional legal and policy analysis. Inclusion of more materialist, empirical, and unconventional research approaches would have made for a stronger and more innovative work.

In addition, fewer calls to action are contained in the book than expected. Concrete recommendations based on rigorous research and methodologically-sound data are greatly needed to combat trafficking, forced labour, and modern slavery. Kotiswaran herself does propose an insightful agenda for future anti-trafficking research focusing on a "distributively motivated" (39) approach and calling for more legal ethnographic research.

Finally, in a book on labour, a wholesale challenge of the contemporary economic system – capitalism – is conspicuous by its absence. The book does investigate the political economy of labour and acknowledges that exploitation is a hallmark of – not an exception to – global capitalism: an enforced legal and policy system not simply an aberration perpetrated by immoral individuals. Part II of the book identifies the state's role in ensuring migrants serve neoliberal capitalism, but extra-state remedies and systemic transformation are not explored. Moreover, for Kotiswaran, rather than being exceptional or requiring transformational redress, trafficking embodies "regulatory predicaments" (7) similar those of other issues confounded by globalization. But what

of the contributions to trafficking, forced labour, and modern slavery of the circuits of globalized capital themselves? Even the book's articulated labour approach to anti-trafficking encompasses primarily human rights and migration issues best addressed structurally by legal remedies and law reform rather than economic re-orientation. Notions of corporate social responsibility – with trade unionism as accountability – and “redemptive capitalism” are expounded, but their need not assigned to any systemic causations. Immigration controls are argued to be perhaps the “single biggest legal factor contributing to modern day slavery.” (25) Qualified as a legal factor this is true. But what about the exploitation inherent in capitalism, the very structure of the relationships in which slavery manifests? In this way, Kotiswaran's book misses the opportunity to de-exceptionalize and externalize trafficking not only beyond individuals and “domestic abuses” but to capitalism itself. The abolition of slavery in the United States was not an exercise in law reform. Efforts to end slavery challenged and transformed an entire slave-based economy. Accordingly, any study of trafficking and slavery that does not expressly interrogate and challenge the fundamental basis of the free market – the exploitation inherent in capitalist labour and social relations – is incomplete.

Kotiswaran's book is still a significant contribution to re-examining the law and governance of trafficking, forced labour, and modern slavery, true to its title. Its insights are very important and the book provides interdisciplinary perspectives, helpfully challenging traditional trafficking discourses from their usual legal and policy assumptions and illuminating the implication of the state.

The book is an excellent challenge to traditional narratives, data, and hubris of anti-trafficking work. However, overall its overarching transnational legal approach

does seem to imply that the law – albeit not simply criminal law – can remedy trafficking and forced labour. Kotiswaran is quick to recognize this and other limitations of the book, regarding writing an inherently imperfect and “myth-making” (46) enterprise.

Given its excellent contribution to reflective, critical analysis of the fundamentals of law and human trafficking, *Revisiting the Law and Governance of Trafficking, Forced Labor and Modern Slavery* should be read by as many scholars, practitioners, and activists as possible, while transforming the global economy.

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**Kevin Skerrett, Johanna Weststar, Simon Archer, and Chris Roberts, eds., *The Contradictions of Pension Fund Capitalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2017)**

PUBLISHED IN 2017 as part of the Labor and Employment Relations Association Series, *The Contradictions of Pension Fund Capitalism* assembles an international cast of researchers that bridge financial capitalism with the crude reality of employment entitlements that are increasingly under threat. The editors begin with a concise introductory chapter that captures the focus of subsequent contributions. “Invested across the planet,” Skerrett, Weststar, Archer, and Roberts write, “in every conceivable industry, commodity, and asset class, pension funds are today leading agents in, and beneficiaries of, liberalized and globally integrated markets.” (1) The narrative throughout the book is one that follows an unraveling of the post-war class compromise and the various features that have jeopardized pensions coverage and benefit entitlements.



Andrew Pendelton and Howard Gospel's treatment of the UK experience in Chapter 2 similarly claims that the development of an employer-based or occupational pension scheme contributed to financialization through the marshaling of a "large and liquid stock market and financial sector." (10) From here the authors examine today's reality in which, as a neoliberal policy agenda that launched in the 1980s, individualized self-invested personal pensions (SIPPS) have become fashionable. SIPPS have, of course, failed to fill gaps in provision, instead leading to pockets of pensioner poverty whereby retirees must rely on other means-tested and universal benefits in order to survive. Financialization has also provoked firms to respond to competitive pressures by adopting human resource requirements that rest on flexible and less costly labour forces. Financial capitalism is advancing this objective to a point where, the authors conclude, defined benefit schemes "have 'fed the beast' that eventually turned on them." (24)

Chapter 3 moves from the political economic structure of finance capitalism to investigating the effects on workers across industrialized countries. Specifically, the extent to which the reduction of benefits in the pay-as-you-go (PAYGO) state social insurance plans and the emphasis on savings and personal wealth as a source of retirement income defines the lived realities of financialization and the erosion of formerly collective entitlements. What Teresa Ghilarducci and Amanda Novello recognize is that life expectancy, leisure time, and health outcomes are not shared evenly across classes and that, ultimately, higher-income workers "are most likely to have the economic lives that dovetail well with a financial retirement system." (49) Dick Bryan and Michael Rafferty further engage with the outcome question in Chapter 4, concluding that the "defined contribution superannuation is one of

the starkest expression of the risk shift from states to citizens, and the associated role of finance." (80) A reversal, they point out, of the Keynesian macroeconomic policies that dominated the political arena for decades. What the authors go on to query is the extent to which *labour's* capital represents a check on capital's power. Their resolution: labour's capital, manifested in pension funds, has behaved just like "capital's capital," providing little hope of wielding these massive pools of wealth to advance workers' interests. Indeed, their contribution is punctuated by the realization that labour is not just a working and consuming class but exists also as a financialized asset *for* capital. (93)

To these points, Michael McCarthy addresses the social investment framework – or, concerns about environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors – that took off following the 2008 Great Recession. His conclusion here is that workers' retirement capital mirrors that of Wall Street investment trends, as conservative law makers and employers have blocked unions from "democratizing their funds and advancing an alternative approach to finance." (115) *Contradictions* also reveals the role of fiduciary responsibility in disciplining union pension trustees who might look to labour's capital as a venue to advance non-financial interests.

Bernard Mees reflects on the realities of financialization in Australia and what impact this has had on the running of union-sponsored pension schemes. Part of the lived reality is how labour has responded to the growth of infrastructure privatization and subsequent investment in these profitable ventures. As an employer trustee remarked, union opposition was overcome when industry was "able to convince them that (a) privatization was going to happen anyway, and (b) ... it's best that workers own the

assets rather than some multinational or American company.” (65) Kevin Skerrett’s chapter on Canada’s public pension funds similarly reveals the lucrative draw of public-private partnerships and privatized infrastructure as textbook investment opportunities for some of the largest funds in the Global North. Meanwhile, a labour trustee suggested that not all members wanted a socially responsible investment choice, favouring instead holdings that effectively managed risks and yielded favourable returns. In the UK, this standard of fiduciary responsibility was entrenched following a 1984 Supreme Court ruling, “which holds that pension fund administration must invest the assets of the fund with a view to the best financial interests of the beneficiaries, to the exclusion of other nonfinancial interests,” (156) as Simon Archer’s chapter elucidates. Even in Canada fiduciary doctrine remains firmly in place, restricting the scope of interests that can be pursued by fund managers.

Johanna Weststar and Anil Verma push this further and dig into the contradictions of labour’s voice on pension boards. Of the trustees interviewed as part of their study, most were discomfited when asked if they represented a constituency, as this threatened their interpretation of fiduciary duty. (189) Working in the best interest of the plan, participants insisted, was their principal responsibility. Even labour trustees adhered to this logic. “Establishing long-term strategies [and] steering the plan through the political realities of the world we live in so that the plan doesn’t become a political target”, said one trustee. (189) Weststar’s second chapter takes on the question of pension fund education, revealing that much of the curriculum reifies the “established neoliberal logic of the financial and pension community” leaving trustees without the tools to “challenge traditional beliefs about investment.” (126)

Power and class return in the final two chapters of the collection. Stephen Maher offers a rather dismal prognosis that neoliberalism is the result of “the historic defeat of the working class,” rendering the possibility of structural reforms virtually impossible. (229) His conclusion is a stark reminder of the limits of stakeholder capitalism due to its inadequate grasp of class power and the reduction of workers’ interests to the economic sphere without concern for political struggle as a catalyst for social change. Kevin Skerrett and Sam Gindin, meanwhile, provide a more useful intervention in their assessment of Canada’s financialized pension system. Theirs is also a chapter that provides much-needed recommendations specific to existing state entitlement programs. To be precise, they advocate for the doubling of universal pension benefits, increasing the Canada Pension Plan replacement rate, the establishment of a “dignity pension,” pension credits, and the establishment of a new funding model. To the last point the authors rightfully look at clawing back tax credit schemes that benefit income earners who can afford to invest in personal pension and saving plans. Instead, the deferred tax revenue would be channeled towards universal collective benefits, reversing the neoliberal turn in the entitlements game.

From a broad and critical political economic framework to a nuanced look at the practice of pension fund management, readers will find this collection to be both accessible and insightful. Indeed, the esoteric and perhaps even nebulous nature of pension funds is wonderfully exposed in this book.

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**Annelise Orleck, *"We Are All Fast-Food Workers Now": The Global Uprising against Poverty Wages* (Boston: Beacon Press 2018)**

THESE ARE DARK TIMES for workers. In many countries, wages have stagnated, union membership has fallen, and inequality is at a record high. Global corporations have acquired significant power to restructure work, leaving many workers precarious and feeling disposable. This isn't entirely new, of course, as the history of capitalism is a history of exploitation. But there have been times when corporations have been more regulated, and when political leaders granted more concessions to workers.

In this context, with weak unions, conservative politicians, and powerful corporations, it seems unlikely that workers could win anything. But in *We Are All Fast-Food Workers Now: The Global Uprising Against Poverty Wages*, Annelise Orleck shows us that some workers are in fact winning. And not just any workers, but some of the most marginalized, low-wage, vulnerable workers.

After being inspired by Bangladeshi garment activists and fast-food worker strikes, Orleck travelled around the world interviewing over 140 workers and activists. She visited Cambodia, Bangladesh, Morocco, the Philippines, South Africa, and many parts of the US. She spoke with farmworkers, garment workers, fast-food workers, retail workers, hotel cleaners, and union organizers. While the countries and type of work vary greatly, many of the workers Orleck talks have a lot in common. Most are working long hours and struggling to make ends meet in a world that blames them for not doing more to get ahead. The title of the book comes from a quote from Keegan Shepard, a fast-food activist in Florida, who sees the ways in which interlocking systems of capitalism, gender, and racial

oppression work to keep vast numbers of workers down.

*We Are All Fast-Food Workers Now* begins with stories of workers that highlight both the extent of the poor conditions but also some of the victories. Workers are winning higher wages and union representation. For example, hotel workers in Phnom Penh organized, formed a union, and protested. They've won a reduction in the number of rooms to clean and a reduction in sexual harassment. Fast-food workers in the US have won a \$15 per hour minimum wage in California and New York, and dozens of cities.

The book then goes on to explore garment and farm work in detail. These are two of the most notorious industries for exploitative working conditions. Garment was one of the first to "globalize"; a relatively small number of huge brands and retailers have built a buyer-driven supply chain that makes workers compete against one another to drive down wages. The system makes it hard for workers to demand higher wages because the brand can then just end the contract and move the work somewhere else. Despite this, Orleck talks to workers who are fighting back. There are the berry pickers in Mexico who walk off the job with signs that say "We are Workers, not Slaves." Workers are fed up, like Bernardino Martinez, a migrant farm worker in Southern California who sued employers who used tasers against workers who organized in the fields. He tells Orleck, "Most workers are too scared to go to court. They are afraid they'll be deported. I was scared too, but even more, I was mad. And I was tired. I had been doing this for seven years and it never got better." (16)

Orleck has a gift for making workers' voices come alive. We hear the words of Tep Sareoung, a young woman who works as a beer promoter in Cambodia, talk about her experience with the union

– first, when organizers came to her neighborhood to educate women about reproductive issues – and then later, as she herself became an activist and a mentor and role model for other young women. Or Girshriela Green, who worked for Walmart for many years and put up with much mistreatment until a friend who had worked there for 20 years was fired with no warning. “That was it for me,” Green said. “I knew then that we weren’t the problem. They were.” (104)

Much of the scholarship on globalization, or neoliberalism, or capitalism, reduces workers to a nameless, faceless mass – often seen as helpless victims, just cogs in the machine. But these interviews show us the people behind the numbers, and bring complexity to the organizing.

Similarly, social movements or struggles like the Fight for \$15 are often portrayed as a monolith. Analysts debate: Is the Fight for \$15 authentic, or a top-down effort by a large union? But Orleck lets us hear from workers on the ground who have participated and organized. Whatever the critiques of the movement, there are real workers with real interests in the campaign.

The book concludes with “transformative visions” that suggest worker struggles can change the world. Here, Orleck’s own admitted optimism may colour her findings, as the examples she shares seem far from enough. I would have liked to hear a bit more analysis about why certain campaigns have won, and what are traps workers must look for. How can the local victories intersect to larger systemic ones?

Nevertheless, *We Are All Fast-Food Workers Now* is a powerful antidote to the pessimism and helplessness found in so many analyses of the global labour movement. Orleck shows us how workers themselves are not necessarily getting trapped by a false debate that says they must organize around class, or gender,

or race. One Mixteca woman, who had picked berries in Mexico since she was seven years old, told Orleck she was “tired of being yelled at and made fun of for being indigenous, tired of being sexually harassed and abused.” (15) Workers’ struggles, many of them led by women, are often a fight against interlocking systems of oppression.

This book also gives hope that despite the daunting nature of global capitalism, workers can fight back locally, in their workplaces and communities, and win. They can, and they are. We have much to learn from their stories.

STEPHANIE LUCE  
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**Marcus Taylor and Sébastien Rioux,**  
*Global Labour Studies* (Cambridge:  
Polity Press, 2017)

SURPRISINGLY FEW introductory texts have been written on global labour studies, despite its notable growth following the 1980’s debates over the New International Labour Studies movement. Perhaps this is attributable to the inherent difficulty of introducing such an expansive discipline: not only are the issues examined and perspectives employed wide-ranging, but they are brought to bear on an incredibly complicated and rapidly changing global economy. In *Global Labour Studies*, authors Marcus Taylor and Sébastien Rioux confront this challenge head-on. The result is a robust introductory work that combines theoretical breadth and empirical rigour, all the while ensuring accessibility for readers new to the field.

As Taylor and Rioux correctly note, the field of global labour studies is considerably fragmented, marked by research that is often conducted within narrow disciplinary frameworks that privilege specific issues and topics, often at the expense

of others. In its 13 chapters, spanning 213 pages, perhaps the greatest contribution of this book is the innovative interdisciplinary framework the authors develop to overcome this fragmentation and produce a cohesive and multifaceted approach to the field. It is constructed through the thoughtful integration of four primary perspectives: (1) political economy and the study of power; (2) economic sociology and the question of networks; (3) human geography and the focus on space and scale; and (4) development studies and the livelihoods perspective.

Challenging tendencies to reify and idealize existing society, a political-economic perspective foregrounds the ways in which the practices, relations, and institutions of labour are socially constructed on the basis of unequal power relations. This perspective is complemented by that of economic sociology, with its emphasis on the social embeddedness of the economy; in particular, Taylor and Rioux draw attention to the ways in which society's values and norms influence the normative conceptions of work and work relations held by individuals. They also call attention to the key role that social networks play in the production and reproduction of labour power and labour regimes as well as in enabling and constraining political praxis.

In their discussion of human geography and space, the authors draw on David Harvey's threefold conception of space as absolute (physical and material space), relative (space as transformed through human praxis), and relational (space as informing and conditioning collective ideas, experiences, and practices). This expansive conception of space proves ideal for conceptualizing the multifaceted ways that spatial relations and social relations mutually constitute one another. Furthermore, when synthesized with the other three perspectives, it enables

the authors to masterfully navigate the complexities and nuances of issues such as the social reproduction of labour power, labour migration, global production chains, and translocal labour movements, amongst others.

These three analytical perspectives tend to focus attention on the larger questions of power and production with a primary focus on macro-level analyses. To round out their analysis, the authors make the astute decision to incorporate a livelihoods perspective drawn from the field of developmental studies. This bottom-up approach focuses on the ways that individuals and households navigate the opportunities and constraints of their specific context. In doing so, they affirm the agency individuals possess when engaging with broader social structures and practices.

After establishing their theoretical framework, Taylor and Rioux use the remaining ten chapters to apply it to a range of issues central to global labour studies. Following the order in which they appear in the work, these include: labour regimes, global production networks, formal labour, informal labour, agrarian labour, migrant labour, forced labour, environment and labour, corporate social responsibility, organizing global labour, and a concluding chapter on the future of global labour. The authors use a combination of vignettes, personal anecdotes, and case studies to introduce the topics to the reader in an accessible and provocative way. Their analyses attend to both the historical development of the issues they consider, as well as how they are concretely materialized in different but interrelated geographical areas. At the end of each chapter the authors provide a helpful list of titles for further readings on the topic.

Three chapters in particular stand out. Chapter 3, on labour regimes, focuses on the critical question of how distinct

workforces are produced and reproduced through a range of overlapping social institutions and processes, including state laws and regulations, social norms and values, the household, and both formal and informal labour organizations and networks. Including such an analysis is particularly pertinent given the degree to which it is conspicuously absent in much of the literature on the global economy. Chapter 4 provides an illuminative examination of global production networks that combine the outsourcing of productive functions, emerging international divisions of labour, and complex regimes of global corporate governance. Finally, Chapter 6 analyses work in the informal economy. The efficacy of employing an interdisciplinary framework is made manifest here, as it enables the authors to move beyond commonplace problematic generalizations to note the significant heterogeneity that exists within this sector.

Notwithstanding its relative expansiveness, there is one distinct lacuna within the author's framework, namely, an explicit theorization of capitalism itself. This leads to a number of notable omissions and has the potential to result in unintended but nevertheless problematic consequences. Two stand out. First, it can potentially obscure the fact that defining features of modern labour processes and practices are historically unique to capitalism. For example, although noted in a number of instances, there is no sustained discussion of the fact that it is workers' objective separation from the means of production which compels them to seek employment within the market or of the simple but immensely important fact that waged-labour within capitalism is always first and foremost a process oriented towards producing profit (abstract wealth) rather than meeting human needs. At the extreme, such omissions could potentially lead readers to reify existing relations,

practices and institutions, especially if they are new to the field of labour studies.

Second, a failure to explicitly theorize capitalism obfuscates how power operates within modern society. Although their identification of the multiple forms power can take (direct, indirect, and symbolic) invites readers to consider the more insidious ways it is operationalized, in each case the focus is on the ability of individuals or groups of individuals to shape the context in which they and others interact. Capital itself, however, is an impersonal, alienated power that conditions and constrains the actions of all individuals and institutions in our society. Even those who seemingly possess the greatest amount of autonomy and power over others are subject to its logic and dictates insofar as their power derives from their position within it.

Despite this shortcoming, the book is a remarkable accomplishment. Not only are the authors able to cover numerous topics central to the field in a relatively small amount of space without succumbing to superficiality, they do so in a lively and engaging way. Perhaps most significantly, the book provides readers with the necessary analytical and methodological tools to enter into and further their knowledge of and work in the field of global labour studies. For these and many more reasons, it is a highly recommendable for students new to the field.

CHRISTOPHER MASTROCOLA  
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**Verity Burgmann, *Globalization and Labour in the Twenty-First Century* (London and New York: Routledge 2016)**

VERITY BURGMAN'S powerful and deeply informed book is based on the assumptions that globalization is a neoliberal political project – rather than an act

of nature or naturalized economics – that poses significant challenges for workers and unions, as well as all vulnerable people.

Because globalization is the result of agency, agency is also central to the responses of workers and labour unions. Theoretically she adopts an agential historical materialist approach, informed by the works of J.-P. Sartre, E.P. Thompson, and Antonio Negri, and hopes that this book will “contribute to the body of knowledge that points to vital signs of labour movement life, whether traditional or novel in method; and to offer an understanding of how and why new ways of confronting capital have emerged.” (29) To accomplish that goal “each of the ... eight chapters takes as its focus one of these characteristics of corporate globalization that have proven problematic for the workers of the world.” (29)

The displacement of the Fordist organization of work, particularly in manufacturing, has weakened the associated hegemonic forms of unions. Yet, the new forms of work organization are themselves vulnerable to worker action if workers and unions act strategically. Lean production is vulnerable to strategic ruptures of the value chain while dispersed work units, such as in fast food, can be brought together through innovative strategies that transcend any one workplace.

Globalization has been shaped and has shaped by new forms of communication. Some unions and activist networks recognized the value of electronic communications early on. Yet, it is not clear that new forms of communication transcend the historical focus of unions on individual countries. In fact, some analysts and activists have recognized that electronic communications can make organizing harder, particularly when such initiatives depend on platforms controlled by capital and do not involve

personal on-the-ground engagement and collaboration.

The global reorganization of production, according to Beverly Silver, weakens labour in the countries and places of origin but can well strengthen it in sites of expansion. (81) Supporting evidence can be found in China and India, the major sites of expansion. But even with respect to sweatshop production, which cannot be easily disrupted by shutting down key nodes, workers and unions have found creative ways to challenge capital with the collaboration of the broader civil society.

The power of globalized capital is evident in its mobility and this requires transnational forms of organization and attitude. The increasing influence of unions from the Global South has provided a corrective to the historically northern unionism of international union organizations. Are these changes in transnational regional and global unionism profound enough to challenge neoliberal globalization? According to the author there are hopeful signs at the European level, particularly the European Works Councils, while global union organizations have become more active. Yet, it is not clear whether the “transnational class-in-itself” is becoming a class-for-itself and whether that can take place via organizational arrangements and without political contestation.

Over their history, unions have dealt with new constituencies of workers – migrants, women, people of colour, and so on. In the contemporary world capital benefits from open borders while workers face significant obstacles, allowing capital to pit practically enslaved immigrants against local workers who, often, contribute to this strategy by their own narrow vision. The emergence of identity politics – particularly the emphasis on recognition as a substitute rather than integral part of redistribution – has made

collaboration across social movements more challenging. Yet, there is evidence of unions responding creatively and proactively to include hitherto marginalized workers – often immigrant women.

Such political innovations are all the more necessary given the rise of precarity as an integral part of the organization of labour. Precarious labour is not simply waiting in the shadows to break strikes and replace organized workers. Rather, various categories of workers work side by side. In the absence of collaboration between them, permanent workers oppress temporary workers and temporary workers replace permanent workers – both serving the interests of capital. While there are instances of workers seeking to find common ground, permanent workers and their unions can and should do more. The most promising cases, however, may be instances of worker run companies that do away with capitalists at the point of production if not at the level of the whole economy.

Workers and unions have also been at the forefront of efforts to protect the public domain and forestall the proliferation of undemocratic marketization. The emergence of “community unionism” that brings together unions, local movements, and communities is a promising development. Community unionism allows unions to play a key role in efforts to prevent privatization – whether water in Bolivia, oil in Iraq, or railways in South Korea. As the author points out “in the absence of adequate defence of the public realm from traditional left parliamentary parties, unions have led and joined in movements to protect public wealth and public services.” (203) Unions have also played a role in opposition against the rich, resisting structural adjustments before, during, and after the Great Financial Recession. The contradictory dynamics of these struggles are evident in Greece where dominant unions ventured beyond

their political limits, if temporarily, under pressure from more radical labour forces.

Burgmann closes by pointing out that “workers with or without established labour organizations, have acted imaginatively and ingeniously to improve their circumstances in the face of globalization, suggesting resistance is both pointed and productive.” (237) This is evident across the eight challenges that she has discussed drawing upon a wide swath of information on the world’s labour. Each chapter, and the book as a whole, are inspirations for more research. The book will be of great use to those who have been studying particular aspects of global labour and want informed accounts of other areas as well as to those starting out a serious study of global labour politics. I close by pointing to three main agendas of research and practice.

First, if one considers the world as the contemporary arena of labour struggles then labour decomposition is characteristic of some sectors and places, particularly in the Global North. Even there, however, there is strong evidence of recomposition as unions emerge in new sectors. Moreover, a “large part of the “world’s workers are still in the initial stages of class composition.” (237) A world level view of labour provides a more realistic assessment of the challenges and opportunities facing workers. This book helps us understand the need to look at the work of labour as a whole, escaping the boundaries of the Global North or the models of unionization that we are accustomed to.

Second, the author finds instances, such as worker-run companies, where “labour’s autonomy from capital also makes possible a postcapitalist future.” (241) This challenges researchers and practitioners to identify such initiatives. What are their characteristics? What differentiates an initiative destined to be an event



from an initiative that reflects a prefigurative, counterhegemonic pattern?

Finally, the author finds hope in the fact that “new highly developed forms of concerted labour transnationalism have been established in the past two decades to confront capital mobility.” (239) A fuller understanding of the depth, breadth, and impacts of cross-border interactions and practices remains a key challenge for all those, including this reviewer, who hope that labour and other emancipatory forces will rise to the challenge of global capitalism and offer an alternative vision (Dimitris Stevis, “International Labor Organizations, 1864-1997: The Weight of History and the Challenges of the Present,” *Journal of World-Systems Research*, 4 [1998]). What are those practices and initiatives that reproduce intersocietalism and what are those forces that herald a global or at least transsocietal labour politics?

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**Benjamin Selwyn, *The Struggle for Development* (Cambridge: Polity 2017)**

BENJAMIN SELWYN has two stated aims in *The Struggle for Development*: (1) theorize development from a bottom-up perspective and (2) demonstrate that collective action by the masses can generate development. The author aims to achieve this through the elaboration of a labour-centered theory of development, which is a direct response to the dominant paradigms in economic development, all deemed to be capital-centric. Overall, the book has several interesting elements and it is hard to disagree with much of the argument, but its main fault is that it stays at a relatively basic level, leaving the reader with the impression that while there is potential in labour-centred development, most of it remains to be worked out.

The first four chapters of the book are largely devoted to a critique of a wide range of approaches in development, including liberal and progressive perspectives, as well as a demonstration that much of what has been tried in the 20th century and beyond has failed to deliver the promised poverty alleviation and general human development. Amongst the reasons brought forward to explain this are that these theories were largely centred on capital accumulation, with policies designed by an elite which tended to disregard the input of workers and subsume their needs to that of capital. Within a capitalist framework and with or without important state involvement, this generated exploitative relations that failed to provide development for the majority, even when the goals of capital accumulation were achieved.

These critiques are well-taken. It is true that much of development theory is obsessed with growth in general, and capital accumulation in particular, and that policymaking elites are given an inordinate place. The point is especially useful when theories typically seen as progressive are analysed, such as some variants of modernization Marxism or the developmental state. It is certainly also true that the developmental results have been dismal for the mass of people, despite some claims to the contrary, and that even when there has been some economic growth, it has tended to occur on the backs of the very people it was supposed to help. Globalization has been good for capital but much less for workers, by virtue of the capitalist logic that was driving it.

However, beyond the point about the problems associated with a focus on capital accumulation and a disenfranchisement of workers in decision-making processes, there is little novelty here and the overall analysis remains relatively basic. For example, in Chapter 2, the author

provides a simple class analytical framework of the functioning of capitalism from a Marxist standpoint, with some elements of intersectionality thrown in, none of which will be new to readers used to a critical perspective on development. The exposition is pedagogical and some chapters could be useful in the classroom, but otherwise the pace is very slow and the first four chapters could easily have been condensed in less than half of the hundred pages they occupy, to leave more space to what constitutes the original contribution of the book: the theory of labour-led development.

Chapter 5 provides the contours of such a theory ... in six pages or so, with the rest of the chapter devoted to the recounting of various examples. Predictably, the author cannot go in much depth with respect to the theory in so few pages and as a result, the examples are thrown in as a hodgepodge of illustrations without much of a guiding analytical thread. Taken from different continents, the stories deal with workers taking their destiny in their own hands, of self-management, of collective action by the underclass. They are certainly stirring and show how good things can happen when workers have agency, but it would have been useful to submit these situations to a thorough analysis. For example, does it matter which groups of people – blue collar workers, small scale farmers, the unemployed, etc. – unite and struggle together? What are the important constraints and possibilities in their actions? In this vein, it would perhaps have been useful to analyse failures as well as successes.

After going through these examples, Selwyn takes up the task in Chapter 6 of describing what labour-led development could look like if its principles were applied to an entire country. Part of that chapter is, in fact, the description of some transitional policies after an imagined

takeover of the state by workers. The author quickly makes the important point that any such transition will have to work within the confines of the existing context, including capitalist relations and institutions, as well as a potential dependency on trade with other countries whose governments may not be especially friendly. Still, there are possibilities for improvement.

The proposals to this end are wide-ranging and many interesting ideas are put forth. While Selwyn could certainly have provided a more extensive justification for some of the policies and practices he selects – why use a participatory planning structure from Marta Harnecker and not, say, from Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel, for example? – he does provide interesting guiding principles. Examples include designing policies to atrophy capitalist relations and favour labour-led social production, socializing means of production, and giving much importance to the identification and satisfaction of communal needs and purposes. The list of proposals don't really constitute a template or a roadmap, but that's probably a good thing. If elites are to step aside and workers take over the lead, they should certainly be the ones to determine what to do and how to do it.

Two things are lacking, however. First, while Selwyn does a good job of putting forth interesting proposals, he does not really work out their implications, and in particular the ways in which they would interact, reinforce or negate each other. He also does not really lay out what the actual constraints from existing capitalist institutions would be, how capital could be actually be reined in, and how to deal with capitalist resistance at home and abroad. He describes an imagined utopia where the transformation can take place peacefully, but this is unlikely to happen in practice, to say the least.

Secondly, an analysis of actual attempts at reshaping whole societies is missing. Selwyn does talk briefly about the Russian revolution, which he says is the only instance of workers actually taking power, but leaves it at that. For one thing, this is a claim that should be substantiated, less through an analysis of the Russian revolution itself, something which has already been done extensively, than through a study of other attempts to transform a society in the 20th and 21st century. Interesting case studies include Nicaragua in the 1980s, contemporary Bolivia and Venezuela, or even Israeli Kibbutz and the Mondragon co-operative if we decrease the scale. For sure, these cases are problematic on several accounts. Nonetheless, a systematic study using a labour-led development framework could illustrate some of their failings as well as successes, and it could delineate more precisely the real

constraints that any attempt to move away from capitalism face. This would have been a great contribution, one that would probably have forced a more careful and extensive theorizing, and one which could have provided readers with some important keys to understand the dynamics of social change and move the horizon of the possible.

Overall, the book is a good read and makes some important points about the limitations of existing theoretical paradigms and developmental strategies. However, the pace is slow, the analysis tends to remain broad and basic, and the possibilities of the labour-led framework are underexploited. Still, a labour-led perspective on development has potential and one hopes that theory laid out in the book will be developed and applied further in future work.

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