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REVIEWS

Sheila Rowbotham, *Rebel Crossings: New Women, Free Lovers, and Radicals in Britain and the United States*

London: Verso, 2016; 512 pp; ISBN 1784785881

Rebel Crossings is a detailed biography of the interwoven lives of six individuals who were inspired to pursue socialist and anarchist solutions to the injustices of capitalism and patriarchy at the turn of the late nineteenth into the early twentieth century. In her meticulously-researched book, Rowbotham portrays their individual and collective activism – inspired by utopian ideals of liberty, love, and cooperation – as well as the challenges and shortcomings that at times constrained them.

This collective biography begins with the consciousness-raising of two well-educated, middle-class British women named Helena Born (1860–1901) and Miriam Daniell (1861–1894), who were close friends. While living in Bristol, England, prior to emigrating to America in 1890, they were exposed to the milieu of the Bristol Socialist Society and Bristol Women's Liberal Association and to the writings of avant-garde thinkers such as Edward Carpenter, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman. Rowbotham recounts their support for and, on some occasions, leadership in labour strikes, soup kitchens, and other forms of activism. Using archival materials, she describes their experimentation with alternative, more 'natural' modes of living, which included practising free love, free thought, and cooperative association; exploring mystical traditions aimed at achieving spiritual harmony; wearing bloomers and riding bicycles; and eating a vegetarian diet. Each woman had entered into a 'free union' with a man whom she had met in the radical social sphere – Helena with Irish-born anarchist William Bailie (1866–1957) and Miriam with Scottish-born union militant Robert Nicol (1868–1956). Their respective relationships were wrought with challenges and tensions not only because they were violating Victorian gender norms (which the men could more easily navigate), but through circumstances such as pregnancies, prior marriages, and family conflicts. Rowbotham further shows how this complicated web expanded when Miriam died and Robert embarked on a relationship with Gertrude Dix (1867–1950), a fellow British migrant and author of two 'New Woman' novels, among other works.

Helen Tufts (1874–1962) is the only American-born figure of the six. Her role in the intricate narrative emerged primarily out of her romance with William, which occurred after Helena's death. Moreover, Helen memorialized Helena by publishing a posthumous book of her writings, which Rowbotham stumbled upon in the 1970s and later served as the catalyst for *Rebel Crossings*.

This book is an important contribution to the study of radical movements because it offers a refreshingly decentred perspective on the emergence of collective consciousness and gives insight into how some middle-class individuals gravitated to socialism, anarchism, and feminism – largely an outgrowth of their intellectual and artistic interests. Avoiding the pitfall of romanticising their activism, Rowbotham reveals how the six individuals, one way or another, fell short in attempting to live out their ideals. Egotism, jealousy, and prejudice were among the human foibles that, at times, clouded their utopian aspirations.

A second important feature of this book is that it illustrates both the micro- and macro-level communication processes that shape social movements, which are inherently fluid due to their permeable borders and internal conflicts. Indeed, the collective biography form itself is effective in highlighting the ways in which political, sexual, psychological, transcendental, and health interests merged and conflicted, relative to shifting contexts and political actors – not to mention the role of class differences. Further, Rowbotham calls attention to points of agreement and disagreement between and within the socialist and anarchist movements – for example, debates about 'propaganda by deed' that were heightened in the wake of the assassination of President William McKinley in 1901. Additionally, she shows how radical ideas migrated and circulated between Britain and the United States through the work of peripheral activists rather than through the vantage point of more well-known figures such as Eugene Debs, Havelock Ellis, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Emma Goldman, and Benjamin Tucker.

There's a lot more to the life stories of the six activists and the insights yielded about the socialist and anarchist movements than the broad brushstroke above can capture. While the level of details in *Rebel Crossings* can feel exhaustive at times, they are valuable – and arguably necessary – in Rowbotham's ability to offer such an intimate and yet wide-reaching perspective on radicalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Donna M. Kowal, The College at Brockport, State University of New York

Dylan Taylor, *Social Movements and Democracy in the 21st Century*

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017; 304pp; ISBN 9783319819402

The theory of Spanish exceptionalism has, once again, been discarded in the latest elections in Andalucía. The unexpected growth of Vox, a newly-born right-wing party, has led the left – mostly Podemos – to a shocking state of self-criticism. Previously, Podemos thought of itself as the emancipatory solution to the 'democracy crisis' that sparked in 2011. This change in voter preferences cannot be understood just in terms of the left fault locally, but must be examined in terms of the *global* regressive and fascist trend too. Along these lines, Dylan Taylor's book *Social Movements and Democracy in the 21st Century* is both timely and necessary in the current context.

Taylor asks uncomfortable questions in order to understand and overcome the current democratic crisis within the neoliberal system. The book performs a close examination and in-depth study of the Occupy movement in core countries, with the aim of strengthening the Marxist understanding of social movements while critically examining the anti-authoritarian and sometimes anarchist tendencies of new social movements in the twenty-first century. *Social Movements and Democracy* calls for engagement between various social movements and the State; this, according to the author, would facilitate participation in State institutions without leaving a bottom-up strategy in leftist politics. As much disagreement as we could feel while reading Taylor's book, it brings forth and shows that old debates within the leftist tradition are still pertinent, ongoing, and unresolved.

The book is divided into three sections. Part I, *Situating Contestation,* introduces the study of social movements and their history, starting with the French Revolution and expanding into the globalisation movement. Chapter 3 examines the emergence of New Social Movements (NNSSMM) as a reaction to the old traditional left. The next chapter focuses on NNSSMM's oblivion of the political economy and the advent of identity politics, which contributes to the neoliberal order. Underlining the interplay between traditional leftist theory and practice, chapter 5 delves into the contemporary theories of the left in search of answers. Part II, *Contesting the Twenty-First Century: An Analysis of Occupy* draws interesting conclusions from interviews conducted during the Occupy Wall Street, Occupy London, Occupy Oakland and Occupy Melbourne movements. Here, Taylor demonstrates the problems within each encampment: that they were not truly horizontal, they were incapable of endurance, and had difficulties managing the various trends within them (reformists versus radicals). For Taylor, one of the Occupy movement's biggest problems lay in the lack of a 'subject of change'

(Chapter 7) However, in the subsequent chapter, he recognises that despite the Internet's role in fostering the movement, Occupy's claim to be legitimate through their 'right to the city', along with the direct encounters between activists, were its most important long-term effects.

Part III, *Claiming the Twenty-First Century,* draws on Nicos Pulantzas' work in order to offer the left a strategy moving forward, that is, the return to a balanced engagement with the State in order to avoid an ideological and physical gap between the 'rulers' and the 'ruled'. Chapter 10 calls for a return to communism and the conceptualisation of 'class' as a solution in building a massive popular movement.

Social Movements and Democracy's analysis of Occupy in core countries brings the reader to the everyday lived discrepancies within the encampments. While these discrepancies are necessary to revisit, one misses a more in depth analysis of the State as a repressive instrument along with the neoliberal and therefore regressive forces. Furthermore, the lessons learnt from the experience of other non-core countries, not just Venezuela, which he mentions, that share the same strategic philosophy, would have made the reader rethink the possible positive outcomes of the Occupy strategy. In Arab contexts, the strategy was called 'Revolution' (another reminder that words matter) and many such 'revolutions' resulted in long-lasting dictatorships being overthrown, despite the counter-counter revolutionary backlash. In Tunisia, notwithstanding the many problems still faced by its citizens, the movement overthrew a thirty-year long dictatorship, and the population remains strongly politicised through street protests.

Although somehow sympathetic to the Occupy movement's positive effects and anarchist tendencies, the author's defence of the Marxist tradition is evident from the book's beginning and clearly stated in the conclusion. It seems to propose a renewal of leftist strategies rather than counteracting the democratic crisis. Overall, therefore, the book makes an important contribution to the ongoing debates within the leftist tradition and, despite possible disagreements, it brings forth necessary debates, allowing the reader to take away many important lessons.

Laura Galián, Universidad de Granada

Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*

London: Yale University Press, 2017; 326pp; ISBN 9780300215120

Just after midnight on 28 January 2011, I was in my flat in downtown Cairo, arranging to meet friends at the protests that day after Friday prayers. I noticed that

my internet had stopped working. Concerned, I picked up my mobile only to see that that, too, had no network. It turned out that this was an internet and mobile network shut-down, ordered by the Egyptian government. As alarming as that moment was at the time, Zeynep Tufekci shows that this act was a blunder by Hosni Mubarak – the authoritarian president of Egypt. Having initially underestimated the importance of the internet in the growth of anti-government activism, this crude act of censorship amidst the early days of the Egyptian Revolution galvanised protesters and perhaps even encouraged more people to turn out into the streets.

Tufekci is an activist, academic and veteran of the internet. Her wide-ranging and thought-provoking exploration of networked protest – in this context, protest movements that have assimilated digital technologies – touches on movements and dissent across the globe but focuses mainly on Gezi Park in Turkey, Tahrir Square in Egypt (it is a shame that her analysis considers only Cairo), and the Occupy movement in the United States.

Tufekci explains the networked public sphere – Durkheim is oft-cited – and how this has shaped consumption and production of news and politics. In the digital age, attention has become more valuable than information. She explores how digital technology can shape movements' strategies (for example, Facebook's 'like' function increasing a tendency for sharing positive news); how these functions are shaped by its founders, programmers and owners; but also the space for shaping or subverting the technology by its users.

The book analyses the mechanisms of organising and assesses movements' narrative, disruptive, and electoral capacities to achieve social change. Tufekci then considers governments' counter-revolutionary repertoires and how much these have advanced since Mubarak's clumsy response in 2011. Tufekci highlights that in the digital era, censorship in the form of total denial of access is not effective, therefore governments instead seek to deny social movements attention, focus and credibility. There is a fascinating telling of the role of digital technology in the attempted coup in Turkey in 2016, during which President Erdoğan used Facetime to call CNN in order to show that he was still alive and that the coup had thus far failed.

The underlying thesis of the book is that digital technologies enable networked movements to grow very quickly but without prior building of collective capacity through shared experience, which leads to future frailties. Tufekci illustrates this with the example of the civil rights movement in the United States building to the climax of the march on Washington in 1963. In contrast, networked protest movements often *start* with a mass protest, such as the Occupy movement in Zuccotti Park in New York. Digital tools give networked movements power because they can organise in more horizontal and in some ways more egalitarian manner, can reverse

the power imbalance of the state to some extent, and need less infrastructure while millions can participate. On the flip side, the fragility of networked protests can be seen in tactical freeze ('Tahrir or bust', p80), a result of not having developed mechanisms for collective decision-making and therefore being unable to negotiate with adversaries or even within the movement. This explanation is persuasive in explaining the chosen scenarios but potentially risks conflating protests with movements. What of the movements that engage in slower, traditional organising *and* deploy digital technologies to mobilise protests, albeit not on the scale of Gezi, Tahrir or Occupy?

Tufekci is particularly convincing on the dangers of digital dualism – the idea that the 'virtual world' isn't the 'real world' – and in undermining the accusations of 'slacktivism'. She compellingly argues that offline versus online is a false binary, and this misunderstands the digital reconfiguration of the public sphere. She critiques the techno-determinism of Western journalists asking protesters in the Middle East if social media had *caused* the uprisings, demonstrating that this is a perspective that ignores the complexity of causation, and the situations and agency of the people using the technology.

The author's breadth of interviews, research and first-hand experience enrich a text that engages sociology, political science and technology, though perhaps at the expense of the historical and political context from which the protest movements arose.

Lisa Matthews, Right to Remain

Paolo Gerbaudo, *The Mask and the Flag: Populism, Citizenism and Global Protest*

London: C. Hurst & Co., 2017; 256pp; ISBN 978-1-84904-556-8

The Mask and the Flag continues Paolo Gerbaudo's examination of the theory and practice of recent social movements, in particular what he calls the movement of the squares: the uprisings beginning with the Arab Spring in 2011 that saw the occupation of public space as a common tactic. These movements, he argues, represent a shift away from the anti-statist prefiguration of the alterglobalisation movement towards an engagement with electoral politics and populist imaginary of 'the citizens'.

Gerbaudo depicts the radical practice at the heart of the movement of the squares as 'neo-anarchism', a position he links to writers such as David Graeber, Mark Bray

and Marina Sitrin. This neo-anarchism, it is argued, provided the movements with their means – participatory and consensus-based forms of decision making – while the narrative content eschewed the anti-statism and anti-electoralism of anarchist politics. The aim of the movements of the squares was not to build a counter-society but to ensure that state power was more responsive to the demands of the citizens.

This marks a direct challenge to those authors who have claimed that the central value of Occupy and other movements is that they show how a democratic society should operate. Gerbaudo's argument is that while anarchist in form, in content they aimed at establishing popular sovereignty in the context of the nation state. Part of this story of the movement of the squares is the turn towards electoral politics that – if not entirely capturing the spirit and membership of the movements – can certainly be seen as a result of their mobilisations.

While many anarchists might sneer at such an electoral turn, the argument Gerbaudo is making operates at a more fundamental level. His position in the book is that the 'neo-anarchist' practice of the movement of the squares ultimately failed to provide, firstly, an effective mobiliser – instead it was populism and even a return of national identity that united people – and, second, a realistic and capable method of democratic governance as an alternative to the state – rather, consensus decision-making and general assemblies led to inertia and de-motivation of participants.

The argument about the populist nature of the movements of the squares is well-founded and well-evidenced through interviews with movement participants. Less well-supported, I would suggest, is the more polemic claim in the book that electoralism on the national stage is a necessary step towards realising the aims of these movements. In the cases where left-populist parties have had some level of electoral success, and even in the case of Syriza forming a government, the results have been somewhat less than satisfactory, and Podemos, for many the model of the left-populist party, has both moved away from participatory engagement and seen a slump in popular support. What is perhaps a more promising manifestation of the radical spirit of the movements in question is the municipalism that has seen success, for example, through the Barcelona en Comú take-over of the mayoralty of Barcelona and the expansion of democratic structures of governance in Kurdistan.

This radical municipalism, while mentioned briefly in the book as a realisation of the horizontalism and participatory democracy of neo-anarchism, is left unexplored as an alternative to the electoral politics of populist parties like Podemos and Syriza; and is instead in fact conflated with it. Similarly unexplored in the book is the response from within the anarchist elements of the movements to the failure of the mass general assembly as a forum of governance. Again mentioned only briefly, the 'spokescouncils' introduced during the Occupy Wall Street encampment

suggest other methods of ensuring effective governance while maintaining the participatory character of the movements' anarchism.

At the end of the book, Gerbaudo highlights the desire to 'marry the participatory ethos of the movement of the squares with a more strategic coordination of collective efforts' (p245). Are these not found more in radical municipalism than in populist political parties? Have anarchists themselves not developed these methods rather than being eclipsed by them? These questions are only raised very briefly in the book. Nonetheless, *The Mask and the Flag* does present a convincing argument that populism and 'citizenism' can act as unifiers and mobilisers in ways that other paradigms of the left have failed to equal in recent years. The book is an important contribution to debates on how to make anarchist politics relevant and effective and poses crucial challenges to anarchist practice that should be taken seriously and not rejected out of hand.

Thomas Swann, Loughborough University

Kevin Van Meter, *Guerrillas of Desire: Notes on Everyday Resistance and Organizing to make a Revolution Possible*

Oakland and Edinburgh: AK Press, 2017; 196pp; ISBN 9781849352727

Guerillas of Desire is as a significant work which develops an understanding of how the concept of resistance should be located in Marxist and anarchist traditions. The analysis serves the important purpose of constructing common frameworks of understanding between autonomist Marxism, chiefly through the work of Harry Cleaver, and social movement activism. The book is split into three parts. The first explains the concept of 'everyday resistance' and builds a theoretical framework which is later applied to historical forms of oppression; the second is an impressive historical account which locates a similarity in forms of resistance under different historical forms of exploitation. A wide conception of the 'working class' is crucial for the narrative of the book, which demonstrates the similarity of forms of 'revolt against work' to various forms of capitalist domination in slavery, peasantry, industrial proletarianism and social reproduction. The third section focuses on the implications of this approach for contemporary organisation with a critique of the traditional union form and one of its apparent successors, the non-profit, and ends with a reflection on the need for new forms of organisation which focus on the self-activity of the broadly defined working class.

The first section of the work engages theoretically with aspects of power,

differentiating between *potestas* – the power enacted directly upon others, generally by the state (the exposure of which being its own form of resistance); and *potentia* – the power to affect change through resistance, in part as systems of domination are forced to adapt to insurgency. It is this latter concept of *potentia* which is largely drawn on in the later historical sections of the work, highlighting the power inherent in the collective, disruptive action of resistant subaltern groups.

The impressive second section discusses the forms and strategies of everyday resistance present under conditions of slavery, peasantry, and waged and domestic labour. Of particular interest are discussions of how groups constructed ethical positions to justify elements of radical or illegal resistance, especially through the subversion of (intended) forms of control (such as the church); and the gradual co-option of other groups sharing common interests (such as the illegal trade that emerged between slaves and poor whites in the antebellum South, itself a form of 'everyday resistance'). This analysis is extended in a discussion of peasant politics which, as well as offering an impressive review of the literature, seeks to demonstrate the way in which capitalist regimes of enclosure and scientific agriculture develop in response to peasant resistance.

The final historical chapter explores the development of the labour movement in the US through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and, drawing on autonomist Marxist analysis of the collapse of the Keynesian welfare state, highlights the role played by forms of resistance in terms of class, gender and race. In this exploration, the chapter highlights the forms of 'organization' – solidarity, communication and mutual aid – which are explored in previous historical contexts earlier in the book, and contrasts these with formal labour unions of the era, offering a powerful critique of unions as being co-opted and complicit in the exploitation inherent in Fordist production. This critique of formal organisations continues into the next section, which starts to discuss the contemporary era of neoliberalism and forms of exploitation, raising concerns around affective work and precariarity. In this third section, a compelling alternative account of organization is developed along three lines. First, in response to Alinsky, Van Meter argues that a structural understanding of exploitation and oppression must inform resistance movements. Second, the book provides a critique of the co-option of non-profit welfare providers by the neoliberal state, labelling the non-profits as 'administrators of poverty' (p142). Third, Van Meter argues that the concept of prefiguration should be replaced by one of emancipation. In so doing, the field is opened for a discussion of organisation which is spontaneous, autonomous and solidaristic, constantly agitating through acts of everyday resistance.

Guerrillas of Desire begins with a self-confessed provocation: the left misun-

derstands resistance. The implications of this claim, which forms the central thesis of the work, have huge significance for those with an interest in both Marxist or anarchist approaches to resistance, and the book goes a long way towards building bridges between these two approaches, highlighting the contribution made to the understanding of class conflict by autonomist Marxists. The book could be best understood as an awakening – both to the nature and capabilities of those who the left seeks to mobilise and organise, and to the historical record and future possibilities of the revolt against work.

Robin Jervis, University of Brighton

Daniel Guerin, *For a Libertarian Communism,* David Berry (ed.)

Oakland: PM Press, 2017; 160pp; ISBN 9781629632360

English-speaking anarchists are most likely to know Daniel Guerin for his book, *Anarchism* (1970) and his anthology, *No Gods No Masters* (1998). This little book, however, is a selection of his writings on the topic of working toward an integration of anarchism and Marxism (The cover has a picture of Marx looking over Bakunin's shoulder as he reads a left newspaper.)

> The Marxists have turned their backs on me as an anarchist, and the anarchists, because of my Marxism, have not always wanted to view me as one of them ... I believe in both the need for and practicality of a synthesis between Marxism and anarchism (p39).

At various times he called his approach 'libertarian socialism', 'libertarian communism', or 'libertarian Marxism'. When he called himself a 'libertarian Marxist', it was not primarily a reference to the minority antistatist-autonomous trend in Marxism. Rather he meant that he was a Marxist socialist who was open to learning from anarchism. Some of us approach the issue of a possible 'synthesis' from the other direction: as anarchists who are open to learning from Marxism. For us, Guerin has much to say.

The life of Daniel Guerin (1904–1988) is described in an excellent introduction by David Berry. In the 1930s Guerin joined the revolutionary wing of the French socialist movement. During World War II, he joined the Trotskyist underground. After the war he became disillusioned with Trotskyism. In the post-war period he became prominent as an opponent of the French-Algerian war and as a

supporter of the Algerian people –without endorsing the nationalist programmes of their leaders. As a Gay activist, he was regarded as the 'grandfather' of LGBT liberation in France.

In the '50s, Guerin 'discovered' anarchism. He found Bakunin's writings to be a 'revelation'. He was deeply impressed by Proudhon's advocacy of worker self-management and federalism. 'The future belongs to the autonomous management of enterprises by associations of workers', federated together (p77). As a Gay man, he even valued Stirner's individualist-egoist anarchism, for Stirner's rejection of moralism and puritanism.

However he was primarily in sympathy with the tradition of revolutionary class-struggle anarchist-communism – the kind of anarchism which had most in common with libertarian-autonomous Marxism. He sought 'a synthesis ... between the two equally fertile schools of thought: that of Marx and Engels and that of Proudhon and Bakunin' (p43). Like Marx and Bakunin, he believed in the possibility (not inevitability) of a revolution by workers and all the oppressed, as demonstrated by the May 1968 near-revolution in France.

Guerin regarded Marxism as having both libertarian-humanist and authoritarian-centralist sides. There was Marx's analysis of alienation under capitalism; his insistence that the emancipation of the working class must be conquered by the working class itself; his radically democratic analysis of the Paris Commune; his historical materialism; and his analysis of how capitalism works. On the other hand, there was an authoritarian 'Jacobin' trend in Marx's Marxism, which had been further developed by Lenin. Marx's programme for taking state power, through elections or revolutions, and then nationalising industry, led to state capitalism (as Bakunin had warned). Marx's historical materialism and his political economy could be, and usually were, interpreted in a mechanistic manner, leading to authoritarian conclusions. Marx's expulsion of the Bakuninists from the First International had been an historical disaster. In the '70s, Guerin became an enthusiast for Rosa Luxemburg, whose life and writings fit the libertarian socialist synthesis he believed in.

Many anti-authoritarian radicals are woodenly sectarian. Daniel Guerin, however, was willing to work with almost anyone on the Left. While generally rejecting the Marxist strategy of participating in elections, he was in favour of working inside labour unions and was in solidarity with national liberation struggles. At all times, his revolutionary goal was a cooperative federation of self-managed industries and communities. This booklet is the perfect place to begin to explore Guerin's libertarian communism.

Wayne Price

Patricia Burke Wood, *Citizenship, Activism and the City: The Invisible and the Impossible*

London: Routledge, 2017; 136pp; ISBN 9780815351535

Patricia Burke Wood argues that critical urban theory (CUT) needs to take intersectionality seriously. The vanguard of radical urbanism, we are told, is still too male, too Marxist, and prone to incorporate the questions of race, gender, and identity without truly thinking them through. Highlighting an anarchist approach as potentially preferable truly sets this work apart. Attempts to juggle radical feminism, anti-racist politics, activism *and* anarchist ideas of resistance are rarely seen in CUT, and the book's greatest merit is its ability to see beyond the narrow confines of an expected reference list or field of vision.

Unfortunately, such breadth in so short a volume leaves it open to several 'easy' challenges, and too much of this book feels thinly substantiated. One edited volume is taken as representative of CUT in its entirety. Anarchism is reduced to a small selection of Emma Goldman's pamphlets. An unholy trinity of David Harvey, Slavoj Žižek and Noam Chomsky are lumped together as somehow politically synonymous, with the latter highlighted as a prime example of the limitations of Marxism. We apparently need a 'citizenship theory', but are never told what this is. Most glaringly, Wood rails repeatedly against the dangers of an 'approach from a bird's eye view' and highlights the necessity of paying attention to the 'details of the inhabited city', and yet the book itself remains oddly mute on any actual city or the lives lived in it (p50). Dublin is hauled in by way of introduction, but the reader is never effectively shown how 'the inhabited city' in abstract form is actually that different from 'the city' in abstract form. These examples illustrate the book at its worst, and frequently left me frustrated. For a piece of work that sets out with such a necessary set of questions, it is a shame to see it trip up over such low hurdles.

It speaks to the strength and urgency of Wood's purpose that despite these issues, the central argument of the book – that CUT, à la Goldman, needs to acknowledge all forms of oppression and all forms of resistance – holds together remarkably well. CUT, we are told, must 'address all the ways in which the city liberates and oppresses' (p97). It should not impose the need for its own theory, but take seriously those living and struggling on the ground. These are important conclusions, and shine most strongly in the chapter on *Sad, sick and diva citizens*. Here Lauren Berlant's idea of the diva citizen is deployed particularly effectively. 'Small' and seemingly insignificant support structures are recast as the seeds of

multiple invisible utopias; tiny recurring moments of peace, recovery, and mutual aid that allow those marginalised from society to survive and thrive.

This coalesces around a rejection of 'unity'. Wood argues that if we take intersectionality seriously, then the idea of 'the people' becomes not only anachronistic and fantastical, but inevitably dangerous, for it violently denies (implicitly or explicitly) our differences. This presents a daunting challenge: so much of the radical *hope* in CUT rests on the promise of 'real' democracy as a challenge to the capitalist state, where unity works through a pursuit of common aims (consider, in particular, the work of Andy Merrifield and Mark Purcell). If we neuter this dream, the result is something of a political vacuum, where only everyday coping mechanisms are left to pick up the pieces. Enter anarchism, which is brought in to tie the pieces together. This *almost* works, but the book does little to advance an idea of anarchism that manages to enact this 'impossible' utopia of disunity on any meaningful scale. The sense of politics here feels both deeply radical and alarmingly safe, siphoned off into an essentialism that celebrates our divisions. Wood's analysis of the problem is astute (despite its occasional flaws), necessary, and engagingly written; her diagnosis of the solution is much harder to imagine in action. This tension – between the idea of unity and utopias of difference – is unresolved, and left me thinking for quite some time. This is a quality that may not be as easy to praise as satisfying answers, but is no less valuable in the realm of ideas.

Hamish Kallin, University of Edinburgh

George Ciccariello-Maher, *Decolonizing Dialectics*

Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017; 242 pp: ISBN 9780822362432

The introduction to *Decolonizing Dialectics* is appropriately titled 'Ruptures,' since Ciccariello-Maher argues for a new and radical sense of the dialectic, both in practical and theoretical terms. Mired in a complacent unity characterised by a teleology of purpose and an optimistic promise of progress, the dialectic has, as Maher argues, lost its way. It no longer serves as the vehicle for social change, but rather as a means to mask alterity in favour of an insidious, homogeneous universalism. Maher's solution is to decolonize dialectics through what he terms a 'counterdiscourse' offered as a means to radicalise the dialectical tradition by emphasising rupture and at the same time discarding the notion of unity. This counterdiscouse is firmly founded in the centre of the dialectic and revels in the spirit of conflict.

As to the question of why dialectics, Maher responds that while a *radical-*

ized dialectic is capable of resisting the notion of a dialectical progression moving inexorably and deterministically in accordance with its own internal oppositions, a *decolonized* dialectic understands both the historical origin of that movement as well as its brutal reality. Questioning the fixed linearity of the dialectical movement and recognising the subjective capacity to enact change is one thing, but a decolonized dialectic embarks from the historical experience of colonialism itself by placing demands on its victims to 'catch-up' to the standards of the European colonists while stripping the colonized of their inherent identity.

At first glance, the intellectuals Maher utilises – Georges Sorel, Frantz Fanon, and Enrique Dussel – seem to be an odd combination to support the main argument of the book. But, as Maher deftly demonstrates, they have more in common than meets the eye. We start our journey with *fin de siècle* French syndicalist Georges Sorel, who distils the basic contours of a radicalised dialectic based on class struggle. Maher argues that class struggle, derailed by the false promise of social unity, inspired Sorel's conclusion that working class conditions do not guarantee an oppositional working class identity. Rather, identity must be aggressively and subjectively projected in open conflict. For Maher, Sorel does not provide the origin of decolonized dialectics; rather, through his pervasive class orientation and critique of Marxism he presents a radically combative foundation allowing for the conditions of possibility for a subsequent decolonisation.

The second of Maher's intellectuals, and perhaps the most important, is Frantz Fanon who serves as a link between a European dialectic and one more openly decolonial. Quite unlike Sorel's concern with class struggle that sees the dialectic frozen in a sea of sameness, Fanon views the issue from the Hegelian master-slave relationship where white supremacy usurps the dialectic. For Fanon, the result is a prevailing zone of nonbeing where recognition and reciprocity are non-existent. Yet Maher argues that, much like Sorel, Fanon advocates a subjective, identitarian struggle considered necessary to jumpstart the dialectical movement, all at the expense of determinism, teleology, and pre-emptive reconciliation.

Lastly, Maher brings into focus the Argentine philosopher of liberation Enrique Dussel. Although Dussel rejects dialectics, Maher argues that he does not stray very far. Rather than rejecting a decolonised dialectic, Dussel insists on incorporating the category of Levinasian exteriority into a dialectics of national and popular identity that becomes an essential ingredient for Maher's overall position.

Maher's book is an important effort to redefine the dialectic in a more radical and indeed, violent manner. And, while there is much to commend this book, I would offer one criticism. Fanon seems to be the fulcrum point upon which Maher stakes his argument. Much of that argument, however, is an extended critique of

Sartre's *Orpheé Noir* as a 'dialectical betrayal'. While Sartre believed the Negritude movement would eventually be subsumed into a greater class struggle, he did not, as Maher suggests, radically alter his position when he wrote the introduction to *The Wretched of the Earth*. While the discussion of this alleged betrayal is interesting, it does not prove decisive for Maher's overall argument. Perhaps a better approach would have been not to vilify Sartre but to embrace him, albeit in a different manner. By this I mean Maher could have turned to the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, which rejects the very dialectic of unity Maher disdains and adopts a far more radical, combative, and violent dialectic designed to bring about the social change Maher otherwise so eloquently argues for.

William L. Remley, Saint Peter's University

Julian Wright, *Socialism and the Experience of Time: Idealism and the Present in Modern France*

Oxford: OUP, 2017; 294pp; ISBN 9780199533589

Julian Wright's *Socialism and the Experience of Time* is an ambitious investigation into socialist conceptions and perceptions of the present time and their interplay with doctrines of social change. It is a thoughtful but lively account of the political philosophy of key French socialists in the early twentieth century, which seeks to reconceptualise debates on and understandings of socialism in the long nineteenth century, through the conceptual lens of 'time'. This approach, Wright argues, problematises the canonical opposition between reform and revolution, highlighting the idealism of French socialism and recasting it as a broad 'challenge to modern culture' (p22). It also challenges the ways in which those concerned with social change in all its forms usually opt for long-term, structure-focused frameworks and analyses, thereby overlooking more complex and personal scales as well as the personal, subjective experience of living through history.

The monograph opens with an erudite theoretical/ philosophical inquiry into theories of time, incorporating Benjamin's 'Jetztzeit' (now-time) and George Gurvitch's definitions of plural social time, and interweaving them with historiographic debates relating to the French revolution and its aftermath. The second part focuses on how early twentieth-century socialists made sense of the eventful century which had just elapsed – how they understood the emergence of socialism in earlier generations as well as the history of the working-class movement in France. The third section offers a series of intellectual biographies of prominent

socialist theorists and writers, probing again 'the socialist experience of time', this time from the perspective of the time of the individual: Benoît Malon and André Léo, Georges Renard, Jean Jaurès, Marcel Sembat and Léon Blum.

This is a stimulating and well-executed book. For a scholar of anarchism and this specific period of French history, it is especially interesting to see how conceptions of reformism and revolution clashed and solidified at this pivotal time, without the sense that either was being compromised. Another fascinating aspect – which is at the centre of Wright's argument regarding the personal experience of time and its importance to politics – is the social, personal history of politics, the study of the socialist milieu which underpins intellectual biography: the interactions and occasional squabbles between famous theorists (and their spouses), their written exchanges, social lunches, and institutional links. Overall, Wright's conceptual framework results in a thought-provoking and successful historical study blending social history with philosophy.

Despite the wide meaning of 'socialism' (and its French equivalent, *socialisme*) in the period under consideration, the book focuses on French parliamentary socialism. Nonetheless, it offers much to reflect upon for those whose primary interest lies in anarchism and all things revolutionary. If it is permitted to digress slightly from the genre of the review, I would like to offer an anarchist perspective on the book, to open up a dialogue with some current questions in anarchist historiography and also to stress the relevance of anarchism to this study of time and socialism. Indeed, while anarchists only appear on a couple of occasions, there are obvious connections. First, these theorists occasionally moved in the same circles and talked – thus partaking in shared social time. In 1898, for example, a spy reported on a recent cross-socialist meeting: 'Jaurès and [the anarchist] Sébastien Faure spent a long time in discussion. Jaurès claimed that the revolutionary movement should be delayed. Sébastien Faure argued that however difficult, and whatever happened, the night from Tuesday to Wednesday should go down in history. Jaurès's opinion eventually prevailed'.[1] Another nudge comes from the cover of the book, which is based on Paul Signac's painting 'Au Temps d'Harmonie', famously inspired by the anarchist Charles Malato's statement that 'the golden age is not in the past, it is in the future'. This, again, bears testimony to the centrality of these questionings regarding revolution and its temporality across the entire socialist movement. Lastly, in many ways, the concepts which inform the book echo both the anarchist educationalism that developed from the 1890s onwards, and the notion of prefigurative politics which is central to contemporary theories of anarchism and social movements more generally, in that these seek to reconcile life in society with revolutionary action. But of course, all revolutionaries

think about time and history in relation to their activism in the present – this is a fruitful topic of inquiry, as Wright's study demonstrates.

Constance Bantman, University of Surrey

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1. Archives de la Préfecture de Police de Paris, BA1497, report by Foureur dated 27 October 1898

No!: Against Adult Supremacy

London: Sinney Distro/Dog Section Press, 2017; 319pp; ISBN 9780993543531

I don't remember how I came across 'Underground Power', a young people's liberation group in the 1990s. My memory is of a badly printed double-sided piece of paper discussing youth oppression, and of a workshop in London where young people from Manchester spoke gently of revolutionary ideas. Underground Power was not explicitly anarchist, yet as a teenager it was like a breath of fresh air – I particularly remember its radical critique of compulsory education as dampening young people's revolutionary spirit:

> ... despite our protests, we were still dragged kicking and screaming into schools. At school we were constantly told how stupid we were and started to believe it, we lost respect for ourselves and the belief that we could change the world ... This slowed down our liberation ... [1*]

Underground Power was in my mind while reading this book, an anthology of twenty issues of the online zine *No! Against Adult Supremacy*. School is a key theme here, too, with articles about deschooling, play and home-schooling (like most of the book, these tend to be written from a USA perspective). A strength of the book is a strong sense of youth oppression and liberation shaped by class, race, gender, dis/ability and sexuality – Damien Sojoyner writes an interesting critique of the 'school to prison pipeline' theory; Jerome Hunt and Aisha Moodie-Mills discuss the criminalisation of gender nonconforming youth; and there are articles on ablism, intersex and neurodivergence. A plethora of issues are discussed: the criminal justice system, social care, parenting and care-giving, corporal punishment, and the inclusion or exclusion of children from meetings and other activist spaces.

Reading the book felt a little like arriving late at a gathering where interesting conversations are already underway – disjointed but stimulating. Articles contradicted each other, which is fine, but there was little sense that any of the writers were in dialogue with each other. This led to a lack of coherence; yet the articles were short and easy to read in bite-sized chunks. Producing a book from an online zine is a good way of reaching different audiences and invites a different kind of reading; yet I would have liked some discussion or reflection on the zine's inspiration and who was involved (not names so much, but some idea of whether it was a collective project, where the editors or organisers were coming from politically and positionally, and whether children and young people were involved).

Many articles appear to be by parents and activists, while others are excerpts from longer academic pieces on children's oppression and liberation. (These usually had their references removed; while understanding the impetus towards readability, there are places where at least a few footnotes were needed to help readers source evidence and statistics). Children and young people rarely appear as contributors until the last few issues; some of the earlier contributors might be children or young people, but the use of 'they' or 'you' rather than 'we' suggests not. There is something odd and potentially condescending about envisaging anarchism as 'liberating children from an oppressive society' (p34), and about suggestions for what children should do and think about: 'Let other young people know how you feel about parental coercion ... Children need to recognise that they are a uniquely oppressed class ... ' (p35). Throughout the book, adultism and adult supremacy are compared to racism or patriarchy, yet it is difficult to imagine a zine on racism or sexism written mainly by white people or men respectively, at least not without serious discussion of the writers' own positionality and privilege.

Whether or not children and young people were part of the editorial group, it wouldn't have been difficult to involve them – through interviews or artwork if not through essays, perhaps in collaboration with radical educators and youth groups. It appears that at some point this omission was recognised, and issue 18 includes a TED transcript by a 'kid' eloquently challenging the word 'childish' and other forms of age discrimination; yet this writer goes on to joke about charging a family member ten per cent interest on a loan, and to celebrate Microsoft and Bill Gates. This was so clearly out of kilter with the politics of the zine that the chapter's inclusion appeared tokenistic.

Children and young people themselves need to be central to a project focusing on their liberation and this could have been more clearly discussed throughout the book. Later, there were welcome perspectives from anarchist and activist children and young people, including Joy's beautifully sweary 'Child Privilege', Elena

Hagopyan's experiences of adult bullying of children with health problems, and Isis Nelson's attack on adultism: 'My snarl will be vicious and my voice louder when I'm discounted just because of my age' (p307).

I am not sure whether the writers envisage an adult or youth readership, or both – I would have enjoyed it as a young activist and playworker who did not get along well with long anarchist tracts. As an adult youth worker and researcher, my favourite chapter was the interview with Carla Bergman, a community artist and anarchist who works alongside young people on the Thistle youth project. Carla speaks in a tangible way about the importance of trust (young collective members at the Thistle have keys to the space), and a grounded recognition of power relations that centralises solidarity rather than being 'permissive and nice' (p40).

Despite some reservations I recommend this book, will return to parts of it again, and am glad to have read it. It is valuable in its highlighting of adult supremacy, its diversity of contributions, and its discussion of youth oppression and liberation in the broader context of the normalisation and legitimisation of hierarchy, domination and violent oppression.

The online zine can be accessed on the Stinney Distro website, alongside further resources such as posters and a printable 'mini-zine'.

Tania de St Croix, King's College London

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1. J. Bird & K. Ibidun, 'Underground power', chapter 8 in, M. John (ed.) *Children in charge: The child's right to a fair hearing* (London, 1996), p125

Derek Wall, *Elinor Ostrom's Rules for Radicals: Cooperative Alternatives Beyond Markets and States*

London: Pluto Press, 2017; 138pp; ISBN 9780745399355

The Green Party activist Derek Wall pays homage to both the economist Elinor Ostrom and the radical campaigner Saul Alinsky in this clear and concise text on managing the commons. Over the years Wall has written a number of books that are aimed at educating and inspiring eco-socialists. At first glance a book on Ostrom and the commons may seem a path too well trodden for the author to add anything new but the text's importance is that it firmly shows that we should look beyond existing structures and mindsets to arrangements that are decidedly

anarchist in spirit. This is not to say that either Ostrom or Wall are anarchists. Wall readily acknowledges that Ostrom's own politics was somewhat veiled by the neutrality of her discipline – economics – and her own personal preferences. She certainly was not of the Left but Wall's intended readership is. The book is also a guide to sustainable environmental management based on the clear rules laid down by Ostrom's work on governing the commons.

In recent years, historians, social scientists and political activists have shown considerable interest in the notion of the commons and how privatised public or communal space can be retrieved, protected, cared for and defended by the people who have the true right to do so. At the base of many of these studies and observations are the principles of equality and cooperation. Authority and decision-making are lodged within the community and while there may be in-groups and out-groups the overall aim of *Rules for Radicals* is to clarify how a dynamic equilibrium can be maintained that benefits everyone dependent on what is held in common. The significance of these rules are certainly and most obviously applicable to the relatively small scale although it is conceivable that, suitably and sensitively adapted, they could work at much grander scales. Much Green and anarchist thought focusses on the importance of the local and Wall states that people are more likely to respect the rules if they have been engaged in making and modifying them. Those who contravene the rules, the 'free riders', should be subject to a graded system of sanctions. This happened in the past. An external management body, such as the state or a corporation, could regulate the commons but such a body is likely to be insensitive to local conditions. For Ostrom, and for Wall, the rules are the people's and the product of deliberation, agreement and a pragmatic approach to problem solving.

Decentralisation and deep democracy is at the core of this book. Wall refers to Occupy, Murray Bookchin, the Kurdish writer Ocalan, Chantal Mouffe and others when discussing how giving voice to or creating space for inclusive communal decision-making can take place. As Wall notes intersectionality, equality and a healthy scepticism concerning the efficacy of conventional political parties and the state are key values of many Greens. For self-governance to succeed careful preparation is needed. An 'education for democracy' that embraces genuine participation and fashions new predispositions and proclivities for trust and cooperation is required. Political institutions, social and economic relationships need to be transformed and this problem of transformation is one that will, almost inevitably involve contestation and conflict. Wall recognises this by addressing some of the pre and proscriptions that have emerged from various marxist movements and theories particularly those of Hardt and Negri. What he tends to ignore is

the anarchist-communist tradition in which a strong focus on social as opposed to political revolution is often quite evident. The classical anarchist Kropotkin does get a mention as does William Morris but more recent figures like Colin Ward or Richard F. Day unfortunately do not.

Wall reveals himself as a practical person and a pragmatist. He discusses Ostrom's use of IAD (Institutional Analysis and Development) methods as being useful despite being abstract, overly complex and limited. Ostrom did seek alternatives to the market and to corporate and state power and Wall is undoubtedly correct to note that a better understanding of institutions will help us challenge and change them. What Ostrom ultimately gives Greens, he concludes, is 'an emphasis on pragmatism'. This is fine but then what? One step at a time.

John Blewitt, The Schumacher Institute