Reviews

Andrew Adonis, *Ernest Bevin: Labour's Churchill*, Biteback Publishing, London, 2020, xvi + 352pp; ISBN 9781785905988, £20.00 hbk

Alan Bullock's three-volume biography of Bevin – the first volume was published sixty years ago – has proved pre-emptive; very few studies of Bevin have followed. Adonis is mostly concerned to praise Bevin's achievements and there is no doubt that there is much to marvel at. This is no history but we can at least agree with him that Bevin's career has much to teach us about the history of the Labour movement in Britain during the first half of the twentieth century and beyond. Space restrictions mean that I will take up only two of many interesting questions that a study of Bevin raises – his sense that he understood the working class and his foreign policy after 1945.

Bevin was born into poverty in 1881 in the village of Winsford on Exmoor and after a rudimentary education joined his brothers in Bristol where he began work aged thirteen, eventually becoming a horse driver of mineral water wagons. He also became a Baptist Sunday school teacher, influenced by the socialism of a local celebrity preacher. He attended WEA classes and meetings of the Bristol Socialist Society. As late as 1910, aged twenty-nine, he talked of becoming a missionary but he was already involved in the Right to Work agitation encouraged by the SDF since 1905 and local politics. The Avonmouth dock strike of June/July 1910 gave him an opportunity to organise the strikers' relief fund and promote the formation of a carters' union as a branch of the dockers' union, the better to assist the strike and strengthen labour in the port. His success in this venture got him elected as founding chairman of the Bristol carters' branch of the Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Workers' Union. He was a full-time official six months later and national organiser of the dockers' union by 1914. In 1920 he achieved renown as the 'the Dockers' KC' for his skilled defence of the case for a pay rise in the Royal Courts of Justice. Adonis minimises the role of the unprecedented strike wave and the surge in trade union membership in this period of Bevin's rise (1910-20) and focuses instead on his personal qualities – the energy, determination, organisational and negotiating skills, attention to detail and self-confidence which Bevin brought to bear in his work. His convictions are only mentioned in

passing, including his 'contempt' for almost all political leaders in these years (p28); his belief that a 'social revolution' was necessary; his opposition to the Great War, to conscription, and Labour's entry into the Lloyd George coalition; and his hostility to the 'ruling class'. None of this is examined in any detail or used to explain Bevin's leadership role in the trade union movement. His opposition to Communists, home and abroad, emerges as early as 1922 in Adonis' account, mostly through trade union work, which took him to numerous overseas conferences and tours in Europe and the USA. This work was Bevin's focus in the early 1920s as he drove through amalgamations that led to the formation of the Transport and General Workers' Union, a union he would lead for twenty-three years and dominate even longer.

Bevin was never interested in personal material gain and honours, but he was vain and vindictive. He saw himself as a champion of the working class – 'my people' as he called them (p181). He did not suspend this vocation during Labour governments, even though they also claimed to represent the people. He organised and defended strikes during Ramsay MacDonald's minority governments and his dislike of the Labour Prime Minister was both 'prodigious and mutual', as was his mistrust of left intellectuals. Bevin confessed that he had 'not much faith that the middle class politician will give us socialism' and perceived 'a mid-Victorian outlook' in the Labour leadership of 1924 (p60). This attitude was vindicated when MacDonald's second government could find only orthodox answers to the mass unemployment of 1929-31. Bevin found an ally in Keynes in demanding public investment but also called for devaluation of sterling and an end to the Gold Standard. In the 1930s he supported tariffs with imperial preference, nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy and planning. He never served on Labour's NEC and only became an MP when Churchill made him Minister of Labour in 1940. But he was no syndicalist. He believed in parliamentary reform and the need for independent labour representation. He saw communism and fascism in the 1930s as equally hostile to freely organised labour and played a leading role in opposing Labour pacifism. The General Strike's defeat had enabled him to get to the top of the TUC quickly and with Walter Citrine he steered a course looking for partnership with government and business. This tripartism materialised during the war and was consolidated by the Labour Governments of 1945-51 in which Bevin served as Foreign Secretary.

Like Arthur Henderson in 1914, Bevin reasoned that 'the country will always turn to the people who saved them' (p184) in gratitude for

their sacrifices in the war. By the end of 1942 6.5 million men were under Essential Work Orders and 8.5 million women were registered for national service. Bevin spoke up too for British foreign policy when it became controversial in 1944 after Churchill despatched troops to Greece to support the right in what Adonis calls 'a communist-inspired civil war'. He became Foreign Secretary when Labour formed the government in July 1945, perhaps because influential people had lobbied for his appointment (p229). Adonis correctly emphasises Bevin's determination to confront Stalin's aspirations well before the USA showed much interest in the matter. That meant opposing Soviet claims on German reparations, persuading the Americans to remain militarily committed in western Europe, creating a West German state, and blocking Soviet access to the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Bevin believed that Stalin in 1945 wanted to dominate Europe from the Baltic to the Adriatic and later talked hysterically of the Soviet urge for world domination. Adonis doesn't mention the realistic assessments of Russia's war-making potential that existed in 1945 which Bevin seems to have made no use of. The extent of the destruction in the Soviet Union is never mentioned, nor is the post-war famine, the continuing insurgency in the Ukraine, the dubious advantages to Stalin of Soviet domination in poor countries hostile to Russia, the technical deficiencies of Soviet industry, the shortages of every kind in food, raw materials, housing, and much else besides. The focus is on Bevin as the most consistent public opponent of the Soviet dictator between 1945 and 1951 and Adonis asserts that even his support for a British atomic bomb was 'directly related to the containment of Stalin' (p263). Following Bullock, he also credits Bevin with turning the vague offer of American aid to Europe in June 1947 into what became the Marshall Plan. Bevin's diplomacy led to NATO via the Anglo-French Dunkirk Treaty and its enlargement in the Brussels Pact. His conspicuous presence in the Labour government even helped to ensure that strikes in 1945-51 were a small fraction of those which erupted in 1919-20.

In the penultimate chapter we learn of Bevin's failures, while the final chapter calls for more Bevins. The biggest failures derived from Bevin's 'unreconstructed imperialist' convictions which saw him oppose Indian independence in Cabinet and attempt to acquire new colonies in north Africa. He supported the re-imposition of French and Dutch colonial power in south east Asia and ensured that Britain's swollen military commitments cost twice the amount spent on the NHS (in fact Britain was a warfare – rather than a welfare – state well into the 1970s). At the same time Bevin was a fervent advocate of 'development', for British purposes, of the

Crown Colonies in Africa and in any British dependency with scarce raw materials and foodstuffs. His anti-Semitism was an important factor in his mishandling of the Palestine crisis in Adonis' view. It was a prejudice Bullock tried to explain away and one Bevin shared with leading officials in the Foreign Office, though Adonis is silent on this wider context. In dealing with Bevin's opposition to British involvement in European unity he does admit that these were views he shared with most, if not all, of the Labour Cabinet. He should have added that the same was true of Bevin's imperialism and his conviction that Britain's Great Power status, and the imperial base on which it rested, had to be preserved. A closer examination of Bevin's anti-Soviet foreign policy would have shown its connections to these assumptions concerning British interests. It would also have shown that the military, the Joint Intelligence Committee, MI5, MI6 and leading officials in the Foreign Office had already identified the Soviet Union as the main problem for post-war Britain before Bevin had taken up his new job, though none of them believed that Stalin wanted another major war. Orme Sargent, who became Permanent Secretary at the FO in 1946, was calling for Britain to 'take the offensive in challenging Communist penetration in as many of the Eastern countries of Europe as possible' in early July 1945. Bevin's views complemented this outlook and as the most powerful man in the Labour Cabinet and a commanding figure in the party he restored the FO's standing in Whitehall and made sure the Cabinet and the party conformed to the policies he championed – bipartisan policies, as Anthony Eden often pointed out.

'Whatever may be my other weaknesses, I think I can claim that I understand the working classes of this country' (p202). Bevin shared this conceit with many of his contemporaries but it should not be allowed to pass without comment in view of Labour's fitful record in government over the last 120 years. Did Bevin understand that most working class voters did not support Labour before 1945; that most workers did not belong to trade unions; that most women voted Conservative? Bevin's vanity was certainly capacious but it is unlikely that he was claiming to understand any of these people. It is much more likely that he meant Labour voters and trade unionists among the working class and that he complacently assumed the rest of the working class would eventually follow his lead. Adonis doesn't consider that it might have been Bevin and people like him who played a big role in alienating many of Labour's presumed constituency, not to mention the lower middle class that Bevin looked down upon and the 'brain workers' who Sidney Webb and Arthur Henderson hoped to attract to Labour in 1918? He certainly had little sympathy with

women workers and women were confined to only tokenistic roles in Labour's governing bodies during and after Bevin's political career. 'Bevin had no time for claims by women for equal treatment' in 1945 when married women workers were barred from keeping their wartime jobs and they had no say in determining their wages while the war continued. Bevin was opposed to equal pay in the name of industrial peace. Adonis thinks it was 'left contrarianism' after 1951 that made Labour indifferent or hostile to winning power again on a pragmatic basis' (p325). But what about the party leaders who fixated on winning parliamentary majorities with no need for electoral or other constitutional change? What about the lost women voters? If women had voted Labour in the same proportion as men the party might have governed continuously between 1945 and 1979 as Claire Short claimed in the 1980s. Yet it was not until 1989 that the party adopted quotas for female representation at all levels within the organisation, in response to evidence that women perceived Labour as the most masculine of all the parties. Adonis concludes by asserting that the party 'needs again to become a genuine labour *movement*, otherwise populism fills the void' (p325). But populism is already filling the void and New Labour helped to create it.

John Callaghan

Anne Bennett, *Dining with Diplomats, Praying with Gunmen, Experiences of International Conciliation for a new generation of peace-makers*, Quaker Books, London, 2020; 160pp; ISBN: 9781999314156, £10.00, pbk

In a world of never-ending war and a neo-liberal order that has turned peace (and war) making into a professional profit-making process, Anne Bennett has written a timely book that reminds us that it was not always this way. Equally important, it suggests it need not remain this way. Peace has become an industry with generous funding opportunities for NGOs that, too often, follow the money from one conflict to another. Moreover, as numerous political autobiographies and memoirs testify, conflict resolution offers politicians and their advisors the opportunity to add 'peace-maker' to their repertoire and hopefully enhance their historical record, however late they come to the process. Think Tony Blair and Co. Former 'combatants' involved in conflict but insufficiently high ranking to be accorded a role in the new dispensation can use their 'knowledge and

expertise' and previous status to carve out new roles in the burgeoning peace industry, for example as educators and commentators. However, the narratives emerging from these different parties can be selective and self-serving, exclusionary and far from the whole story. In sharp contrast, much of the work undertaken by Quaker peace-builders was so highly confidential that it rarely reached the public domain. Quakers preferred quiet diplomacy and eschewed the self-promotion of so many present and near past players. They brought their own resources and human capital to conflicts, building local networks and remaining committed throughout.

Significantly, as this is a book by a Quaker about Quakers, there is no suggestion that a religious dimension is necessary for peace-building. Nonetheless, the faith factor is inevitably critical to fully grasping the success and efficacy of Quaker peace-building. It is, however, far from the only distinctive feature. Given the need for and importance of peace in today's militarised, war-torn, refugee ridden, unequal, divided, violent world, Bennett's is a timely but also a very different contribution to peace building literature. It deserves careful consideration.

The book derives from a consultation, the outcomes of which Bennet skilfully conjoins with an exploration of past and present Quaker experiences. The intent is to blend the wisdom of those who have gone before with the knowledge of current practitioners, plus the ideas of young upcoming peacemakers. The outcome is a highly readable and informative history which, as the title evocatively indicates, takes the reader on an unusual journey from dining with diplomats to praying with gunmen. Quakers built on a foundation of local and international networks established over a long and notable history dating back to the seventeenth century. From the beginning, the core Quaker testimonies of peace, equality, simplicity and integrity guided their efforts toward uniting violent, divided societies and preventing or stopping wars. The result is a specific, spiritually infused process of conciliation that embraces love, optimism and hope as integral to ending suffering and achieving long-term reconciliation. Notably, a distinctive feature seemingly appreciated and acknowledged by all parties, is the Quaker commitment to absolute pacifism. Parties who did not agree with or adhere to pacifism, or even vehemently rejected its premises, could still respect and trust its practitioners, their methods and motives. In this context the Quaker modus operandi of creating safe spaces open to all parties became a crucial means of helping generate trust in the Quaker's 'principled multipartiality'.

Bennet highlights how trust is perhaps the most necessary and yet the most difficult component to attain. She illustrates how it was cultivated and

consolidated by the Quaker commitment to the long-haul. Quakers recognised that real peace takes time. They were prepared to devote whatever time and energy were required, made possible by their not being reliant on short-term funding. Quakers were thus able to build relationships and work with local actors, critical to securing ongoing reconciliation and sustainable peace. Moreover, and crucially, Quakers supported, promoted and gave full credit to local players. Quakers applauded local activism and assumed a position of being happy to help the implementation of processes rooted in the needs of the local environment endorsed by those who best understood it. Quakers were not there to impose an externally concocted programme based on scholarly theories developed from unrelated conflicts that served the political interests of others. Bennet openly acknowledges Quaker readiness to accept that there are no perfect people or solutions and that in a slow determined process good enough can be acceptable when the overwhelming necessity is to stop the killing.

Although Bennet does not posit that faith is a requirement for peace and reconciliation, as integral to the Quaker approach, it must be considered. It certainly was by those awarding the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947 following Quaker work to relieve famine and suffering during and after both world wars. The chairman of the Nobel Committee, Gunnar Jahn, said: 'It is not the extent of their work or its practical form which is most important … It is rather the spirit which animates their work. Theirs is the message of good deeds, the message that men can come into contact with one another in spite of war and in spite of difference of race. May we believe that here there is a hope of laying a foundation for peace among nations, of building up peace in man himself, so that it becomes impossible to settle disputes by the use of force' (p12).

Not taking sides but recognising the suffering of everyone is a key Quaker concept, but it does not come from a position of neutrality. It comes from a position of witness to the sanctity of life and the belief that there is 'that of God in everyone', despite the accompanying recognition that engaging in conciliation involves working with individuals and groups who have deployed violence to achieve their goals. It also means listening to them. Bennet stresses the importance of listening, highlighting its importance during the Northern Ireland 'Troubles'. She notes the necessity of empathising with all sides, acknowledging their losses, pain, grievances, sense of injustice. It was also the means by which Quakers gained a deeper understanding of the aims and concerns of the people with whom they were working but who held very different views. It was a process that inevitably confronted all involved with a range of

dilemmas, which Bennet frankly and honestly examines, observing that; 'Undertaking this type of work sometimes raises the moral dilemma of appearing to collude with evil'. It often required developing relationships with those who had committed atrocities. Moreover, progressing the conciliation process could appear to legitimate people and actions whose nature risked compromising Quaker morals, standing and reputation, the very features that made them effective peace players. They also risked allegations of being used by the unscrupulous to further purely political agendas. Cognisant of and constantly discussing the dangers, Quaker conciliators knowingly, with a combination of caution and courage, pursued the precarious path toward peace well aware of the profound and complex challenges entailed.

Through the ages religion has often been a causal factor leading to war, Bennet reminds us that, in certain circumstances, it can also be a factor in its resolution. Bennet has produced a thought-provoking, insightful evaluation of Quaker contributions to international conciliation that will be of interest to a wide range of readers. A valuable resource for students of peace studies, it will be of equal interest to students of religion and politics, as well as activists involved with and interested in peace and conciliation.

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Richard Arnold Bermann, *Ireland [1913]*, translated and edited by Leesa Wheatley and Florian Krobb, Cork University Press, Cork, 2021; vi + 200pp; ISBN 9781782054351, €29.00, hbk

This is the first English translation of Richard Bermann's *Irland*. Bermann (1883-1939), a Viennese Jew, was a journalist and travel writer in the German-speaking world, better known under the nom de plume Arnold Hoellriegel. German travelogues on Ireland have tended to take two forms: transports of delight to a green and misty isle magically detached from the 'filthy modern tide', as Yeats put it, or explorations of Irish oppression for its relevance to German politics. Bermann's *Ireland* is unusual in combining elements of the two. Though not an 'Irish freak', to use the modern expression, Bermann had axes to grind. Extensive globe-trotting left him appalled at the vulturous homogenisation that followed Anglo-Americanisation, notably in Africa and the Middle-east. Like many continentals, he was bemused that one of Europe's off-shore islands

could build the biggest empire in history and intrigued that Ireland, so small and so proximate, should still resist assimilation after centuries of threats and blandishments. And like many Germans, he relished Ireland for its use as an abiding counterpoint to the moral pretensions of the Pax Britannica. But while taken by the myths and legends, the ruined castles and the friendliness, there was sinister rationale to the book. Much of it was first written for the liberal paper *Vossiche Zeitung* in a series of articles in July and August 1913 as Berliners discovered the third Home Rule crisis. Unionists had formed the Ulster Volunteer Force to resist Dublin rule and Germans wondered if the Ulster question would lead to civil war and diminish Whitehall's interest in Europe's balance of power. For their part, Bermann suggests, the Irish were musing about a German invasion, a scenario the British popular press had been sensationalising since the 1890s. Noting lush grass, plump livestock, sturdy horses, and idle youths, Bermann saw the value of Ireland to Britain in a future conflict. Impending war makes the book doubly unusual in that it doesn't seek to sell the product to the reader. What is the point of a travelogue if one is not going to travel? To learn about your prospective enemy, obviously.

Bermann is far from flattering. Arriving via the boat train from London, Paddington, he writes of Cork: 'There is indeed a main street, and, well, another main street' (p37). And that's it. There's not much to see. Nothing is going on. The streets are boring, or empty. The food is bland, and different from that in London only in being either over-cooked or under-cooked and accompanied by substantial quantities of potatoes. What can one do when not at a tasty German table except cover it in sauce? He regularly bemoans the dirt and inefficiency, and the beggars, and the weather (he's right there). Everything is better in Berlin. After Cork, Bermann moved on to the Lakes of Killarney, which had been placed on the tourist trail by Queen Victoria in 1861, though 'the Famine Queen' preferred the Scotch to the Irish, and the Scottish to the Irish too. En route, he introduces the reader to an important thread in the book, Ireland's tragic history. In case the point is missed, an entire chapter is devoted to the parable of Pat the Kerry farmer, whose subjugation, exploitation, and immiseration explain his feckless character and ramshackle economy. 'And if you don't believe it', adds Bermann with a wry jibe at Pat's mendacity and mendicity, 'you will be charged a shilling' (p60). And so to Limerick, 'another of those cities very picturesquely situated on a river, but otherwise of little interest' (p61). Again, Bermann lapses into history, and how William of Orange defeated the Jacobites, and promised religious toleration only to renege on the Treaty of Limerick and allow parliament to enact the Penal Laws

against Catholics. In fairness, Bermann knew his Irish history. Then he is on to Dublin, which drew faint praise, and Belfast, which he loathed for its functional modernity and indifference to native culture.

But *Ireland* is not a tourist's travelogue. As Bermann puts it, when visiting a house you learn more from the privy than the parlour. Essentially, it's about Home Rule and the disappearance of another nation into the anglosphere, a nation Bermann cares about as the Irish are 'the Jews of the Occident' (p103). Five of the twenty-six chapters are devoted to history and four more to politics and culture. And here, Bermann is insightful and relevant. After meeting the two leaders of Ulster Unionism, Sir Edward Carson and James Craig, he addressed their famous slogan 'Home Rule is Rome rule', arguing that clericalism in Catholic Ireland was a consequence of foreign oppression and likely to recede once nationalist dreams were realised. Conversely, while deeply sympathetic to the Gaelic revival spearheaded by the Gaelic League, he was pessimistic about its prospects, pointing out that in Ireland, unlike Hungary or the Czech lands, the masses had stampeded towards English after the Great Famine and the voice of Ireland, in everything from literature to political pamphlets and ballad sheets, was now in English. Bermann is sharp in spotting contradictions. English was the language of Irish nationalism, and without it the Irish would have been much less effective in making their case to the world.

Surprisingly, there is little in *Ireland* on labour. Aside from the start of the 1913 lockout in July of that year, Ireland had been experiencing a strike wave since the summer of 1911 in a parallel development to Britain's Great Labour Unrest. In Bermann's only reference to labour, he told Carson: ' … don't forget about the workers in Dublin and Belfast. They are almost like brothers in how they flout Catholic nationalism and Protestant ultra-conservatism. Their leader Jim Larkin is more important to them than John Redmond and than you, Sir Edward – they want to live, not dream' (p146). If only. There are more than a few predictions that have a heartrending quality in the light of the storms that would break in Europe in 1914 and in Ireland in 1916. Ireland did not become a rain-soaked Bavaria, but an independent republic. And the proud German scourge of the anglosphere ended up fleeing from the Nazis in 1938 to the United States.

Bermann is never dull, often pithy, usually concise, and the narrative gallops along at a steady pace. Even when condescending on the squalor and tedium of Irish towns he is humorous. On culture and politics, he is astute, and the reader's pleasure is enhanced by knowing what happened

next. Cork University Press and the editors are to be congratulated on a decent production, an illuminating introduction, and helpful annotation. However, there are a few errors. The Dublin coronation of the Yorkist pretender Lambert Simnel is dated 1587 instead of 1487, and, unforgivably, the birth year of another pretender, Big Jim Larkin, is cited as 1876 rather than 1874.

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Dave Chapple, *Soldier Saving Lives: Keith Howard Andrews*, Somerset Socialist Library, Bridgwater, 2020; 56pp.; £5.00 plus £2.00 p&p, pbk

Once again, Dave Chapple has written an excellent piece of social history. This book is his tribute to Keith Howard Andrews and his life. Although he was known as Keith, earlier in his life, and as Norman when in the army, he was generally known as Andy. I was impressed that after knowing Andy for such a short period, just two and half years, Dave has been able to give a reflection of Andy's life, that leaves you with a clear picture of those events which helped shape his view of the world. In particular I like the question and answer style and the way Dave has used other testimonies concerning Andy. Many old soldiers would not be prepared to discuss their wartime experiences, so it was good to read Andy's words after such a long and full life.

Andy was born in Kilburn, Middlesex in 1907. He had two brothers and two sisters, His father was in the army and his mother was a cook. He did not have much of a relationship with his father, but after leaving school and working for a short while Andy also became a soldier, joining the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC). After twelve months, he was posted to Quetta, India, now in Pakistan. On the way, he passed through Bombay and saw at first hand how local people were being treated and the conditions under which they worked. This made an impression on him and helped develop his anti-imperialist and anti-fascist views. He enjoyed sport, and when he was not on duty, he was much happier mixing with Indians. Dave quotes Andy: 'If you cut your finger there, and an Indian cuts himself in the same place, you get the same material coming out'. He was clearly developing strong views about the world.

Andy was posted next to Shanghai for twelve months, but this was at a time when China was starting massive political and social change. It

was not an easy time for him and his comrades, there not was much to do outside of his duties, and he only recalled going into Shanghai twice during that time.

After being demobbed in 1931, Andy came home and lived with his mother in Kilburn, where he started to be more politically active. He followed his brother Edward, a trade unionist, into the Independent Labour Party (ILP), but in 1932 when the ILP disaffiliated from the Labour Party Andy left it and joined the Kilburn branch of the Communist Party. He was active in many events, speaking at meetings, distributing leaflets and openly confronting 'Mosley's black shirts'. It is clear from these accounts that he had become a committed anti-fascist. There are various documents in the book relating to this period. He found it difficult to get employment, but eventually found work in a hospital, not as a medic but as a boiler man. In 1936 he decided to go to Spain and join the Republican cause. His thinking was clear, he could do much better over there than where he was. Within five days of volunteering, he was on his way, again to serve as an army medic, and travelled over on an ambulance. The first person he met when arriving in Spain was a fellow member of the Kilburn CP branch.

Dave has included many of Andy's own recollections of his time in Spain. There are also tributes and reports from other nurses and medical staff, which mention his contribution to the Republican cause. A report from Winifred Bates, a CPGB commissar, stated 'In the sterilising van we find Keith Andrews … he has been in Spain since the first weeks of the war'. 'He just carries on', said his American comrade, the driver Robert Webster. 'He's the most dependable man here'. There are assorted pictures of Andy working on ambulances. He did not see much action, but his recollections give an insight into another side of war, often not seen or talked about. Dave has also made use of other accounts of this time in Spain, such as those of Archie Cochrane and Dr Moises Broggi. These accounts, together with Andy's story, give the reader a feel for these very difficult times. These were courageous efforts by a group of exceptional individuals.

In 1938 Andy returned home from Spain, and worked for a while in a hospital before enlisting in the army again. He could not rejoin the RAMC, so he joined the Royal Artillery. There was little or no check on his political activities, even thought he had served in Spain. He became a driver, and was part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) that went to France. He was evacuated from Dunkirk and posted to Bristol, and decided that the West Country was where he wanted to live.

After the war, following a brief return to London, Andy lived in different parts of the country around Bristol before settling in Taunton in 1955, where he rejoined the CPGB. He worked in a hospital pharmacy until he retired in 1972. When Andy was ninety-nine, he revisited Spain one last time, accompanied by Dave, to mark the seventieth anniversary of the International Brigade. This was a real privilege for Dave, as he also met other surviving International Brigade members.

Andy had a long, full, amazing life. Many today have simply no idea what his generation lived through. Dave's tribute will help remedy this. There are many photographs to show the different phases in Andy's life. My personal favourite shows him on his mobility scooter, with a placard saying, 'Peace, Equality, Justice, Now! I can't wait another hundred years'. He declined the telegram for his hundredth birthday, responding: 'me and the Royal Family haven't been friends for ages'. I highly recommend this book to anyone who wants to learn about social history, which is always best told through lived experiences.

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Talbot C. Imlay, *The Practice of International Socialism: European Socialists and International Politics 1914-1960*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2018; 480pp.; ISBN 9780199641048, £90.00, hbk

The focus is on the politics of the Socialist International, which has been the subject of relatively little academic study compared with the Third International. There is perhaps less interest among academics in international social-democratic politics than there is in international communism, and social-democratic politics is often studied in terms of national political parties or the foreign policies of specific social-democratic governments. The value of this new study by a Canadian academic is the transnational approach and the breadth of the sources used. Imlay tends to focus on British, French and German socialist parties, who dominated the Socialist International in both interwar and post-war periods. Given social-democratic parties were in government in all three countries for part of the period covered, the study provides an analysis of the extent to which socialists in government retain the internationalist perspective they asserted in opposition. Perhaps the author could have had a more explicit focus on this dichotomy.

The study is presented as a chronological narrative. Imlay examines the attempt of social-democratic parties to re-establish the International both during and after the First World War, and the attempts by the British Labour Party to collaborate with socialist parties in other Allied countries, then to collaborate with parties in neutral countries, and then to re-establish relationships with German and Austrian socialists, a process made difficult by the continuing hostility of the French socialists to German socialists, who were considered to bear some of the responsibility for the war. This study supplements David Kirby's 1986 study, *War, Peace and Revolution*, which focused on the role of socialists in the neutral countries in attempts to rebuild the International during wartime.

By focusing on the Socialist International, Imlay does not consider other networks of international solidarity such as the international trade union movement, the women's international and the youth international, nor the numerous international peace networks, although since these networks were disrupted by the social democratic/communist split in the postwar period, they should perhaps be studied separately. Imlay's study focuses on the big issues of international policy – European reconstruction, disarmament, responses to fascism, and after the Second World War, reconstructing the International (again), European reconstruction (again), and European security in the context of the Cold War. There are also informative chapters covering the important areas of attitudes to Empire in the interwar period and to decolonisation in the period after the Second World War. Imlay provides a comprehensive transnational chronology and analysis in all these areas, providing an excellent summary both of original source material and of the secondary literature.

In his conclusion, Imlay comments that socialists' approach to internationalism remains embedded in their own national politics. Although he allows that internationalism helped 'to counter the temptation to adopt an exclusive (or more "national") perspective', he concludes that 'it is probably the case that, in the long term, the pull of the nation was simply too powerful in a world of nation states' (p464). Imlay notes that in both post-war periods, European socialists sought to fashion a new model of international relations which would reduce the tensions between nations which led to recurring wars, but observes that the socialist approach was not distinct from that of liberal internationalists who also supported peace, disarmament and European unity. Imlay is however right to note that socialist internationalism in Europe has declined since the late 1950s. The Socialist International split in 2013, with most European socialist parties setting up an alternative organisation – the Progressive Alliance.

The fact that most members of the British Labour Party, and no doubt of the German SPD and the French PS are unaware of this fact, demonstrates the extent to which the international dimension of socialism is largely forgotten. Imlay comments on the attempts at socialist co-operation within the European Community/Union and the establishment in 1992 of the Party of European Socialists. From a British perspective, these are to a certain extent matters of historical interest only. The ambivalence within the Labour Party on EU membership showed that the British Labour Party lacked a coherent approach to its international relationships. So as Imlay argues, socialist internationalism has fallen short of its potential, and it would be profitable to re-examine the more internationalist practice pursued in the periods immediately after both world wars.

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London

Jonathan Israel, *Revolutionary Jews from Spinoza to Marx: the Fight for a Secular World of Universal and Equal Rights*, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 2021; 549pp.; ISBN 9780295748665, $39.95, hbk

Those familiar with Jonathan Israel's opus will recognise the argument underlying this sweeping study of Enlightenment, Jewish history, and revolution. There existed, Israel posits, two Enlightenments. The first, the 'Mainstream Enlightenment' associated with 'Locke, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Hume, Wolff, Kant, and Adam Smith' (p21), was devoted to scientific learning, generally tolerant of theisms, politically moderate, and by no means uniformly hostile to monarchy. The second, 'Radical Enlightenment', unflinchingly anti-theological, anti-monarchic, and fiercely republican, originated with the seventeenth-century Jewish thinker, Baruch Spinoza. In this volume, Israel shows how Spinoza's radicalism, grounded in philosophical monism – the fundamental insistence upon the unified unfolding of spirit and matter – let loose a subversive current that sparked intellectual and political revolution. In the process, he recovers the immense, though often overlooked or suppressed influence of Spinoza on generations of Jewish and non-Jewish Radical Enlighteners from Moses Mendelssohn, Solomon Maimon, David Nassy, and Heinrich Heine (among many others) to Denis Diderot, G.F.W Hegel and, finally, Karl Marx, whom Israel portrays as both last Spinozist and ultimate gravedigger of Radical Enlightenment.

The opening chapters ground Spinoza's radicalism in the experience of Amsterdam's Portuguese *conversos*, descendants of Jews – like Spinoza's ancestors – forced to convert to Christianity following the Portuguese expulsion of 1497, before fleeing to Amsterdam and returning to Judaism. This liminal experience transformed Portuguese conversos into a subversive 'diaspora within a diaspora', enemies of 'ignorance', 'superstition', and 'a resilient oppositional underground sworn to fight divine right monarchy' (p61). They likewise revolted against the conservative, hierarchical and theocratic order of the Sephardic-Jewish community established in Amsterdam following the Spanish expulsion of 1492. These dual currents reached their apogee in Spinoza's *Tractatus-Theologico Politicus* and *Tractatus Politicus*, which systematised his revolt against theocracy, divine right monarchy, and all authority based upon revealed religion, including Jewish, rabbinic authority. Israel's Spinoza is a child of the Dutch revolt against absolutist Spain and a Straussian *avant la lettre*, for whom reason could be realised only through the democratic republic, which alone could defend individual Rights and Liberty against threats 'from above' in the form of coercive monarchical and religious authority and 'from below' in the form of populist, always dangerous direct democracy.

As a work of early modern history, this is a captivating study. Israel traces the dissemination of Spinozism throughout the revolutionary Atlantic and European worlds, carried forth by hidden acolytes who often concealed their debt due to the general repudiation of Spinoza following his excommunication in 1656. In one of the most compelling chapters, he frames Moses Mendelssohn, pioneering figure of the eighteenth-century German-Jewish *Haskalah* (Jewish Enlightenment) as a crypto-Spinozist whose magnum opus, *Jerusalem*, espoused a republic modeled on 'purified Spinozism'. In so doing, Israel re-grounds the Haskalah itself – a movement for Jewish intellectual and social integration and political emancipation – as a Spinozist undertaking. Successive chapters on Maimon and Nassy demonstrate how Radical Enlighteners dedicated to the gospel of Liberty, equality of rights, militant republicanism and Jewish integration disseminated the intertwined revolts of Spinozism and Radical Haskalah to early modern Poland, Suriname, the Dutch Caribbean, and the entire revolutionary Atlantic.

With the French Revolution, the happy march of Radical Enlightenment encounters its first dire threat: popular democracy. Israel explores the rise and defeat of Radical Enlightenment in the French Revolution over two chapters. The first uses the Polish-born, French-identified, Jewish revolutionary Zalkind Hourwitz to examine the fight for Jewish emancipation

and the Spinozist republic of rights (which, for Israel, unsurprisingly culminates in Condorcet's Liberal Constitution of 1793). The second traces the fate of the Polish-born brothers, Emmanuel and Junius Frey, converted Jews, financiers, and Spinozists. As politically calculating Radical Enlighteners, the brothers, especially the essayist Junius, clashed violently with Robespierre's Jacobins, despite initially siding with them against moderate Girondists. As the terror unfolded, Junius presciently warned that the primary and 'direct danger menacing the Revolution' lay not with monarchists, but 'unruly mob stirred by rabble-rousers … and Rousseau's theories' (p252). His fears proved justified, as the Freys were attacked publicly as foreigners and outsiders, accused of financial and sexual scandal, and ultimately sent to the guillotine as the Jacobins turned towards xenophobic nationalism, 'Counter-Enlightenment anti-intellectualism, Rousseauism and populist philistinism of Robespierreisme … ' (p431). Framed as the antitheses of Radical Enlightenment, direct democracy and Rousseauist populism constitute the hand-maidens of tyranny, suppression of the minority by the 'General Will', terror, and xenophobic idiotism.

Israel's disdain for populist democracy is exceeded only by his antipathy towards Marx and socialism, construed here as the ultimate and dire enemies of Radical Enlightenment. Israel opens the concluding chapter by provocatively framing the young Marx as a child of the Spinozist Radical Enlightenment against the fervent denials of both the 'Marxist world and most of the scholarly non-Marxist sphere … ' (p404). Pointing to Marx's university notebooks, filled with passages from the *Tractatus-Theologico Politicus,* Israel credits Spinoza with instilling in the young radical an unrelenting contempt for theocratic superstition, revealed religion, and 'organized priestcraft' (p409) Even Marx's infamous critiques of Jews and Jewry in 'On the Jewish Question', while dissected, are framed as arguments in favour of Jewish emancipation in the name of (Spinozist) universal rights. Yet, for Israel, Marx's Radical Enlightenment ended the moment he embraced socialism, repudiated the belief that philosophy alone constituted the 'chief motor' of history, 'switched' from fighting for 'universal rights and equality based on democracy to capturing and totally transforming the economic system' (p419), and embraced class war (pp402, 423) Rather than a fight for equality of rights, socialism is cast as a repudiation of Radical Enlightenment and understood simply as the demand for crass economic equalisation and the violation of property rights, and, as such, inherently prone to antisemitism ('proven' through the writings of Proudhon) (pp391-393).

This is undoubtedly an erudite study. Yet the closer Israel approaches the modern era, the more transparent his politics become, leading to unsubstantiated assertions and rather deterministic proclamations about the inevitable paths socialism took once veering from bourgeois liberalism, conflated throughout with Radical Enlightenment. Provocatively introduced as a Radical Spinozist, Israel's Marx ends as a string of Liberal clichés: prophet of the vile dictatorship of the proletariat, espouser of an 'irreversible iron law of history', founder of a 'new religion', inaugurator of inquisitorial excommunications (read: Stalinist purges) by driving out the Weitling-ites (p423). Israel ends with the *Communist Manifesto* and revolutions of 1848, thereby avoiding consideration of *Capital*, Marx's most incisive critique of how ostensibly universal rights of Liberty and Equality, naturalised to the extreme here, mask underlying compulsion, unfreedom, and inequality. Israel thus also misses the opportunity to consider how the entire logic of *Capital*, which posits the unified, dialectic, and intertwined unfolding of the social and intellectual world of capital, remained at its core a Spinozist project.

Most problematic are Israel's claims concerning socialism's supposed repudiation of Radical Enlightenment. This is an argument that can only be maintained if one conflates Bourgeois Liberalism and Radical Enlightenment and ignores, as Israel does, the entire history of socialist practices of self-education and mass education. Israel's conclusion does acknowledge the emergence of circles of young Jewish socialists all over the Russian empire in the 1870s who seemingly fused socialism and Radical Enlightenment. Yet even a cursory consideration of classic works by Franco Venturi, Leopold Haimson, Erich Haberer, Geoff Eley, and others about the revolutionary movement in the Russian Empire and Europe would demonstrate that the enduring commitment to Radical Enlightenment was by no means exclusively a Jewish phenomenon. One is left wondering what it is that truly bothers Israel most about Marx and Socialists: that they repudiated Radical Enlightenment, or democratised it.

Despite these criticisms, this book should be read by anyone interested in revolutionary history in the early modern or Jewish world. Whatever its partialities, Israel's suggestion that we recognise the influence of Spinozism and his pantheistic monism on Marx's thought offers avenues for rethinking socialism in an era where ever-accelerating capitalism wreak ceaseless destruction on our global environment, however much to the chagrin of the author.

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Mike Richardson, *Tremors of Discontent, My life in Print 1970-1988*, Bristol Radical History Group, Bristol, 2021, 200pp, 20 illustrations; ISBN 9781911522591, £10.00, pbk

Dave Chapple, *Bristol, 13 miles due East*, Somerset Socialist Library, Bridgwater, 2021; 64pp, 45 illustrations; £5.00, pbk

Dave Chapple, *Local, Loud, Left-wing and Proud*, Somerset Socialist Library, Bridgwater, 2021; 96pp, 137 illustrations; £5.00, pbk

Dave Chapple, *Protest and Deliver: A Clevedon Postman 1978-1987*, Somerset Socialist Library, Bridgwater, 2021; 80pp, 73 illustrations; £5.00, pbk

E.P. Thompson once said 'reminiscences can be strangely untrustworthy sources' but he added that we need to recover experiences and reasons when the 'mists of mythology' are obscuring the past. This alone justifies some new autobiographical accounts by Bristol socialists which show just how important the 'militant minority' has been over many decades in driving forward a socialist agenda in both the workplace and the community. Mike Richardson's *Tremors of Discontent* (2021) and Dave Chapple's three volumes: *Local, Loud*, *Left-wing and Proud (*2021), *Bristol, 13 miles due east* (2021) and *Protest and Deliver: A Clevedon Postman 1978- 1987* (2021) are testimony to the sheer hard graft that goes into activism. Talking and listening as well as arguing, writing, and speaking in meetings as well as sometimes getting into punch-ups with fascists. This was in an era before 'clicktivism' and the overuse of the word 'activist', when there was a Gestetner printer in the hall and the distribution of rank and file leaflets outside factories at 6:00am (if this sounds arduous, think of the lovely cooked breakfasts that followed in a local cafe!). They became committed socialists in decades when revolutionary and counter-cultural ideas were permeating working-class communities and were drawn into left groups because the Labour Party was, as Raymond Williams and others noted in the *May Day Manifesto*, falling far short. But social democracy was nevertheless strongly rooted because it was based on the pillars put in place by the 1945 Labour government: the NHS, a national education system, welfare, nationalisation, all of which have been destroyed or undermined under Thatcher and Blair, arguably because Labour failed to build on these foundations. They were also drawn into trade union activism because that was what you *did* at work as a socialist and because the level of union militancy was at a high point until at least the Falklands War. For these 'old

school' writers, it is axiomatic that there is class struggle in the workplace in which the 'frontier of control' has to be negotiated every day.

Both authors grew up in the Bristol area. Mike Richardson lived on the Lockleaze council estate in Bristol, went to a 'secondary mod' school, and left in 1963 with one 'O' level in Greek civilisation and a love of chess, having in the meantime fallen in love with his future partner Christine. Dave Chapple in Clevedon, thirteen miles east of Bristol, a 'self-contained working-class community' attended a grammar school at Nailsea after passing the 11-plus in 1963. When the school became a comprehensive he came across 'left-wing teachers' and in 1969 was drawn into politics through the Springboks tour. Where Dave Chapple went to Sussex University, subsequently dropping out, Mike Richardson was plunged into a world of work when you could leave one job on a Friday and start another on the following Monday. He had little contact with unions until regular employment from 1970 at Robinson Waxed Paper (which became RWP Flexible Packaging in 1972) became the 'catalyst' drawing him into trade unionism.

Both authors note that they felt themselves to be *outside* the working class – 'on the margins' but also marginalised because middle-class mores were equally alien. They do not hide their anxieties and fears about not belonging because their tastes were changing and they were coming into contact with many diverse influences. Dave Chapple, for example, interacted with the Bristol black music scene and the very lively left political culture of the city with a left bookshop, second-hand record shops and newspapers like *Bristol Voice*, the *Gleaner, Socialist Challenge, Socialist Worker*, and *Newsline*. In those days, papers like *Black Dwarf, Big Flame* and *Socialist Challenge* were lively, thoughtful, and well-designed, unlike most of today's lamentably lifeless left press. Mike Richardson started his long association with the print unions, and notes that most shop stewards at his workplace 'eschewed mixing politics with trade unionism, placing their energies in looking after their members' interests at work' – a kind of bread and butter trade unionism that was common even at the high points of militancy. In contrast, he struggled to match his politics to his unionism and workplace, which was not always an easy task!

They were therefore drawn to the revolutionary left, in this case varieties of Trotskyism such as the Workers Revolutionary party (WRP) and the International Marxist Group (IMG). The theory was that the unions were the connecting link between the working class and the (Leninist) party even though, as Dave Chapple ruefully points out, the IMG mainly attracted middle-class students until its 'turn to industry' and the WRP

appeared to believe that it knew how to bring down capitalism. Mike Richardson wasn't always convinced and found the WRP's 'disregard for the practicalities of trade union resistance' left him with a sense of powerlessness. But such groups did provide an anchorage for many young militants who wanted a theoretical framework for their anti-capitalism. Neither of these accounts is overtly polemical or full of the ideological twists and turns of the far left as seen in so many post-war reminiscences such as Alan Woodward's *Poor Boy's Tale* (2012) or Bill Hunter's *Lifelong Apprenticeship* (1997). In style and tone they are much more like the 'Red conductress' Zelma Katin's account of her wartime work on the Sheffield trams.

Mike Richardson's book is really about his working life – 'a life in print'. He charts the development of the print unions, the NGA, SOGAT and NATSOPA, describing decisions at branch meetings, management opposition, and pay campaigns in a largely but not exclusively male environment in which he highlights the role of women in the clerical chapel. But by 1986 he was 'feeling the strain of years of constant conflict' and his battle against dismissal over compulsory redundancies until he was 'utterly abandoned by the [SOGAT] union bureaucracy' as management took the offensive. He once again felt himself to be an outsider and was now out of a job. The rest, as they say, is history. He took a full-time course in Trade Union and Social Studies course at Gwent College of Higher Education and then a PhD (industrial relations in the British print industry 1918-1939).

The three volumes of Dave Chapple's memoir run parallel to Mike Richardson's working life – crossing paths on Bristol Trades Council as 'young delegates'. Dave Chapple was never a 'political Marxist' but was active in the Bristol IMG for about 15 months. He left because of the 'turn to industry' policy and the 'vituperative pages of competitively and politically correct shite' in the internal discussion bulletins. The suggestion that he should leave Bristol to further the Leninist cause was clearly the last straw. *Protest and Deliver*, his second volume, charts his nine years in the post office in huge detail, beginning as a six-day working week with a 5:00am start, showing how delivery work was monitored, and the activities of the Union of Postal Workers (UPW) today's Communication Workers Union (CWU), reminding me of Iqbal Vaid's account of his twelve years as a postal worker in London. The book is copiously illustrated with leaflets (sometimes hand-written and hand-drawn), letters and newsletters – a really important means of recording the history. Indeed, all three A3 volumes are chock-full of images. The final volume – *Local,*

Loud, Left-wing and Proud – covers his time standing as a Labour candidate for Woodspring constituency in 1987 general election after having re-joined the party. But along the way he describes the local and national struggles that formed the backdrop to politics before and under Thatcher, including Grunwicks and the St Paul's, Bristol, riots.

Neither of these writers has lost the fire and anger of militancy, taking part in a debate that informs recent books like Arthur McIvor's *Working Lives; Work in Britain since 1945* (2013) which partly draws on the oral history of workplaces in west London. But more importantly, their writing will give tomorrow's 'militants' an invaluable guide to how rank and file organising was done in the post-war workplace. This is not to argue that we can simply read off the 'lessons' of those years into the present but, successful or not, right or wrong in their choices, they drew on political resources that gave them the confidence to take on their employers and governments in defence of worker's rights and in pursuit of a new society. In *Threads Through Time* (1999) Sheila Rowbotham comments on the powerful assumptions that 'present versions of the lived past which are unrecognizable to participants.' These accounts help to challenge those assumptions.

One last thing – both writers are involved in local history groups in Bristol: Mike Richardson in Bristol Radical History Group and Dave Chapple in the Somerset Socialist Library. As a former worker at HISTORYTalk, a local history project based in Ladbroke Grove in west London (an area where militant action has a proud history of its own, particularly relevant in the light of the Grenfell Tower fire), I can testify to the value of collecting and documenting working-class history.

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Kate Stephenson, *A Cultural History of School Uniform*, University of Exeter Press, Exeter, 2021; 232pp, 21 illustrations; ISBN 9781905816538, £75.00, hbk; ISBN 9781905816552, PDF; ISBN 9781905816545, ePub

If there is one experience common to the quasi-totality of adults who grew up in the UK, it is that they once wore a school uniform. This book on the topic by Kate Stephenson that discusses the development and implementation of this phenomenon should thus be of considerable interest, particularly to those involved professionally in education but also beyond its confines.

The subject obviously encompasses a wide span of information but is given focus and coherence through its organisation into chapters dealing, in order of foundation or emergence, with a particular type of school and its uniform whose later development is also largely charted in the same chapter. Selected examples are mainly taken from the system in England with Scotland being mentioned only briefly. Where relevant to the focus, reference may also be made to the situation in other countries.

The first chapter (The Charity Schools 1552-1900), as one might expect, deals with the origins of uniform in England, largely in the context of charity schools, although there is some mention of the religious institutions and other establishments which preceded them. There are instances of institutions linked to the Church which trained potential recruits in the Latin language supplying gown-like habits to the pupils. However, the mid-sixteenth century on saw the establishment of charity schools where it was customary (and indeed necessary) to provide simple clothing for those impoverished children to whom education was offered. From there the focus shifts to public schools (1800-1939), their development and their gradual introduction of uniform, evolving largely out of dress for sports to a full range of specified items for everyday wear and special occasions. Later, when education for girls became accepted, their establishments moved, although more slowly than had the counterparts for boys, towards school uniform (Public Schools for Girls 1850-1939). As education, at various levels, became more widespread in the latter part of the nineteenth and first part of the twentieth century, the wearing of uniforms was also to be found in a range of other settings (Education for All 1860-1939). The final chapter (Fashion and Fancy Dress 1939 – Present) has a multiple focus. It considers first of all the role of uniforms during the Second World War where they were maintained (albeit streamlined) in the face of government calls for restraint amid a shortage of cloth and clothing coupons, as a symbol of normality amidst the conflict. It then moves on to their ongoing role following educational expansion in the post-war period. The next part of this chapter shifts the consideration of the role of school uniform beyond the classroom to consider its emergence as an item of fancy dress for adults, even becoming in certain situations a symbol with erotic connotations.

While the book's narrative follows the historical development of schooling and the concomitant expansion of school uniform, very interestingly too, it links uniform to social movements and attitudes. The provision of uniforms may in the case of charity schools have been dictated by the economic needs of the charges for suitable clothing that would protect them from the elements but in a society with roles largely determined by class,

their mode of dress also performed the function of signaling their subservient station in life. In later public schools, educating children to assume higher status positions, uniforms indicated exclusivity.

The wearing of uniform became more widespread as the practice in earlier public schools was imitated by newer comers catering for a more middle class clientele anxious to establish their credentials, seriousness and respectability and also to ensure access to prestigious careers for their offspring. Imitation and transfer of known models may also be seen in the spread of uniform in the days of Empire as those educated in the system introduced the practices of the home country to the locations in which they worked.

The consideration of girls' uniforms, initially in the public schools, reveals the mixed motives and subtexts involved in the adoption of uniforms as the proponents of a serious education for girls sought to establish academic validity despite conflicting viewpoints about the duties and status of women in society. In the face of fears that women might lose their femininity and be deflected from their role as wives and mothers, it is understandable that the earliest pupils should have worn fashionable clothes normal for girls from their background. As female education became less controversial, clothing, again through sportswear (although still feminine and fashionable), gradually became more practical, leading ultimately in many establishments to the adoption of the gymslip. Schools sought too to stress the equivalence of their education to that accorded to boys with the introduction of items such as ties and shirts. Strict adherence to standards in uniform and behaviour was considered important for girls in all types of school over the years, the promotion of respectability and morality reflecting the interrelationship between uniform and social norms.

As education expanded to offer secondary schooling to a wider section of the population, the tradition of uniform set by the more elite schools continued to be imitated despite its cost adversely affecting those from the least affluent backgrounds. Interestingly though with the introduction of the Eleven Plus (arising from the 1943 Norwood Report) certain families saw the purchase of grammar school uniform as a celebration of success and a validation of aspiration, with various relatives helping to cover the expense. The price of uniform remains, however, a problematic area, creating an undue burden for some.

Post Second World War, a number of factors both shaped society and impacted on school uniform. Gradually as the importance of national cohesiveness and group identity lessened, changes in the understanding of

the development of the young led to more child-centred, less rigid practices and teaching. Technological advances enabled the use of synthetic, easier to maintain materials, and this, coupled with changes in fashion, impacted on design. Schools (apart from certain older, more exclusive establishments) moved towards a less formal, more relaxed approach to uniform, a trend accentuated with the development of the comprehensive sector post 1965. In a world where the role played by celebrities as fashion leaders had displaced that of the upper classes, a reversal of previous modes of imitation was now seen in the way that state schools influenced a relaxation of rules for clothing even in more expensive parts of the system.

From about the late 1980s, with a slackening in discipline, uniform once again began to assume a role of order creation as well as acting as a means of ensuring equality and creating a sense of belonging among its wearers. This position which still obtains was not, however, without its detractors who argued that it stifled the development of individuality among the young.

It is in the nature of an interesting book to lead the reader to think of further areas for study outside its remit and this work is no exception. The author already makes some suggestions (for instance, the supposed link between positive behaviour and school uniform) and a further field suggested itself to this Northern Irish reviewer. Although uniform has the traditional role of creating a sense of discipline, cohesion and solidarity as the author suggests in a general quote (144) from what seems from the footnote and bibliography to be a Northern Irish government document, in that part of the UK, aside from its intended functions, uniform has also acted as a community marker in a divided society. Thus, particularly at the height of the so-called 'Troubles', wearing a particular uniform could signal difference and division in certain areas and even present some danger with children hiding insignia when they judged themselves to be in alien territory or taking roundabout routes to school. Beyond this parochial suggestion, it would certainly be interesting in further studies to consider how uniforms of different types have served to emphasise antagonistic societal situations and exacerbate tensions in a range of locations.

This is a rich and well-researched book offering varied and interesting insights. It deserves to be widely read – unfortunately it is currently only available in hardback or as a similarly expensive e-book or PDF. Hopefully, it will be re-issued in paperback making it more accessible to a wider audience.

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Gregory P. Williams, *Contesting the Global Order: The Radical Political Economy of Perry Anderson and Immanuel Wallerstein*, State University of New York Press, Albany, NY 2020; 256pp; ISBN 9781438479651, $95.00, hbk

Williams' book is a revised doctoral thesis which, as the subtitle indicates, embraces a relatively rare methodological move in contemporary political science: a comparative analysis of two intellectuals and the scholarly work they created over several decades. Williams should be applauded for even commencing on the journey: an attempt to summarise the oeuvre of just one of these scholars would be a Herculean effort, let alone a comparative analysis of both. He proceeds in this endeavour in a rather chronological fashion, commencing with the upbringing of both protagonists and their respective intellectual formation (chapter 1 'Cosmopolitan Beginnings') as well as the impact other scholars had on their work (chapter 2 'Ideational Lineages'), but themes do emerge in subsequent chapters: chapter 3 on the significance of 1968; chapter 4 on the relevance of institutions such as the Fernand Braudel Center and the *New Left Review*; chapter 5 on the neoliberal countermovement as of 1980; chapter 6 on the fall of East European Communism in 1989; and chapter 7 on the ideology of great powers; all bookended by a brief introduction and a conclusion.

There is not an overabundance of personal or biographical information about the two academics under consideration, just enough to put their ideas and shifting theoretical concerns into a broader context. Even the latter is more a summary than a comprehensive textual analysis given the tremendous output each academic created in his life time. That said, reading the study I often wondered who its targeted audience was. For those intimately familiar with the output in question, the fact that Wallerstein was influenced by Polanyi, Braudel and Fanon and Anderson by Lukács, Althusser and Sartre (and later on Prigogine and Gramsci, respectively) is not really news. And their respective impact is summarised in rather brief interventions, as is the case for other topics or controversies: the Brenner Debate is summarised in two pages, as is the Anderson debate with E.P. Thompson. Andre Gunder Frank's debate with Wallerstein on the beginning of capitalism, which stretched over a decade, takes up but a single page, and the vast literature on anti-systemic movements is summarised in three pages. For those who may be unfamiliar with these debates, Williams does a decent job explaining them in the limited space available. Yet I'd also hesitate to recommend this book for graduate, let alone undergraduate students, who are unacquainted with

Wallerstein and Anderson. Though it offers a comprehensible trajectory of their ideas on certain issues and topics, it is far from comprehensive and often scratches the surface instead of providing an in-depth comparative textual analysis (the closest Williams comes to doing so is in reviewing the differences and similarities between Wallerstein's *Modern World System I* and Anderson's *Passages From Antiquity to Feudalism* and *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, early on). For those ignorant of world system analysis and its intellectual background, I'd still suggest Wallerstein's *World System Analysis* (2004). In analysing Anderson's changing political as well as theoretical preferences, one cannot escape debates such as reform versus revolution or Eurocommunist currents in Communist Parties and Trotskyism, and while Williams often mentions such currents, he also spends a lot of valuable pages on historical context (e.g. what did Wallerstein do as a faculty member to help out protesting students at Columbia in 1968 or specific Turkish foreign policy on Cyprus and the Kurds – all fascinating but for those interested in the comparative analysis of Wallerstein's and Anderson's ideas and texts, probably frustrating detours from the matter at hand).

It certainly would have been interesting to hear what the authors *themselves* thought about one another as well as Williams' analysis of them, but while Wallerstein was willing to be interviewed for this interesting project, Anderson was not and that probably did not make things easier for the author.

Though Williams points out in chapter four that institutions matter and rightly so, the reader is informed of the creation of the Fernand Braudel Center and its academic journal *Review* at the State University of New York at Binghamton, but nothing is said about the Center's controversial closing and the tragic demise of its journal (its last issue was featured in 2016). Nor are we informed of the changing readership at the *New Left Review* and the impact it has (or no longer has), though some of its internal debates are featured in the text. Therefore, in terms of intellectual legacy and impact of the respective writings on radical political economy, Williams ultimately provides limited information to the reader. For example, he does not discuss the Political Economy of the World System section of the American Sociological Association, which Wallerstein endeavoured to create decades ago. Nor is it clear to what degree Anderson, who joined the UCLA faculty in 1989, was successful in developing his own school of thought there as mentor to a cadre of graduate students.

While this volume provides a useful bibliography for interested readers as well as an index, it should also be mentioned that Williams does not

really confront either Wallerstein's or Anderson's thought critically, even when comparing them. He comes across as a dispassionate bystander who deftly summarizes intellectual developments and uses both published as well as unpublished sources from the *New Left Review* and Wallerstein's letters to good effect, but refrains from any pointed criticism himself and in doing so refuses to position himself regarding critiques whenever they are mentioned. For example, to what extent is Eurocentrism plaguing Anderson's oeuvre more than that of Wallerstein's? Williams does not go there, which is a pity given all the copious reading he has done. To what extent does their respective radical political economy make a difference in the field? We do not know.

To be fair, such a comparative approach can often raise more questions than a single author can possibly answer. If anything, it suggests far more research like this should be undertaken in order to spell out similarities and divergences between intellectual giants within the social sciences.

To conclude, for those already intimately familiar with all these theoretical debates, Williams does not truly break new ground. For those completely ignorant of them, it probably attempts to cover too much ground with too many names listed. I would, however, recommend the volume for a select group of graduate students interested in comparative social science research or for readers already aware of some of Wallerstein and Anderson's respective oeuvres but who have not yet immersed themselves in them. For that purpose, every university should acquire a copy for its library collection.

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Cal Winslow, *Radical Seattle: The General Strike of 1919*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 2020; 290pp; ISBN 9781583678534, $95.00, hbk; ISBN 9781583678527, $26.00, pbk; ISBN 9781583678541, $19.00, ebk

In 1919, in the midst of the Spanish flu pandemic, during a period of great worldwide turmoil, workers in Seattle shut down their city and ran it for five days. In *Radical Seattle: The General Strike of 1919*, Cal Winslow depicts this extraordinary event which began as a campaign of solidarity for the city's dockyard workers and represented the high point in a longer process of socialist and working-class organisation in the Pacific Northwest.

However, *Radical Seattle* is not just about the five days of the strike. Winslow argues that it is only through examining the background, the intense bitter conflicts, the discontent of the working people, and the socio-economic structure that workers found themselves in, can we ask ourselves: What was it that made Seattle 'a city where workers could imagine themselves running industry'?

The opening three chapters take on a thematic and contextual approach. Seattle was both a boom town and a centre for radical politics. The city had two enormous attractions for capitalists due to its harbour and the abundant resources of timber in Washington State. Huge sawmills and lumber camps invaded vast forests. Working life in the camps was both precarious and dangerous the mill owners were rabidly anti-union.

Conversely Seattle and Washington State had a history of anti-establishment beliefs going back as far as The Populist Party, to the cooperative movement, the Socialist Party to the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Seattle was a beacon for socialists of various persuasions. The city's branch of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) was against America's entry into World War I, had pressed for recognition of the fledgling Soviet Union, and Seattle dockworkers refused to handle weapons destined for Alexander Kolchak's White Army. The Seattle labour movement had also supported calls for a general strike during the campaign to free Tom Mooney and Warren Billings, two labour activists who had been falsely accused of the Preparedness Day bombing of 1916 in San Francisco.

Crucial to the politicisation of the Seattle working class, Chapter 4 takes us to the Everett Massacre. Everett was at the time a stronghold of Washington's timber workers. In 1916, the city's shingle weavers went on strike to protest a wage cut. While most of the shingle workers belonged to the International Shingle Weavers Union which was affiliated to the AFL, they also had clear sympathies with the militant IWW or 'Wobblies'. The Wobblies first became involved after months of sporadic violence from vigilantes, sheriff's deputies, and the police against striking workers. Having been previously beaten out of Everett, the IWW resolved to send in supporters via the *Verona* steamship. As supporters were attempting to disembark the ship, they were met with a hail of bullets from Sheriff Donald McCrea's deputies. Thirty-one were wounded in the attack, with five deaths. At least a further half dozen unidentified had died. In what Winslow describes as the Peterloo Massacre of the Pacific Northwest, the Everett Massacre became the rallying call for the Seattle working class.

While the shipyard workers campaign largely concerned 'bread-and-butter' trade union issues, the call for a sympathy strike resonated across

the city. It represented a tension within the labour movement between that of the narrow craft unionism of the national organisation of the AFL, and broader industrial unionism of the IWW, which believed in a 'One Big Union' transcending occupational lines.

As previously noted, things were different in Seattle. While there were radicals throughout the US they tended to be on the fringes, in Seattle there was a more inclusive 'radical consensus'. Members of the AFL, the IWW, and socialists shared platforms and openly fraternised together. This 'intense localism' as historian Robert Friedheim called it, is what made Seattle unique. On 6 February 1919, Seattle's workers – all of them – struck. The general strike was called by Seattle's Central Labor Council (CLC), headed by James Duncan, a Sunday school teacher. It represented 110 unions, all affiliated with the AFL. Tens of thousands participated in the strike in support of 45,000 shipyard workers in Seattle and nearby Tacoma. Laundry workers, hotel maids, miners, and even musicians all took part in the strike. For five days in February, workers ran Seattle.

It is noteworthy that the shutdown of Seattle's economy did not trigger a social unravelling or lead to wanton violence. The leaders of the strike also maintained vital services. Refuse continued to be collected, milk runs and 'strike kitchens' were opened, public safety patrols were organised, while the fire service and other critical services, such as telephones and the electricity supply, were also maintained. The General Strike even managed to penetrate the city's racial divide as Japanese immigrant workers embraced the strike. The Japanese Labor Association donated $50 towards the strike. Its leader, Katsunari Sasaki, wrote to James Duncan appreciating the fact that 'some local unions of organized labor here in Seattle have had a good feeling toward us while American Federation of Labor is still discriminating us and refusing to become member of organization'. Women also played a crucial role both before and during the strike. Many female workers within the hotel maids and laundry workers unions, mobilised and volunteered along with their male counterparts. Iconic labour heroines, such as Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Anna Louise Strong, and Kate Sadler, all receive deserved recognition throughout this work.

But why did it all end after only five days? The strike ended primarily because it became isolated. It didn't spread down the coast to California, nor was there widespread support from the country for it. So, this time it wasn't because of a violent crackdown or due to internal struggles – the way that most strikes are defeated. Aside from the traditional foes of organised labour, a high proportion of blame can be left at the door of the national organisation of the AFL. Its president, Samuel Gompers,

boasted that the 'insubordination of the general strike' was 'destined to die an early death' and that it was the AFL and not the US State Troops 'which ended this brief industrial disturbance of the Northwest'.

While the five days of February were peaceful, the inevitable violent crackdown on radicals and organised labour followed. One such particularly gruesome spectacle occurred in Centralia. There Wesley Everest, an ex-serviceman, was caught by members of the American Legion after an attack on the local IWW hall. After Everest's capture, he had his teeth knocked out and was dragged through the town to the local jail with a belt around his neck. Later that night a group of men forced their way into the jail and castrated him in the back of a car. He was then dragged to a bridge where he was hung twice. After being shot at, the body was then taken down and displayed in front of prisoners to make a clear point.

So, what are we to make of the Seattle General Strike of 1919? Winslow's work is an attempt to debunk the narrative of the strike as merely a failure, but rather afford it its due recognition as 'the highest point in a longer process of socialist and working-class organisation'. There are those on the left who point out the naivety of not thinking about how the general strike might lead to the gaining of political power. Yet despite being inspired by the events of the revolution in Russia, a decade of struggle and activism in the log camps and timber mills, a history of non-conformity, a proud localised 'radical consensus', its fundamental purpose wasn't all that explicitly revolutionary. The strike meant different things to different people. As Winslow shrewdly surmises: 'Some were striking to gain a definitive wage increase for their brother workers in the shipyards.' A minority undoubtedly were striking because they thought 'The Revolution' was about to arrive but for many, it was essentially a show of solidarity. While many valid criticisms may be made regarding the failed tactics or shortcomings of the strike; most of these are based on the gift of hindsight.

The aim of this work was not just to describe the events of 6-11 February 1919 but also 'an attempt to recover the decade-long making of the collective capable of launching one of America's most gripping strikes'. Cal Winslow more than succeeds in this objective. *Radical Seattle* is a powerful read.

Liam Ó Discín