

Mitchell is guarded in evaluating the counter-state's contribution to Sinn Féin's partial victory in 1922. Certainly, the Dáil and its government were of immense propaganda value. The colonial regime, headed by the ageing, blimpish Lord French, underestimated its opponents, and, with the failure of a few feeble and ludicrous efforts at winning "hearts and minds", relied increasingly on repression. But was independence due primarily to Dáil Éireann, Sinn Féin, or the IRA? The counter-state was most useful in 1920 when it filled the vacuum created by the collapse of policing and the courts. In the process, it generated a sense of the inevitability of national independence. However, it could not discharge the other functions of the modern state. Its economic initiatives in afforestation and co-operatives were marginal or unsuccessful. Ultimately, the counter-state was driven by the Sinn Féin-IRA struggle, and failed as a project to create an alternative regime in embryo.

After the truce of July 1921, Republicans were preoccupied with negotiations for the Anglo-Irish Treaty. The post-war economic boom had now yielded to a slump, and Dáil civil servants had plenty of work to do in administering land courts and labour arbitration. Yet the Dáil debates on the Treaty fixed obsessively on the constitutional status of the proposed new Ireland, to the neglect of practicalities or the Ulster question. With the foundation of Saorstát Éireann, what little remained of the counter-state was wound up or merged into systems of government and bureaucracy modelled on Westminster and Whitehall. One of the great puzzles of Irish history is how Sinn Féin steered a purely political revolution through a period of intense social conflict. Recent studies in contemporary local history are confirming the importance of the Republican state as a factor in shaping agrarian and labour unrest, and the attitudes of interest groups such as ranchers, small farmers and trade unionists towards the national movement. Up to now, that state has been ill-defined. Mitchell gives it definition in this balanced, objective and extensive account of the revolutionary Republic.

Enmet O Connor

TILLY, CHARLES. *Popular Contention in Great Britain 1758–1834.* Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) [etc.] 1995. xvii, 476 pp. Ill. \$49.95; £31.50.

Over twenty years in the making, this major study of popular collective behaviour combines painstaking research and mature reflection. In tune with fashionable epistemological and historiographical developments, Charles Tilly now eschews the teleological paradigms which informed his earlier analysis of collective violence. Modernization is purportedly purged from these pages, along with any attempt at meta-historical analysis. In place of epochal transition from the traditional and reactionary to the modern and proactive, Tilly offers a minute investigation of the complex but critical emergence of public meetings, demonstrations and special-interest associations. A study of how change occurs, it celebrates the advent of "durable mass national politics" in nineteenth-century Britain.

Aided by a team of research assistants, Tilly has drawn up a database of over 8,000 "contentious gatherings", occasions on which ten or more people, outside of the government, "gathered in a publicly accessible place and made claims on

at least one person outside their number, claims which if realized would affect the interests of their object". In an exhaustive study of Middlesex, Surrey, Kent and Sussex, some 1,204 such events were charted during thirteen years scattered from 1758 to 1820. A national survey of the seven year period from 1828 to 1834 produced a total of 6,884 events. Taken together, it is an impressive body of evidence, culled from the major periodicals of the day. The interpretation, however, is perhaps less revisionist than Tilly implies.

While repeatedly repudiating unilinear, functional and teleological modernization, Tilly offers a progressive reading of his data. There were twists and turns, reversals and losses, overlap and continuity, but a clear forward trend emerges. With the increasing "nationalization" and "parliamentarization" of contention, the old parochial, particular and bifurcated popular politics gave way to cosmopolitan, modular and autonomous forms. In this new repertoire of contention, the scope of the action and the objects of claims commonly spanned multiple localities; people employed very similar performances across a wide range of issues, groups, localities and objects of claims; and the organizers of such performances frequently scheduled and located them in advance at their own initiative rather than taking advantage of authorized assemblies of routine confluences of people.

These mechanistic and logistical changes, the necessary foundation for "mass national politics", evolved through three distinct stages: invention, consolidation and expansion. During the first period, 1758–1788, there was a fertile cluster of innovations in associational action, particularly in Wilkite London. Between 1789 and 1815, public meetings and demonstrations took shape as the standard forms of "para-parliamentary" politics, in implicit, if grudging, co-ordination with the authorities. After 1815, meetings, demonstrations and special-interest associations were the overwhelmingly dominant settings for claim-making: traditional forms of local, particular and mediated action entered definitive decline. This chronology is hardly surprising or contentious. In obeisance to current historiographical "correctness", Tilly may have altered his epistemological premises, but despite protestations to the contrary, the whiggish forward thrust of his work remains. What we have here, in fact, is a more nuanced but less exciting reprise of a familiar narrative, the modernization of protest in Britain through the politicization of discontent.

This is not to dismiss the work as old-fashioned or outdated. In coverage and framework, indeed, the book is commendably up to date, an able riposte to post-modernist interrogation of social science history. Through masterly summary of the latest findings on Britain's combined and uneven development, Tilly offers a convincing analysis of the socio-economic processes – population growth, migration and urbanization; capitalization, commercialization and proletarianization – which contributed to the shift to cosmopolitan, modular and autonomous repertoires of politics. Much emphasis is accorded to politics itself, most notably the inexorable war-driven expansion of the fiscal-military state, a process which brought parliament into increasing prominence. Access to local patrons and exploiters proved decreasingly feasible and efficacious: demands needed to be conveyed directly to Westminster. In facilitating such access, Tilly highlights the decisive contribution of organizers, brokers and political entrepreneurs (his list extends from John Wilkes to John Gast). Alert to changes in political opportunity, they were the innovatory force in para-parliamentary politics. Within limits set by demographic change, capitalization and the growth of the state, the repertoire

of contention developed in autonomous and contingent fashion, the result of political manoeuvring between these political culture brokers and the authorities.

Through such constant interaction, contention accumulated its own history of shared beliefs, memories, models, precedents and social ties, its "repertoire" of actions. For Tilly, the metaphor of repertoire embodies the process of historical change. A learned cultural creation, repertoire emerges out of struggle, not out of abstract philosophy or political propaganda. At any particular point, people learn only a rather small number of alternative ways to act collectively: many possible contentious actions never occur because the potential participants (collaborators and antagonists alike) lack the requisite knowledge and memory. Like language, actions take their meaning and effectiveness from shared understandings, memories and agreements, however grudging, among the contending parties. These shared understandings constrain the sense of what is possible and desirable. The prior path of collective claim-making thus constrains its subsequent forms, influencing the very issues, actors, settings and outcomes of popular struggle. Innovation occurs through political manoeuvring at the perimeter of the existing repertoire: it seldom breaks entirely with old ways.

In reading actions as language, Tilly offers a behavioural alternative to the narrow text-based focus of the "linguistic turn". These alternatives, however, should not be considered mutually exclusive. What is needed is a composite approach, embracing the intellectual paradigms, rhetorical tropes and behavioural codes within which contention was expressed and represented. As well as reading actions as language, we must study language in action. Here, as Tilly evinces, context is as important as content. Taking his metaphor as cue, historians should reconstruct the repertoire in performance, paying particular attention to the changing codes and conventions of political behaviour and public space interposed between utterance and representation, intention and perception.

While an important contribution to debate on the practice and philosophy of social history, Tilly's study, as intimated above, retains a sense of whiggish progressivism. He not only explains but also applauds the change in repertoire. A model for the rest of Europe, Britain's new mass politics extended citizenship and democracy, while facilitating social movements which challenged powerholders in the name of the disadvantaged. The new repertoire, however, was probably less consensual than his analysis suggests. By focusing on the south-east, Tilly takes undue account of the independent *extra-parliamentary* challenge of the radical mass platform. Assembling in carnival atmosphere behind banners and bands in trade, locality, family, ethnic and other groups, the crowd joined together in proud display as the excluded but sovereign people, demanding their constitutional rights "peaceably if we may, forcibly if we must". A blend of disciplined display, conviviality and "menace", this popular format owed much to the character of its gentlemanly leaders. While imposing "British" good order on the crowd (often portrayed by wearing Sunday best), the political entrepreneurs of the mass platform had also to raise the spectre of forcible intimidation, and hence did not discourage the presence of rough and rugged workers, "the fustian jackets, blistered hands and unshorn chins". Without necessarily adopting class-specific language, a sense of class pride developed around the boisterous cultural style of the mass platform and its forceful tactical independence, its freedom from party and parliamentary alliance. As champions of the excluded and "ragged" people, Henry Hunt and Feargus O'Connor vouchsafed the platform's self-sufficiency:

their very character as gentlemanly leaders embodied an integrity above the factionalism and apostasy of party politicians and the specious independence of other parliamentary Radicals. Middle-class politicians who attempted to win some measure of working-class support for “respectable” *para-parliamentary* agitation failed precisely to the extent that they refused to accept popular radicalism’s cultural style, its modes of open access mobilization and democratic organization. While Chartists displayed considerable ambivalence towards free trade they were united in rejection of the operational style and procedures of the Anti-Corn Law League. For those engaged in public meetings, demonstrations and associations, the very ways and means of agitation – the behavioural codes of the repertoire of contention – were themselves the crucial subject of much contestation. Popular contention has meanings beyond those revealed by Tilly’s impressive database.

One final gripe. A book of this high quality, based upon a wealth of primary research in numerous archives, deserves a system of proper referencing. The Harvard system deployed here fails to do justice to Tilly’s labours and hinders others who wish to pursue the sources.

John Belchem

BARROW, LOGIE [and] IAN BULLOCK. *Democratic ideas and the British Labour movement, 1880–1914*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996. ix, 326 pp. £40.00; \$69.95.

After World War I, socialist proponents of a strong democratic programme “found themselves squeezed between the benevolent elitism and ‘realism’ of one sort of Fabianism and what in some ways was the re-importation of the same thing in the revolutionary guise of Leninism” (p. 303). On the one hand, the Labour Party adopted a view of politics and the British constitution that owed much to the Fabian’s defence of representative government rather than popular government. And on the other hand, the Bolshevik experience embodied the triumph of the Lenin of *What is to be Done?* over both his own more democratic guises and the popular democrats in the Russian movement. Logie Barrow and Ian Bullock’s impressive work attempts to recover a stronger democratic tradition within the British left and to explain why it was squeezed out between these two alternatives.

One thing Barrow and Bullock rightly emphasize is the extent to which the socialism of the 1880s drew on a popular radicalism associated with Chartism. The first socialist organization of the 1880s was the Social Democratic Federation (SDF). Many of its members had been active in ultra-democratic movements, and the views of Hyndman, its idiosyncratic leader, overlapped with theirs here in important ways. The members of the SDF consciously saw themselves as the inheritors of the Chartist mantle: even as they came to place more emphasis on social reform, democratization typically remained essential not only to their vision of a socialist society but also as a strategic necessity to bring socialism about. Indeed, the commitment of the SDF to political action and political reform was one of the key issues that led people to leave it to form the Socialist League. Whilst some members of the League were anarchists who rejected the state as such, others, including William Morris, argued democracy had to come after the