case studies of individual almshouses. She quotes Nigel Goose, the author of a case study of a Norwich almshouse, pointing out that "[a]lmshouses require the attention of historians working at the local level if we are ever fully to understand their place in the history of the mixed economy of welfare" (p. 188), obviously agreeing and making a case for the study of individual almshouses, which in themselves can serve to dissect an overly static image of almshouses and their history.

To conclude, it would be laudable if Nicholls's excellent and ground-breaking study were to inspire the study of almshouses in other regions of the British Isles, and beyond. The only criticism one might have of this rich and detailed study is that the recurrent emphasis on the great diversity of almshouses and the difficulty of categorization sometimes seems to play down the many things it does tell us about early modern English almshouses, their founders, residents and rules, and the scope for comparison this book offers. It seems to me that Nicholls is being overly modest, even if her restraint is inspired by the correct observation that the early modern age tends to escape our modern desire for systematization and categorization. The study of social history in general and of almshouses in particular is not necessarily helped by overly rigid schemes of past human behaviour. If Nicholls's study shows us anything, it is the great resilience and adaptability of early modern humanity with regard to the eternal problem of averting and alleviating poverty.

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ALAYRAC, PIERRE. L'Internationale au milieu du gué. De l'internationalisme socialiste au Congrès de Londres (1896). Pref. by Jean-Numa Ducange and Blaise Wilfert-Portal. Presses Universitaires de Rennes, Rennes 2018. 222 pp. Ill. € 20.00.

The Second International held nine congresses from its founding in 1889. These were grand events that brought together the leading representatives of the socialist world for a week of debate, celebration, and networking. The tenth congress, scheduled for August 1914 in Vienna, was hastily cancelled as troops mobilized across Europe and the anti-war promise of the International became an uncomfortable memory. Ever since, historians have focused upon the presence of nationalism and internationalism within this fascinating and complex institution. The historiography is intimidating, both for its sheer size and canonical status. But new scholars are needed to refresh the field, and Pierre Alayrac's new historical sociology is a welcome contribution. Alayrac treats the 1896 congress in London as a microcosm from which to show the diversity of "experiences and activities" in late nineteenth-century socialist internationalism (p. 94). "Historians of socialism", he writes, "have often restricted themselves to the study of relations between national movements, neglecting the plurality of social profiles, and the resources available to each to impose their views" (p. 202). Alayrac's project seeks to rectify this tendency by unpacking socialist parties and revealing their individual members.

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The book is composed of three chapters. Chapter one explores how socialists were shaped by the configuration, or the *mise-en-scène*, of the 1896 congress. Mundane details like seating arrangements, the order of business, and above all the arrangement of delegations, directed events on the ground. The imperative of organizing unified, "homogenous" delegations "nationalized" positions. In effect, the congress was an agent of nationalism. This attention to the structuring mechanisms of congress culture is in close conversation with the research of Kevin Callahan.[1] Callahan and Alayrac both argue that these carefully choreographed events were nationally structured in a way that underwrote an "*inter*-nationalist" socialist community. One might reflect upon how Callahan's Geertzian idea of symbolic ritualization differs from Alayrac's reliance on the interactionist and structural theories of Goffman and Bourdieu.

Chapter two highlights the socioeconomic diversity of the congress. Rather than a unified group of peers, Alayrac finds significant "stratification". This chapter is the heart of the book and its most innovative. The biographical data of known attendees is statistically analysed and compared to demonstrate large differences in social standing. In addition to learning that the median age was thirty-nine, and that just eleven per cent of active participants were women, his Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) graphs degrees of influence and reconstitutes a "sociological morphology" of the congress (p. 101). This data has its limits. For instance, one could ask whether we really can fit everyone into just "three classes". And what about the many participants the author acknowledges he is unable to triangulate in his source material? But his approach is fascinating and useful for reminding us of how positions of authority in the socialist movement were not just products of prior experience or conviction, but also of economic mobility and social networks. The final chapter argues that diverse groups of socialists used the congress as an "arena" to settle their quarrels in sometimes overlapping ways. Particularly interesting in this respect is his discussion of the international federations and syndicalist organizations that also gathered on the congress sidelines.

In Raoul Peck's recent film, *The Young Karl Marx* (2017), we see the famous June 1847 congress of the League of the Just unfolding. The boisterous, smoke-filled room seems light years away from the genteel gathering Alayrac studies half a century later. What happened in this relatively short time? How did socialism move from London's back lanes to the stately Queen's Hall? The short answer is that socialism was institutionalized as a mass party with an extensive apparatus for education and fundraising. Alayrac gives us a snapshot of how the shift from party militants to party professionals entrenched hierarchies. One of the larger implications of his book is that socialist "inter-nationalism" was constructed to eliminate lingering militant syndicalist and anarchist wings. In addition, overturning the idea of monolithic blocs challenges us to think more about the fluidity of alliances and positions within "French" or "British" socialist parties.

Even if Alayrac raises ambitious questions for the historiography, his subject of one congress for engaging them sometimes seems too modest. The 1896 congress in London was

1. Kevin Callahan, "'Performing Inter-Nationalism' in Stuttgart in 1907: French and German Socialist Nationalism and the Political Culture of an International Socialist Congress", *International Review of Social History*, 45:1 (2000), pp. 51–87; *idem*, *Demonstration Culture: European Socialism and the Second International, 1889–1914* (Kibworth Beauchamp, 2010). See also the review of this book by Stefan Berger in *International Review of Social History*, 57:1 (2012), pp. 116–117.

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important, but significant changes in socialism occurred within a decade, not least the formation of the International's Secretariat in Brussels and the dramatic Revisionist schism within German social democracy. His "sociological morphology" generates "typologies" of socialist actors, but their durability amidst these changes remains uncertain. Moreover, the extensive work of prosopography and statistics for a single event also suggest some limits to the approach. In ongoing efforts to reconcile transnational and social histories, Alayrac might consider "upscaling" his framework to include not just multiple congresses, but also alternative stages of socialism, like party meetings, parliamentary debates, or public protests across several countries. Kevin Callahan's interest in the demonstrations that the International coordinated against the Balkan Wars, drawing 100,000 protesters onto the streets of Paris in 1912, provides a good example of a potential way to extend the research from London to Europe. Finally, I would have liked to read more about how gender affected the "social profile" of international socialism and its events. Women played a leading role in creating liberal internationalist reform networks. One has the sense of a hugely missed opportunity on the part of the Second International in this respect.

Taken together, Alayrac's multifaceted study is a concerted and thoughtful attempt to shift our focus on the Second International from questions of doctrine to participation and socioeconomic positionality. It is exciting reading for historians of socialism looking to find new answers to old questions and it showcases promising methodological innovations that may be pleasantly unfamiliar to those outside the French academic nexus of sociology and history. With the recent transnational turn, one hopes to see more of this research and perhaps a new golden age of scholarship on the Second International and *fin-de-siècle* social democracy.

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Alternatives to State-Socialism in Britain. Other Worlds of Labour in the Twentieth Century. Ed. by Peter Ackers and Alastair J. Reid. [Palgrave Studies in the History of Social Movements.] Palgrave Macmillan, London 2016. xvii, 354 pp. € 96.29. (E-book: € 74.96.)

Alternatives to State-Socialism in Britain poses crucial and challenging questions about actors, organizations, and forms used to build a more equal society in the twentieth century. It addresses issues that go beyond Britain and the field of labour and social history and, as such, could attract the interest of a broad audience. The chapters are all well-crafted, documented, and enjoyable to read, and have been assembled in a coherent manner by the editors.

Ackers and Reid's introduction immediately sets the aim of the book – to vindicate the existence of a liberal-pluralist "living political tradition that values associational forms of life above the state" (p. 2) vis-à-vis the state-centred tradition common to both twentieth-century Marxist labour historians and social democrats. In this tradition, the state has

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