

## BOOK REVIEWS

FRANK, ANDRE GUNDER. *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age*. University of California Press, Berkeley [etc.] 1998. xxix, 416 pp. \$55.00; £42.00. (Paper: \$19.95; £14.95.)

In this book, Andre Gunder Frank first of all emphasizes the important economic role of Asia in general, and of India and China in particular, during the period of European expansion as part of a global trade network. However, his major aim is “to analyze the structure and dynamic of the whole world economic system itself and not only the European (part of the) world economic system”. Frank starts by tracing his own intellectual development as part of his ever-continuing discussions with other major system thinkers such as Immanuel Wallerstein, with anthropologists like Eric Wolf, and with world historians, first and foremost William H. McNeill. Frank then presents his main thesis: since 1500 a single global economy with a worldwide division of labor and multilateral trade has existed. Asia in general and East Asia in particular were the dominant centers of economic power. West Europeans, and later North Americans, only took over after 1800. The period of Western dominance is now coming to an end, and the former pattern of Asian dominance is re-establishing itself.

The main characteristics of the modern world economic system are discussed by referring to the work of major scholars: Alfred Crosby’s discussion of the effects of the Columbian exchange of plants and animals worldwide; William McNeill’s analysis of the global but unequal spread of infectious diseases; the importance of trade diasporas almost everywhere (as emphasized by Philip Curtin, strangely not explicitly mentioned by Frank); Sing Chew’s views on generalized ecological change – mostly deterioration – during this period.

While presenting a review of the existing literature, Frank argues that since around 1400 a world division of labor has existed, based on regional networks of global trade. He describes these networks in terms of consumable commodities, silver and gold. China and India were the most central parts of global trade. In many instances, trade was only possible when commodities were exchanged for precious metals or cowry shells. As long as the prices of gold and silver differed between China and Europe, the pressures of supply and demand also led to a worldwide trade in such metals. Silver, gold, copper and cowry shells therefore fulfilled a double role. They were traded as commodities in return for other commodities, yet in their role as monies they also facilitated the functioning of a money economy, including the increase of various forms of credit.

Frank pays due attention to Dennis Flynn’s and Arturo Giráldez’s important argument that most American silver flowed both through Europe and the Philippines towards China, which made European expansion possible in the first place. Also, Japan was a large producer of silver, and its role has yet to be fully determined.

As a result, in South China and Bengal: “the agricultural and settlement frontiers expanded along with their commercialization, stimulated by demand from the outside which also generated local demand – and supply – and which were financed by the influx of new money from abroad”. This also led to “increased production and migration *within* Asia and for *intra*-Asian trade” and to considerable population growth.

Thanks to the influx of especially American silver, both production and population levels grew more in Asia than in Europe.

From 1500 to 1800 the population in India and China grew faster than in western Europe, while the numbers were considerably larger to begin with. Asians may have lived longer as well. The higher production and productivity levels in many parts of Asia resulted in greater competitiveness worldwide. Intra-Asian trade was considerably larger than any European mercantile efforts. It was only thanks to American silver that Europeans could buy themselves into a flourishing Asian trade system. The major difference was that all around the globe Europeans became middlemen managing their own growing worldwide trade networks. Until today European scholars have devoted most of their attention to these global networks, to an extent out of all proportion to their real significance in Asia.

The European scientific revolution of the seventeenth century is another myth that Frank seeks to demolish. China especially, and to a lesser extent India, was scientifically very advanced. Moreover, it remains to be seen whether European science had any real influence on its technological development before 1800. European guns mounted on ships provided some advantage, but never so decisively as to establish effective monopolies of trade and production.

Frank subsequently seeks to tie together developments, often considered separate, into one “horizontally integrative macrohistory”. He dismisses the idea of a generalized economic crisis in the seventeenth century in places as far apart as Europe (with the exclusion of the Netherlands) and China. However, he thinks there is enough evidence to state, for instance, that “the continued long ‘A’ expansion in Asia was punctuated by a *world monetary crisis* culminating in the 1640s”. Between 1600 and 1800 a number of Eurasia-wide interlinked economic and political developments would have taken place.

Frank’s explanation of why “the West” won – at least temporarily – consists of two aspects. In the nineteenth century, the long period of Asian economic expansion finally came to an end, mostly for internal reasons: “Production and trade began to atrophy as growing population and income, and also their economic and social polarization, exerted pressure on resources, constrained effective demand at the bottom, and increased the availability of cheap labor in Asia more than elsewhere in the world.” Europe and the Americas made good use of this situation by industrializing, and thus became the major global producers and traders. Frank ends his book by restating his earlier conclusions in more general terms.

I consider *ReOrient* by far Frank’s best book. In the past, Frank often assumed rather controversial positions that were not always backed by solid historical evidence. However, this book has been researched far more thoroughly and is far more balanced.

Of course, some of the points made by Frank are debatable. First of all, Frank’s concept of a global political economy is, in my view, too limited. There is, for instance, hardly any place for culture as a relatively autonomous regime. Also, there is little in the way of a systematic discussion of the effects of the surroundings in which people live, which do limit their actions to some extent.

Secondly, Frank is reluctant to recognize that there were any exceptional European developments before 1800. However, between 1500 and 1800 Europeans destroyed all the American empires and conquered an entire continent – no-one else did so during that period – while the Russian empire expanded into Central Asia. Europeans, not Asians, established trading posts along the African coast and in Asia; no Africans or Asians did anything similar in Europe or the Americas. During the sixteenth and seven-

teenth centuries the Dutch started fighting the Spanish and the Portuguese on the other side of the globe; the Chinese and the Japanese did not find themselves at loggerheads in the English Channel or the Mediterranean. In addition, there were fundamentally new developments in science and technology, a result in particular of the European need for technology to help its ships successfully navigate the seven seas. In other words, I think that Frank pushes his case for European marginality too far.

Thirdly, I think Frank is right to emphasize the importance of one single global political-economic system since 1500. However, this does not necessarily mean that in our search for evidence we should first of all expect there to have been similar effects everywhere. For example, in 1999 the Peruvian economy was stagnant, if not contracting, while the Dutch economy was growing. Yet both are obviously part of a global trade and production network. What we need is a good theory of systemic interrelationships, causes and effects. As I see it, the theory of economic macrosystems is still in its infancy.

Finally, the reliance on the works of other scholars and the lack of any first-hand experience with the laborious historical craft may be Frank's major weakness. However, his major strength is the insistence on the importance of systemic effects of global economics since 1500 and the prominent role Asians played in it. Let us hope that Frank's *ReOrient* will help scholars to appreciate this to a greater extent. The precise dynamics of the global political-economic regime may still need to be elucidated, but an initial, albeit perhaps sketchy, outline is there. Frank deserves praise for the courageous way in which he set sail on this voyage while openly criticizing his earlier work.

*Fred Spier*

HERZOG, DON. *Poisoning the Minds of the Lower Orders*. Princeton University Press, Princeton 1998. xvi, 559 pp. £19.95.

Weighty books with contentious titles from major publishers carry a more onerous promise of delivery than other works, and this more than most. For Herzog not only offers an historical account of the reception and transformation of radical ideas in Britain during the 1790s and Regency period, and of the origins of conservatism, but also an excursus in political theory, via an interrogation of "our own commitments and anxieties about democracy" (as the blurb alarmingly expresses it). (By this chiefly seems to be meant the potential anxiety American conservatives might feel in acknowledging the more antidemocratic elements in their own ideological closets.) Herzog's chief methodological aim, admirably, is to level, as far as possible, the barriers between "high" political theory and "low" social history, so as to make intelligible an account of political ideas which manifestly concerns the lower orders a great deal *more* intelligible by detailing their own ideas in as many manifestations as possible. In this he succeeds to a substantial degree: the result is a richly-researched, engaging, and sometimes provocative work.

In Part One the central figure of this account is Edmund Burke, and the chief theme, the forging of Burkean conservatism on the anvil of Paineite radicalism in the early and mid-1790s. Herzog's chief concern here is to reject the contemporary radical assertion that Burke's views simply echoed "prejudice", while those of Paine and his followers were inspired by "reason". This account commences with a rehearsal of the now oft-

explored Queen Caroline case, then moves to Burke's construction of an idea of "tradition" in response to the French Revolution. The concept of "tradition" is, as Herzog recognizes, much contested; there were many "traditions" on offer in that moment when it seemed that all the political and much of the social world was being made anew, and Burke's ideas on church and state constituted only one, and not an even very widely-shared, conception of British history, culture and national identity in 1790. The patch of "tradition" which most interests Herzog concerns prejudice and the deliberate inculcation of ignorance, superstition and illusion – what a later generation, *pace* Sorel and others, would refer to as "myth", and justify in similar terms. In Burke's case "tradition" was enlisted primarily to cement subordination and counter equality by investing the past, and its supposed chief principles of (British) order, with mythical status, by stressing the naturalness and inevitability of hierarchy, and the historical nonexistence of successful "levelling" schemes, as well as their distance from anything that Burke regarded as remotely Whiggish. "Tradition" also meant resistance to an emerging master in the coming century, the ubiquitous, hydra-like "public opinion". Burke may not, as Herzog argues, have used the word "conservative" to describe his own views (or anyone else's). But he clearly identified some popular as well as elite prejudices as worth reinforcement, and others, socially and politically liberal, as dangerous. The sites where opinion was leavening, in debating societies, coffee houses, pubs, Sunday schools, and circulating libraries, are thus examined here, as are the rise of popular literacy and education through Mechanics Institutes, the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and other means. Once this flood of enthusiasm for the written and spoken word reached the masses, his hypothesis runs, the *ancien régime* was doomed; echoing Koselleck: "Criticism spelled the death of kings."

In Part Two, Herzog turns to the issue of contempt (towards women, blacks, the working classes, Jews, and others) as a means of fixing social prejudice. The antidote to the spreading, contagious "poison" of popular literary culture was the reinforcement of subordination. In the first instance this was achieved by trial, transportation, and brute repression. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, however, the issue was less seditious behaviour than the need to recapture some elements of public opinion, and to refine others. The public sphere had not only become dangerously unstable in the 1790s, fluctuating with every current of revolutionary upheaval, prone to erratic movements and speculative ventures like the public funds with which it was so often compared. It had also, Whiggishly, become less conventional and more liberal, perhaps more French, American, perhaps more widely "sceptical" and "enlightened". Behind middle-class pretensions, too, always lay the tacit threat of alliance with the poor, whose own pretensions thus became the chief target of the campaign to foment "contempt" early in the new century. Condescension was reinforced, insolence and impudence condemned. Too frail, perhaps, to mount their own defense, the upper classes and especially the aristocracy depended on Whig and ex-radical allies like James Mackintosh to cement loyalty to the established order to some conception of progress. Some of this contempt, too, was shared by radicals themselves; Cobbett was notably anti-Semite, and to be "English", in this conception of national identity, was to disdain the Scots, the Welsh and usually the Irish. Women often fared little better.

Part Three then looks at responses to this contempt on the part of those who wished to participate in public life, but whose social and political identity was severely impaired by the prejudices described previously. The Cobbettite ideal of the true-born Englishman was of course an excellent vehicle for rebutting accusations of proximity to French

or American politics, and of emphasizing a shared culture inhabited by both upper and lower classes. Any hostility shared by all Englishmen (even women) could be used to deflect and defuse popular discontent. And men could bond against women, especially “public women” like Mary Wollstonecraft, as English could against Irish, in order to reinforce their sense of identity. Radicals could thus be complicit, in Herzog’s view, in the ideal of social order which conservatives crafted in the wake of the revolution. Chapter 11, “The Trouble with Hairdressers”, touches on the language of class, but does not penetrate far in explaining why defenses of the “dignity of labor” were constant in the radical literature of the period, and how the language of civil and political rights became steadily infused with ideals of economic rights.

The chief strength of this book is its wide scope and perceptive grasp of the innuendo and nuance of social exclusion, which makes it one of the most important contributions to discussion of the language of class in Britain of recent years. Admittedly a study of conservatism, it says too little on the perceived merits of equality, its popular appeal, and its reinforcement of certain trends in Christian culture and even Whiggish politics. Radical works tend to be pillaged for the way in which they reinforce exclusionary strategies, rather than the inclusive aims which the language of class often struggled to achieve. Despite a discussion of Malthus, there is too little on how political economy, so central to the ideological development of this period, was used both inclusively and exclusively. More perplexingly, there is curiously little on theories of national identity as applied to this period, and on the impact of empire, of the Napoleonic wars, and of the juxtaposition of “English” or “British” to French as a vehicle of inclusion/exclusion. Such discussions would have made this study more comprehensive, but they do not markedly detract from its considerable achievements.

*Gregory Claeys*

RIOT-SARCEY, MICHÈLE. *Le réel de l’utopie. Essai sur le politique au XIXe siècle.* Albin Michel, Paris 1998. 309 pp. F.fr. 140.00.

This book is a major contribution to our understanding of nineteenth-century political history. Its research on the years 1830–1840 brings out admirably the common doctrinal base shared by monarchists and republicans, liberals and conservatives, François Guizot and Auguste Comte, Alphonse de Lamartine and Louis Reybaud: the philosophy of progress with order. It was a philosophy that stressed the assurance of the providential forward march of the world, of a coming happiness, linked to the natural movement of society – a movement that respects and safeguards the ultimate foundations of social order: family and property. It goes without saying that this progress, the product of a slow and gradual accumulation of benefits, required the exclusion from the political sphere of the dangerous classes and irrational social categories: workers and women. To workers who became impatient with their lot, Lamartine offered the only and true solution, inspired by sane public morality and civilized reason, the only way for them to become proprietors and therefore citizens: the savings bank.

Those who dare to touch the pillars of civilization, those who, like the insurgent workers of Lyons in 1831, the strikers of 1840, the socialists and other partisans of subversive doctrines who challenge family and/or property, are denounced as enemies of progress, reason and public morality, or, even worse, as incurable *utopians*, individuals

outside of reality, dreaming of social regression, of a return to the “savage condition of communism”.

A passage written by Victor Cousin in 1828 wonderfully summarizes this philosophy, which claims to reconcile morality and force: “I intend to demonstrate the morality of success. Usually one sees in success only the triumph of force, and a sort of sentimental sympathy moves us towards the defeated; as I hope to have demonstrated, since there must always be a defeated side, and since the victorious one is always the one that should be so, one must only prove that the winner not only serves civilization, but that he is the best, the most moral one, and that this is the reason why he is the victor. If things were not so, there would be a contradiction between morality and civilization, which is impossible.”

Inspired by Walter Benjamin’s critique of the ideologies of progress, Riot-Sarcey hopes to retrieve the events that introduce *discontinuities* into this triumphal procession of the victors, to rediscover the unaccomplished hopes, and the multiple possibilities repressed by the official version of history – to uncover the moments when the victims of the liberal system rebel and defy the hierarchies established in the name of “civilization”.

The two events that she has chosen to illustrate her argument – the insurrection of the silk workers (*canuts*) in Lyons in 1831 and the Parisian strikes of 1840 – are described as “non-political” by the self-instituted representatives of the public space – always male and proprietors – and “explained” by the subterranean influence of seditious ideas propagated by the Saint-Simonians, the communists and other dangerous utopians. Even someone as favourable to the “organization of labour” as Louis Blanc is afraid of the collective action of the “pariahs” and preaches harmony among the classes: “Let the bourgeoisie become the people’s tutor: it is its duty, and, as I have tried to demonstrate, it is also in its interests. Because, after all, the bourgeoisie has rendered important services to the cause of civilization, and its interests are no less dear to me than those of the people. Are we not all brothers?”

It is during these events – a true historical refutation of the “progress-in-order” philosophy – that utopia shines with all its subversive fires, because it is not a “chimera” – a word dear both to liberals and republicans – but simply any body of radical propositions that are unachievable in the framework of the dominant thought-systems, in other words, a project aiming at a transformation of the social relations which dares to challenge the foundations of the established social order: family and property. In short, utopia is, as the libertarian communist Joseph Déjacque wrote, “an unachieved but not unachievable dream”, taken on board by those who, like women and proletarians, are excluded from the “representative” political system.

What interests the author are less the utopian doctrines in themselves – often, as in the case of Saint-Simonianism, contaminated by the ideology of industrial progress – than their historical effectiveness (what she calls “the reality of utopia”, their reception by social actors). For instance, she draws on the correspondence of the Saint-Simonian newspaper *Globe*, an astonishing collection of 2,097 letters addressed to the editors. This treasure, conserved in the Parisian Arsenal Library, is scrutinized and analysed for the first time in one of the most interesting chapters of this book. “‘From the exploitation of man by man’ to the need ‘to subvert the foundations of the existing system’” would be an apt title for this correspondence, to which male and female workers, doctors, lawyers, students, “faithful wives” – all disappointed by the betrayal of the July Revolution (1830) – contributed. After July 1830 power was monopolized by “miserable

schemers". As for the Saint-Simonians, some of them, like Charles Emmanuel, dreamt of reconciling socialism and individualism.

It is not an accident that the most radical figures in utopian circles were *women*, such as Claire Demar, whose "sovereignly rebellious" word does not hesitate to challenge the imposed morality; or Pauline Roland and Jeanne Déroin, who aspire at a "direct government" of the citizens; or the female correspondents of the *Globe*, who dare to demand women's participation in public life.

More sympathetic to the subtle analysis of Jacques Rancière and Miguel Abensour than to the narrow approach of someone like Paul Benichou – who reduces all utopias to "totalitarian" dogmatic systems – Riot-Sarcey is interested in the tensions between theories and practices, and in the reinterpretation of utopian ideas by the excluded, women and proletarians, who dream of self-emancipation.

The importance of such privileged moments, where utopia and the historical event intersect, is that they permit the rise of a *revolutionary spirit*, which breaks the conformist continuity of a "progress" respectful of order and social hierarchy.

Reading this book is not always easy: its uneven style and the deliberate choice of discontinuity often means one loses the thread of the argument. However, the force and originality of the discourse are unquestionable, even if one does not always share the author's viewpoint. For instance, it is difficult to understand her surprising argument (p. 267) that Marx and Guizot had similar views since both shared the same "usual criteria" for understanding history as the product of "political transformations resulting from power relations". But one should above all pay homage to a book that tries – and succeeds – in writing nineteenth-century history "against the grain".

Michael Löwy

RODGERS, DANIEL T. *Atlantic Crossings. Social Politics in a Progressive Age*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) [etc.] 1998. ix, 634 pp. Ill. £21.95.

This is the story of a little book that became a big one and yet never managed quite to overcome its origins. It is a massive, prize-winning, astoundingly detailed, encyclopedically scoped, prodigiously researched, often beautifully written account of social policies in the broadest sense among the nations on both sides of the North Atlantic during the period from the 1890s up to the end of the Second World War.

It appears to have started out (and bears these marks in its title as well as in much of its *Fragestellung*) as a more modest endeavor, seeking to identify and trace the European influences on American social policy during the progressive era. Rodger's immediate historiographical audience is those American historians who, he claims, do not recognize that, in fact, European precedents and models had profound influence in the US and who therefore continue to think of American policies as formulated in splendid exceptionalist isolation. If such a species of scholars still exists, notice has hereby been served that it is endangered, if not outright extinct. To this end Rodgers paints the vacillating currents of influence and sometimes reciprocal admiration in wonderfully nuanced and detailed terms: the pilgrimage of Americans to German universities to sit at the feet of the professorial socialists, the homage to things Teutonic that ended with the outbreak of World War One and the shift, instead, to Britain as the transatlantic focus. The

story he tells is primarily that of connections between these two nations, with France and Scandinavia playing more peripheral roles. If bringing American historians out of their isolation had remained the book's ambition, however, it would be a classic case of killing the proverbial gnat with a howitzer.

From the vantage of anyone who does not need convincing of this rather limited point, the interest of the book lies in its more general tackling of the development of social policies in the North Atlantic nations and the reasons why they have varied so remarkably among economies that, generally speaking, faced the same problems of industrialization and urbanization. Here Rodgers has a great deal to offer, with fascinating chapters on a wide variety of social policies, understood in the broadest sense: not just social insurance, but economic theory, town planning, zoning, housing, transportation and rural development. Sometimes the American starting point locks him into a narrowly national scope, as in his discussion of the working-class focus of early social insurance schemes, not the poor, a point which will surprise no one familiar with European social policy and which appears to stem in large measure from the peculiar (and late twentieth-century) American usage of "welfare" to refer to means-tested programs targeted at the poor (pp. 209ff).

And yet, it is also in the transition from his narrower topic, of the transatlantic connections, to the broader one, of the divergent development of social policies among all these nations, that growing pains in the book's magisterial expansion arise. His starting position, fixated as it is on the largely one-way traffic from European precedents to certain American social policy experts and reformers, limits his ability to make sense of the larger issues except in terms of intellectual influences and relative speed along a common path of development. Crudely put, the problem is this: from the vantage point of those Americans who paid attention to European developments, Europe was ahead of the US for most of the period dealt with here, beating it along a path of development that America was, or (from their point of view) should also be traversing, but at a slower and more incomplete rate. But this was the perspective of only a few among those who made decisions on such matters in America, the perspective of the social-science chattering classes. Others, of course, did not see things this way, maintaining that European precedents were inappropriate and unilluminating and, in most cases, these were the actors who had their way. Hence, the delicate dance that Rodgers has to maintain between lavishing attention on the European policy imports and influences and then explaining why so few of them actually took root. This dilemma, however, gets to the heart of the matter. Rodgers, admirably, wants to undercut the provincial notion of American exceptionalism in a strong sense, that the US was somehow immune to the sorts of problems and the solutions thereto proposed in Europe. But this leads him too often into a rejection also of exceptionalism in a weaker sense, that in fact American solutions to common problems were simply different from the European, and not just slower or more incomplete. In other words, by taking the transatlantic observers' perspective, he has no axis for viewing the problem other than theirs, namely the belief in a common journey, with nations distinguished only by their speed and not their trajectory.

Balancing these two sets of factors is at the heart of his problem: the intellectual influences and precedents that the Americans harvested from Europe and the domestic factors that explain why some took hold and others did not; the importance of business interests, the rule of the market principle, the weakness of the labor movement, the strength of popular governance, the crosscutting effects of ethnic and national differ-

ences, the weakness of the administrative infrastructure, and so forth. The book wavers uneasily from one to the other side of this equation. Sometimes there are interesting accounts of the domestic factors that explain American divergence from European patterns. Trying to explain why public housing did not take root until the twentieth century and then focused only on the poorest, for example, gives rise to a nuanced, though never really very conclusive, argument about the factors that separated American from European policies that, in fact, is largely independent of the argument on policy borrowings (pp. 193–208). Similarly the very compelling account of the unusual trajectory of social insurance in north America focuses on factors such as the timing of reforms, ethnic differences, the prevalence of business-oriented ideology, the role of the labor movement and established interests (pp. 254ff). Again, all these factors are arguably much more important than precedents and policy borrowings and Rodgers does not ignore them, but they are curiously and awkwardly relegated to a secondary position in comparison to his particular *leitmotiv*, even though his overall interest is larger than just the Atlantic connections as such.

At other times there are accounts of the ways that American observers were inspired to emulate or reject European precedents. This, of course, is the least surprising of the book's insights – that there should have been a learning process, and is the kind of study, here pulled off transatlantically, that Allan Mitchell has spent a career performing between France and Germany. Most ambitious, however, are the claims that the intellectual influences themselves were a causal factor, i.e. that the very fact of the previous existence of European programs was the primary reason for their adoption in the US. But oddly, given the overall theme of the book, Rodgers makes this claim only occasionally. I count just a handful of such instances (pp. 235, 247, 286, possibly 322, 337). On p. 254 he makes the claim that social insurance in the US would have been inconceivable without European precedents, which seems either trivial or wrong, and in any case wholly unprovable. Finally, however, after 400 pages, he gets to the New Deal, which he interprets in large measure as the result of the breaking through of an accumulated and delayed blockage of reforms taken off the European policy shelves, though when he settles down to the details it is largely the insurance aspect of social security that he finds to be a policy import, though then even the choice in favor of that option turns out to have domestic causes too.

Although it is hard to know precisely how to measure this, it is certainly the case that differences within Europe among nations' social policies were as great as between any given European country and the US, something that Rodgers implicitly accepts in his discussion of various modes of dealing with the problem of income security for wage earners (pp. 226–229) and actually claims as an overall point occasionally (p. 255). One of Rodgers's achievements is to have brought the US into the orbit of European social policy, showing the interconnections and mutual influences and thus demonstrating that we need to talk of an Atlantic world in this respect and not just Europe or America in mutual isolation. But at the same time, with his focus on the intellectual and policy influences across the ocean, with the strongest ones emanating from various nations whose precise choice depends on the issue and time in question (Germany fading out, for example, after 1933), he turns "Europe" into a monolith that it never was (something, by the way, that is a common failing in studies of social policy). If European nations differed among themselves, for reasons that have been given extensive explication in terms of domestic factors, why should not the same approach hold true for transatlantic comparisons? By focusing his attention through the lens of social policy

borrowings, Rodgers has confined himself to what is largely a discussion of retardation and not one of difference.

As for the style, it may be churlish to complain about it being too good, but there is an issue here. The work is written very well, at times annoyingly so, as though Rodgers were aiming at History Book Club members as his audience, while the scholars interested in the nuts and bolts of social policy, who are his likely readership, have to plow through acres of phrases crafted more for their grace than succinctness. The two hearts that beat in the breast of this volume are also part of the problem. The narrow agenda could have easily dispensed with at least half the bulk of the book; the larger America-in-transatlantic-perspective approach, however, is what prompts Rodgers to spend inordinate space describing perfectly commonplace matters in graceful prose: seven large pages (pp. 45–51), for example, to nail fast the observation that America and Europe both went through industrialization during the latter decades of the nineteenth century.

The way it ends is also part of this problem. Rather than coming to some sort of grand conclusion, it just peters out. After the Second World War, the Americans thought they had nothing more to learn from Europe and the transatlantic connection was broken in an intellectual sense. Surely the big issue here, the development of American social policy in its larger Atlantic context, does not end in the forties. And given, most recently, the persistent example of Canadian health insurance (a stand-in for European-style precedents) in American discussions of such matters, or the continuing influence of British policies on heroin use, crossoceanic influences are not a thing of the past. Oddly enough, Rodgers is willing to take at face value the policy experts' claims of American exceptionalism after 1945, while rejecting similar claims made by the domestic politicians who resisted the European blandishments held out to them by the Atlantic crossers during the previous seventy years. If his point is only that the policy experts had been influenced by European precedents (whatever the politicians thought) from the 1890s up to the 1940s, but were less so thereafter, he need hardly have written so massive or detailed a study. His book is much more than that, but time and again his narrower starting point inhibits its potential. Only because the little theme of the volume has suddenly swung itself into the saddle again after five hundred big pages, does an otherwise so spectacular book end with a whimper.

*Peter Baldwin*

LIU, TIEN-LUNG. *The Chameleon State. Global Culture and Policy Shifts in Britain and Germany, 1914–1933*. Berghahn Books, New York [etc.] 1999. xv, 171 pp. \$39.95; £25.00.

American graduate students in political science and sociology regularly practice an exercise that works well in moderation, but if pursued excessively renders them intellectually muscle-bound. Here are the steps:

- (1) identify at least two general arguments concerning some important phenomenon;
- (2) name a case or two of that phenomenon neither (or none) of the arguments can fully explain;

- (3) devise a new – usually more complex – argument fitted to the case(s) at hand;
- (4) vigorously vindicate the new argument by narrating the case(s) in its terms.

The exercise almost always produces an illusion of strength, for two reasons: first, no known social phenomenon actually conforms in all details to general laws; second, at the cost of parsimony, astutely adding variables to existing schemes almost always makes it possible to achieve a better descriptive fit. Prolonged use of the exercise produces deleterious effects, however. The procedure easily generates spurious general statements, and the whole operation calls attention away from causal processes. Having studied something called “state theory” with Ralph Miliband at Brandeis, Theda Skocpol at Chicago, and Victoria Bonnell at Berkeley, Tien-Lung Liu engages in the student exercise with a vengeance. *The Chameleon State* examines state policies toward labor in Britain and Germany from 1914 to 1933 with the announced aim of explaining changes and international differences in those policies.

According to Liu, his analysis stages a confrontation among state-pluralist, social-democratic, neo-Marxist, corporatist, and statist theories of relations between states and major social classes within their territories. As the book proceeds, however, the analysis simplifies to a three-way contest among: (1) theories of capitalist domination, (2) ideas of state autonomy, (3) Liu’s own more complex argument featuring national culture, class structure, and historical contingency. The third wins more or less by default.

Concretely, Liu argues that World War I and postwar reconstruction enhanced the power of labor ministries by making the cooperation of labor and capital more crucial to governmental efforts, that in times of national crisis government officials overrode the interests of labor and capital alike, that threats to capitalist property relations and public order reinforced alliances between government and capital at the expense of labor, and that external legitimation reinforced government’s power to intervene in relations between capital and labor. Despite Liu’s claims, these plausible concrete arguments raise doubts about the significance of national culture, fall far short of constituting a general theory of anything, and leave open the crucial question: what causal processes generated these effects? Since governments often fail to implement apparently desirable programs, for example, what mechanisms translated the postwar crisis into effective intervention by labor ministries? “The two cases show”, declares Liu, “that organized labor became ascendant when the state had to rely on its support for war and mobilization. Moreover, this analysis uncovers a major variable missed by structuralist neo-Marxist arguments: syndicalism in both countries prevented organized labor from converting the labor departments into vehicles of class interests” (pp. 81–82). Such arguments cry out for specification of causes and effects: exactly how did war enhance labor’s power, and how did organized labor translate that power into influence over state policy?

Liu’s narrative (as contrasted with his explicit argument) points to the relative devastation of capital and the state by the wartime experiences of Britain and Germany as causes of differences in the postwar position of labor, but that line of analysis remains undeveloped. One might also have thought that the search for causal processes would lead Liu into direct investigation of industrial conflict, but aside from summary statistics and the presentation of such struggle-filled years as Britain’s 1921 and 1926 in the guise of crises that challenged government officials, readers get no sense of changes in management–labor relations at the level of shops and mines. Liu’s analysis entirely ignores the contributions of Friedhelm Boll, Keith Burgess, Roy Church, Elisabeth Domansky,

Roger Geary, Hartmut Kaelble, Klaus Tenfelde, and Heinrich Volkmann to the discussion of industrial conflict in Germany and Britain during his period. As a consequence, the fact that in both countries strikes mounted during the waning months of World War I and peaked during the immediate postwar years figures as a challenge to labor ministers, but not as part of the explanatory problem.

Despite clear indications in his own summary data, furthermore, Liu misses the characteristic difference in strike shapes of the two countries between 1914 and 1933: in general, much more concentrated in short, large, demonstrative strikes on the German side, much more concentrated in long, smaller, painfully-negotiated strikes on the British side. Nor do readers get much inkling of the wider European context – either the international variation in unions' places in national politics documented by Gary Marks or the general conflict-generating effects of World War I examined by Leopold Haimson. Instead, Liu presents parallel national histories of labor ministry interventions in capital–labor relations. Readers who seek information about labor policies in Britain and Germany from World War I to the Nazi seizure of power can turn to Tien-Lung Liu for compact narratives. Those who wish to explain variation and change in national power struggles among capital, labor, and state officials will have to look further.

Charles Tilly

ANDERSON, PERRY. *The Origins of Postmodernity*. Verso, London 1998. vii, 143 pp. £11.00.

Originally intended as the Introduction to Fredric Jameson's collected works, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998* (1998), *The Origins of Postmodernity* is a short critical introduction to postmodernity as well as to Jameson. Anderson maintains the primary objective of the book is to present a better historical account of the origins of the "idea of postmodernity than is currently available" (p. vii) by evaluating Jameson's analysis of the conditions that have given birth to the postmodern "not as idea, but as phenomenon" (p. vii). The book itself has four parts. In the first, and shortest part, Anderson offers a preliminary treatise on the origins of postmodernism. In the second part postmodernism is defined through the evidence of its arrival since the 1970s (as a phenomenon in a variety of cultural fields). In the third part Anderson evaluates Jameson's seizure of the nature of postmodernity as the cultural logic of late capitalism. In the fourth and longest part, the commentary on Jameson's capture of postmodernism is addressed.

Historically the terms modernism and postmodernism emerged, according to Anderson, from Hispanic America, specifically the Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío, who coined the term *modernismo* in 1890, and the poet-anthologist Federico de Onís, who invented the descriptor *postmodernismo* in the mid-1930s. Onís invented the term to describe what he saw as the conservative inflexion of modernist poetry. Anderson traces the subsequent emergence of the concept of postmodernism in the anglophone world by noting Arnold Toynbee's specifically historical use of the term in the 1950s. Anderson then examines postmodernism's aestheticization in its deployment by the antirationalist humanist and Heideggerian-inspired American poet Charles Olson. By the late 1950s a whole range of cultural critics are seen to have taken up the term, amplifying and filling out its possible meanings – C. Wright Mills describing the bankruptcy of socialism and

liberalism, Harry Levin summarizing a new middle-brow literature that had rejected modernism's separation of artist and bourgeois (postmodernism manifested as debased literature), and Leslie Fiedler's celebration of a new postmodern generation of "cultural mutants" who would happily cross classes and genres.

In the second part of the book Anderson describes the historical journey of postmodernism from the early 1970s. This phase begins with the appearance of *boundary 2* significantly subtitled a *Journal of Postmodern Literature and Culture*. Next we have the conflicting intellectual interventions (across an aesthetic terrain inclusive of architecture, poetry, design, and painting) of the likes of Ihab Hassan, Norman Mailer, *Tel Quel*, hippies, Marshal McLuhan, Robert Venturi, Charles Jencks, and the coterie of Black Mountain artists and critics. Hassan, for example, is taken as defining postmodernism in terms of a Foucaultian epistemic break, the cultural signature of which is the interplay of indeterminacy and immanence as presignified in the work of Marcel Duchamp. It is Anderson's judgement that by the mid-1980s Charles Jencks had reflected in architecture a postmodernism defined as a plurality of choice that he believed had destroyed old-fashioned concepts such as left and right, capitalist and proletarian. It was, of course, in philosophy, with Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* (1979), that the concept was crystallized epistemologically with its emphasis on language games, discontinuous knowledge and the consequent collapse of the modernist grand narratives.

Anderson is dismissive of Lyotard's analysis of knowledge suggesting his contribution is that of a "street level relativism" (p. 26) which is generated by his rejection of an Enlightenment reason that was, so Lyotard claimed, in league with capital. Lyotard's journey from "revolutionary socialism towards a nihilist hedonism" (p. 28) is not to Anderson's taste. Anderson's characterization of Lyotard's late-1990s position – that capitalism should be understood less as a socioeconomic system and more as the trope of infinity – is regarded as equally nonsensical. More happily, however, Anderson quickly turns to the role of Jürgen Habermas, as the truth-seeking political dissident trying to recover Enlightenment-inspired modernism from the logic of global capitalism. Anderson's sympathetic treatment of Habermas is precursor to the third part of the book in which he evaluates Jameson's capture of the nature of postmodernity.

Anderson maps Jameson's initial understanding of postmodernism as a modernism liquefying from within (the cure for which was a new literary realism), through to his exploration of the ideology of the text in which he signalled the final end of modernism and the emergence of postmodernism. Although presaged in *Marxism and Form* (1971), Jameson confirmed through his reading of Mandel, Baudrillard, Lefebvre, and Lyotard that Western society had entered a new historical epoch. From the early 1980s, through his rethinking of Marxism as a narrative rather than a scientific analysis of change over time, Jameson perceived the main features of postmodernism as being fixed by the equation of the material with the cultural conditions of late capitalism. The main features of this new equation were the death of the subject and the loss of a sense of history (the ascendancy of space over time), the extension of postmodernism across the whole range of cultural practices, the decline of class conflict in the face of the rise of the global mass consumption market and, finally, his response which was to reject the moralizing of conventional Marxism in favour of working within postmodernism to expose its frailties and thereby destroy it. As Anderson concludes, Jameson's exposé of the pervasive nature of symbol and image in his 1984 essay "Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism", signalled, henceforth, that no Marxist critique of late capitalism could ignore its culturally hegemonic character.

In the final part of the book Anderson suggests that all subsequent analyses of postmodernism are in dialogue with Jameson. Selecting the work of Callinicos, Harvey, and Eagleton, Anderson asks how is the postmodern to be periodized, what is its intellectual form, and what is the best political response to it? Drawing on his own work, he confirms his belief that the origins of postmodernism were the result of semi-industrial societies impacted by new technology possessing an open horizon of politics, in which a variety of artistic movements erupted (p. 81). In other words, these were societies where the bourgeois market had not yet fully dominated. All this ended with the Second World War, the result of which was to produce the dominance of the new capitalist democracies powered by mass consumption and technology, especially television, which nurtured the global image and, finally, postmodernism is evidenced in the advent of the Cold War, Reaganism, Thatcherism, and the neutering of the left.

According to Anderson's short narrative of postmodernity, its manifestation is to be found in the decapitation of the avant-garde (especially in painting) with individual genius being replaced by the hybrid, the crossover, and the "double whammy" of the commodification of what is an antirepresentationalist art. All this is summarized in postmodernism's profound antifoundationalism that celebrates the spectacle above all else. For Anderson, this celebration is nothing less than the effort to depose the social but, he argues, the most recent work of Jameson shows it can be resisted. The resistance will be achieved through a return to themes once prohibited by postmodernism: the return to ethics, the rebirth of the subject, the regeneration of class politics (reinstating the primacy of class over race and gender), the rejection of the market and, most importantly, a return to an aesthetics founded on the economic categories found in Marx's *Capital*. After reading this short and breathless analysis this reviewer feels obliged to pose the obvious question. Is Jameson's definition of postmodernism as the marriage of aesthetics and economics all that Anderson claims it to be: the critique that will ensure that the spell of the postmodern system can be broken (p. 137)? Such doubt, of course, has no place in Anderson's brief analysis. The answer to that question requires, as Anderson himself suggests, a more substantial study of Jameson.

Alun Munslow

*Women and Revolution: Global Expressions*. Ed. by M.J. Diamond. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht [etc.] 1998. xxv, 434 pp. D.fl. 280.00; \$150.00; £95.00.

*Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women. Europe Between the Two World Wars*. Ed. by Helmut Gruber and Pamela Graves. Berghahn Books, New York [etc.] 1998. xvi, 591 pp. Ill. £42.00.

The relationship of women's struggles for freedom to wider movements of emancipation has been a topic which has suffered from the general turn away from the hope of social transformation since the late 1980s. The appearance of two books, Helmut Gruber and Pamela Graves's *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women* and M.J. Diamond's *Women and Revolution: Global Expressions*, which take up this theme again, makes a welcome change from the tendency in some women's history to abstract "gender" from other social and political developments.

*Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women* takes in a wide range of European count-

ries: Austria, Germany, Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark and much of the historical material is not available in English. So simply as a collection this work fills a crucial gap. The focus on the interwar period gives the book coherence and the editors have also made an effort to ensure that topics are taken up and discussed which make it possible to compare the questions raised.

An obvious starting point is the relationship of socialists to women's political rights. Several contributors point out that the conviction that women would vote for conservative parties, especially in Catholic countries, was used against campaigners for women's suffrage. Other factors, for instance the degree of interconnection between socialist and feminist women and the irony that the left in the socialist movement was inclined to dismiss the significance of the vote, are not, however, drawn out.

The idea of women's inherent conservatism is belied by several fascinating references to women's position in the labour market and their militancy as workers. Mary Nash, for instance, writing on Spain, notes that women's overall strike participation in the textile industry between 1905 and 1921 was actually higher than their male counterparts. The women, who earned under fifty per cent of male wages, struck mainly for higher pay. In 1915, though, in Barcelona, women in the soup factories started a four-month strike for the right to do male jobs. Similarly, during World War One, Italian women workers called for equal wages for equal work and participated in the "two red years" of 1918 to 1920. Socialist women theorized the implications of working women's actions in terms of both consciousness and the structure of capitalism. For example, Mary Gibson cites the Italian socialist Cristina Bacci, who argued that equal pay demands challenged the idea that man was "king of the universe" and that equal pay would enhance women's self-confidence and enable them "to take part in a new, shining, and whirling life and to feel in themselves a sparkle, a force, their own will", while Mary Nash tells how Margarita Nelken in Spain argued for wage parity in the economic interests of the working class.

Most working-class women were, however, still outside the formal labour market and classed as "housewives" – though this could include home work, taking in lodgers, selling goods, doing laundry. The socialization of domestic work was part of the socialist programme and practical innovation occurred at the municipal level. Between 1919 and 1934 socialists in Vienna pioneered a model welfare system which aimed to transform the circumstances of everyday life in working class communities. Helmut Gruber shows how the mechanized laundries, bathhouses, kindergartens, playgrounds, swimming pools, medical and dental clinics, libraries and lecture halls combined with a public health programme. He chronicles the remarkable experiment which introduced sprinkler trucks to collect rubbish, school lunches, school medical and dental examinations, nurseries, after-school centres, municipal swimming pools and municipal culture. The problem was that this top-down version of welfare penetrated the domestic lives of working-class women and was perceived often as coercive regulation of daily existence. Moreover, Helmut Gruber points out that the welfare system tended to classify the poor, the unemployed, the evicted, and the drinkers as deviants.

This key dilemma of how to combine a transformatory social vision with the material conditions for a deeper democracy has been present throughout the history of the welfare state. It has particular implications for women because women's reproductive activity was frequently the subject of regulation. Ida Blom describes how Scandinavian social-democratic women were able actively to shape welfare policy. While conservative advocates of "social motherhood" subordinated women as mothers to an organic view

of the state, more radical versions argued that mothers as individuals, including single mothers, had a right to social resources.

In several countries a tension can be detected in the disputes about birth control and abortion between eugenic theorists and advocates of women's right to control their bodies. Atina Grossman contextualizes the latter in Germany, observing that the remarkable slogan of the German Communists (KPD), "Your Body Belongs to You", coexisted amidst a culture which presented contradictory images of women: tough Soviet tractor drivers, fit sporty girls with bobbed hair, suffering mothers. She notes that the KPD was never successful in recruiting large numbers of women, either working-class housewives or the new "white-collar" workers, partly because they focused on industrial workers and on their battles with the social democrats.

Implicit in *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women* is the thorny question of "modernization". During the 1920s the boyish ideal of the socialist woman as *la garçonne* embraced modernity and autonomy, while the iconography of motherhood invoked kinship, connection, and a resistance to the modernizing thrust of capitalist market-based consumerism. The problem was that *la garçonne's* freedom did not touch the interconnecting needs of mothering, while the socialist mothers' autonomy was rarely the aim of policy. In Europe and in the Soviet Union women such as Dora Russell, Stella Browne and Alexandra Kollontai struggled to link the two, meeting opposition from both the reformist Labour Party and the communists. This collection does not dwell on women like these who found themselves besieged on several ideological and political fronts within the left; it does, however, document how socialist men frequently resisted innovatory schemes for organizing women.

Nonetheless, as Geoff Eley points out, the socialists were in advance of political parties of the centre and right on "the woman question". Though the contributors to *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women* adopt a dry, impersonal style, again and again the tragic, destructive impact of fascism comes through on policies, ideas and the lives of individuals, especially of course Austrian and German women.

Geoff Eley raises a difficulty in *how* the history of women and socialism is to be told. Most of the contributions in the book basically take a political view of labour history, though they do open out a little to include the culture of gender. Consequently they do not explore the processes through which class is defined and formed which has exercised much radical social history from the 1960s. As he says, this means the collection avoids the error of seeing everyday culture as the equivalent of politics; however, it also excludes popular movements, discussion of how socialist debates interacted with prevailing culture and pays little attention to the interior life of the socialist political organizations discussed, in which, when it comes to men and women especially, things are rarely as they seem on the surface.

In contrast M.J. Diamond's collection *Women and Revolution: Global Expressions* is prepared to take risks and combines writers from literature, history, anthropology, political science and sociology. Its scope is vast – all the more so because "revolution" is used loosely to include social movements such as civil rights in the US, the response to civil war in Nigeria and Biafra, the impact of the market in China.

While the editors of *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women* have attempted to create a coherent pathway with introductions to the sections, M.J. Diamond has simply brought together contributions to conferences and an issue of a journal. Though she says they have been revised and re-edited, the end result is patchy. Guida West's account

of “Women in the Welfare Rights Movement” does bring us up to 1996, but in one essay statistics are cited from the mid-1970s as contemporary evidence, while for Linda M. Lobao, writing on women in Latin-American and Cuban guerrilla movements, “at this time” is supported by a reference to 1984.

There is now such a rich and sophisticated literature on women in Latin America and social action that this section is disappointing. Linda M. Lobao brings together interesting material but misses out the critiques made by socialist feminist women of the guerrillas, not only in relation to gender-power relations, but also as a political forum which could challenge the lack of democracy in the dictatorial regimes. The important question of democratic process is entirely absent from Juan Lazaro’s uncritical account of the *Sendero Luminoso* in Peru. He writes unselfconsciously about the “indoctrination of women” and fails to explain that “political violence” is a euphemism for killing political opponents – including socialists and feminists.

Moreover, the sections do not have much coherence. M.J. Diamond contributes two insightful and well-written pieces on Olympe de Gouges and Louise Michel which just about connect with Joy Hervey’s illuminating cameo on Dr Mary Putnam Jacobi and the Reclus family who supported the Paris Commune. However we then jump to Rhoda Lois Blumberg on women and the civil rights movement, and Guida West on the welfare rights movement in the US. Both are useful studies in themselves and raise issues which have a continuing relevance for women’s movements – though Guida West misses the women’s liberation groups’ links to the welfare rights campaigns of the late 1960s.

In her chapter on black women freedom fighters in South Africa and the US, Rosalyn Terborg-Penn reflects on the lack of crosscultural studies of resistance movements. M.J. Diamond’s collection may not hang together but it does bring us work which would be otherwise hard to come across – particularly the material on Africa, which is well represented in studies of African women’s rebellions and Obioma Nnaemeka’s evocative account of novels about the impact of war in Biafra.

I found Mary Elaine Hegland’s description of how an Iranian village turned against the Shah most successful in recognizing the complexity of specific movements while drawing out general political questions. At one level it is about how people come to situate themselves politically, and how action in the exceptional times of rebellion grows out of, and then turns around existing social relationships. At another it demonstrates how the actual circumstances of social existence and popular perceptions of human behaviour shape movements, though the initial responses to perceived injustices can result in equally repressive regimes. This takes us into a realm beyond the consideration of organizational policies and ideas in thinking about women’s (and men’s) political attitudes.

Linda M. Lobao includes a suggestive footnote which cites Louise Tilly’s argument that working-class women’s workplace rebellion resembles that of men, but that women are more likely to participate in movements around consumption. These are not examined as collective struggles, though consumption features in Louisa Schein’s exploratory attempt to understand the impact of the market in modern China. She says she is on “shifting terrain” and the difficulties are tremendous. But the real problem in this bold attempt is that she has a specialized knowledge of the Miao people and the material from the early 1990s is much thinner.

Amrita Basu’s excellent account of the organization of tribal people in India contains a thought-provoking rumination by one of the activists about the difficulty of being

involved in a movement and writing about it. This echoes Obioma Nnaemeka's quote from Simone de Beauvoir, "When totally immersed in a situation, you cannot describe it." Amrita Basu also reflects on the problems of creating a "New Left" in India from grassroots activism. The movement of tribal people influenced some Indian feminists, just as the North American civil rights and welfare rights movements did. These interactions are the most elusive to chart historically. The understanding of such connections does, however, relate closely to the hope which Guida West expresses of political alliances between women. It is left to Temma Kaplan writing on "Community and Resistance in Women's Political Cultures" to suggest that a new political culture needs to be conceived out of the global grassroots movements in which women have played such a vital part.

Both these volumes provide much material for reflection on women's resistance; they also indicate how there is not only a great deal of political work to be done in continuing and reinventing the struggles of earlier times but a challenging intellectual task of developing new ways of thinking and writing about women in radical movements for emancipation.

*Sheila Rowbotham*

DERFLER, LESLIE. *Paul Lafargue and the Flowering of French Socialism 1882–1911*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) [etc.] 1998. xv, 369 pp. Ill. £27.95.

Paul Lafargue (1842–1911) is best known as the son-in-law of Karl Marx who proclaimed "the right to be lazy". Other aspects of his multifaceted personality and his theoretical work have been largely forgotten. A native of Santiago de Cuba, Lafargue was the only Marxist of his generation who came into direct contact with the downside of European expansionist policy. Among his ancestors were members of three oppressed nationalities – he was of mixed African, Caribbean, Jewish and French heritage. Living as a mulatto in Paris, Madrid and London, he encountered racial prejudice repeatedly – also within the labour movement. (In 1866, in an article on American slavery, he wrote: "Like an insult, the word 'coloured man' is thrown in our faces. It is for us, revolutionary mulattos, to pick it up, seize it, and show ourselves worthy of it.")

Thanks to his unique origins, an ensemble of contradictory cultural and intellectual influences was embedded in Lafargue's mindset. While he was often a staunch supporter of an orthodox Marxist viewpoint (and was therefore derided by Marx as a "*gros oracle*"), he also advocated a hedonistic outlook, reminiscent of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's "state of nature", similar to a Ludwig Feuerbach, freed of the adherence to Hegel, and possibly even related to the anarchist egoism of Max Stirner.

In some cases Lafargue oversimplified the interdependence of cultural phenomena from economic forces and class struggle in his pioneer efforts to apply Marxist methods of analysis to questions of anthropology, aesthetics and literary criticism. Anticipating Marxist literary critics such as Plekhanov and Mehring, he may have been the first exponent of "cultural politics" in his effort to tackle the indirect forms of political dominance – over the schools, the media, and the family – and overturn a social order in which power was not only centralized and coercive but also diffused and consensual.

Contrary to the admiration of Marx and Engels for industrial progress (“The Bourgeoisie [...] has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals” reads the Manifesto of the Communist Party) he had no faith in the “sauce of progressing progress”. He therefore did not view large enterprises, especially in the agricultural sector, as necessary stages on the road to socialism.

Never accepted by the overwhelming majority of French people as one of their own and denounced as “*le mètèque*”, he has nevertheless become deeply rooted in the French tradition of thinking

- (1) through his admiration for the philosophers of the French Enlightenment;
- (2) through his role as a successor in some respects to the Saint-Simonians, who under the leadership of Enfantin increasingly emphasized the importance of women’s issues, ultimately advocating free love and associating the outcome of history with the “emancipation” and “sanction” of the flesh;
- (3) through his intellectual development; (he started his revolutionary career as a dedicated follower of Proudhon and an admirer of Blanqui);
- (4) through the essayist and polemic style he preferred;
- (5) through the selection of themes he elaborated; (could a German Marxist of those days – e.g. Karl Kautsky – have written studies on subjects such as the “History of adultery”, “Circumcision” or a satire entitled “Sermon of the Courtesan”?).

Notwithstanding his gender, Lafargue was deeply dedicated throughout his adult life to fighting the patriarchy, adopting the feminist traditions of the woman fighters of the Commune (Louise Michel, Paule Mink) and cooperating closely with renowned female political exiles (Clara Zetkin, who had escaped from Kaiser Wilhelm’s Germany, and Alexandra Kollontai, a refugee from Tsarist Russia). Through these activities, probably motivated by the similarity between racial and antifeminist prejudices, he acquired the nickname “Marxist troubadour”. Last but not least, this realistic revolutionary had such a lively imagination that he even included wetnurses in his satire with the strange title “The Sold Appetite”.

For years Paul Lafargue has fascinated Leslie Derfler, a professor of history at Florida Atlantic University. The first fruit of his interest was a splendid biography (1991), in which he emphasized family identity and the origin of French Marxism from 1842 to 1882.<sup>1</sup> In his second volume Derfler explores Lafargue’s political strategies, specifically his break with the party’s co-founder Guesde in the Boulanger and the Dreyfus episodes and the issue of socialist–syndicalist relations. Derfler shows Lafargue’s importance as both a political activist and a theorist. He describes Lafargue’s role in formulating strategies such as the promotion of the Second Workingmen’s International, the pursuit of reform within the existing state but opposition to any socialist participation in non-socialist governments and the subordination of trade unionism to political action. His reflections are broader than an exclusively academic viewpoint. In his postscript he also raises questions such as “Would Lafargue have joined the Communist Party?” and answers: “If it is true that the real authority of the militants in 1920 lay in their syndicalist vision of the factory without bosses, the society without exploiters, the nation without state, certainly he would have [agreed at] the outset. Whether this abiding belief in

1. Leslie Derfler, *Paul Lafargue and the Founding of French Marxism 1842–1882* (Cambridge, MA [etc.], 1991).

human freedom would have allowed him to stay in the party, is much less clear.” I believe that this opinion should be complemented with the statement: in addition to his abiding belief in human freedom, his hatred of any form of social-patriotism and governmental cooperation with the bourgeoisie would have prevented him from staying in the party. In this respect I agree with the anonymous author of the article “La vie et la mort de Paul Lafargue” in *Quatrième Internationale. Revue théorique mensuelle du Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste*, 2 (1937) (most probably Pierre Naville), who wrote “A propos du 25<sup>e</sup> Anniversaire de la mort de Paul et Laura Lafargue”: “He denounced brilliantly and definitively the mysteries of economy, policy, moral and intelligence of the democratic bourgeoisie, in a manner that still serves us today. That is why in the time of the *Front Populaire*, which means prostitution of worker’s leadership by the democratic bourgeoisie, the memory of Paul and Laura Lafargue acquires an unexpected significance.”

This competition should not, however, detract from Leslie Derfler’s monumental oeuvre. His two books are a valuable asset, not only for persons interested in the origins of France’s labour movement, but also for those who want to rethink – after the collapse of what was called “socialism” in eastern Europe – in keeping with the “latest Bakunist” (Marx), the consequences of the split between Marxists and anarchists for the subsequent elaboration of theoretical ideas within the social democratic and communist parties.

Fritz Keller

HÄNISCH, DIRK. Die österreichischen NSDAP-Wähler. Eine empirische Analyse ihrer politischen Herkunft und ihres Sozialprofils. [Böhlau Zeitgeschichtliche Bibliothek, Band 35.] Böhlau Verlag, Wien [etc.] 1998. 492 pp. Maps. S 696.00; DM 98.00; S.fr. 89.00.

This ambitious examination of the Austrian Nazi party, in terms of who voted for it in the penultimate phase of the Austrian Republic from 1927 to 1932/33, is based on a computer analysis of highly aggregated election data. It has been attempted against the background of Austria’s political, social, and economic development since 1919 and embedded in secondary analyses of other Austrian parties, such as the *Christlichsoziale Partei* and the *Österreichische Volkspartei*. The electoral levels in question are those of the communes, the regions (*Landräte*), and federal level. There are subdivisions according to gender, religious confession, and social structure; important attention is paid to the factor of unemployment. The book contains graphs, maps, and tables, and the list of secondary titles consulted is almost, but not quite, exhaustive.

Hänisch’s caesura around 1932/33 may be logically explained in terms of the end of democratic rule in the Austrian Republic at that time, and the beginning of Austrofascism. But I did miss a continuation of the treatment to the period of the Anschluss, March 1938, perhaps in a moderated form. Thus far then, Hänisch’s most important conclusions for me were the following: Austrian Nazi party (NSDAP) voters tended to hail from heterogenous political backgrounds. Former followers of bourgeois parties (*Deutschnationale*; *Heimatblock*) were clearly overrepresented. Confessing Catholic voters, on the other hand, especially from Vienna and surroundings, were underrepresented. (This shows a remarkable congruence with the picture already presented for

Germany by Thomas Childers, Jürgen Falter, and others.) Outside Vienna, every third (1930) and every fourth (1932) NSDAP voter had defected from the Austrian Socialists (SDAP). (This, too, parallels the findings for Germany). From the perspective of social origins, Hänisch states that Austrian NSDAP voters were much more strongly middle-class (*mittelschichtengeprägt*) than corresponding voters in the Weimar Republic, with regional differences playing almost no role at all. The author traces this to the strong bipolar structure of Austrian society, insofar as it was either decidedly socialist or bourgeois (with due emphasis on the ideological consequences of such provenances).

Hänisch's consideration of a *Volkspartei* character of the Austrian NSDAP, which decades ago had been asserted for the German archetype, is more ambiguous. Rather than a social catch-all quality, Hänisch, at least for regions outside Vienna (where there were inroads into the Catholic *Christliche Volkspartei*) vouches for the general overrepresentation of white-collar workers and civil servants, to a certain extent also of industrial workers, whereas he sees the peasants as underrepresented. All told, the Austrian Nazi party was closer to the Austrian Social Democrats than to the Catholic bourgeois conservatives. With qualifications, the Austrian NSDAP before 1933 may be described as a "protest party" (p. 402), but much less so than were the Nazis north of the border at that time.

Hänisch's study will be welcomed by all cliometricians among the historians of Austrian and German fascism, especially since cliometrics, at least in that area, has been going out of style lately. My main criticism of the book is that Hänisch, no matter how much he loves the computer, has not been able to separate methodic and methodological issues conditioned by his data treatment from a desired, easily comprehensible narrative presentation of his findings. With all its charts and graphs, to the non-computer-initiated historian of modern Austria and the Third Reich such a book today is confusing, as statistical lingo and other technical-speak take over the production. However, the dedicated few who are mainly concerned with the Austrian period from 1927 to 1933 and who have an eye for numbers and their interpretation, will undoubtedly welcome the appearance of this work. However, it will remain for a conventional historian to make Hänisch's language palatable to one's colleagues.

*Michael H. Kater*

BOLDORF, MARCEL. Sozialfürsorge in der SBZ/DDR 1945–1953. Ursachen, Ausmass und Bewältigung der Nachkriegsarmut. [Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte: Beihefte; Nr. 138.] Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 1998. 254 pp. DM 88.00; S.fr. 88.00; S 642.00.

Based on a dissertation submitted at the University of Mannheim, this book deals with the major theme of the elimination of poverty in East Germany in the years after 1945. It does not deal with the problem of poverty of industrial societies at a particular stage of development, but concretely with the devastating consequences of the Second World War in a part of the defeated Germany, namely the area occupied by the Soviet Union. In this case, poverty – which should always be understood in its specific historical context – did not affect a more or less marginalized fringe group, but the mass of the population, whose standard of living had dropped below the bare subsistence level. At the centre of Boldorf's study are the people supported by the public welfare institutions,

that is to say, those people who at times did not even have enough income to procure the most basic essentials, that section of the population which was the poorest within in situation of general misery.

In this study Boldorf did not want to engage in the debate about the time period and the early extent of the fundamental social and political restructuring in the areas occupied by the Soviets and dominated by the communists. But he did want to ask whether a Marxist alternative to the traditional social welfare concepts emerged in the Soviet-occupied zone and then the German Democratic Republic. The author and the study come to the conclusion that the search for what would be in this sense an emancipatory attitude, which could be defined as empathy with the “humiliated and insulted” (p. 9), proved fruitless. To come straight to the point, social welfare policy in communist East Germany was quite strongly rooted in the tradition of German social welfare history.

An element that was grafted on to this tradition during the period under consideration was the special effort to exploit the production factor labour to the full, the intention being (in fact until the end of the GDR) the mobilization of everyone fit for work. For that reason alone it should be evident that social welfare was and remained subordinated to labour market policy.

Immediately after the end of the Second World War, however, the problems were rather less conceptual and more concrete. Because of the pressing need to alleviate the social consequences of the war, the efforts around this time were far more influenced by necessity and pragmatism than by ideological considerations.

The study is divided into three main parts, dealing with poverty as a mass phenomenon in the immediate post-1945 period, the organization of welfare in the GDR, and the position of welfare in the planned economy. The problem of mass poverty was to a large extent caused by the forced migrations and expulsions which began during the war as a consequence of Nazi aggression and continued until the end of the 1940s. Among the social consequences of the war, these were primarily responsible for the surge in the need for welfare support. Against this background, Boldorf turns, within the context of the standard of living, to the general level of nutrition and consumption at this time. In the immediate postwar years it was not just a distinct underclass that suffered material deprivation, but in fact the majority of the population. Because savings accounts, wages and salaries were frozen, most people found themselves in dire financial straits. Essential goods were so expensive on the free market that the rations provided by the food stamps were the sole sources of food and drink for nearly everyone. Broad sections of the population were entitled to, and benefited from, measures by the social welfare services which went beyond basic support.

The most important organization at this time was the People's Welfare (*Volksfürsorge*). To this organization, which in fact continued to play a key social role until the end of the GDR, Boldorf for obvious reasons devotes a separate chapter (pp. 173ff). The *Volksfürsorge* brought together the regional welfare and relief organizations, comparable to the private and church welfare charities. Born of necessity, the *Volksfürsorge* was initially a nonpartisan organization, but cooperation with similar organizations soon ended because the communists took control everywhere. Even so its first president, Helmut Lehmann, had his roots in the Social Democratic Party (SPD); he was also the member of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) central secretariat (later politburo) responsible for social policy. It was only in later years that “people's solidarity” was placed ideologically in the tradition of the old Communist Party's Red Aid (*Rote Hilfe*).

In part two Boldorf examines the executive agencies of the social welfare system. Various organizations were involved, which influenced welfare provision in different ways. The Allied Control Council did not issue any directions or guidelines that had a direct impact in this sphere. The labour and finance departments of the Soviet Military Administration in Germany (SMAD) restricted themselves to supervising and influencing their respective areas of responsibility. In particular they intervened in the fiscal autonomy of German authorities, and of course they sought to control the allocation of labour, which also affected the welfare recipients. Overall, however, the influence of the occupying authorities remained limited. There were various reasons for this: there were hardly any Soviet models or experiences which could have been transferred to the much more sophisticated German welfare system; the Soviets were not familiar with specific regional problems; and they were not very interested in welfare policy. This contrasts sharply with the current view, also held by many researchers, that the Soviet occupying power in principle took all the decisions. The findings of this study indicate, instead, that at the weekly meetings the Soviets generally accepted without objection the proposals of the German central authorities responsible for labour and social welfare.

In part three Boldorf examines the position of social welfare within the framework of the planned economy. At this juncture several previously discussed issues, such as the measures to reduce welfare support, increase labour participation and raise living standards, are raised again. What comes over particularly strongly in this section is how the early 1950s marked the transition to a more ideologically-based welfare policy. At least from the perspective of the authorities, the falling numbers of welfare recipients were cause for exaggerated expectations, according to which social welfare provision would soon prove superfluous in the socialist state on the grounds that the new economic system was inherently socially just. This was certainly highly optimistic, and in the end undermined the support system for welfare recipients. This ideologically distorted perspective also led to rather unrealistic assessments of achievements and possibilities. For the reality was that the forced reduction of recipient numbers was the result of a pragmatic policy, which was primarily guided by the desire to save money and put people to work. It was in this sphere in particular that the Soviet interventions were felt. The SMAD wanted to see a reduction in public expenditure, and on several occasions it made arbitrary cuts to the social welfare budget. After the foundation of the GDR the austerity policy was intensified, and the welfare recipients were increasingly seen as a drain on society. Unless they were incapacitated in some way they were expected to eliminate the reasons for their need for support, that is to say, they were expected to work. This argument was used in 1952 to legitimate deep cuts in welfare support because of the growing strain on the public finances. The main instrument for the planned and compulsory reduction of welfare support was job allocation. (This remained the case beyond the time period under consideration here.) The efforts of the labour and social authorities were primarily oriented towards expanding the labour supply and getting as many people as possible into employment. (Again, this remained the case until the end of the GDR.)

Around the end of 1953 the authorities assumed that nearly all welfare recipients capable of work had been integrated into the labour process. By this time the foundations of social welfare policy had been laid, so that only minor modifications were introduced in the following years. Henceforward there were only a few groups which continued to receive support. At the ideological level the developments during the period under consideration here meant that the concept of "social policy" was avoided

altogether until the 1970s. New conceptions of a “socialist social policy” were developed only subsequently, culminating during the Honecker era in the formula of the “unity of economic and social policy”.

Beatrix Bouvier

BANDYOPADHYAY, SEKHAR. *Caste, Protest and Identity in Colonial India. The Namasudras of Bengal, 1872–1947*. [London Studies on South Asia, vol. 15.] Curzon, Richmond 1997. xii, 324 pp. £40.00.

This study traces the process of “identity formation” among the *Namasudras*, one of the most numerous agrarian castes of eastern Bengal, having a very low ritual ranking in the Hindu caste hierarchy. Once mostly boatmen and fishermen, they became, by the late nineteenth century, settled agriculturists, reclaiming vast swamps and forests.

The “community consciousness”, which their first organized protest movement in 1872 reflected and also reinforced, had long been growing. A decisive role here was that of radical, deviant *Vaisnava* sects, sharply critical of caste hierarchy. To these sects belonged, in the late nineteenth century, most *Namasudra* converts to *Vaisnava* faith. This, however, did not lead to any organized defiance of the institutional forms of caste domination.

This defiance, first in 1872, argues Bandyopadhyay, had much to do with the growth of settled agriculture, providing for *Namasudras* a relatively stable subsistence, and even making possible the rise of a group of affluent cultivators; the affluence, making them more conscious of their lowly social position, prompted them to an organized protest against it.

We need to know more about the composition of *Namasudra* peasantry. One fact seems indisputable: the negligible number of owner cultivators and the preponderance of tenant farmers, particularly sharecroppers, quite a few of them being tied to a variant of it, *dhankarari*, acceptable only to destitute cultivators. While sharecroppers typically parted with half of the rice harvest, *dhankarari* obliged them to surrender a specified quantity, regardless of the actual output. Settled agriculture, not perhaps causally related to the protest movement, did bear on its organization. The floating population of boatmen and fishermen was far more difficult to organize than a stable peasant village created by settled cultivation.

The initiative in the 1872 movement did not, notably, come from the peasant mass. A small group, including some rich farmers and a few others making fortunes through trade, presumably grain trade, and through professions unrelated to agriculture, organized it.

It started when high-caste Hindus curtly rejected a wealthy *Namasudra*'s invitation to attend a funeral ceremony in the family, openly sneering at the lowly caste position of his community. In inviting them, despite its knowledge of the rigid caste ban on the dining of caste Hindus with “untouchable” *Namasudras*, the family had presumably mainly personal interests in mind: getting the Hindus to admit its aspiration, born of its affluence, to a higher social position which their acceptance of the invitation would signify. The aggrieved family organized a boycott (*hartal*) of caste Hindus, calling upon *Namasudra* brethren to stop working for them in any form. They responded, feeling the refusal of the invitation as an affront to them as well. Some were cold, particularly

those fearing the boycott as a threat to their subsistence. The movement petered out partly because of the leadership's failure to mobilize them, even through coercions.

The *hartal* showed a combination of defiance and conformity. All services to caste Hindus were withdrawn, at least initially. The "strikers" also conformed to their behavioral norms. *Namasudra* women stopped working in the open field, because caste Hindus thought the practice abominable. *Namasudras* working as scavengers in jails deeply resented doing this dirty job, their leaders pleading with government to end the practice of recruiting scavengers exclusively from their community.

The new movement, following the collapse of this agitation, contributed most to the creation of community consciousness among them. It grew around a new sect, *Motua*. The social composition of its leadership and its aims and practices distinguish it from the later phases of the *Namasudra* movement.

The individuals directing the movement, particularly since the Swadeshi period (1905–1911), were generally affluent. The sect's founder, by contrast, was a *Vaisnava* family of moderate means, one member, Hanichand, losing, thanks to a cunning local landlord, even his small *jote* (landholding), and thus leaving his ancestral village.

The sect's aims and methods were distinctive too. While the sect leader regarded cultural regeneration of *Namasudras* as the major means of creating of them a "community", the leadership of later movements, till about the early 1930s, largely relied on the colonial state to be better equipped to face caste Hindus.

The sect leader's aim was not just the creation of a *Namasudra* "community". He wanted to create an altogether new sect, its followers being bound by loyalty to him, and by a new body of beliefs and practices. The sect steadily grew, with *Namasudras* and also other caste members accepting its ideals and aims. Since it was functionally outside the domain of Hindu caste hierarchy, the leader asked the converts to redefine, according to its ideals, their stand on caste. Caste as a social organization was rejected. Admission to the sect was free and open to all, regardless of their social and economic status. Anybody could join the congregational singing of hymns and songs, an essential part of its religious organization. A daring assault on caste hierarchy was permitting the taking of water from any person if only he had a "pure heart". The leader's exclusive emphasis on devotion as a means of reaching God made redundant the old practice of reliance on an intermediary, a preceptor (*guru*), invariably a Brahmin. The sect grew more cohesive where high-caste Hindus, suspecting its tenets as being subversive of their hegemony, opposed it.

The nature of the *Namasudra* movement noticeably changed since the Swadeshi agitation (1905–1911). The *Motua* movement's accent on the construction of cultural boundaries marking off *Namasudras* from dominant caste Hindus greatly weakened now, excepting perhaps for occasional harangues from the elite leadership blaming all their woes on these Hindus. A steady shift occurred from a cultural movement involving direct mass participation to institutional politics in which only a tiny elite group took part. The masses were now explicitly told that the colonial state, upholder of "social equality", would provide to them all that caste Hindus had for long denied, and that political power derived from a share in the administration would counter high-caste domination. Anything weakening the state should, therefore, be avoided, because this, through reinforcing caste Hindu powers, would further degrade the *Namasudra* social position. This was why the leadership opposed the *Swadeshi* movement (aimed against the government's partition plan), asserting that merely a handiwork of caste Hindu elites, it would only promote their interests. All this was misjudging the colonial state's

social policy. Government had scarcely meddled with the caste system, and would surely not intervene now to reorder it. Access to administrative power, just minimal and far beyond the reach of the *Namasudra* masses, was the leadership's primary concern. In this it had a precedent to cite: government showing special favours to Muslims should treat *Namasudras* similarly. The leaders, however, coined popular slogans to mobilize the masses. They called the *Swadeshi* movement (as, indeed, other mass movements – Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience and Quit India – all similarly opposed by them) a purely *bhadralok* agitation, wholly to be avoided by *Namasudra* subalterns. The device worked, largely because of the latter's strong antipathy towards caste Hindus. They were made to believe that their material deprivation and social ignominy was all due to caste Hindu domination. Quite a few of the *Swadeshi* leaders, they were also told, had long been their exploiters as landlords, and their plight rarely figured in *Swadeshi* programmes. The *Swadeshi* leaders' failure to remove this impression, reinforced this opposition to their movement. Fresh conflicts (1907–1908) between *Namasudra* sharecroppers and local landlords over commutation of produce rent into money rent sharpened this antagonism. Rising agricultural prices at the time, making produce rent more onerous, prompted sharecroppers to insist on cash rent, a demand landlords opposed. (The elite leadership had perhaps a peripheral role in this agitation). Bitterness with caste Hindus deepened during the 1911 census. *Namasudras* wanted *Chandal*, an opprobrious name coined for them by caste Hindus, changed to "*Namasudra*", a claim Hindus ridiculed. The *Motua* movement continued even then. We are not sure of its links with the new leadership, nor of the persistence of its old influence.

Later developments weakened *Namasudra* sentiments of solidarity. An earlier trend strengthened: organization of their movement around essentially elitist demands, demands for more power under the new constitutional arrangements (1919, 1932 and 1935). The elites, pursuing their own group interests, gradually drifted apart from the *Namasudra* masses, precluding the rise of a "movement", that is, organized collective efforts shaped by "community consciousness" towards achieving common aims. The findings of Bandyopadhyay's excellent study support this conclusion.

Two other developments – partial involvement of the *Namasudras* (since about 1939/40) in the communal politics of the Hindu *Mahasabha*, and growth of agrarian radicalism, initially on their own, and later under Kishan Sabha leadership (1937–1947) – mark a further shift away from their earlier solidarity movement. Acceptance by some leaders of the *Mahasabha's* social and political philosophy justifying the demand for an exclusive Hindu homeland reversed their perennial plea for delinking *Namasudras* from caste Hindu society. The *Mahasabha's* assumption of a homogeneous Hindu society, negating the leadership's earlier perception of it as an entity split into antagonistic communities, undermined the rationale of *Namasudra* solidarity. The stress in the philosophy of agrarian radicalism, primarily involving sharecroppers, the most numerous section of *Namasudra* cultivators, on the economic roots of Hindu landlord domination, nearly replaced the traditional idioms of caste with those of class. The solution for *Namasudra* deprivation was not therefore, reordering of caste, but redefinition of relations of production – in this case a substantial increase in the sharecroppers' share in the produce, abolition of landlords' extralegal excesses and coercive powers.

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