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# BOOK REVIEWS

## The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life. Ed. by Alf Lüdtke. Transl. by William Templer. [Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History.] Princeton University Press, Princeton 1995. xiii, 318 pp. $49.50; £37.30. (Paper: $18.95; £15.95.)

Alf Lüdtke's volume on everyday life brings to the English-speaking audience a range of writings published earlier in German. *Alltagsgeschichte*, or the study of everyday life, emerged in Germany in the mid-1970s and by the 1980s there was a virtual flood of literature on the theme both inside and outside academia. In the context of the German social sciences, *Alltagsgeschichte* was an oppositional movement in the same way as people's history was in the nineteenth century. ln many ways the emergence of *Alltagsgeschichte* in Germany in the 1980s did for the social sciences what the discovery of the common people did almost two centuries ago. By celebrating the common people Herder and his contemporaries in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century valorized tradition against the Enlightenment emphasis on reason. By shifting the historian's gaze to the realm of the everyday, Lüdtke and others critique teleological frameworks which focus on broader structures and processes of change. But just as people's history was appropriated in different ways within different historiographical traditions, there is a heterogeneity of perspectives on everyday life.

Many of the themes on which studies of everyday life focus – family, gender, sexuality, religion and community – became an important part of the social history agenda in the 1960s. In a sense much of what *Alltagsgeschichte* did in Germany was already being done within the world of Anglo-American social history by Thompson and others who saw class as an experience rather than as a structure and viewed history from the bottom up. If Thompson sought to recover the experiences of those who lived through the Industrial Revolution, studies of everyday life in Germany have similarly made visible the everyday historical realities under the Third Reich, the inner workings of the regime, and the popular feelings and sentiments which implicated the people in the exercise of Nazi power. Yet it would be wrong to read in these essays simple rearticulations of Thompsonian ideas. The term "everyday" here acquires a heuristic value, it is elevated from a descriptive to a conceptual category, categories like "experience" are problematized; and post-modernist insights are used to deepen the concerns of English social history. The emphasis of *Alltagsgeschichte* historians, like many contemporary critics of modernist frames, is on a "decentred" analysis, suggesting that it is possible for contradictory moments to coexist with, without necessarily being linked to, each other. Lüdtke and other contributors to this volume question conventional notions of what constitutes a "centre" without ignoring the interlinkage between the particular and the general, between specific situations and broader processes of change.

Works on everyday life are often imprisoned within a set of conceptual dichotomies. In a general sense the everyday has been seen as a realm away from the public arena and the world of formal politics; as a sphere which embodies the repetitive and the non-eventful in contrast to the dynamism of the non-everyday. The essays in this volume seek to question some of these polarities. Lüdtke shows the fluidity of distinctions between the public and private, the personal and political; when the personal is

politicized, politics is privatized; when everyday acts redefine the social world, dynamism is inscribed into everyday lives.

Many of these studies on everyday life draw upon the insights of critical anthropology. Hans Medick's widely acclaimed essay on ethnological ways of knowing reproduced in the collection questions unilinear conceptions of history which were dominant in German historical anthropology. He shows how perspectives drawn from cultural anthropology have made historians more sensitive to the question of the cultural production of social life. Culture and cultural expressions, he emphasizes, are not constant and unchanging: they not only represent the social world but actively construct and transform it. In the Geertzian mode, Medick sees cultural expressions as socially produced texts, which can be interpreted through a process of "thick description". Through such a descriptive process it is possible for an ethnographer to unravel the many layered meanings of a text without necessarily looking for a false coherence or unitary sense.

The influence of recent trends in critical anthropology is evident in many other contributions to this volume. Both Lüdtke's and Wolfgang Kaschuba's essays focus on the significance of body language and symbolic communication in shaping the culture of the workplace. Gestures, silences, jocular rough play all ordered the world of work in meaningful ways, structuring hierarchies, reproducing difference. The emphasis given to work and skill in the constitution of identities is significant, given recent writings in which ties of neighbourhood and community outside the workplace displace work as a site for cultural transactions. The crucial category in Lüdtke's analysis is *Eigensinn*: the everyday acts – the jocular horseplay, the physical expressions of camaraderie among workers, the evasions of work norms – through which workers tried to appropriate time and space and created a private world of desire and fantasy for themselves. Loafing at the workplace and other expressions of wilful action by workers were not acts of resistance to Nazi authority. These were the ways in which workers could create a distance between themselves and authority structures at the workplace. Lüdtke's argument here is different from James Scott's notion of everyday resistance, elaborated in *Weapons of the Weak*, where all violations of work norms are read as resistance. For Lüdtke, everyday practices reproduce and affirm, just as much as they resist, dominant structures of power. But Lüdtke's exploration of the politicization of the private sphere and the privatization of politics within Nazi Germany is very similar to the notion of hidden transcripts developed in Scott's later writing. *Eigensinn* coexisted with public silence and made workers complicit in the exercise of Nazi power, just as the private and hidden transcripts of resistance, in Scott's framework, coexist with public transcripts of submission to norms and codes.

Lüdtke's notion of everyday politics is distinct from Harold Dehne's framework, which is concerned with the relationship between everyday action and class struggle. Through creative activities of appropriation in their daily lives individuals generate the capacity to transform their everyday lives and ultimately society; while their individual subjective experiences, their hopes and disappointments, are structured within larger historical processes, the conditions of everyday life define the events which have a political impact and transform developmental processes. If Lüdtke explores how the practices of everyday life reproduce power structures, Dehne concentrates on their transformative potential.

Studies on everyday life have often been as "gender blind" as traditional histories. Writings on the public sphere have been premised on a dichotomy between a male-dominated public sphere and the everyday where women are present. Such an assump-

tion authenticated a male-centred history: it was as if a study of the public sphere could not but focus on males alone. Critiquing this sharp separation between spheres, Dorothee Wierling argues that the private spills over into the public and vice versa. She pleads for a gendered history which looks at gender relations within and outside everyday contexts, examining the interconnections between the public arena and the private. A gendered perspective, she argues, cannot take for granted universalistic notions of patriarchy and operate with a simple framework of domination and subordination; it has to understand the specific meanings which men and women attach to their sexual affiliation, it has to explore the everyday as a site for complex negotiations where gendered selves are constituted through acts of resistance, agreements, "stagings" and rituals. A gendered perspective on the family suggests that the family may have different meanings for men and women. It is not just a unit where shared strategies are worked out, but an arena of struggle for power for men and women.

Niethammer's piece on popular experiences in the former GDR lacks the thick descriptive quality of Lüdtke's contributions. The richness of Niethammer's biographical data gets lost in his tedious quantitative analysis of social mobility and political experiences (tables 1–4). Peter Schöttler's essay on the history of consciousness emphasizes the need for a critical reflection on its conceptual premises. Pointing to the conceptual problems that surface in the studies of mentalities and ideologies, he suggests that discourse theories and narrative analysis would open up new vistas of social-historical research. The essay, however, offers no more than a useful survey of the existing literature on the subject.

While this volume opens up many historiographical issues, conceptual problems remain. Most contributors quite rightly question frameworks which draw a sharp dichotomy between the everyday and non-everyday, the political and the non-political, the individual and the social, the repetitive and the spectacular. If the everyday is not so different from the non-everyday, if the term is so marked by fluidity and ambivalence, then how can it demarcate the specificity of a domain of study? The term had its use in the polemics against the traditional focus on the extraordinary events, but it seems to lack any conceptual density. In any case, while categories can be resignified, can they be divested of all sedimented meaning? For implicit in the use of the term everyday life is a binary opposition between the ordinary and the extraordinary, the private and the public. Studies of everyday life will always be haunted by these oppositions.

*Chitra Joshi*

## Crossick, Geoffrey and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt. The Petite Bourgeoisie in Europe 1780–1914. Enterprise, Family and Independence. Routledge, London [etc.] 1995. xi, 296 pp. £45.00.

The poor petite bourgeoisie. Kings and businessmen, aristocrats and scholars, scientists and workers, poets and peasants – all have been lauded for their wondrous accomplishments, acclaimed as the essence of humanity, or, at the very least, of the nation. Songs of praise have been written on their behalf. But who has ever written an ode to the petite bourgeoisie? Who has ever venerated them, as did Shelley the poet, as "the

unacknowledged legislators of the world"? Who has seen in the activities of the grocer, tanner, or tobacconist the outlines of the bright and prosperous society of the future? Where are the petite bourgeoisie's illustrious defenders and advocates? If they can be found at all, they are seen lurking in the dark shadows of right-wing politics.

They may not have their Richelieu, Shelley or Marx, but the petite bourgeoisie have at least, and at long last, found their historians. In the past fifteen years there has been a small boom in research on the petite bourgeoisie, and now we have a masterful work authored by two major practitioners in the field. *The Petite Bourgeoisie in Europe* is a synthesis in the best sense of the term. Geoffrey Crossick and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt draw fruitfully upon the published studies of many other historians as well as their own particular researches, much of it conducted under the rubric of a long-running research round table that they helped found and direct. The authors capture petit-bourgeois life with a wide-angle lens that offers the reader nothing like the caricatured, cartoonish shopkeeper one often finds. Instead, one discovers the multidimensional lives of these fixtures of nineteenth-century society, their worlds of work, family, politics and culture. The picture the reader encounters is also not a static one. As they develop the historical examples of Britain, France, Germany and Belgium, the authors are sensitive to the shifting nature of petit-bourgeois life over the course of the long nineteenth century.

Crossick and Haupt first tackle the immensely difficult problem of definition and demarcation. In terms of income and labor, the petite bourgeoisie shaded into the skilled working class; on the basis of their ownership of property and a style of respectability, they approached the more substantial bourgeoisie. Precisely this uneasy position in the middle defined them: they were owners of property and their own labor, yet never exercised a monopolistic position in the market-place. Internally, the petit bourgeois was a notoriously heterogeneous grouping. The major divide ran between artisans and shopkeepers, yet this was hardly fast and precise as the example of bakers and butchers and many other trades demonstrates. However, class analysis, the authors argue, hardly provides a sufficient definition of the petite bourgeoisie. The great virtue of this book lies in the nuanced explorations of family life, reproductive strategies, culture and the urban environment alongside the more well-travelled paths of political economy.

The first few chapters of *The Petite Bourgeoisie in Europe* do trace the economic dimensions. The authors examine comparatively in their four countries the slow, uneven and varied demise of the corporatist world. However divergent the course of events, the guild-dominated system of the *ancien régime* provided the language and ideals of petit-bourgeois independence. Amid the changing economy of the nineteenth century, small enterprise continued to play a vital and often expanding role in the market-place, providing specialized services and goods primarily to the urban population. Marx's imagined collapse of the petite bourgeoisie, the bifurcation of society into only two classes, could not have been further off the mark. Acclaimed by its members for providing an anchor of stability in a rapidly changing society, petit-bourgeois life was also very much "a world in movement". The small capital requirements enabled workers or rural migrants to enter the ranks; upward mobility to the stature of the more substantial bourgeoisie, if rare, was not impossible. Downward mobility, the ever-present danger of eternal indebtedness, bankruptcy and social collapse, lent a more despondent tone to this world in movement.

All of the efforts of the petite bourgeoisie revolved around the vibrant, sometimes desperate, protection of property and independence. The family was, of course, central to this endeavor. Its members labored together in the workshop or store, the desire to

pass on wealth governed many business decisions, and marital partners were chosen on the basis of their expected contribution to the enterprise. Women from retailing families, for example, were often prized because of their experience and knowledge in running a shop. The family was not, however, a static institution. As state protection declined and modern, large-scale commerce increasingly threatened their way of life, the family became even more important. The petite bourgeoisie folded into themselves, their families becoming ever more insular and protective and suspicious of the larger world. At the same time, keenly aware of the declining opportunities available in the independently-owned retail trade and artisanry, the petite bourgeoisie began sending their sons off for education and into the more secure world of white-collar employment. Memoirs provide particularly rich insights into family life and the authors use them effectively. The recollections are not always tender and one reads about unending toil, the absence of affection and the constrictions felt at least by some children in the closed, privatized petit-bourgeois family. Idealized in political and religious discourse, the family was the site also of patriarchal domination, intense labor exploitation, internal strife and unceasing demands on the time and energies of all of its members.

The authors also write insightfully and sensitively about the spatial dimensions of petit-bourgeois life. In the shop, the drawn curtain separated the business space from the private family quarters. But this was, of necessity, a semi-permeable divide, because the petite bourgeoisie lived through the intermingling of the private and public. Their shops also provided the space for the broader public sphere, as customers gathered and chatted with one another and the proprietor and his wife. In this way, the shop extended into the neighborhood, the other essential realm of petit-bourgeois life. The neighborhood provided customers, a larger arena of sociability and a site of political engagement. And in the home and the local community the petite bourgeoisie increasingly adopted a social style of respectability and privacy. While labor parties proclaimed international solidarity, the petite bourgeoisie remained firmly embedded in the local community, a situation they cultivated through local pageants, property ownership and political office.

And what of petit-bourgeois politics? One senses the heavy hands with which the authors took up their pens (or pressed their keyboards) as they wrote their chapter on politics. One can almost hear their collective sigh of reluctance and sorrow when reading their lines that admit, yes, the petite bourgeoisie did move to the right in the course of the nineteenth century. A host of developments pushed the petite bourgeoisie in this direction: the more rigid class segregation that developed in cities toward the end of the century; the emergence of department stores; the states' abandonment, to one degree or another, of long-standing protective policies. By the end of the period under investigation, the "social question" revolved more critically around industrial workers, hence the proliferation of state welfare policies directed at the proletariat. At the same time, the establishment of Marxism as the reigning ideology of the left excluded the petite bourgeoisie from the popular politics that had once bound them to workers. What had socialists to offer shopkeepers other than predictions of their eventual demise? Fascists could and did offer the petite bourgeoisie protection and honor. Nonetheless, the authors argue strongly that no necessary connection existed between the social group – the petite bourgeoisie – and fascist movements. Where that link came to be, most strongly in Germany, it was a result of specific political opportunities and conjunctures (p. 229). While this non-determinist position is refreshing, it is only partly convincing. A stronger counterfactual argument is needed, one that depicts the realistic alternatives to the right-wing proclivities of the petite bourgeoisie.

Overall, *The Petite Bourgeoisie in Europe* provides a richly textured analysis. It is a good place to begin, and to conclude, the search for this vital but long caricatured social group.

*Eric D. Weitz*

HAHN, MANFRED. Archivalienkunde des vormarxistischen Sozialismus. Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 1995. 304 pp. DM 88.00; S.fr. 88.00; S 687.00.

With the winding up of research activity on the history of socialism in the East and the clean sweep of ideologies in the West, some central research questions have been left open. Now that it has become fashionable to regard Marx in the way that Hegel was regarded by subsequent less distinguished thinkers in Germany, namely as *passé*, socialism too has fallen into disrepute as a theoretical and practical critique of capitalism. Early socialism, in any case an inadequately researched area, is one of the areas affected. Such questions as the relationships between "utopian" and "scientific" socialism or between socialist theory and the proletarian movement, the independent importance of the early socialism and communism before Marx, the traditions of revolutionary bourgeois thought in socialism and so on appear to be more than obsolete nowadays.

It seems to me to be rather doubtful whether the efforts by Manfred Hahn, a Bremen-based researcher on socialism, unruffled as they are by the spirit of the age, point the way out of the present research doldrums. His recently published *Archivalienkunde des vormarxistischen Sozialismus* has the character of finality about it, although its intention is precisely to promote new research. This is perhaps because Hahn adopts an extremely conventional, not to say unhistorical concept of "premarxist socialism", which equates chronological and causal sequences: "It [premarxist socialism] is *pre*marxist – also in the sense of being prior – and at the same time pre*marxist*, it prepares the way for marxist socialism and finally becomes part of its heritage" (p. 14). In other words, the concept itself contains no more than the orthodox Marxist scheme of a teleological development, paraphrased with the dubious metaphor of inheritance, from the "precursors" of socialism to Marx, whose critical theory is reified as "scientific socialism" (p. 29).

Here it is notable not only that Hahn does not discuss the twin concepts of "socialism" and "communism" in their contemporary usage, and that the "revolutionary core" which he elevates to the most important criterion of "premarxist socialism", the "conceptual leap" beyond capitalist society (p. 14), is scarcely to be found in all the theoreticians quoted. Was Babeuf a socialist? Was Louis Blanc's *Organisation du travail* a revolutionary text? Most of all, this definition of socialism is largely unrelated to the processes and disputes within society, to the early proletarian movement, and to the labour movement of the first half of the nineteenth century. Thus the early socialist and communist leagues, associations and secret revolutionary societies are also totally excluded; instead, pride of place is given to a connection between "imagined socialism" and communitarianism as a "movement" which makes the picture of the development of socialism no less one-sided. We end up either with Marx or in the Icarian communities of the United States.

What can be the use of "archive studies in premarxist socialism"? Anyone who has worked on early socialism and communism is familiar with the problem of inadequate records, but nonetheless I am not certain whether research on socialism will be given a new stimulus by the kind of archive studies which Hahn has assembled with infinite diligence.

This is undoubtedly an excellent working tool which can provide short cuts for subsequent research. The author's principal intention is to draw the attention of researchers in the history of socialism to manuscript sources, some of which have only been partly studied and all of which have hitherto received inadequate attention from researchers. Therefore readers should not expect any help in finding first editions or reprints of works by socialist authors, periodicals, pamphlets, etc. This restriction to archive materials recorded only in manuscript form (manuscripts and letters by socialists, police and court records, official investigation reports, agents' reports, documents from socialist communities) is persuasive inasmuch as it reflects the status of early socialism and makes a break with the false assumption "that the history of the social movement, of socialism, may be safely written on the basis of printed documents" (p. 21). Nevertheless there is also a need for a reliable survey of the printed sources for early socialism and communism, to which researchers will still have to refer, not to mention the lack of critical editions, and so it is to be welcomed that Hahn gives notice of a second volume which will contain a list of printed sources.

The first main part (III.1) of the *Archivalienkunde* is based on a list which Hahn explicitly declares as "definitive" and which constitutes a hall of fame of "premarxist socialism": "Twenty-eight premarxist socialists are listed", from François-Noël Babeuf to Richard Lahautière, and with the exception of some names from the community movement the selection criteria are quite conventional. The individual chapters, ordered by name and each provided with a short biography and references to contemporarily published works, contain an extremely extensive survey of existing manuscript sources for the theoreticians and agitators of early socialism (and communism), further subdivided by individual archives, libraries, collections, etc. This survey is unique in this form.

In the second main part, "more than fifty communities are addressed"; Icarian, Owenist and Fourierist colonies principally in the United States but also in Britain, Ireland, France, Romania and Latin America. Here too we find references to archive materials, subdivided on the same principle. Part III.3 reports on the collecting and conserving institutions. In each case this consists of a short and mainly narrative history of the institution concerned, focusing on sources relating to "premarxist socialism". Hahn's book closes with a list of secondary literature explicitly limited to works of interest for archive studies.

The records of archive sources assembled by Hahn are based to a large extent on information provided by the conserving archives, libraries and other institutions themselves in response to written enquiries; as is emphasized, the author was unable to inspect them in person. As Hahn himself is aware how unreliable such information may sometimes be, we have to expect statements such as "[. . .] Dezamy documents from 1844 are said to be held there under J 2/2, document sheaf or liasse no. 9 [. . .] signature not J 2/2 but FM I2 10.6 (communication from the Archives de la Ville Du Havre [. . .], 23.01.1992)". Despite all the author's care, there are some surprising elementary mistakes (e.g. Blanqui, "Aux études en médecine et en droit" for "Aux étudiants [. . .]", p. 67). At times references which might lie outside the narrow scope of this approach

would spare the user the need to refer to unprinted sources, since there are printed editions (for example of parts of Hess's Amsterdam papers) which Hahn does not mention.

As for language and style, while these are perhaps not the most important part of such a work for researchers, both the schoolmasterly tone and the tendency to abbreviation are notable. Whole passages of Hahn's book have the character of working drafts, unordered collections of notes, etc. (e.g. p. 248f.), and the publishers or publishers' readers should be asked whether a more discursive style might not have been advisable. But such relatively trivial criticisms do not detract from the positive impression that Hahn has produced a study of immense diligence which will be of considerable use for any future research, both in detail and as a whole.

But the question is what direction research into the history of socialism should take. Perhaps it would be much more important to undertake a historical and theoretical re-evaluation of early socialism and communism, and perhaps some patterns of interpretation which are restricted by Marxism have to be laid aside to achieve this. There have indeed been some new approaches in recent decades which would seem to me worthy of being taken further. Thus E.P. Thompson suggested a "sociology of ideas" to improve our understanding of the reception of socialism in the early English labour movement. Jacques Rancière, whose work on the history of the mentality of the proletarian movement is in danger of being forgotten, drew attention to the difference between the *parole ouvrière* and socialist discourse *about* the worker and the working class. Here a productive link was established between the socio-historical approach and the history of ideas. In comparison, and despite the stimulus it provides for new studies of the sources, Hahn's *Archivalienkunde des vormarxistischen Sozialismus* reads like a swansong for orthodox certainties.

*Ahlrich Meyer*

NORD, PHILIP. The Republican Moment. Struggles for Democracy in Nineteenth-Century France. Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) [etc.] 1995. viii, 321 pp. Ill. $49.95.

American historian Philip Nord has investigated the factors that enabled the Third Republic – despite its difficult emergence – to become "*la plus longue des Républiques*" (the longest-lasting Republic), as a recent synthesis on the subject is entitled. The issue is far from new. Philip Nord begins by listing the responses currently submitted: "the Guizot moment", which permitted a liberal re-evaluation of the republican ideology; the rise of "new classes" destined to be the breeding ground of the Republic's elite; the compromise negotiated between the new elite and the traditional elite so much more easily than the Commune and the repression that followed prohibited any alliance between movements to the left of another type of middle class and the peasantry. While the author does not dismiss any of these explanations, he proposes refining the analysis by borrowing theories from the transition to democracy, elaborated after the last war for other periods and other forms of government. He pursues an improved understanding of the Republic's successful inception amid the ashes of an authoritarian government. This line of questioning abandons the reflection about the period 1860–1880 that looks above and beyond the republican victory. Reviewing these two decades, he aims

to demonstrate how and why a republican political culture arose that the victorious Republic merely legitimized – to the extent that they may be perceived as the "Republican moment" preceding triumph and enabling and responding to its implantation.

From the 1860s onward, as Philip Nord shows, economic change and freedom of exchange gave rise to an educated middle class that encountered assorted institutional obstacles everywhere and aspired to increasing autonomy. The author examines the fight for emancipation from the double tutelage of the traditional elites and the state. He supplies several examples that all concern Paris, involving either socio-professional groups (merchants, attorneys), intellectuals (students, New Painting), and ideological or religious orders (Freemasons, Jews and liberal Protestants). All groups are scrutinized.

These rather heterogeneous groups underwent similar crises throughout the 1860s. Dissidents, who were often confused with a new generation, revolted against the state's tutelage of the agencies that directed their group or their profession and against acceptance of a comparable situation by their peers. They all demanded institutional autonomy and disposed of semi-independent organizations (university administrations, consistorial minorities) or voluntary associations, such as the Union nationale du commerce et de l'industrie, the Alliance israélite universelle (AIU), the Freemason lodges, or the circles of the teaching league. Battles that began internally in each of the groups concerned became progressively oppositional to the regime. The reasons for this tendency were the veto that the imperial power wielded against them and the contemporary junction between the new generation and the republican militants from the preceding generation who had found refuge with some of these groups (especially the Freemasons). What began as a localized conflict regarding issues such as the way of electing the grand master of the Masonic Lodge or the administration of chambers of commerce rapidly turned into a political conflict between democrats and partisans of an elitist way of ruling or an authoritarian *status quo*.

From that point onward, the fights that enabled the republican opposition to capture the support of the organizations it needed were far from circumstantial or sporadic. The battles initiated in closely circumscribed settings on the basis of strictly internal problems effectively persisted, drew on the breeding ground of common militants that formed the nucleus of a reawakening republican movement, and soon enabled the quest to conquer the general opinion far beyond the ones affected by the problems initially advanced. Reflection about the Second Republic's failure and the exile imposed on several republicans convinced everyone of the need for a pedagogical approach. As quickly as possible, the republican opposition tried to convey a republican message that had been subdued considerably following the recent disappointments of the Second Republic. It assumed a wide variety of characteristics of an environment struggling with another one that at least revolved around unifying poles: emancipation of thought from clerical (in its various components) or philosophical orthodoxy (*cousinisme*) and emancipation of civil society from intrusion by the government or by certain constituent bodies. This admittedly rational message retained its necessary visionary quality in that it was based on a citizenship conveying its myths and promises. From the 1860s onward, the idea became widespread before the courts and in books and periodicals, both verbally and symbolically. Before 1880, the ideology figured in effigies at certain ceremonies or in honour of some centenary. It induced an enthusiasm for reform that even penetrated private life, given the republican conviction that the transformation of families and households into a constitutional government model was one of the best ways to cultivate new citizens.

These struggles eventually enabled the ranks that characterized the Republic to make their mark. Thus, the driving forces were attorneys, the Republic's administration and liberal Protestants who served on the board of education. This well-known fact is not, however, the book's main asset. The study shows mainly that these early struggles enabled the invention of a new political culture that became the republican culture. Understanding this culture requires considering the underlying practices or ideologies from different environments. Readers learn that the Ferry school's secular ideal was perceived as a new faith and an element of the republican mystique (i.e. as a secularized Protestantism). Likewise, recalling the role of attorneys in the emergence of the republican opposition, along with the corresponding implications for possible transfer of professional practices in politics elucidates the nature of dominant political practices in France from 1880 onward. Assorted practices derived from the judiciary effectively became political standards from the 1870s onward: committees, speeches, general understanding of public life, the need for universally understandable discourse. These concepts were constituent forces of the regime, despite the efforts of the parties of the masses, the unions, and the rightist leagues to steer politics in a new direction.

This study improves the reader's understanding of each of the environments analysed and often studied through primary sources. The work's essence covers a broader scope: it also pays tribute to the major renewal enabled by approaching politics from the perspective of a political culture. The author identifies the multiplicity of fields tracking the rise and elucidating the scope. All these areas relate to civil society rather than to institutional politics. They cover professional circles and culture, as well as private life, and prove to be far more relevant issues than the political authoritarianism forced on to the opposition in spheres less directly subject to its control.

This cultural approach that re-evaluates civil society's role in politics improves our understanding of the rapid and deep entrenchment of the republican culture (along with the Republic). Unlike the circumstances following the establishment of the two previous republics, the triumph of the 1880s induced only the semblance of a cultural revolution. The culture to which the victorious republicans gave free reign and legitimacy featured predefined modalities for both diffusion and content through struggles in certain sectors of civil society in its uprising against first the Empire and then the government of moral order. The culture was not imposed. This origin harboured both its strength and its durable capacity for resistance despite the shortcomings highlighted by the author: exclusion of workers and women and the risk of running astray or being diverted towards racism, nationalism or imperialism.

The approach selected and its revelations about the republican system of organization call for considerable relativization of certain ideas commonly advanced about the weak propensity of the French to organize and the primacy long afforded to a direct relationship between citizen and state. This pre-eminence would explain the relatively late emergence of modern political parties. Political activism among the civilian population arose from the 1860s onward. It inhibited the state from early disinvolvement from civil society, whereas the citizens occupied the new spaces thus vacated, while a conglomerate of committees and associations crystallized and achieved results attesting to their importance. Accordingly, the author argues that a bureaucratized trade union movement or powerful employers' organizations cannot be considered the only indicator of vibrant civil life. In the 1880s these varied and plentiful forms reflected a more fraternalist than corporative topography of associative movements that conformed to the American model. This book is a valuable history of associative movements in France and their

role in politics, a largely uncharted area of historiography. As a pioneer study, it concurs with the re-evaluation and possibly the rehabilitation of the Empire – a new tendency in French historiography.

*Danielle Tartakowsky*

VANDERVORT, BRUCE. Victor Griffuelhes and French Syndicalism 1895–1922. Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge [etc.] 1996. xix, 278 pp. $50.00.

Passionate, dedicated, energetic when not sapped by ill-health, innovative, wily, audacious, irascible, at times caustic, ambitious, prideful, self-confident, authoritarian, sometimes imperious, Victor Griffuelhes had an unparalleled influence upon France's largest pre-1914 labour organization, the *Confédération Générale du Travail* (CGT). Some of the same traits that carried the shoemaker to the head of the CGT in 1901 at the age of twenty-seven contributed to his undoing and his resignation in 1909. Between those dates Griffuelhes oversaw the expansion of the CGT, led it through its "heroic period", and shaped the distinctive programme it adopted in 1906 as the Charter of Amiens. His influence continued to be felt within the organization well beyond the First World War. Three-quarters of a century after his death in 1922, Griffuelhes – the man his fellow union activist Alphonse Merrheim called the "soul" of the pre-1909 CGT and whom Jacques Julliard, the leading French student of the movement, regards as the "purest incarnation" of French revolutionary syndicalism – has found his biographer.

Bruce Vandervort notes that his study "belongs to a venerable but lately much maligned genre, the life-and-times biography" (p. xi). But if the genre has fallen into desuetude in labour history, a biographical approach, "much maligned" or not, provides its own opportunities to correct, refine, or reinforce the historical record. Such amendment may be limited to the career of the biographer's principal, in this case Griffuelhes. Thus, Vandervort, reviewing a long literature nominating no fewer than ten authors, inspirers, or participants in the drafting of the CGT's key statement of revolutionary syndicalism, the Charter of Amiens, convincingly endorses Jean Maitron's attribution of co-authorship to Griffuelhes and Emile Pouget. Regarding Griffuelhes's 1909 resignation over the irregular but not corrupt financing of a permanent headquarters for the CGT, Vandervort discounts as too conspiratorial and simplistic earlier explanations featuring the manipulations of Minister of Justice Aristide Briand and a few of Griffuelhes's union opponents. He attributes greater importance to Griffuelhes's own haughtiness and wounded pride in the matter, even more to Griffuelhes's sympathies, in the eyes of the left in the CGT, with the socialist-syndicalist faction in the socialist party. If a few uncertainties, mainly from the post-1914 period, remain regarding Griffuelhes – was Merrheim's 1920 accusation just that his wartime commercial endeavours were those of a war profiteer, for example, and what was the point of Griffuelhes's 1921 trip to Russia? – it is because the primary sources which Vandervort extensively marshals remain silent or ambiguous.

But a biography may illuminate historiographical issues that transcend the life of a single actor. Looking at the 1890s, for example, Vandervort takes issue with Jacques Rancière's arguments that shoemaking barely qualified as a laboriously learned craft and

that its practitioners were radicalized through the frustrations of such an undemanding trade. He similarly takes issue with those who see the provenance of revolutionary syndicalism in *fin de siècle* anarchism. As for recent reassessments of the linkage between Georges Sorel and his circle and CGT leaders, Vandervort asserts that the Sorelians were the lesson-drawers, not the inspirers, in that relationship.

But aside from mending the historical fabric in minor ways, Vandervort's study advances a number of larger theses as well. One is that Blanquism was a chief ingredient in the recipe that produced revolutionary unionism in France. Here Vandervort reinforces the claims of Maurice Dommanget and Jolyon Howorth in their respective studies of Blanquist leader Edouard Vaillant. Committed to political action, the Blanquists also envisioned an independent role for the trade unions, within which their respect for worker autonomy enhanced their influence. Blanquists founded the Shoemakers Union, which Griffuelhes joined in 1896. They were also active in the National Federation of Bourses as well as the CGT, and urged the merger of the two organizations, which would come in 1902, a year after Griffuelhes came to head the CGT. Vandervort sees Griffuelhes's desire to build a workers' movement, a *parti du travail* uniting workers acting for and by themselves rather than through disaffected middle-class intellectuals, as the unifying thread of his activities from his Blanquist period in the late 1890s through his pre-war activities in the CGT and his post-war embrace, on the assumption that the Russian system of soviets meant workers' control, of the communist party.

Vandervort, moreover, challenges the widely-held view that "de-skilling" or "proletarianization" contributed greatly to radicalizing labour movements. He urges caution in applying this thesis to French workers of his period. "Instead," he writes, "the two main elements in the process that affected skilled workers like Griffuelhes and his fellow artisan shoemakers were falling incomes and frustrated upward mobility" (p. 245). But Vandervort's revisionist thesis may leave readers uneasy. First, he appears to adopt an unusually restrictive premise whereby proletarianization can only radicalize those workers in an industry who are themselves directly de-skilled by it. But it is not clear (particularly since he cites the example of Joan Wallach Scott's *The Glassmakers of Carmaux*) that the thesis Vandervort challenges requires that de-skilling be a proximate rather than a mediate cause of radicalization. Vandervort himself notes that already in the Second Empire the mass production in shoemaking had emerged that "ultimately deprived shoemakers like Griffuelhes of control over their work" (p. 9). Second, the reader may suspect that Vandervort the biographer is generalizing unduly in assuming that many skilled workers in other trades shared the experiences of Griffuelhes, a *bottier*, or skilled shoemaker. Vandervort closely studies the working conditions of the *bottiers* of Paris, but they numbered no more than 2,000 in 1914. This is a rather narrow evidentiary base for the bold claim of the thesis that the de-skilling or "the proletarianization of artisans was the key impetus to radical trade unionism in France and elsewhere" has been "tested and found wanting" (p. 245).

Vandervort is more convincing in challenging the characterization of French revolutionary syndicalism as a backward-looking ideology reflecting the nostalgic defence of artisanal values against the transformative forces of modern technology and economy. Before, during and after his eight years at the helm of the CGT Griffuelhes argued that the French economy and entrepreneur, the French worker and union movement, must modernize. He castigated French capitalists for their timidity and lack of imagination, and urged the development of a more dynamic, fully industrialized economy, populated

by modern factory workers. Manual workers must unite with their mental counterparts, the technicians possessing productive expertise, in the eventual self-administration of labour. In his first speech at a CGT congress, in 1900, moreover, Griffuelhes invoked ongoing developments in factory shoe production to urge union organization by industrial federation, and he long promoted such organization among his fellow leatherworkers as well as those in mining, textiles and the building trades. It is not entirely clear from Vandervort's account, however, whether industrial organization meant for Griffuelhes only greater coordination of independent unions within an industry or the more centralized industry-wide decision-making favoured by metalworker leader Alphonse Merrheim, the chief spokesman for industrial unionism in the immediate pre-war period. In discussing the critical self-analysis of the goals, strategy and structure of the beleaguered CGT in the half-decade before 1914, Vandervort depicts Griffuelhes as an opponent of those urging greater union decentralization. But other historians, among them Jeremy Jennings and Merrheim's biographer Nicholas Papayanis, portray him as a leading decentralist critic of Merrheim's proposals.

Rarely, however, does Vandervort give the reader too little context; it is a daunting task to write a "life-and-times biography" and he proves generally adroit at putting his protagonist's activities into their wider setting. For example, Vandervort is highly sensitive to regional differences and tensions within the French labour movement and to the difficulties of fashioning a national movement in the early twentieth century. The conversion of the 1901 CGT, a moribund, craft-oriented, largely Paris-bound and wholly Paris-led body into a genuinely national, increasingly industrially-minded organization in 1909 owes much to the efforts of Griffuelhes, a man from the provinces. Vandervort not only captures the revolutionary syndicalist spirit of Griffuelhes – his commitment to the autonomy, self-reliance and direct action of workers – but delineates the practical, institutional contributions that made him "the founder of the modern labor movement in France" (p. 247). Vandervort, moreover, has a nuanced grasp of the factionalism that figured so largely within the CGT. He is particularly adept at mapping the divergent tendencies within the organization up to 1909 and again after the First World War, and at locating Griffuelhes on that ideological terrain.

But if Griffuelhes embodied revolutionary syndicalism during its heroic era, he arguably embodied its inherent tensions as well. The uneasy equilibrium achieved within the CGT in 1906, when it adopted the Charter of Amiens as much as a procedural safeguard against ideological dissonance within the organization as a positive programme, could not be sustained in the face of a relatively recently united socialist party, a changing economy, increasingly organized employers, and an increasingly impatient and hostile state. Griffuelhes was a complex man at the centre of a complex and protean movement in pre-war France, so much so that in the later 1920s his legacy could be claimed equally by Secretary Léon Jouhaux for the now clearly reformist CGT majority, by Pierre Monatte for its revolutionary syndicalist minority, and by Pierre Besnard for the anarchosyndicalist *CGT Syndicaliste Révolutionnaire*.

In offering a fine and long overdue study of the complex figure who shaped and exemplified the CGT during its heroic period, Bruce Vandervort has demonstrated that whatever the limitations of the genre, there is still a good deal of "life" in labour biographies. (And credit is due to the publisher for producing a handsome, user-friendly volume with footnotes instead of endnotes, and a full bibliography.) To consider his work along with other major monographic contributions to French syndicalist studies in the 1990s, such as Jeremy Jennings's study of ideas in *Syndicalism in France* or

Kenneth Tucker's neo-Habermasian analysis of discourse in *French Revolutionary Syndicalism and the Public Sphere*, is to realize that the study of social movements would be a poorer thing if it relinquished the benefits of methodological pluralism.

*Wayne Thorpe*

POLASKY, JANET. The Democratic Socialism of Emile Vandervelde: Between Reform and Revolution. Berg, Oxford [etc.] 1995. xi, 303 pp. Ill. £39.95. (Paper: £14.95.)

Emile Vandervelde (1866–1938) was the most prestigious of all Belgian labour leaders during the period of the Second International. He held ministerial office in several coalition governments and was a familiar figure on the European diplomatic scene. Like many of his "centrist" Social-Democratic contemporaries Vandervelde tried to combine his revolutionary political aims with parliamentarism and gradualism. But unlike most of them Vandervelde never admitted that socialism could result from a gradual accumulation of reforms. Throughout his life Vandervelde regarded Marxism as a powerful guiding principle in the hands of the labour movement, but, strangely, he continued to stress his commitment to Marxist principles after the First World War, by which time most Social-Democratic party leaders had already lost their faith in Marx.

Vandervelde was one of the intellectual bourgeoisie of Brussels, where he had studied and taught at the university. In many ways, even in later life, Vandervelde remained the university professor and militant intellectual he had been when he embraced socialism. In 1893 this brilliant young man wrote the new manifesto of the Belgische Werklieden Partij, the Belgian Workers' Party, founded in 1885. When he and 27 of his comrades were elected to parliament in 1894 he immediately became their spokesman and the uncontested leader of the opposition. Vandervelde was more than a party leader, though. He was the "patron" of Belgium's working classes. In intellectual circles he was admired for his broad culture, and in the international labour movement his many books and articles on a wide range of subjects made him a well-known theorist, only slightly less important than Karl Kautsky and Rosa Luxemburg. Vandervelde's role as leader was determined by his ability to conciliate the political extremes and to preserve the unity of the labour movement at home and abroad. His most glorious period was between 1900 and 1914 when he presided over the Bureau of the Second International. Vandervelde's role in this came to a virtual end when, in 1914, he was appointed a minister of state and he began to support the war aims of the Belgian King Albert I and the Allied Powers. During and after the Great War he represented the Belgian Workers' Party as minister in various governments of national union. As an opponent of any contacts with the German socialists, he became an obstacle to the resurrection of the Second International.

After the armistice Vandervelde desperately tried to recover his position as an international socialist leader, but by refusing to choose between his role as minister and that as socialist internationalist he never regained his pre-war prestige and credibility. In his own party Vandervelde became an advocate of "governmental participationism" and on the international scene a fierce enemy of Bolshevism. This made him the target of attacks from his own left wing and from the communists.

Vandervelde was at his best as Minister of Foreign Affairs (1925–1927), a position

which allowed him to contribute to Germany's joining the League of Nations and the construction of peace in Europe. His diplomatic role was of limited importance, however. Vandervelde represented a small power, and Belgium's close alliance with France became an obstacle to independent diplomatic action.

As an advocate of the democratic road to socialism Vandervelde had to admit that even in Belgium, where his Belgian Workers' Party gained 40 per cent of the popular vote in 1925, the bourgeoisie remained powerful enough to force his "democratic government" out of office. Thereafter Vandervelde became an ardent defender of a "revolutionary road" to power, a strategy he eclectically combined with diplomatic initiatives in favour of disarmament and rallies against fascism. He suffered his cruellest defeat as a socialist and party leader when the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936 and his socialist companions in government agreed to support Belgian neutrality in order to save the government of national union. Later on Vandervelde was compelled to resign as minister when his fellow socialists decided to recognize the Franco government in Burgos. Vandervelde died on 27 December 1938, a few months before the final collapse of the Spanish Republic.

In her pioneering study Janet Polasky, Vandervelde's biographer, provides an exhaustive account of his political activities. Vandervelde appears as a master of compromise and an architect of consensus. By the rank and file he was accepted as a "patron" and by the bourgeoisie as an influential opponent of high culture and expertise. Polasky has read Vandervelde's many books and articles and analysed his doctrine. She has unearthed many documents never before used in studies of the Belgian Workers' Party. Moreover, she has succeeded in presenting a vivid portrait of the politician and theorist that Vandervelde was. The weakness of his position as party leader is also carefully analysed.

In many respects Polasky's impressive study is indispensable for all scholars of Belgian socialism. It is lucidly written, well thought out and provides an extensive bibliography and numerous references to primary sources and archives. However, Polasky remains too discreet about Vandervelde's personal life and his complex character. She has reduced Vandervelde's biography to an account of his public life. Although Vandervelde's private life remained a secret to many of his comrades, his opponents and enemies have written about the weaknesses of his character. It is possible that the Vandervelde family archives contain further documents that reveal more about the private Vandervelde than Polasky does. Vandervelde married twice. His first wife was the British feminist Lalla Speyer, who also played an important role in the Belgian socialist movement. When and why Vandervelde divorced her is left unclear. It seems Vandervelde and Speyer lived separate lives throughout their marriage. In 1927 Vandervelde married the much younger doctor Jeanne Beeckman, who acted as his secretary and nurse during the last decade of his life. Polasky includes no more than a few lines and footnotes about these two important women in Vandervelde's life.

Vandervelde seems to have had many psychological problems, though these are not discussed by Polasky. Certainly Vandervelde was a "mother's child" and rather clumsy and timid in his behaviour. He was unable to organize his personal life and was often dependent on help from others. It is claimed that he was even unable to buy himself a train ticket. He felt uneasy in the company of working-class people. Although he could speak several foreign languages he refused to do so, preferring to use just French. In their memoirs, Vandervelde's enemies (de Man, Spaak) within the Belgian Workers' Party include some cruel details about his vanity and lifestyle. Polasky omits them. The

importance of Vandervelde's lifelong friendship with Louis de Brouckère is also largely underestimated in this book. The same can be said of Vandervelde's role in the leading intellectual and artistic circles of Brussels. Vandervelde was one of the organizers of the party's art section in Brussels. He was also a founder of the Université Nouvelle, which was established in 1894 by dissenters from the Université Libre. A further, minor, criticism is that Polasky misspells the names of some well-known politicians (Brantig instead of Branting, Braecke instead of Bracke) or omits their Christian names (as in the case of James Ramsay MacDonald) and that she confuses the Liberal politician Marcel-Henri Jaspar with his Catholic uncle Henri Jaspar.

*André Mommen*

RATZ, URSULA. Zwischen Arbeitsgemeinschaft und Koalition. Bürgerliche Sozialreformer und Gewerkschaften im Ersten Weltkrieg. [Einzelveröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin, Band 79.] K.G. Saur, München [etc.] 1994. xii, 574 pp. DM 128.00.

The First World War is one of the most fascinating events in modern history; by the end of the four years that it lasted, the global balance of power, the political map of Europe and conditions within the countries involved in the war had all changed radically. It seemed as though Friedrich Engels's prognosis of 1887 had come true word for word. Engels had stated then that the only possibility left for Prussian Germany was a world war and had prophesied that this would be a war of extreme violence in which armies of millions would murder each other. It would lead to unprecedented destruction, hunger, pestilence, suffering and the breakdown of values, to an irreversible disruption of the whole mechanism of trade, industry and credit, and even to the collapse of the old states in such a way that the crowns would roll on the streets in their dozens.

However, as far as Germany was concerned the question soon arose as to how far-reaching this transformation actually was. Despite the pressure for modernization created by runaway industrialization, the "semi-absolutist" imperial system in Germany had proved remarkably stable up to 1914. Unified both in their resistance towards the emancipatory endeavours of the labour movement and in their desire for expansion of power abroad, the social groups supporting the Empire found ways to realize their interests even without any decisive political reforms. The situation was rather different for the Social Democrats, denounced as "hostile to the Empire"; although their electoral support increased and they formed the largest party in the Reichstag from 1912 onwards, they were still in the minority there. In addition Prussia, where the three-class franchise system ensured the dominance of the conservatives, was able to block any reform in a democratic direction. The rigorous exclusion of the Social Democrats by bourgeois Germany was mirrored by their own self-isolation. The concept of class struggle not only corresponded to everyday experience but had a mobilizing effect. A separation "on principle" from the bourgeois camp was a precondition of final victory for the majority of the party. Only a minority argued openly for an alliance with reform-minded bourgeois groups.

The outbreak of war created a new situation: the Kaiser recognized "only Germans", the Social Democrats committed themselves to the defence of the country, and the government promised a "reorientation" in domestic policy. But in practice little was

done in this regard. As for bourgeois Germany, the military successes nourished hopes of world power rather than democracy. The centrist parties also continued to keep their distance from the Social Democrats, among whom the committed reformists now set the tone.

Among the groupings trying to develop the "spirit of 1914" in the direction of "internal reconstruction", the Society for Social Reform (Gesellschaft für Soziale Reform, GfSR) played an outstanding role. The book under review focuses on this society's activity during the war. The GfSR, founded in 1901 by bourgeois supporters of social reform (scholars and academics in the "armchair" socialist tradition, some centrist and liberal members of parliament, social-policy activists at state and local level, reform-minded businesspeople and representatives of christian and liberal trade unions, workers' societies and salaried employees' associations), became in effect the mouthpiece of the christian-nationalist workers' and salaried employees' organizations. Despite continued attempts by its leaders – its president Hans Hermann von Berlepsch and the very active vice-president Ernst Francke – it did not succeed either in winning over the Free Trade Unions or in extending its influence to the affluent or educated middle classes. In 1910 there were only 1,475 individual members, as against around 1.5 million members of affiliated bodies (p. 14). But while the former number hardly changed in the subsequent period (p. 207: by 1918 individual membership had "risen from the 1913 level [. . .] of around 1,300 to 1,452"), there was a rapprochement with the Free Trades Unions in the face of the intensification of social conflicts in the pre-war years.

When the whole of the labour movement joined the front of national unity in August 1914, a long-held wish was fulfilled for the GfSR's social reformers, themselves firmly in the grip of the national euphoria. The new configuration promised movement after the stagnation of the pre-war period. In this war, said the GfSR leadership at the time, the intention was to win "freedom from the external enemy" but also "freedom within" (p. 24), the "admission of the working class as a class with equal rights throughout the state structures", this being a matter of "justice" in view of the sacrifices made by the workers (p. 25). As the GfSR noted attentively, similar ideas were also being expressed by Social Democrat leaders. From this point on the GfSR had three aims: to encourage a rapprochement between the bourgeoisie and the Social Democrats, to bring together the various workers' groups, salaried employees' organizations and civil service associations to pool their efforts for socio-political reform, and to influence the government and the military authorities in this direction. The first aim was also pursued, with limited success, by other groups, such as the German 1914 Society (Deutsche Gesellschaft 1914) and the Free Patriotic Society (Freie Vaterländische Gesellschaft), and by collections such as *Die Arbeiterschaft im neuen Deutschland* ("The Working Class in the New Germany") edited by Friedrich Thimme and Carl Legien (Leipzig, 1915). The GfSR had more success in its mediating role in pursuing its second aim, where in the last analysis the interests involved were common to all the organizations concerned – measures to solve the problems arising from the war (unemployment benefit, labour exchanges, food supplies, price rises, protection of homeworkers, provision for disabled soldiers and war widows and orphans) and reforms in the laws on association and coalition and in employment law. There were repeated instances of cooperation on specific problems, and this was reflected in the Reichstag in a similar cooperation of centrist, liberal and Social Democrat members. The affiliation of the General Committee in 1917 marked the crowning achievement in the extension of the GfSR to a joint body of all the independent employees' organizations. As for the third aim, the

GfSR had to rely on exercising influence informally. On the one hand it performed a mediating and advisory role; on the other, it informed the civil and military authorities regularly on the mood among the working class; from the end of 1915 this was done above all by the monthly *Berichte des Bureaus für Sozialpolitik* ("Reports of the Bureau for Social Policy"). There was only one occasion on which the GfSR was officially involved by the government: on 8 November 1918, when Gustav Bauer, the Social Democrat state secretary for labour in Prince Max of Baden's cabinet, invited it to a discussion on his socio-political programme.

Those who know the committed and competent author will expect no less than a solid and reliable piece of research. Suffice it here to mention that the list of sources and bibliography alone amount to 48 pages. The detailed presentation is followed by a short appendix in which some documents illustrating the work of the GfSR are reproduced. The book is completed by an index of names and a general index. It is unclear why the author addresses herself only to a highly specialized readership, those who know, for instance, who Posadowsky, Dernburg, Wilbrandt, Trimborn, Baumgarten and others were, what paragraph 53 of the GO was about, etc. Some further explanation in such cases would have enhanced the readability of the book, and the presentation might have been tightened up somewhat by the avoidance of repetitions. Perhaps too the structure of the work could have been more clearly organized. But formal shortcomings of this kind do not detract from the value of this solid study, which for once places day-to-day political work rather than the "big questions" in the foreground.

This is not to suggest that Ratz has ignored the "big questions" altogether, however. She is not interested in every small political event for its own sake but considers it from the viewpoint of the transformation of society intended and, in this regard, also from the viewpoint of the "possibilities and limits of bourgeois-Social Democrat coalition politics in the late Empire" (p. v). As she admits, the actual results achieved during the war were essentially rather modest. The cooperation between bourgeois groups and Social Democrats which the GfSR strove for did not get beyond temporary joint working parties; differences of ideology and principle were carefully excluded. This was also true of the Popular Alliance for Peace and Fatherland (Volksbund für Frieden und Vaterland, VfFV), formed in late 1917 as a counter to the Fatherland Party (Vaterlandspartei). As for the desired reforms in social policy, aside from the amendment to the Association Act of June 1916 (which guaranteed freedom of operation for trade unions) and the socio-political provisions of the Emergency Services Act of December 1916 (which introduced company committees and dispute commissions), not much was achieved. It is true that Bethmann Hollweg in particular showed "great interest" in the GfSR's efforts (p. 294, *passim*), but he also had "great understanding" for industrialists' view that they should run their own affairs (p. 302) and was generally concerned to postpone debates on controversial issues until after the war. A more active interest was shown by the Prussian war ministry, at least while it was headed by General Groener. After all it was principally due to the requirements of the war that the social reformers, even if not in a position to bring about "a basic change of direction in official policy", could at least "still achieve partial successes" (p. 434). For this reason Ratz considers it fully justified "to give war the role of the 'great pacesetter of social policy' " (p. 435).

In conclusion Ratz reaches a surprisingly positive assessment of what was achieved during the war. "Particularly with regard to the [. . .] changes initiated, the question of the Empire's reformability can no longer be answered simply in the negative" (p. 454).

For a soundly-based assessment of the extent of these changes it might be useful to make international comparisons. Ratz chooses a different way to support her thesis; she puts these changes into the perspective of the "developmental processes pointing towards the Weimar Republic" (p. 455). The efforts discussed in her book therefore appear as the "foundation of the Weimar social system" (p. 2) and at the same time are seen as "pointing the way to the Weimar coalition" (p. 5). Against this it must be said that these efforts must primarily be evaluated within their own context, i.e. the war years, which was quite different from that of the Weimar period. Until summer 1918 the behaviour of the parties involved was based on the expectation of a German victory, which would have had the effect of stabilizing the system. Accordingly it was initially the bourgeois side which dictated the conditions for any bourgeois/Social Democrat coalition, namely making it dependent on the Social Democrats' unconditional maintenance of the national loyalty they had demonstrated in August 1914. Accordingly, particularly in the first two years of the war the "bourgeois/Social Democrat rapprochement" in principle consisted of the Social Democrat majority – whose leaders feared nothing more than their party again being pushed into isolation – moving towards the bourgeois side; that is, in the hope of gaining a "moral" entitlement to reforms it refrained from openly criticizing official war policy. And at that time the centrist parties were less interested in the democratization of the state than in the extension of its power. Even in the last year of the war, no agreement could be reached within the VfFV, for instance, either on the peace agreement or on parliamentary reform. The domestic reforms which could have actually been obtained had there been a German victory would very probably have been far removed from the "Weimar social system" and even further from a democratic constitution.

It is slightly surprising that Ratz states so definitely that the return to opposition politics advocated by the minority in view of the changing character of the war would scarcely have been a "realistic" alternative (p. 27). How "realistic" was the majority's policy? In view of the fact that the expectation of a German victory proved mistaken, it is quite reasonable to ask whether a different, more confident policy which would not have led to a split in the party would not have been more conducive to the democratization of Germany. It certainly cannot be ignored that it was primarily those processes *not* pursued by the bourgeois social reformers and their Social Democrat partners – the Russian Revolution, the major strikes of 1917–1918, and (last but not least) the revolution in Germany – which caused the delicate seeds of the "Empire's reformability" to take root.

*Jürgen Rojahn*

MALLMANN, KLAUS-MICHAEL. Kommunisten in der Weimarer Republik. Sozialgeschichte einer revolutionären Bewegung. Mit einem Vorwort von Wilfried Loth. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1996. xvi, 552 pp. DM 98.00; S.fr. 99.00; S 765.00.

In his post-doctoral thesis for the University of Essen, Klaus-Michael Mallmann delivers a massive all-round attack on previous Western research on the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) in the Weimar period. He accuses it of "ideological top-heaviness" (p. 4), arguing that under the spell of the stalinization thesis (Flechtheim, Bahne, H. Weber) and with a fixation on conference resolutions, programmatic statements and

the elaboration of the various party lines it has drawn the picture of a monolithic, strictly disciplined party centrally controlled from Moscow, in which the members were controlled by the leadership by means of the hierarchically structured party apparatus. Thus far, he claims, the history of German communism has primarily been written as the history of "a dogma without human beings, a ruling apparatus without subjects" (p. 1).

Mallmann adopts a fundamentally different perspective. His approach is that of a social history "from below". His study focuses on the ordinary members who were active in the KPD, the reality of communist politics at local level, the party rank and file with their roots in their own social environment. Mallmann operates with the category of "social and moral environment". In his view a left-wing proletarian environment in the tradition of the pre-1914 Social Democratic environment continued to exist after the First World War and only gradually split into distinct Social Democrat and communist components; it was only towards the end of the Weimar Republic that these two environments became ever more distant from each other. Mallmann's central finding is that the rank and file of the Communist Party, located within the environmental contexts which they had taken over but also themselves shaped, oriented themselves far less on the current "party line" put forward by the leadership than on the measure of their own organizational development. He sees environment and vanguard (i.e. the full-time officers and party headquarters) as two separate structural principles. "The inborn contrast between environment and vanguard formed the internal structure for the contradictions which arose from it; the contradiction between particularistic plurality and the leadership's view of itself as a general staff, between the real world and quasi-military party commands, between local autonomy and centralized party rule [. . .]" (p. 81).

On the basis of painstaking evaluation of sources and secondary studies, Mallmann attempts to substantiate his thesis of the relative autonomy of the party base and to prove that the local party groups paid little heed to the guidelines from Berlin, that the debates at leadership level were of little or no interest to the ordinary membership, that local viewpoints were determined more by experience than by ideology and were surprisingly loosely oriented on the party programme. Thus the changeover of organizational structure from residence- to workplace-based party groups ordered by the party leadership turned out to be a fiasco, as did the creation of a separate communist trade union organization in the shape of the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition (RGO). According to Mallmann, there was a wide gulf between the party's decision-making and reality on the ground, between policies in practice and the intentions of the vanguard, who thundered against "opportunistic obscenities" (Ulbricht; p. 239). Even after the swing to the far left in 1928–1929 Mallmann does not view the KPD membership as a herd of willing followers, claiming that the party was not nearly as "bolshevized" as it presented itself (p. 365).

Mallmann's source-based and well-presented discussion tells us a great deal about communist local government policy ("red church policies"), communist club structures and youth organizations, the organization of festivals, iconography and symbolic politics, and also about the relationship between communists and Social Democrats at the local level. Mallmann gives examples of the sporadic cooperation between communists and Social Democrats based on the largely identical view of their enemy held by ordinary members of both working-class parties. Overall he sees the communists as "heirs

of the pre-1914 labour movement" (p. 302) and – with a pointed emphasis – as "social democrats despite themselves".

Such a watered-down characterization of the Communist Party base deserves to be met with considerable reservations.

On the other hand, Mallmann does put forward notable arguments against the dominant view of an external remote control of the KPD by the Comintern when he correctly questions the usual assumption that the early KPD was originally characterized by "democratic communism". "It did not take Stalin to 'stalinize' the KPD", he argues (p. 67). He states that dictatorial practice and ideological narrow-mindedness were already characteristic of the early KPD, so that stalinization was not the outcome of an external impetus; instead it arose through the further unfolding of a structural principle, namely the vanguard's understanding of itself, "which was just as native to German communism as its ties to its environment" (p. 78f.).

How convincing is this picture of the communists in the Weimar Republic which Mallmann conjures up with such verve? The answer depends on whether one accepts his weighting of the various factors and considers that his source material provides a sufficiently solid foundation. In both regards scepticism is permissible. The archive material Mallmann refers to is almost exclusively for the Saarland. Since only around 1 per cent of the KPD membership lived there, it is dubious whether findings relating to the Saarland can be seen as representative for the whole of Germany, not only because of its border situation but particularly because everyday party matters in the Saarland were of a highly parochial nature. For Germany as a whole Mallmann relies very heavily on memoirs and local studies. Such studies, often composed with a clear political intention, are very varied in quality and do not obviate the need for a careful methodological check using the materials they are based on. It must therefore remain open whether the source material provides a sufficient basis to support Mallmann's firm statements with absolute certainty.

It further remains open to question whether the alienation between leadership and base actually had such a significant effect on the KPD's policies as Mallmann assumes. This alienation certainly existed, and it is proved conclusively; but it is also true (and Mallmann does not conceal this) that deviationists were expelled from the party or left it. In the final analysis the membership did follow the party line laid down by the KPD leadership, and after the swing to the far left this was quite clearly determined by guidelines from Moscow. To that extent party resolutions, programmatic announcements by party headquarters and the behaviour of the KPD Reichstag members were much more important than Mallmann is prepared to admit. In any case, these shaped the outside view of the party. Showing that the party base frequently acted in opposition to the party line is not enough to change the fact that the KPD worked systematically to destroy the Weimar Republic as a constitutional parliamentary state.

Mallmann has undoubtedly produced important results, but he would have been well advised to treat them more as a substantive addition to the previous research he so strongly criticizes, an addition by the perspective of a social history from below, rather than as a fundamental revision of the history of German communism.

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ARNOLD, BERND. Steuer und Lohnarbeit im Südwesten von Deutsch-Ostafrika, 1891 bis 1916. Eine historisch-ethnologische Studie. [Europa-Übersee, Band 4.] Lit, Münster [etc.] 1994 [*recte* 1995]. 415 pp. Ill. DM 78.80.

The quest of colonial administrators for the mobilization of labour power and their favourite instrument to pursue it, tax, are well known and documented. The present study offers a series of insights into the workings of this mechanism in a circumscribed region of erstwhile German East Africa, the greater part of which forms the present mainland of Tanzania. It also adds colour to the picture of strategies employed by the indigenous people to deal with, and sometimes to evade, colonialist efforts to make them "work".

In important respects the book must be considered a legacy of the conditions under which many scholars found themselves working in the former GDR. Having begun his studies for the present work in 1960, Arnold was able to visit Tanzania and the region of his particular interest in the south-western part of that country only in 1990. The present publication is based on his "Dissertation 'A' ", defended at the social science faculty of Humboldt University in East Berlin in 1988, supplemented by a brief section on the situation in the present-day Mbeya Region as witnessed by Arnold during his visit. The book's chief interest stems from the principal limitation with which its author had to cope. While being cut off from opportunities for fieldwork or access to foreign archives, Arnold studied thoroughly what was available to him: the German Central Archives (now the federal archives) at Potsdam, which yielded particularly rich materials for the district (*Bezirk*) of Tukuyu (colonial name Langenburg) on the northern tip of Lake Nyasa, and especially the mission archives of the Moravian Society (*Brüdergemeine*) at Herrnhut, Saxony, and the Berlin Mission Society, both of which were active in the area from the early 1890s.

Arnold starts from the proposition that to various degrees pre-colonial structures provided inroads on or obstacles to the main forms of colonial penetration, i.e. tax and wage labour, as well as to migrant labour over short and long distances. This was true of cultural patterns such as the strong preference of the Nyakyusa (in the centre of the area studied) for bananas as a staple diet, which supposedly acted as impediment on them for leaving their core area, and of the introduction of a form of taxation by the Sango state just prior to colonization in the northern region.

The two main chapters deal with taxation and wage labour during German colonial rule, i.e. up to mid-1916, when the district was occupied by British and South African forces. Arnold divides this into three periods: 1891–1897, which saw the first steps towards colonial rule; 1898–1904, which saw the first attempts at taxation, the introduction of money and the establishment of the district seat; and 1905–1916, after the Maji Maji rising in the areas adjoining the East, a period which saw the systematization of colonial rule, tax reform and the enlistment of chiefs as petty officials (see pp. 77f.).

As Arnold demonstrates, the missionaries acted as pioneers of colonial rule, founding their first stations three years before the establishment of the district centre at its first site in 1894. In many ways they acted as intermediaries for the colonial administration, but they were also its critics on a number of occasions. An effective colonial administration can be dated to the "assertion of the 'sovereign right to taxation' [which] the colonial administration considered as decisive for the question of power" (p. 94). Colonial taxation was meant to meet criticism at home directed at the costs of the newly

acquired colonies. But, as in other colonies, it was aimed also at "educating" Africans to "labour", i.e. making them perform waged labour. Especially during the initial stages, taxation was levied with a considerable degree of force by officials, and particularly their retinue, which consisted of African soldiers (*askari*) recruited at first outside the colony and, later on, also of scribes and petty officials recruited locally. Only from 1911 were the local chiefs appointed as petty officials or mayors (*jumbe*), responsible for levying taxes on their people, but the local authorities failed to develop this into a kind of "largely 'indirect' rule" throughout the district (p. 227).

Taxation brought serious infringements for Africans. Initially, a hut tax was levied which fell particularly heavily on polygamous households, in which each wife had a hut. Changes in building patterns towards large rectangular houses were then countered by introducing a poll and hearth tax. At least as important as the material extortions, often increased by corrupt petty officials (according to sources cited, predominantly Africans), were the modalities of taxation: pillaging, burning down huts, impounding livestock, or even taking the women of a village hostage until tax was paid. Protests were partly put down by force, partly mollified by a temporary tax reduction, and in several instances missionaries were asked to act as tax collectors in such cases. Tax was at first paid in kind, later in money, but initially also in the form of labour, not least to build up the missions and government stations. The missionaries themselves levied fees on their flocks as well as on people living on their stations and availing themselves of access to wage labour and protection. The response to taxation was by no means a universal move to take up wage labour or succumb to work in lieu of taxes. Arnold's account shows various strategies to market produce to earn money and includes instances of driving cattle to Salisbury (present-day Harare), which initiated work in the nearby goldfields. There were also instances of people moving away from areas particularly harassed by tax-collection drives.

Tax and work were thus intimately connected. In conveying European working techniques such as brick-making and masonry the missionaries again acted as important intermediaries. The same is true of the popularization of calico over locally produced cotton or felt dresses. In this area, as in many others, this engendered the development of a need for continued waged employment. While still building up their stations, the missionaries acted as important employers and tried to link this to their spiritual endeavours. In several instances wage disputes acquired a distinct flavour as a result. During the first two periods inhabitants of mission stations were typically short-distance migrants, in any case "strangers" to the surrounding people. When building work subsided, as it did too on the government's side, employment became scarce in the region, save for on a few private and mission plantations. Long-distance labour migration towards plantations in the coastal and Usambara regions and also towards various mining centres became necessary to cover cash needs developed during the period covered by this analysis. There was, however, a countervailing tendency, at least when planters were loath to employ migrants, thus producing fairly quick labour turnover.

Arnold's material gives valuable insights into the local fabric of colonial rule and missionary activity, and also into the ways in which waged labour and European work methods were propagated. This has to be set against the serious imbalances of the book as a whole. The chapter on pre-colonial societies is scarcely referred to in the rest of the book. Source quotations, especially in extensive notes of up to two pages, are thrown at the reader without much comment, and intriguing questions are left unanswered. How, for example, did missionaries tolerate men and women being (and being

photographed) more or less naked at one of the main mission stations as late as 1913, as documented in the pictorial appendix (p. 409)? It is also hard to understand why the Reichstag debates are quoted from a German dissertation of 1939, which might explain the supplanting of Karl for his father Wilhelm Liebknecht (p. 92). The circumstances under which the book has been written explain the virtual absence of any reference to recent debate on pre-industrial work and also on ethnicity. Nevertheless, scholars of the field will undoubtedly benefit from the material so painstakingly assembled by Arnold and presented here.

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