Few issues have occupied the attention of academics, analysts and activists more closely than those on the role of South Africa’s labor movement in the transition to democracy. Most commentators place the beginning of this transition to former President F. W. De Klerk’s February 1990 decision to repeal the ban on liberation movements and release Nelson Mandela and other prisoners from incarceration. However, it would be more accurate to think of the transition as beginning in 1973 in the industrial and port city of Durban, where thousands of workers shook the quiet confidence of South Africa’s racial capitalist regime through a series of spontaneous and prolonged strikes that changed the context of South African labor and politics in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Developments in the following decades kept the question of the strategic role of unions in the struggle to overthrow the apartheid regime and transform the South African economy high on the political agenda. The 1985 formation of Cosatu saw the initially uneasy amalgamation of socialist and populist/nationalist strands of the union movement join together in one major federation. Despite the emergence in 1983 of a strong mass movement called the United Democratic Front (UDF), many would agree that unions, particularly Cosatu, were the leading component of the anti-apartheid struggle until at least 1990. The repeal of a ban on the African National Congress (ANC) in that year and the shift to negotiations involving elites from both sides of the struggle represented a notable change in the relative power and role of the union movement. The 1994 democratic elections which saw the ANC assume power in a Government of National Unity posed new questions with which the unions continue to grapple to this day.

The collection of essays in the volume edited by Glen Adler and Eddie Webster address aspects of this complex set of developments within the context of South Africa’s transition to democracy and the liberalization and globalization of economic relations. How is the role of South Africa’s labor movement in the anti-apartheid struggle to be understood? Even those operating from a social democratic framework, the editors argue, tend to view transitions to democracy as “outcomes of pacts between elites: labour is assessed in terms of its capacity to deliver its constituency to the pact . . . The writings in this volume are motivated by a different approach, proceeding from an understanding of labor as a collective actor capable of shaping the character of democratization through the disciplined and strategic use of power” (3).

Evidence in many of these essays suggests that South Africa’s progressive union movement did indeed develop innovative strategies and advance sub-
stantive ideas that shaped key institutions and policies which (through exacer-
bating the crisis of the state and in other ways) contributed significantly to the
struggle to end apartheid. Less certain is whether labor can continue to exert
pressure on its alliance partner, the ANC, in the new phase of consolidating dem-
ocratic gains and hastening social and economic transformation.

As Derek De Villiers and Mark Anstey show, unlike the situation in Brazil
and Spain where conservative governments assumed state power at the end of
authoritarian rule and imposed neoliberal policies, the dominant faction of the
South African labor movement is “allied with perhaps the most labour-friendly
government ever to come to power in contemporary transitions to democracy”
(8). Also, the labor movement is financially independent of the ruling party and
markedly stronger than its counterparts elsewhere in the developing world. Fi-
nally, the unions, through their participation in structures such as Nedlac (where
organized labor and business try to reach agreement on social and economic is-
issues before these are taken to parliament) are involved at the very heart of the
consultative process over policymaking. These factors suggest that the demo-
cratic government may not easily adopt a labor-repressive policy.

However, for Adler and Webster, the threat to labor’s radical reform pro-
gram lies elsewhere: “in the unfamiliar political terrain of a democratic transi-
tion; in the daunting macroeconomic environment posed by globalization,
neoliberalism and structural adjustment; and closer to home in the internal
workings of the labour movement itself” (10). For despite its labor-friendly his-
tory, the ANC has also rapidly embraced a neoliberal economic program. On
this basis it quickly discarded the core developmental promises of the Cosatu-
initiated Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), and encoded ne-
oliberalism in its “Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy” (GEAR),
which was announced in 1996 with the warning that the framework was “non-
negotiable.”

Aside from these “external” developments, a number of contributions in
this volume address issues related to the internal strength, capacity, and strate-
gies of the union movement. South African unionism is “still characterized by a
marked lack of unity and cohesion as a movement” (73). Many key leadership
figures have left Cosatu to join government and the corporate sector. We learn
that there has also developed a growing gap between the union leadership and
its mass base. In his case study, Karl Von Holdt finds evidence of support for the
strategy of “ungovernability” in the workplace, including wild-cat worker action
not sanctioned by the Cosatu union.

Other contributions address aspects of the relationship between the three
principal components of the tripartite alliance, Cosatu, the ANC, and the South
African Communist Party (SACP). P.G. Eidelberg observes that the shift to a
neoliberal economic policy by the new government represents a marked dis-
continuity with the “interventionist” policies of the apartheid state. It suggests,
he argues, that prospects for radical reform under the current form of “tran-
formation” are less bright now than during the domestic and global conditions of
the 1980s (155). Graeme Gotz’s chapter on the changing definition of the RDP
is remarkable for its insights. He sheds light on highly sensitive debates with the alliance on the origins, meaning, and substance of the RDP in the process of its formulation, and in the subsequent period of what he refers to as its “governmentalization.” He notes how some cabinet ministers, “taking sustenance from [then] Deputy President Mbeki’s unstated aversion to the RDP exercise and advantage of Mandela’s hands-off management style, did far less than they should have to translate RDP precepts into their departmental modes of operation” (182). He nevertheless sees positive signs within unions like the National Union of Mineworkers, which has “embarked on an imaginative initiative to affect local reconstruction and development programs at every mine” (188).

Despite the wide coverage of issues in this volume there are a few surprising gaps. Greater attention could have been devoted to women in the union movement, whose role in championing women’s rights and gender equality in a hostile environment, occasionally from within “progressive” unions, were a critically important contribution to democratization both within these unions and the larger community. Also, more regional or sectoral studies may have brought out other interesting variations. Articles covering unionization and politics in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, for example, may have offered important and perhaps different perspectives and qualifications. In KwaZulu-Natal progressive unionization occurred against the backdrop of a fierce Zulu Nationalist (anti-ANC) struggle led by the Inkatha Freedom Party, which posed novel challenges to Cosatu strategies on the shop floor and in the community. In the same region, especially in industrial sectors such as clothing and textiles, a large population of working-class Indians were gradually brought into the progressive union movement and to some extent into the broader anti-apartheid movement. The non-racial unions’ political role and mobilization here in support of the ANC were arguably more crucial than that of organizations such as the Natal Indian Congress, the historic avenue through which Indians were enrolled into the anti-apartheid cause in Natal. Finally, I am surprised that little or no attention was paid to the (changing) role of progressive intellectuals, whose substantive support of organizations like Cosatu (through research think tanks such as the Economic Trends Research Group) was a very distinctive feature of what I have elsewhere called the “decade of liberation.”

That said, this is still an important book, which systematically organizes some of the key ideas, challenges, and questions that have characterized debate on the role of unions in South Africa’s democratization. The questions it poses on this issue will remain relevant in the future. It offers a valuable new country case study and important theoretical qualifications to the growing literature on the study of transitional societies.

Vishnu Padayachee  
University of Natal, Durban


These two works make for marvellously complementary reading on the current transformation of the local Chinese state. Both are written by distinguished China scholars who include a range of locations to which repeated research visits were made in the 1980s and 1990s. Both stress the institutional legacy of the Maoist state amid the changing external environment of marketization as a key explanatory factor in state behavior and outcomes. Neither hesitates to ask “big questions” relevant to both the China field and the issue of local state capacity. In terms of subject matter, however, the two could hardly be more different. *Rural China Takes Off* is, at heart, about success: how the local state from the county level down to the village so keenly and successfully sponsored rural industrialization and development in the late 1980s and early 1990s. *Contesting Citizenship in Urban China* is largely, although not exclusively, about relative failure: the local state’s ongoing reluctance to fully incorporate internal migrants from the countryside as urban residents and the migrants’ resulting survival strategies.

*Rural China Takes Off* seeks to explain the unexpected: the ready adaptation of local cadres in China to markets, profit incentives, and the active running of enterprises. Jean Oi concentrates her interviews in provinces “that promoted rural enterprises and are among the most developed” (206). The first four chapters suggest that, in effect, old Maoist institutions that fused local economic and political control were put to new entrepreneurial uses once the external incentives changed in the 1980s, resulting in the emergence of a distinctively Chinese form of local state corporatism. Once the center stabilized local government property rights, slashed central aid to localities, officially began to encourage local governments in tapping local sources of revenue, and provided career rewards and bonuses for local cadres who promoted local development, local cadres began to invest in local collective enterprises, using lateral and vertical contacts in the local bureaucracy to supply information, inputs, credit, and subcontracts. The last three chapters concentrate on the ways in which the local Chinese state has consistently managed to evade the spirit, if not the letter, of the central regulatory regime by keeping things “within the family” (157) since the mid-1980s. Locally based auditors deliberately go lightly on tax evaders and shield struggling enterprises, local officials engage in creative accounting and the manipulation of revolving funds, and local bank branches systematically respond with bailouts to enterprises in trouble, even going so far as to help villages caught in flagrant corruption. Oi concludes that “the fusion of economic and po-
political power does not have to be destroyed . . . the issue is what incentives exist for implementing reform” (191).

There is much of value in *Rural China Takes Off*. It is a work that ranges far, addresses an important topic, and will prompt a great deal of useful rethinking of standard assumptions about local inputs into patterns of development. But there are important questions of variation that *Rural China Takes Off* does not systematically address: Great chunks of rural China have not successfully industrialized. The author suggests, but doesn’t prove, that areas with primarily agricultural, particularly grain-based, economies will have little with which to work (191). It is at least possible that other, less economically successful areas of China are as characterized by the fusion of political and economic power, the protection of local interests, and de-fanged regulatory control as are those that “took off.” Certainly, there is a wide literature both in the China field and elsewhere that indicates that local fusion of political and economic power leads to rent seeking, corruption, lack of accountability, bossism, and anything but local development. Oi’s work shows that local state institutions in combination with new incentives are necessary ingredients in China’s first stage of rural industrialization; but more explicit comparison with areas that did not substantially industrialize might yield clues about which other variables are sufficient as well as necessary in this process.

Dorothy Solinger’s *Contesting Citizenship in Urban China* addresses an enormously complicated phenomenon: The “floating population” of rural underemployed who emerged after decollectivization in the early 1980s, and the ways in which the urban state and urban residents have responded to the enormous social change unleashed by the combination of marketization and millions of ruralites on the move. *Contesting Citizenship* ranges widely latitudinally and longitudinally: The author conducted research in six major cities that received large numbers of floaters and covers the better part of the 1980s and 1990s. The work first describes the stark internal apartheid of the Mao era, which permanently divided citizens of the People’s Republic between those with urban household registrations (*hukous*), entitled to a large range of state-delivered benefits (subsidized grain, living quarters, health care, access to good schools), and those with rural household registrations, which carried no such entitlements. Despite (or perhaps because of) rural decollectivization, the reservoir of cheap labor that internal migrants supply to keep China’s industries competitive, and the ongoing dismantling of the entitlements regime within urban China, ruralites are welcomed with a great deal of ambivalence still, and remain the equivalent of second-class citizens with permanent urban status forever beyond reach.

*Contesting Citizenship in Urban China*’s greatest strength is its attention to both variation and agency. Within the local urban state, the marketizing imperatives of the reforms have led different sectors to vary in their responses to the floating population: Some help, some rely on the cheap and docile labor migrants provide, some remain suspicious, and most have learned to systematically extract rents from those who are by definition of marginal status (Chapters 3–
4). Also covered are the reasons why migrants leave the land (Chapter 5), how migrants are integrated into different types of urban jobs (Chapter 6), and the varied strategies ruralites have adopted to get access to some of the benefits of urban life, such as housing, health care, and schooling (Chapter 7). Solinger suggests that despite ongoing exclusion from participation in the regular urban benefit regime, migrants have sometimes been able to carve out a poorer version of urban citizenship in the social and geographical spaces that the urban state cannot or will not reach.

Taken together, these two works illustrate the paradoxical and ambivalent performance of the local Chinese state during a period of rapid marketization and social change: simultaneously capable of generating new wealth while extracting rents from those least able to resist, creatively entrepreneurial and reflexively bureaucratically control oriented, posting double-digit growth, and unable to ameliorate the appalling social costs unleashed by marketization. Neither version of the local Chinese state is any less real or accurate than the other; these two excellent volumes reinforce the truism that what one finds depends on where one looks.

Julia C. Strauss
University of London


Whatever credit Britain might take for having given birth to the subject of cultural studies must, ironically enough, be attributed largely to its receptivity to outside influences in the 1970s and beyond. Its originators in the New Left were unusual in British terms by being both unashamedly intellectual and open to Continental theorizing. Its relationship to the common-sensical homegrown tradition of cultural criticism of George Orwell and Richard Hoggart was accordingly double-edged: at once acknowledging its influence and criticizing its rigid empiricism. Its subjects were those subcultures which refracted American pop culture through the peculiarities of the British class structure. Immigration not only provided cultural studies with its big stars in Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy but also demanded that reassessment of national identity which the discipline was alone prepared to undertake.

Phil Cohen is an unmistakable product of this time and place. The influence of Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein, Louis Althusser and Pierre Bourdieu is very much what might be expected. His subjects are also those of cultural studies more generally: identity, ethnicity, masculinity, territoriality, all centered around his abiding concern with the experience of white working-class boys. His political development serves as a shadow history of the New Left, from 1960s countercultural idealism through 1970s grassroots activism and 1980s municipal so-
cialism to 1990s disillusionment with Tony Blair. And, as a “disguised autobiog-
raphy,” the collection of essays contained in Rethinking the Youth Question de-
scribes a career path whose very eccentricity is representative of those of his con-
temporaries as he moved into social work from the fag-end of the underground before being drawn into the secure berth of an academic post.

But Cohen is no standard-issue cultural critic. He glories in the name of “maverick” (14) and has long refused to toe any form of party line. He began as something of an autodidact, his focus on community work leaving him confess-
edly “out of touch” (50) with intellectual currents and at one remove from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. This, when combined with his un-
compromisingly independent temperament, has led him into various confronta-
tions with received wisdom over the years, whether questioning feminists’ ef-
forts at establishing a common sisterhood with teenage girls or anti-racists’ at-
tempts to understand working-class prejudice as a form of false consciousness.
The recent trajectory of cultural studies has left Cohen feeling ever more iso-
lated. His white, male working-class subjects, though the heroes of one phase of the discipline, have become the villains of the next for their chauvinism and racial prejudice. And, as cultural studies has become ever more concerned to re-
spect the subjectivity of disadvantaged groups, Cohen has found himself penal-
ized by doctrinaire “protocols” which deny that a “white, male, middle-class and middle aged researcher” such as himself can “entertain anything but an explo-
itative relationship with clients who are black, working-class, women or young people” (17). He duly registers his objections, arguing that white boys should be neither idealized nor demonized and insisting that the very differences between researcher and researched create a dynamic worthy of study.

What is most distinctive about Cohen’s work is his longstanding efforts to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Since the heady days of the under-
ground, when he took time out from occupying a building to mug up on Marx-
ists and conduct a socio-economic analysis of the protesters outside, he has al-
ways refused to choose between thinking and doing. In the seventies, his efforts to create an “applied cultural studies” (13) took the form of initiating commu-
nity projects. A youth club for unclubbables and a discussion group for young racists acted as laboratories in which he developed theories about youth work in collaboration with the people that they concerned. In the 1980s, he turned to edu-
cational work in a project aimed at teaching schoolchildren to employ the tech-
niques of cultural studies when producing magazines about themselves. Here, as elsewhere, he was eager to establish his distance from his current tendencies in cultural studies, maintaining that textual criticism when divorced from issues of “author and audience” (367) risks misrepresenting the young. Examining how teenagers create and consume cultural artifacts is in his view as important as ex-
amining the texts themselves.

Rethinking the Youth Question is, in short, the work of a true original, a man by turns theorist and activist, social worker and social historian, ethnographer and educationalist, often at odds with orthodox thought. There is something ad-
mirable about his hands-on involvement with the subjects he studies and it is un-
derstandable that, after twenty years in academia, he still feels no academic “in the accepted sense of the term” (13). There are times, however, that Cohen seems too eclectic and idiosyncratic for his own good. His work has a fragmentary quality. The revisions are haphazard, the typos many. A whole chunk of text appears twice in the same essay. Theoretical models are adopted and dropped at will. Ambitious plans for a “general theory of cultural identity formation” (181) or an analysis of the historical relationship of class conflict to Oedipal conflict never get off the ground. Even his two community projects, which produce the most compelling chapters in this volume, are sadly cut short by mysterious fires. What we are left with is a collection of bold criticisms of others’ work and scattered insights of his own regarding the roots of racism, the development of policing, the youth vote, and the purpose of vocational training. A retrospective collection resembling a work in progress, Rethinking the Youth Question fizzes with enough unfinished ideas to make it a stimulating if occasionally infuriating read.

Marcus Collins
University of Newcastle


In this snapshot of London in 1900, Jonathan Schneer has found an original and intriguing project. Emphasizing the indubitable role of British imperialism in shaping and influencing the city, Schneer examines aspects of London life in a series of vignettes, each of which can successfully stand alone. He moves from the lives of some of London’s most celebrated laborers, the dock workers, to the businessmen who peopled the City of London near the docks where goods were literally exported and imported, hauled on and off the huge cargo vessels by the dockers. London’s political hostesses enjoy a chapter almost of their own before Schneer moves to the circles of London radicalism in its various and imperial guises: the London Irish, and the Indians, Africans, and Caribbeans who peopled the city.

Schneer’s basic argument is that London’s history and culture cannot be understood apart from its centrality as a city at the heart of the most influential and most successful of the nineteenth-century European empires. He argues that London’s residents differed from those of the other powerhouse cities of Britain in this period by virtue of their city’s symbolic as well as material associations with power.

Schneer is persuasive in his argument that any comprehensive understanding of London is impossible without attention to its imperial dimensions, and his is an important contribution to that understanding. Less convincing is the implication that similar criteria do not apply in the case of other major industrial cities in Britain. Arline Wilson’s work, for example, does a fine job in demon-
strating the profound impact of colonial slavery in the development of Liverpool as a city of political and economic as well as cultural consequence. (See her essay in Alan Kidd and David Nicholls, eds. *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle-Class Identity in Britain 1800–1940*, [New York, 1999])

In expounding London’s importance, Schneer may well underestimate the potency of an imperially inflected analysis for other urban British locations. His chosen year, 1900, was a time when London was expanding rapidly and its suburbs were burgeoning. Indeed, he describes the weekday scene of suburban commuting as the typical lot of London’s middle-class male work force, scurrying to clerical and business jobs off the morning trains.

Yet aside from a nicely turned paragraph on the commuter trains, the suburbs barely warrant a mention in Schneer’s analysis. This seems an odd choice, for more and more of London’s population was suburban, a social geography mercilessly lampooned by a number of Britain’s satirical writers at the time, though that growth provided substantial employment in the construction and building trades, transport, and in retail services. Divorcing metropolitan from suburban London requires a rationale not offered here. What difference to Schneer’s position would a consideration of the suburban have made? Can London be denoted as merely a central heart shorn of its growing and populous suburbs? What, then, defines a city, or this city, if the areas in which its residents increasingly reside are excised from view?

The emphasis on London, innovative a strategy though it is, is also sometimes a weak link, making it seem as if this is a book with a theme in search of content. In the chapter the author calls “Limning Female Gender Boundaries,” London seems little more than a description of where these women resided for a part of their lives. There seems to be little that London offers conceptually in this chapter.

I much enjoyed Schneer’s resurrection of some hitherto neglected political hostesses of the period as well as his outlining of the extraordinary careers of Flora Shaw and Mary Kingsley, a rather better-known duo than Lady Dorothy Nevill and Lady Londonderry (Theresa Talbot). Yet at the end of the chapter I was puzzled by precisely what role London played in the making of these women’s lives, and how they interacted specifically with the imperial metropolis. The lives of Shaw (later Lady Lugard) and Kingsley both offer an imperial element, as other authors have noted, but how did their intense involvement in imperial affairs influence the shaping of the imperial metropolis? How did the metropolis affect or influence them? Without that constituent, it is unclear what Schneer thinks was particularly unique about London.

Yet there is much to praise here. Schneer brings together the work of the Indian National Congress, the Irish nationalist movement, and the Pan-African conference, clarifying the political connections between these various anti-colonial campaigns. He skillfully teases out the connections between metropolitan anti-Semitism and empire. His description of the lives of dockers is vivid and lively, and he offers a treasure-house of wonderful detail that fleshes out our picture of London at this juncture.
In the end, however, I wanted more. Schneer seems right to argue that London was profoundly imperial, to insist that Londoners shaped the ebb and flow of their metropolis and were not merely passive residents. He paints a wonderful picture of London's diversity, bringing to light groups of people whose presence has been hitherto neglected in mainstream historical study of the city. He reminds us of the considerable presence of West Indians and Africans, of Indians and other Asians who made their lives, at least for a time, in London. Still, much of this applies as well to Manchester, Leeds, and Liverpool, cities with diverse populations and economies which could not have flourished as they did without the empire which Britain had so busily built.

Ultimately, while the portraits Schneer paints offer engaging and arresting material, the overall thesis remains stillborn. The empire was of huge importance to London's growth and diversity, and London was central to the empire in economic and political ways, but Schneer's actors, for the most part, would have led broadly similar lives had they worked on Liverpool's docks, pursued a career in trade in Manchester, or entertained lavishly from the glittering country houses where many a political alliance was forged in this era.

Philippa Levine
University of Southern California


Carolyn Tuttle has thoroughly researched children’s labor, and, in the process, women’s labor, in the factories and mines of industrializing Britain. While some of her interpretations will leave questions in the minds of historians, her work makes an important contribution to our understanding of nineteenth-century women’s and children’s labor.

Tuttle’s topic is children’s work in textile factories and coal and metal mines during the Industrial Revolution. She uses a wide range of sources, including Parliamentary Reports, censuses, and the works of middle-class writers and commentators on industry and child labor. Her seven chapters consider child labor during industrialization, the supply of and demand for child labor, child labor in the textile and mining industries, the relationship between women and children as workers, and child labor in developing countries today. She concludes that the early phases of industrialization were labor-intensive and required large numbers of small obedient workers: children (230).

Child labor in textile factories and coal and metal mines during industrialization was, Tuttle argues, importantly different from earlier forms of child labor. First, it was concentrated in industry, rather than agriculture or service. This meant that for the first time, large numbers of children were gathered together
in workplaces and were highly visible subjects of contemporary commentary. Further, these children worked for strangers as employees, not for their parents as assistants. Most importantly to Tuttle, “children's role in the production process became more important and in some situations, essential” (27); employers came to prefer them because they were better suited to new forms of work discipline, new unskilled tasks, and new technologies that required physically smaller workers.

Tuttle is an economist; while she provides many helpful charts and graphs to support her assertions, many technical economic terms go underexplained. The reader who wishes for some explanation of how “the equilibrium of the demand and supply of labor will yield an equilibrium wage rate (W*) and employment level (L*)” (44), or what it means that the “Chi-square for the cross tabulation of the percent of child workers with the size of the work force is 1.66, considerably below the critical value of 13.28” (189), will not receive it. She explains that she favors an efficient household model because it allows for husbands and wives, parents and children, to have conflicting desires and interests (50). Even so, her interpretations rely too heavily on the assumption that people act rationally and insufficiently interrogate the notion of choice for children and the poor. For instance, she asserts that “the fact that more children were not leaving their homes, despite the wherewithal to do so, implies that children believed their standard of living would be higher with their parents than their own. As economists, we can think of this state as an equilibrium, because both children and parents must have felt that cohabitation was better than the alternative” (55). Perhaps, but as an historian, I wonder if children thought only of their standard of living and not about love, companionship, nurturing, or duty when they considered leaving home, and whether they (or their parents) considered themselves autonomous individuals simply because they earned relatively high wages. Judith Lown’s work in *Women and Industrialization: Gender at Work in Nineteenth-Century England* (Minneapolis, 1990) demonstrates that even young adult women who were silkworkers in Essex thought of themselves as subordinate members of their families, and sent large portions of their wages home to their parents.

Tuttle’s argument is far stronger for textile factories than for mines. A key part of her argument is that the increase in child labor during this period was due to an increase in the demand for, not the supply of, child labor (71, 75), and that evidence of rising wages would support this claim (132). However, while she finds evidence that children’s wages in textile factories were rising in the middle decades of the century, she finds no indication that children’s wages in mines were rising (either relative to their previous wages or to adult wages) (178). Similarly, Tuttle argues that an important feature of children’s labor in industrializing Britain was that children were hired and paid directly by employers as “independent wage earners,” rather than simply functioning as assistants to their parents (43, 136). This turns out to be true only of textile work; indeed, she points out that one possible reason for the lack of evidence for rising wages in mining
is that most children who worked in mines were not paid individually because they worked with and for their parents and were considered their fathers’ helpers, not their masters’ employees.

Also distressing is Tuttle’s failure to interrogate notions about the body. She mentions frequently that children (and, to a lesser degree, women) have “nimble fingers” and “pliant natures”; her argument to some degree rests on these assertions, as she seeks to prove that children were uniquely needed workers. But rather than asserting these as physiological or psychological facts, or accepting manufacturers’ assessments of men, women, and children as workers, she might have interrogated these highly suspect claims. When, for instance, she claims that “silk manufacturers quickly realized that the thin and graceful hands of girls were far superior to the large and clumsy hands of boys” (97), one wonders whether “realized” is the most apt term. While much evidence demonstrates that women and children were less able to protest their working conditions or to organize into unions, other historians (including Judith Lown and Anna Clark) have sought to explain these circumstances by exploring issues of identity and power rather than assuming that nineteenth-century constructions of identity were real or correct.

Tuttle’s work is most valuable for the detailed information she provides about children’s and women’s work. This is no small achievement in light of current historiographies. Children’s work has not been widely researched, and Tuttle provides extensive details about the specific tasks children performed, the numbers of child, youth, and adult woman workers in her two industries, and the wages they received. She also provides context about the conditions under which children labored and the communities in which child labor was prevalent. We learn about children working as pickers, batters, scribbler fillers, piecers, minders, and doffers in textile factories, and as hewers, putters, drawers, and slack-boys in mines (100–102, 154), about gender-specific children’s work, and about changes in the industries’ use of child labor over time.

Women’s work has been extensively written on, but current historiography is marked by an excess of theorizing and a dearth of empirical information. Scholars endlessly debate the ramifications of capitalism and patriarchy on working-class women. With some important exceptions, however, including Judith Lown’s work on women in the silk industry and Carol Morgan’s work on women workers in cotton factories (“Women, Work and Consciousness in the Mid-Nineteenth Century English Cotton Industry” Social History 15 [1992]:23–41), historians seeking secondary sources on the actual work that women did and the conditions under which they did it find themselves returning to Ivy Pinchbeck’s 1930 work Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution (London, 1930). Now, however, there is a more recent work to consult. Tuttle provides many details in her chapter on women’s work, argues that “future research on the role of women and children during the Industrial Revolution must recognize that as laborers they were not synonymous” (210), and makes clear when and where these two labor forces worked at the same tasks, together at distinct ones, or altogether separately, depending on the industry, region, employer, and decade. Al-
though women’s work is not Tuttle’s primary concern, her book will be a welcome addition to this field as well.

All in all, thorough research and careful presentation make this book a valuable contribution to the histories of labor, industrialization, women, and children.

Susie L. Steinbach

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*Le monde retrouvé de Louis-François Pinagot* opens with a challenge that Alain Corbin, one of France’s preeminent historians of the nineteenth century, made to himself. This challenge was born of the critique directed at the collective volume to which he had contributed, *Histoire de la vie privée*, that it was concerned solely with the private life of social elites (Corbin, *Historien du sensible* [Paris, 2000] 157–158). In May 1995, Corbin—professor at the Sorbonne and author of innovative, highly praised studies of the effect of migration on the area which supplies labor, and of prostitution, odor, the idea and experience of the shore, leisure, belfries, and more—walked into the archives of the Orne, the department where he grew up. He took the list of villages in the department, closed his eyes and let his fingers pick one. Then he went to the records of this tiny commune, closed his eyes again, and picked Louis-François Pinagot (1798–1876), maker of wooden shoes (*sabots*). For the next two and one-half years, Corbin set out in quest of Pinagot.

Who was Pinagot? One can quite honestly say when one has finished this well-written account, that one does not know, but this is not a problem for Corbin. The twenty-first century understanding of the individual may be inappropriate for interpreting a nineteenth-century rural *sabotier*, but Corbin is equally suspicious of homogenizing concepts which fail to recognize that each person negotiated the multiple identity possibilities he or she encountered in a particular fashion. We lack the sources, Corbin readily concedes, to know the private emotional life of Pinagot.

Pinagot was illiterate and never got in trouble with neighbors or legal authorities. He was a Jean Valjean who didn’t steal (9), a personage from the *l’infini d’en bas* of those who had not “attained the status of subjects” to which Victor Hugo refers in *Les Misérables* (Corbin, *Historien*, 159) and which gives Corbin a chapter title in *Le Monde retrouvé*. Through several references to Hugo, one referring to Pinagot’s family as a “Hugolian Saga” (68), Corbin evokes his engagement with literary as well as historiographic traditions. In an interview, he explained: “This is a new genre which consists in furnishing the materials necessary to transform each reader into the author of an historical novel. One could perhaps call it virtual history” (*L’Histoire* 219 [March 1998]:14).
And yet Corbin’s primary goal is historiographic: “deconstruction of our own historical knowledge” (181). The social history of nineteenth-century France, he believes, has been limited by its depiction of the lower classes in collective anonymity or as revealed by the extraordinary accounts of a few individuals. In an oft-cited article in *Annales* in 1963, François Furet contended that the early modern lower classes could be studied only in numbers and in anonymity, the products of historical demography and historical sociology. Some historians, like Eileen Power, and more recently and quite successfully Judith Bennett, have written biographies of individual medieval peasants drawn from records quantified in other studies. While there is some resemblance between their projects and that of Corbin, he clearly eschews the endowment of actions and characteristics to an individual from analysis of collective data educed by Power when she wrote that “social history lends itself particularly to what may be called a personal treatment.” When Corbin flirts with this approach, it is to say that Pinagot’s very absence from court records makes him “representative” of the majority of his commune’s residents (172).

Corbin’s aim is to reveal the extraordinary diversity, divisiveness, and heterogeneity within populations of individuals living in even the smallest rural communes, communes which themselves experienced macroprocesses like protoindustrialization and deindustrialization in different ways and with different chronologies. Such knowledge is necessarily obscured in solely quantitative accounts. Microhistory shares this project, but Corbin maintains an ambivalent relationship to this methodology. Beginning with the title, Corbin evokes his search for *traces*, the French translation of Carlo Ginzburg’s guiding concept of *spie*, in his well-known methodological essay of that name (“clues” in English) on microhistory to which Corbin refers (312–313, n.32). Yet, Corbin is quite critical of the emphasis in many microhistorical accounts on cultural mediators, who absorb, transform and diffuse a culture from above (180, 238, 271, 321, n.63). And while Ginzburg locates his epistemological pioneers in the pursuit of clues among late nineteenth-century intellectuals and state officials, Corbin takes pleasure in pointing out that humble mid-nineteenth-century forest guards, who tracked down thieves by matching the grain and bark of pieces of wood squirreled away in miscreants’ homes and workshops with stumps in the woods, offer an earlier, autonomous, lower-class instance of expertise in *traces* (147–150).

Corbin is equally wary of social historians’ use of memoirs written by members of the lower classes, often presented by their authors and later by historians as the voice of the people, since the very act of writing up their lives and identifying the experience and essence of their presumed collectivity rendered these individuals radically different from that collectivity. Corbin similarly questions the necessarily teleological accounts of individuals created by lawyers or journalists at the time of a tragedy.

*Le monde retrouvé* is an effort to use the resources of the historian—the archive and the monograph—to locate the individual in a geographical and genealogical matrix and in a matrix of negotiated social, economic, and political “arrangements,” the subject of one of the most innovative chapters of the book.
So where does this leave us? Pinagot is virtually never an agent in *Le monde retrouvé*, but this serves Corbin’s purpose. Much of Corbin’s most innovative work has been done on the senses and sensibilities of people in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Pinagot was illiterate, but what was the lived experience of being illiterate in this particular time and place (85)? Corbin’s goal is to present the sensorial world which Pinagot would have known and the ways he would have experienced it, not his biography per se. “I tried to use what is called in filmmaking, the subjective camera; one sees what [the subject] sees, one moves along with him, but he himself, you never see” (*L’Histoire* 219 [March 1998]:14). If not Pinagot, it is his social imagination and that of those in the world around him—*le monde retrouvé* of the title—that Corbin constitutes. Without this, we cannot understand the meaning of peasants’ participation in history, their apparent movement in and out of a history whose criteria seem to come from elsewhere. While criticizing other scholars for drawing too uncritically from the reports of state officials, Corbin suggests that these are a rich source for the social imagination of their authors and subjects (248, 254). Corbin was trained in the *Annales* tradition and his movement chapter by chapter in *Le monde retrouvé* from ecology to demography to the socio-economic, concluding in social life and politics, mirrors the structure of a traditional *Annales* regional monograph (and strays from any biographical model), but the focus is not on structures themselves, but on how Pinagot’s sense of self is created by his perception and navigation of each element of his experience.

Corbin never refers to Pierre Nora’s influential *Les lieux de mémoire* (Paris, 1984), to which he contributed, but the concluding chapters of *Le monde retrouvé* can be read as a reflection on Nora’s account of the triumph of academic national history over the memory passed on within communities. Corbin was born at the time of the Popular Front to a rural doctor and draws on memories of his childhood for confirmation of insights about nineteenth-century rural life. He shares the chronology present in Nora’s work of a dramatic break in rural France in the early 1950s, a break which coincided with Corbin’s coming of age. If the national history of nineteenth-century France follows a chronology tied to changes in political regimes, Corbin seeks to reconstruct a different memory of the past: one marked by traumatic violence during the Revolution, hard times, and German military occupation. This would have been passed on to Pinagot in his village (and which in turn differed from the historical memory passed on elsewhere in rural France at this time, for instance, that imbibed by inhabitants of the village in the Dordogne which Corbin chronicled in *The Village of Cannibals* [Cambridge, 1992]). This sense that history preserved by individuals’ memories within particular communities differs from academic national history is the foundation of Corbin’s work. It emerged in his master’s thesis on the memory of the Popular Front among those who had experienced it in the Limousin and in his personal reflection on the response to the failed military coup of 1961 (he was a soldier at the time), as potentially as important a challenge to authority in France as May 1968 (Corbin, *Historien*, 18–19, 27–29). Such insights embody Corbin’s concern that the most scrupulous historians may be plagued by anachronism.

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when examining the past. Given Corbin’s suspicion of teleological narratives, it is ironic that one reading of the life of the randomly selected Pinagot would be consonant with the Third Republic myth of which Corbin is critical in which a comatose countryside comes to life with the democratic republic. Pinagot was absent from political life, but his eldest son was elected to the town council at the dawn of the Third Republic in 1871 and was an active councilor.

The history of manual laborers in Western Europe and North America confronts challenges not unlike those Corbin sees faced by the history of rural Frenchmen. In *Le monde retrouvé* and *Historien du sensible*, Corbin warns a number of times against “dolorisme” in the study of the lower classes, a reference to a literary movement that exulted suffering as having a high moral value and as the source of creative activity. He sees “dolorisme” rooted in the sources social historians of the lower classes use, often the product of exterior perceptions which tell us as much about the observers as the observed. These sources focused predominantly on the pains and frustrations of the poor, showing relatively little interest in or understanding of the pleasures and satisfactions of the poor. He sees social historians as further driven by the Enlightenment intellectuals’ mission to identify and rectify injustice—to work to provide the pleasures and satisfactions they feel the poor would want since from their perspective these are necessarily absent in their lives. Corbin is critical of historians who assume that their interests and ways of perceiving and making sense of the world are those of their historical subjects. Such historians construct their research projects and ways of interpreting historical data in light of contemporary concerns in ways which may obscure lived experience or render understanding of past sensibilities ahistorical and largely immune from change. Recognized as a pioneer and academic supporter of the French variant of gender studies, Corbin went to a colloquium on women’s history almost twenty years ago and called for a history of masculine suffering, greater in the nineteenth century, he thought, than female suffering (Corbin, *Historien*, 55). Greater or not, it was radically different, and of a magnitude certain forms of feminist history could obscure.

We are all aware that labor history can be written from a “dolorisme” perspective or its corollary, in which workers come to life only during strikes and political action. Would new directions for the history of labor emerge from the random selection and intensive study of individual workers in industrial areas without a predetermined sense of what makes some important or significant? Does a focus on class consciousness impede recognition of the multiple constructions of identity at work in each individual? Could, Corbin asked in another context, the simple passer-by who found himself or herself fighting behind a barricade become again a simple passer-by when the fighting ended (Corbin, *Historien*, 50)? The point would not be for labor historians to abandon models and narratives, but to open ourselves up to the exploration of new divergent ones. Elsewhere Corbin recognizes that resurrection of a “femme” (female) Pinagot would have been all the more difficult, but equally necessary, and, mischievously evoking a Center of Pinagotic Studies on the bicentenary of Pinagot’s birth (15), he assures us that “if one hundred students took one hundred per-
sonages living around Pinagot as the subject of study, we would renovate completely our vision of nineteenth-century rural France” (Libération, March 26, 1998). Labor historians, don your blindfolds.

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“Global 1968” is rarely considered to be a series of events and processes of relevance to the lifeworld of Catholicism or, for that matter, to the reality of any other religion experiencing the various contestations of that turbulent year. This vision of “1968” as an entirely secular event is reinforced by the prominence of various tendencies and manifestations of the political Left, the latter more often than not ignoring, or in open conflict with, religious authorities and religious beliefs. But for some time now, particularly in the Italian context, the contributions of a Catholic Left to that “moment of madness” most closely associated with “May 68” have become the topic of scholarly and activist concern. This book under review goes a long way to suggest that Left Catholicism in the late 1960s was not only an Italian peculiarity but also a French phenomenon.

Indeed it would have been wholly surprising if French Catholicism would not have been affected by “May 1968,” as the first wave of Left Catholicism in Western Europe, strongest immediately after liberation from the Nazi yoke, was most pronounced and influential precisely in the Gallic state. Predictably, many of the ideas expressed by Left Catholicism in 1968 repeat themes first expressed twenty-odd years earlier. Indeed, even some of the activists and/or theologians, such as Marie-Dominique Chenu, or institutions such as the newspaper Témoignage Chrétien, once upon a time the leading Catholic underground paper in World War Two France, are precisely the same. It is therefore only appropriate that Barrau underscores the central role of the first generation of French worker priests—ordained clergy who took up full-time industrial labor between 1941 and 1954—in generating a favorable milieu towards the creation and elaboration of a progressive French Catholicism even and especially after the Vatican foreclosed on the worker priest experience in early 1954.

Symptomatically, the first reaction to the events of May 1968 coming out of a Catholic milieu was a communiqué protesting “brutal police measures” (35), drawn up at the occasion of a gathering of regional representatives of discussion groups around precisely Témoignage Chrétien on the sixth of May. That same evening, Catholic Action groups emanating from the university milieu published a more moderate statement, yet still fundamentally questioning the official government view of the skirmishes as a “simple eruption of violence” (36). One day later, the spiritual advisors of the Catholic communities on several campuses of the Université de Paris declared themselves in solidarity with the triple demands
of student activists: the release of jailed students, the reopening of the Sorbonne, and the removal of police forces from the Quartier Latin. The floodgates of Left Catholic activism had been opened.

Grégory Barrau highlights the difficulties and inner torment afflicting those Catholics favorable to the massive wave of activism capturing the public eye in May/June 1968. Habituated to the atmosphere of traditional conservatism emanating from church institutions and the church hierarchy, progressive Catholics soon began to justify their engagement on the side of student and worker activists by referring to the necessity to translate the meaning and the message of the gospel into concrete reality. Members of the Jeunesse Étudiante Chrétienne declared on the sixteenth of May: “Why are we incapable of participating in this movement? Does our faith relegate us to the back rows of this world where, in the name of grand principles, we shall be condemned to powerlessness? If Christians do not find [in these events] the signs of the kingdom-to-come, the question shall be: Where will we find the kingdom-to-come?” (39) Under the impact of lived experience in the streets of countless French cities and towns, Catholic youth reinterpreted the questioning of authority as a core evangelical value.

By the second half of May, the Catholic hierarchy began to cast aside the increasingly embarrassing silence with which it had initially responded to the events. Though far from openly supporting the contestataires, it refused to squarely support the forces upholding the status quo. And on the twenty-second of May, Paris Archbishop François Marty published a pastoral letter at the occasion of Ascension Day in which he coined the expression: “God is not conservative. God is for justice” (53). Formulated to convey an exclusively theological meaning, these words were quickly re-interpreted by Left Catholic activists to have an openly political meaning, and in the then-prevailing general atmosphere of total repudiation of conservatism in all walks of life, Archbishop Marty’s pronouncements soon became the household words of the Catholic Left.

By early June, Left Catholic activists began to disrupt church services to draw attention to the societal crisis. Perhaps the most symbolic act of contestation by the Catholic Left was the ecumenical celebration of the Eucharist by leading Catholic and Protestant activists and intellectuals, including Paul Ricoeur, on Pentecost Sunday. Since the thirteenth century the doctrine of transubstantiation had constituted one of the most distinctive attributes of Catholicism and constructed virtually insurmountable barriers to subsequently emerging Protestant beliefs. The joint celebration of the Eucharist centrally questioned one of the most fundamental oppositions between Catholicism and Protestantism.

Grégory Barrau goes on to show that the choice of Pentecost Sunday for this first open and public defiance of Catholic tradition of this sort to occur since the Great Schism was further laden with meaning. Pentecost symbolizes the opposite of the episode of the Tower of Babel. Babylon stands for the punishment of humanity for pursuing false paths. Pentecost is the celebration of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles, re-uniting a fractured and doubting community of believers. “May 68 may represent this new Pentecost which drives away
Babylon . . . For these rebellious Christians, May 68 is a fundamentally evangelical event” (90).

Of course, just as the societal crises eventually passed with Charles De Gaulle soon winning his most resounding electoral victory, one must also realize that most French Catholics did not side with the contestataires and, if anything, mobilized for the retention of the status quo. But in the long run, May 1968 did stimulate important changes, both in society at large and within the life-world of French Catholicism. Barrau suggests that the Catholic hierarchy soon began to distance itself from its traditional identification with the holders of governmental and financial power. From 1973 onwards, the Archbishop of Paris chose no longer to join the grands corps d’état (political dignitaries) on the official grandstand overlooking the July fourteenth parades. And the image of Monseigneur Marty himself behind the wheels of his Citroën 2 CV, a direct consequence of his decision to cut back representational costs, further reinforced the image of a growing desire to diminish the separation between the institutions of the church and the people.

Le Mai 68 des catholiques is highly recommended reading both for students of Catholicism and for readers interested in a hitherto neglected aspect of the social movements shaping 1968.

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In this book, Michael Torigian sets out to describe the travails of French labor and left-wing politics in the interwar period. Focusing very specifically on the relations of metalworkers with the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT), the Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire (CGTU), and the French Communist party, the author examines the internal workings of the labor movement in the years 1934–40.

The metalworkers provide distinct advantages for a case study. As Torigian points out, the metals industry in France was a vast sector comprised of several branches including iron and steelmaking, shipbuilding, mechanical engineering, and the manufacturing of appliances, automobiles, airplanes, bicycles, and related products. Centered in Paris and its suburbs (the departments of the Seine and Seine-et-Oise), employing about 375,000 men and 72,000 women in 1931, it was France’s foremost mass-production sector. The metals industry also had important symbolic value because it included the very visible massive new automobile plants, including the behemoth Renault and Citroën works, that had mushroomed since the Great War. Above all, the metalworkers would be a veritable linchpin of the labor movement in the midst of the crucial events sur-
rounding the strikes and political maneuvering just before and during the Popular Front.

Torigian begins the book with a chapter introducing the situation of the French working class from the First World War to 1934. Although offering some useful information about the Parisian metal industry, most of the chapter is an overview of the industrial changes wrought by the “Taylorist-Fordist mode of production” (8 and passim), as the rationalization of French production is consistently termed in this volume, and workers’ supposed attitudes toward it. The sources consist of labor periodicals from the 1920s and 1930s and selected secondary sources. Not surprisingly, given the source base, Torigian finds that workers were quietly alienated, rendered passive by “Taylorist” forms of management and the Fordist assembly line, and ready to become active and sociable in the strikes of the mid-1930s.

The analysis suffers on two fronts: The portrayal of the rationalization of production in France is oversimplified; and the analysis of the assumed response of workers relies too heavily on union and party periodicals. Although this book’s publication date of 1999 may have precluded use of Aimée Moutet’s excellent Les logiques de l’entreprise: La rationalisation dans l’industrie française de l’entre-deux-guerres (Paris, 1997), Torigian’s analysis would have profited considerably from the thesis from which that book was drawn (“La rationalisation industrielle dans l’économie française au vingtième siècle: Etude sur les rapports entre changements d’organisation technique et problèmes sociaux [1900–1939].” Doctorat d’état, Université de Paris X-Nanterre, 1992), which like many older and all new French theses is available on microfiche by mail. Torigian’s comments about the effect of “Taylorist-Fordist production” on workers also require more nuance; consultation of works on nineteenth-century French workers (by William Sewell among others) or on their autobiographies (by Mary Jo Maynes and Marc Traugott) would show that Torigian’s portrayal of a sort of golden age of solidarity and sociability among pre-World-War-One workers is a serious oversimplification. Similarly, Torigian’s strong assertion (22–24) that passive workers spending their days in Taylorized plants were hoodwinked in their off-hours by a new mass culture, including movies, fashion, and sports, overlooks the extent to which workers selectively chose products and entertainments, giving them meanings unintended by elite producers. There is no evidence that Torigian consulted any of the recent scholarship on mass consumerism. In itself, that would not be an insurmountable problem if there were sufficient evidence to support an interpretation that so thoroughly contradicts recent scholarship; that does not seem to be the case. His notion that mass sports, including bicycling, were merely a sort of opiate of the people offered up by an elite overlooks the extent to which working-class men and women identified with often very self-consciously working-class riders in the tour de France, a fact made clear in the recent work of Christopher Thompson. Torigian seems to have taken his periodicals at face value.

That said, this book’s greatest weakness—its limited secondary and narrow primary sources—is less of a problem in the more substantive chapters. Al-
though some will wonder whether interviews and police records might have expanded the book’s source base, Torigian’s mastery of the huge communist, socialist, and union press, both national and regional, serves as a rather solid foundation for the rest of the book, which largely avoids unsubstantiated generalizations. In chapters three through seven, Torigian offers a detailed and nuanced blow-by-blow description of the changing alliances and divisions of the metal union and the political parties from the attempted rightist coup of the February 1934 until after the unraveling of the Popular Front in 1937–38. Told as a narrative unfolding of the events, these chapters have much to teach not only historians of labor but also French historians more generally. Torigian is particularly adept at distinguishing among the demands of the rank-and-file, the sections and stewards, and the regional and national leadership, clarifying what might otherwise appear to be contradictory actions within the labor movement.

Torigian carefully shows the motivations of both union leaders, especially the ongoing conflicts between the socialist-dominated CGT, the communist CGTU, and the dynamics of their federation, not to mention the federation’s relations with the French Communist party during the Popular Front. By using a narrative structure, he can also include the influence of international events, particularly German rearmament, the Spanish Civil War, the crisis over Czechoslovakia, and the outbreak of the war on the union’s efforts. Moreover, Torigian very successfully portrays the competing demands on union leadership in 1936, as spontaneous strikes by the rank and file forced leaders to call broader strikes or lose credibility, putting the communist partners in the Popular Front government at odds with the socialists, the Radicals, and Josef Stalin’s own directions to bolster France as a counterweight to growing German power.

In short, this is a book that one reads for the workmanlike, detailed chronicle of unionization in the metal industry and as a case study of French labor generally in the years 1934–40. Many secondary sources on twentieth- as well as nineteenth-century labor that might have provided more context do not appear to have been consulted. As a result, it is unclear what Torigian means when he claims that “this book is about the single most important chapter in the history of the French labor movement” (x) or that “the actual birth of the modern French labor movement occurred only in the wake of the general strike of 1934” (192). Clearly, the late 1930s were a very important period of transition for the French labor movement, but readers will need to provide the long-term context for the events described here.

Unfortunately, Torigian’s often interesting account has in some cases been obscured by careless copyediting. French nouns frequently have adjectives of the wrong gender. Accents are wrong or absent altogether. English words are misspelled and misused. There is even a typographical error in the spelling of an isolated German word. It is difficult to imagine how the press could have let so many errors slip through, or into, copyediting and proofreading.

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Specters haunt capitalist globalization—the specters of balkanization and multiculturalism. Although this is not the subject of *Nationalism, Labour and Ethnicity 1870–1939*, it provides the historical context in which the project took shape. If the ideology of market capitalism was conceived in universalist terms, so were most of the socialist responses. For this reason, Austro-Marxist Otto Bauer’s early twentieth-century writings on nationalism stand out as a fascinating precursor to contemporary expositions of multiculturalism.

In an effort to navigate between the Scylla of an Austro-Hungarian state which fostered capitalism under the aegis of a dominant linguistic group and the Charybdis of balkanization, the dissolution into competing polities of the large state necessary for development of the economic prelude to socialism, Bauer championed the cultural autonomy of ethnic/linguistic groups within a single state. Such a genealogy of multiculturalism is not to be found in this collection, but contributors are aware of the contemporary resonance of their work.

Stefan Berger and Angel Smith begin their introduction with the breach of the Berlin Wall, and Jie-Hyun Lim concludes his essay on Poland by describing Solidarity as drawing upon the “people’s nation,” the concept championed at the beginning of the century by Rosa Luxemburg’s Social Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania. Geoffrey Swain’s fine analysis of the triumph of Josef Stalin’s assertion of Russian dominance within the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics over Vladimir Lenin’s policies can be read as a reflection on the breakup of the Soviet Union (and as a rejoinder to those eager to see Stalin as simply a fulfillment of Lenin). Swain concludes that Lenin understood “the power of nationalism over people’s minds, and did, by proposing the dialectic of self-determination for the state but centralization for the party, offer a vision of how the interests of the nation and of revolution could be reconciled” (163).

Taken individually, the ten essays in *Nationalism, Labour and Ethnicity* are good and thorough, although the volume suffers from the diffuseness endemic to such collections. In this case it would seem to echo their subject matter: the particularism of nationalism and the ostensible universalism of socialist and communist movements. The editors’ goals were to bypass the opposition of class and nation and to contest essentialist readings of class, national, and ethnic identities by charting the complex and constantly changing relations of labor movements to nationalism. If working-class identity does not necessarily lead to the profession of socialism, it is less frequently remarked that assertion of national identity need not culminate in nationalism.

The editors asked contributors to address a common set of twenty-three questions. Some recurring themes are drawn from these questions, like the presence and interaction of “good left patriotism” and “bad right nationalism.” Other themes emerge implicitly from the very proposal to consider such a corpus of questions, including contestation of a dominant European model of the relationships among nationalism, ethnicity, and labor movements. Such a norm
takes different forms in the collection. The fullest exposition is given by Rajnarayan Chandavarkar in his excellent essay on India. In the European model, ethnic and national identities impede the emergence of the class consciousness necessary for socialism, while in India, “the teleologies of working-class history and nationalism often moved in parallel directions” (242). This theme runs through the other essays on nations born of British colonialism (and in Smith’s essay on Spain, a nation whose experience “differed markedly from those of her European neighbors” [64]). Terry Irving rejects identification of the Australian Labor party with the nation, an interpretation he sees derived from European models inappropriate for Australia, where the emergence of an industrial economy before the creation of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901 led to a “special kind of Labor nationalism in Australia” (195); it was, therefore, “not nationalism that propelled the trade unions beyond parochialism in the 1890s but class consciousness” (199). Neville Kirk concludes his essay on the United States by rejecting the concept of “American exceptionalism” since there was no true norm from which to deviate. One can see an implicit resolution of this issue in that scholars in this volume who study Europe are primarily interested in the place of nationalist ideologies and practice in socialist movements—“Liberal nationalism was, therefore, able to insinuate itself into labour ideology and outlook in a variety of ways,” writes Smith of Spain (73)—and scholars of the former colonies are more interested in socialist ideologies and practices in nationalist movements.

A second important problematic ranging through essays in the volume is laid out most clearly in Berger and Smith’s introduction: “Nationalist issues were for much of the time relatively peripheral to workers’ thoughts and actions, and seemed often to occupy labour leaders much more than the broader community” (21). Focusing on the integration of labor into the nation state, Berger develops this argument for the British Labour party and the German Social Democratic party (SPD) in the 1920s. Lim makes this case in arguing that Polish workers “did not necessarily join the National Workers’ Union [before World War One] because of its nationalism but because it campaigned hard to improve workers’ conditions” (131). For Irving, “most of the scholarship that purports to tell us about the hold of nationalism as a set of ideas on the working class is actually about [Australian] Labor organisations and intellectuals” (211). The suggestion that labor movement institutions may have been more concerned with nationalist issues than workers merits further study, especially in a period like 1870–1939, marked by repeated crises—including the longest global depressions in history and World War One—crises of the sort which have a formative effect on social identities. What, to evoke Benedict Anderson, is the relation of the imagined communities of nation and of class in particular historical situations? “The nation that the SPD defended in 1914,” Berger tells us, “was not the state of the Junkers and the Hohenzollern monarchy but the future democratic welfare state allegedly threatened by ‘tsarist despotism’” (41). Which nation did German workers defend? One entry way into these issues would be to look at gender, which is rarely discussed in the essays (with the exception of Tim Mol-
dram’s interesting study of South Africa), for nationalism, labor, and ethnicity were clearly gendered concepts in the societies under study, although gendered in different ways in different situations.

This fine set of studies suggests the value of further examination of these questions elsewhere: Mexico and Japan come to mind. And there remains a place for more explicitly comparative work to be done. Labor movement leaders of the period under examination were quite aware of these issues and how they thought they were being resolved elsewhere. We can interpret the analyses they made as a form of self-reflection in the guise of a discussion of the other, and use them to further our own investigations of the imbricated identities of class, nation, and ethnicity and the political movements which drew upon them.

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Joe McCartin is to be congratulated for achieving his goal of establishing the idea of industrial democracy as the central organizing concept in US labor relations during and immediately after World War One. His rightly praised work, *Labor’s Great War*, traces industrial democracy from its flowering under Frank Walsh’s 1913 US Commission on Industrial Relations through the disputes over its many contested meanings during World War One, to its sad result in 1920s company unions and welfare capitalism. He does a masterful job of sorting out the competing groups of employers, labor, government, and public, as well as the contests within those groups. Along the way we are treated to fine character sketches of Walsh, William Howard Taft, President Woodrow Wilson, Secretary of Labor William Wilson, Louis Brandeis, Samuel Gompers, and the International Association of Machinists president William Johnson. However, the book’s successful strategy, its tight focus on American wartime industrial democracy, is also its weakness since it too severely limits itself in time and space.

McCartin’s great strength lies in his successful writing of a political narrative rooted in “both the workplace and the political arena” (8). The narrative moves seamlessly from conference chamber and legislative hearing to shop floor and picket line. McCartin clearly shows how class struggle energized and constrained administration policy as well as how that policy shaped the conflict’s outcome.

He begins with the antagonisms within the Wilson administration which led to the curious alliance of Wilsonian Democrats, American Federation of Labor unionists, and leftist activists that helped create the US Commission on Industrial Relations and brought its chairman Frank P. Walsh to prominence. Walsh had gone from a poor Kansas City immigrant Irish upbringing to become a suc-
cessful lawyer whose experiences with the business class turned him to radicalism. He became a leading reformer with a special interest in industrial democracy. Walsh had argued that American workplaces needed democracy achieved by a politicized unionized work force that could confront authoritarian management. He disagreed with John Commons’ vision of industrial democracy achieved through apolitical government-sponsored mediation.

By the time the US entered World War One in April 1917, other voices presented different versions of industrial democracy. McCartin carefully explores the appearance of radical Taylorites who reconceptualized scientific management to include worker participation. Here also is John D. Rockefeller, chastened by a public drubbing after the Ludlow massacre, who honestly embraced Mackenzie King’s plan for worker representation within an employer-dominated setting. Although Samuel Gompers never officially wavered in support of voluntarism, his alliance with Wilson obviously ran contrary to it and drew criticism from AFL conservatives, while AFL radicals pushed for a rank-and-file strategy in opposition to bureaucratic conservatism. These many players were suddenly brought together by the spring of 1918 in the new arena of the National War Labor Board (NWLB), co-chaired by Frank Walsh and former President William Howard Taft. With Walsh’s appointment, President Wilson gave implicit administration support to industrial democracy. But with the force and sanction of government power, what did that term mean in practice?

The actual development and implementation of “industrial democracy” does seem to indicate that it could be a paper bag filled with a variety of conflicting contents. All agree that it did mean some sort of employee representation plan. Radical workers tried to “de-Kaiserize” industry with militant local industrial councils. Progressive businessmen wanted to institute genuine employee representation, but without “outside” union interference, the forerunner of company unions. Industrialists who would normally have opposed all such schemes often acquiesced to some form of industrial democracy since the profits from government contracts were too lucrative to pass up. The AFL wanted pure and simple unions with a closed shop and a prevailing wage standard. Certain radicalized industrial workers like the Bridgeport, Connecticut, munition workers led by Samuel Lavit or the Schenectady, New York, electrical workers also thought that workers needed unions, but they wanted to break from traditional craft and even industry unionism and organize instead on a regional all-worker basis.

McCartin shows that during the war, the AFL came close to achieving its goals of union recognition, the closed shop, and maintaining craft jurisdiction. Positioning itself between shop floor radicals and recalcitrant employers, the AFL was able to win a number of crucial votes from the NWLB. Many AFL unions made substantial organizing gains during the war.

However, as McCartin demonstrates in a series of finely crafted case studies, even board-approved AFL organizing was not always sufficient in the very short time of the NWLB’s existence. The board could move very slowly, employer resistance might retard it, and workers might have their own agendas. In
Birmingham, Alabama, antiunion forces successfully combined racist violence with a lackadaisical NWLB plus the AFL's own racism to stymie what at one point looked like a successful drive. The effort to unionize basic steel on an industrial basis, which seemed so promising in the summer of 1918, bogged down due to the hostility of craft union leaders.

Schenectady electrical workers tried to go farthest in using the government for militant ends. Confronting General Electric (GE), they successfully used NWLB hearings and orders to recruit thousands of members and organize in other key cities. Central to their vision was the Electrical Manufacturing Industry Labor Federation, which brought together many different craft unions and successfully opened the doors of unionism to all workers. But this new federation drew the hostility of International Association of Machinist president and NWLB member William Johnson, who acquiesced in firing militant unionists. After the board's early 1919 demise, GE easily withstood a strike. The Electrical Federation foundered and Johnson picked up the pieces.

Even where the AFL did make some gains during the war, the aftermath proved a disaster. McCartin cites a postwar banquet where Gompers expected to be recognized as part of the war-winning team only to be vilified by General John Pershing. With the postwar dismantling of economic mobilization agencies, business went on a successful offensive that eventually negated almost all of organized labor’s gains. However, and here is McCartin’s strongest point, rather than returning to the prewar open shop, many employers chose to implement industrial democracy by creating employer-dominated employee councils, often with the help of the aforementioned radical Taylorites.

But how significant was this postwar legacy of industrial unionism? Here, unfortunately, McCartin does not answer many questions. By saying little about the post-1919 period, we are left wondering. How many were involved? We have no good numbers on how many workers labored under some form of the American Plan, nor do we know where many of these workers labored.

Were workers better off if they had personnel departments rather than foreman hiring, stock option plans for loyal employees, union-free shop councils etc.? Lizabeth Cohen, in *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919–1939* (New York, 1990), has suggested that the answer is yes, that workers did come to expect and appreciate welfare capitalism; when the system collapsed during the Depression, they created the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) to win back that security.

McCartin also limits his study by focusing only on the United States. With the United States in its first ever wartime alliance, he shows a remarkable lack of interest in other nations’ experiences. Jeff Haydu, in *Making America Safe for Democracy* (Chicago, 1997), has shown the value of a comparative approach in his study of American, British, and German wartime labor experiences. McCartin’s tale of an American government looking to control labor militancy by growing close to a pro-war labor movement, seems similar to Haydu’s findings in other countries. But where the US government discarded the American labor movement after the war, Haydu shows how workers made real postwar gains in
Britain and even became part of the new political establishment in Germany.

Also, while McCartin is to be complimented for moving beyond the reductio-

nlist “good radicals/bad conservatives” story, it does seem strange to read

about radical workers in World War One without a mention of Eugene Debs’s
jailing, the split in the Socialist party, or attacks on the Wobblies. In his relent-
lessly national tale, he notes the unlikelihood of any Bolshevik revolution in the
US and thus dismisses the impact of the Russian “October revolution” on Amer-
ican workers, employers, and government. But the importance of the Bolshevik
Revolution on American politics is more than leftist romanticism. By 1918, Wil-
son and Taft were willing to work with Walsh and Gompers in part because be-
yond them were Lavit and the Schenectady electrical workers; beyond Lavit
were Debs and the Wobblies; and beyond them Lenin and Trotsky, though by
1919 there seemed little to fear from Lenin or Debs and hence Lavit and event-
ually Gompers both lost their bargaining positions.

Yet, is this a valid criticism of McCartin’s work? Nothing is easier or cheap-
er than the demand that an author should have written a different book. Mc-
Cartin certainly deserves great praise for achieving his goal of establishing the
centrality of “industrial democracy,” both during World War One and after. But
absent a fuller development of the long-term consequences, it remains difficult
to know if, in the long run, it was so important after all.

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Andrew Strouthous, *US Labor and Political Action, 1918–1924: A Compar-
ison of Independent Political Action in New York, Chicago and Seattle.* New
York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000. vii + 208 pp. $65.00 cloth.

The writing of history is defined by questions asked by the historian. Again and
again historians return to the query of “why no labor party?” or “why no so-
cialism in the United States?” on the premise that the absence of a labor party
deviated from the norm, at least observed from a European perspective. For
many historians this political development, or should I say, non-development,
was indicative of “American exceptionalism,” part and parcel of the nation’s
unique political, economic, social, and cultural trajectory.

Andrew Strouthous, in recognition that trade unionists helped to launch la-
bor parties in many cities after World War One, asks a different question: “Why
did US labor’s attempt to establish its own party fail?”

The immediate postwar period was a heady time for organized labor. En-
couraged by the gains made during the war when the eight-hour day became
more commonplace and collective bargaining more acceptable, workers sought
to capitalize on relatively tight labor markets. Sectional and solidaristic strikes
signified a growing working-class consciousness. Industrial unionism stirred in
such mass production industries as steel, meatpacking, and textiles. Labor lead-
ers spoke of a dawning of “industrial democracy” in which employers, even the most powerful corporations, would be compelled to respect workers’ collective rights.

Nevertheless, seasoned trade unionists who had endured open shop drives, court imposed injunctions, the deployment of local police, state militia, and citizens’ (vigilante) committees remained cautiously optimistic. Steeled by setbacks, victories, and voiced apprehension that the most recent gains were precarious, they urged that bold political and industrial initiatives be pursued.

The readiness of Chicago’s trade unions to adopt innovative strategies was particularly noteworthy. Progressives within the city’s labor federation spurred a debate about industrial unionism and the amalgamation of craft unions in the same industry (“federated unionism”) within the American Federation of Labor (AFL). After labor nominees were denied their rightful places on the school board, the Chicago Federation of Labor (CFL), led by John Fitzpatrick, formed the Cook County Labor Party (CCLP). Fitzpatrick and other founders of the CCLP embraced “Labor’s Fourteen Points,” modeled after the program of the British Labour party, whose principles included the “democratic control of industry,” “public ownership and nationalization of natural resources,” and equal rights for men and women.

The prospects for independent political action appeared promising. The Illinois State Federation of Labor did not interfere with the CFL when it worked on behalf of the CCLP. Moreover, the CFL and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union (ACWU), led by Sidney Hillman, worked well together despite the fact the ACWU was not an AFL affiliate.

Yet the party’s first intervention in electoral politics was disappointing. Fitzpatrick ran for mayor in 1919, and netted only eight percent of the vote. However, he did better in districts encompassing the stockyards, where a large Polish immigrant working class resided. Combined with the Socialist party’s support, the working class vote for independent candidates in Chicago rose to its highest level ever. Strouthous tempers this optimistic reading of the CCLP’s performance at the polls by stressing the daunting competition posed by two well-lubricated political machines and the unions’ redirection of their energies to defend themselves against an employer-waged counterattack.

The steady decline of the CCLP and statewide Farmer Labor Party, to which the former was an affiliate until 1923, led the CLF to abandon its support for independent political action and sapped Fitzpatrick’s enthusiasm for the project. The CFL and its constituent unions nevertheless remained committed to a progressive political alternative to antiunion Democrats and Republicans, and accordingly endorsed Robert La Follette as candidate for President in 1924. However, La Follette garnered only seventeen percent of the Cook County vote as most workers, argues Strouthous, saw that a vote for him was a vote “for an individual and nothing” (141). In the absence of an organized party committed to contesting future elections, “geographical, ethnic and individual loyalties” superceded “collective ones” (142).

In New York, initiatives to form and build a labor party took a different
turn. The city's two labor federations, the Central Labor Union and the Central Labor Federation, chronically clashed with the state federation, which religiously enforced the AFL's nonpartisan political policy. The Socialist party, unlike its Chicago counterpart, had enjoyed a modicum of electoral success and opposed efforts to launch the American Labor Party (ALP). Not until the Socialists’ relative strength declined did the party mobilize for the ALP. Unlike in Chicago there was an absence of dynamic and farsighted leadership among the trade union “progressives.” This was demonstrated by ACWU’s exclusion from the launch of the ALP and its inability to develop a counter-strategy against the merger of the CLU and CLF, spearheaded by the AFL, which ultimately led to a reversal of the original endorsement of the ALP.

Even the Socialist party’s backing of the ALP in 1922 proved not to be decisive. Well positioned within the leadership of the ACWU, the International Ladies’ Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), and the United Hebrew Trades (UHT) to mobilize for the ALP, the party squandered the opportunity because it did not forge a strategic consensus about independent political action. On the other hand, La Follette’s candidacy drew the enthusiastic support of the ACWU and ILGWU as well as the endorsement by Number Six of the International Typographical Union and the International Brotherhood of Electricians. La Follette did better in New York than he did in Chicago, gaining twenty percent of the vote, while Socialist party candidates for governor and congress did considerably poorer. In short, the forces most committed (although belatedly) to independent political action showed minor gains. The Socialists’ weakened position meant that no serious counterweight existed to stop onetime allies from jettisoning independent political action altogether.

Although there were similarities in the labor politics of Seattle and Chicago, the differences in labor's engagement with independent political action in both cities proved crucial. The contrast in the experience of labor progressives in Seattle and New York, however, could not have been starker. Radicals within the Seattle Central Labor Council (SCLC), as well as progressives in Chicago, promoted their own version of “federated unionism” among craft unions with kindred trades, such as the Metal Trades Council. As in Chicago the Socialists were a marginal force at the time the Farmer Labor Party was launched. What Fitzpatrick represented to Chicago’s labor movement, James Duncan, Secretary of the SCLC, assumed for Seattle’s trade union progressives. Critically, however, the turn towards independent political action arose in the wake of negative fallout from the general strike of 1918, and unlike New York and Chicago, the advocates of independent political action did not have to face powerful electoral machines which commanded the loyalty of large blocks of voters.

Ironically, the formation of the Seattle Farmer Labor Party came after the launch of labor parties in New York and Chicago. The belated timing was largely the result of the prohibition against candidates in citywide elections running on party tickets. Therefore, Duncan's strong performance in the 1919 election did not explicitly promote a labor party, but, by virtue of broad support from the city's unions, it advanced the cause of independent political action. According-
ly, the FLP officially contested the following year’s elections on a platform derived from Labor’s Fourteen Points and rapidly became the city’s “second party” after the Republicans.

Yet in “first-past-the-post” elections, second place does not necessarily signify long-term viability. Consequently, a virtual civil war erupted between the SCLC and the State Federation, as well as between radicals and conservatives within the SCLC, over the wisdom of supporting the FLP. Duncan’s resignation from his post in the SCLC paved the way for a defeat of the radicals, and predictably in 1923 the SCLC officially endorsed the AFL’s nonpartisan political policy.

Strouthous lucidly and insightfully examines the ebb and flow of independent labor politics in the cities. He underscores the complexity of the relationship between workplace militancy and political activity in light of the stronger showing of independent pro-labor candidates in 1924, during a period of trade union decline, as compared to the disappointing electoral initiatives in 1919 when workers asserted their collective power at the point of production.

Strouthous’s arguments would have been enhanced by devoting more attention to the strategy of independent political action from the perspective of labor leaders and activists. What did the advocates of labor parties in these three cities hope to achieve from political action, both in the short- and long-term? How did they assess their prospects? How did they combat the AFL hierarchy’s insistence on nonpartisan politics?

Undoubtedly, as Strouthous has convincingly argued, union sponsorship of independent labor parties, along with industrial unionism, represented the most serious challenges to orthodox AFL policies and practices. Thanks to Strouthous’s efforts, more scholarship should follow that asks probing questions free of normative assumptions about trade unionism and working-class politics in the United States.

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