

Book reviews

Melvin M. Leiman

The Political Economy of Racism: A History

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Reviewed by Alan Freeman

I scoured Melvin Leiman's fact-filled book for a long time for something good to say. When I found nothing I had to ask why, since Leiman is a sincere man who takes an important issue seriously.

I was reminded of the US debate sparked by Robert Cherry's (1988: 79) polemic against neo-Marxism, which, it is said, departs from 'traditional marxism' by neglecting class in favour of such frivolous diversions as gender or race.

Beware the word 'tradition' in conjunction with the name of Marx. The tradition which makes 'class', by which is meant the wage struggle, the primary issue of politics and denounces all else as a diversion, belongs to the second International. It has alienated and enraged a lot of people with other problems, led millions to their death and, on the whole, hasn't raised wages. When packaged as Marxism, which Leiman's book accomplishes in a scholarly and

professional manner, it is usually labelled 'traditional'. The book should be read to understand the production process of social democratic Marxism.

Cecil Rhodes and Joseph Chamberlain patiently explained that advanced countries must buy off their working classes with the booty of colonial conquest. The most ruthless imperialists start as social reformers, Clinton being the latest. The metropolitan workers' organisations put a specific stamp on this project. With a relatively low level of legal non-military struggle they can build big trade unions and negotiate welfare concessions. In return they offer to seek nothing else. That is, they guarantee the security of the state and the domestic stability needed to pursue military policies overseas. This was known even in Marx's day:

The English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat *alongside* the bourgeoisie. For a nation which exploits the whole world this is of course to a certain extent justifiable. (Engels to Marx, Oct. 7 1858).

The imperialist state is a dialectical unity of colonial militarism and domestic collaboration, a specific class alliance characteristic of contemporary world capitalism. When it breaks down, revolution breaks out: the Paris Commune 1871, Russia 1917, Germany 1918, Italy 1945, Portugal 1974. Military defeat is the only circumstance that has produced revolutions in the advanced countries. One of Marx's most remarkable insights — which has bypassed 'traditional Marxism' — was to predict this notable fact.

All struggles over *who exercises power* thus confront a coalition of the imperialist

bourgeoisie and its working class parties. All battles for political equality, whether of women, black or gay people; all national liberation struggles and all anti-militarist struggles meet universal bipartisan condemnation.

Social democracy is the ideological expression of this alliance after processing in the digestive tract of the Western trade union movement. The conquest of the globe comes out as the 'liberation of small nations'. The mass slaughter of opponents comes out as the heroic battle against dictators bent on world domination. The 'civilising mission' emerges as the idea that Western workers are so advanced that everyone else must follow them. This is strongest in countries which have won lots of wars, made no revolutions for at least two centuries and never suffered invasion or fascism, perfect training for the instruction of the world's revolutionaries, which is why small Internationals are all headquartered in London or New York.

Traditional Marxism is a gaseous waste product of this joint production process. It is a vaporous cloud over the compromise with imperialism. Its special contribution consists of sophisticated leftist reasons why no-one should oppose the state: civil rights promote a black middle class, equality is not a socialist demand, anti-military struggles are pacifist, liberation struggles are nationalist, and no-one understands class, by which is meant getting more money. Marx's view was this:

It is the most important object of the International Working Men's Associations to hasten the social revolution in England. The *sole* means [my emphasis] of hastening it is to make Ireland independent ... it is the special task of the Central Council in London to make the English workers realise that *for them* the *national emancipation of Ireland* is not a

question of abstract justice or humanitarian sentiment but the *first condition of their own social emancipation*. (Marx to Meyer and Vogt, Apr. 9 1870).

So much for the awful perils of bourgeois nationalism.

Scientifically, the point of departure is the *fetishisation of national boundaries*, of which Leiman's work is a textbook illustration. He starts on page 1 with 'American capitalism', by which he means *capitalism in the United States of America*. Unfortunately US capital is not confined to the US. Among copious figures on US living standards the most salient is missing: the world provides an enforced annual subsidy never less than \$100 billion, and many times more in arbitrage, repatriated profits and unequal exchange. US capital will defend *this* aspect of its political economy by any means necessary. Leiman discusses this not as root cause but as a footnote, above all when forced to by the towering legacy of Malcolm X.

The great insight of black nationalism, which puts it head and shoulders above 'traditional Marxism', is to understand imperialism as the key to racism. Since this is also the key class relation of the advanced capitalist countries this is a huge theoretical advantage. The sombre warnings against 'black nationalism' from US and English traditional Marxists come from the most nationalist of all starting points: the distributional struggle in their own country. Black nationalism starts from the international identity of interest of everyone oppressed by the most powerful capitalist classes in the world — the white ones.

One issue highlights the hypocrisy of these relations better than ten thousand income statistics: immigration. Without exception the rich countries have shut out the tide of misery which their own greed has provoked. The countries which accept

refugees are those that can least afford it. The contradiction which most succinctly characterises class relations in today's world is free trade in everything *except* labour power, above all *between* imperialist and dependent countries. Racism is World Apartheid.

Leiman's book contains four references to immigration, none of them modern; his judgement (p.51) is that 'Another *impediment* [my emphasis] to the development of interracial workers' solidarity was immigration: by constantly changing the composition of the working class, it very effectively prevented the establishment of a stable organising base.' Actually every trade union movement worth speaking of was built by immigrants, who fight for their lives when others merely fight for their wages. Everyone else knows who Joe Hill was; Leiman does not even understand where his own trade union movement came from.

Only blissful ignorance can explain Leiman's complete blindness to the causes of the breakdown in working class solidarity. Chapter 6 on Black-White Unity is a lament that it does not happen, aimed mainly at the black communities. His lengthy discussion of this issue boils down to a vain appeal to 'the fundamental community of interest between the black and white working classes'. He should have asked: what is the true relation between the world's poor and a small section of workers which slams the door in their faces, launches periodic pogroms against the few unfortunates who get in under the bar, and joins in wars of annihilation against the rest?

Racism is the fetishised expression of the imperialist division of the world. A privileged section of the working class is rewarded for scabbing on the world-wide struggle against its own capitalists and projects these world social relations into its innards. The hierarchy in the metropolis

faithfully reproduces the world hierarchy of oppression, with the most recent arrivals from the poorest countries at the bottom and the oldest arrivals from the richest countries at the top.

Leiman analyses the roots of US racism in slavery, a searing indictment of the American Dream which even traditional Marxists cannot ignore. But if slavery is the *cause* of racism then in Europe it is an aberration and in Japan incomprehensible. Slavery is the most extreme expression of colonial servitude. It accounts for the specific form of racism in the US but not racism in general.

Failure to grasp the material roots of racism produces the characteristic non-materialist view that, as Shulman (1989: 73) accurately puts it 'racism is something which the capitalists *do* to the working class'. Actually ideology is the *product* of material relations. Racism is present in the consciousness of the metropolitan working class because it is present in their relations to the rest of the world. This happens independently of the capitalists, just as commodity fetishism happens independent of propaganda. Racism for Leiman is a capitalist conspiracy: their 'political interest in maintaining class hegemony requires dividing the working class'.

He needs this to establish a classic counterposition; black struggle as a diversion from class struggle.

My basic theory in this study is that ending discrimination while maintaining capitalism is ultimately contradictory and that terminating both depends on achieving interracial working-class solidarity. Therefore all reformist activity (including the acquisition of political posts) that works within the existing political party system only acts to reinforce and legitimate the exploitative and racist capitalist mode of production and distribution.

What shows the superficiality of this ninety-year old argument is that the *one* permissible reform is the fight for higher wages. The trade unions most certainly 'work within the existing party political system' — in the US the *bourgeois* party system; they clearly 'reinforce and legitimate the exploitative and racist capitalist mode of production' and never cease the 'reformist' pursuit of political posts. But they are ring fenced because the wage struggle is holy.

Leiman's arguments are always used to reinforce the commonsense racism of workers who think any struggle for rights they already have is a frivolous diversion from getting more money. Actually, the struggle for political rights damages capitalism because it necessarily denies them to most humans. It is preposterous and insulting to dismiss the profound and heroic struggle of southern black people with the words (p.323) 'they only changed the status of the blacks from one of *unequal exploitation* to one of *equal exploitation*.' If black people throughout the world had only the same rights and income as a poor American, capitalism would not exist. If it were not for the civil rights struggle the American left would not exist to pass patronising judgements upon it.

Because this economic claptrap is nowhere to be found in Marx, traditional Marxism performs a service. It mutates Marx's categories so that racism can be dressed up as Marxism:

Marxists [*which? who? where?*] emphasise that economic factors are decisive in determining the general shape of any given societal formation and that the class struggle between the propertied and nonpropertied class is the key to all understanding of the 'laws of motion' of all class-divided struggle.

Marx (1977: 20) actually said:

The guiding principle of my studies can be summarised as follows. In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. *The mode of production of material life* [my emphasis] conditions the process of social, political and intellectual life.

The much-maligned Engels spells it out:

According to the materialist conception of history, the *ultimately* determining factor in history is the *production and reproduction of real life* [my emphasis]. Neither Marx nor I have ever asserted more than this. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic factor is the *only* determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, absurd phrase. (Engels to Block, Sep. 21 1890).

In the US and the UK the 'struggle between the propertied and nonpropertied classes' is a dispute over the share of gross output, that is, a legal trade union wage struggle. For comparison, German capital in ten years exterminated 40 million people, eliminated several races from various parts of the planet and devastated half of Russia. It also wiped out the unions, which set back the German wage struggle all of twelve years. The 'economic' factors shaping this class struggle included the failure of 1848 leading to unity under the Prussian Junkers, Germany's late claim to a 'place

in the sun', its defeat in the war, the Russian revolution and a historical tradition of anti-semitism in Eastern Europe predating capitalism by around 700 years.

If the 'struggle between the propertied and nonpropertied classes' covers all this then it just means 'everything to do with capitalism'. But its real content is clear from the rest of the book which centres single-mindedly on 'income, occupational structures, unemployment, education and housing', all from the point of view of *income*, of access to value distributed in the USA. The *economic struggle over the distribution of income* substitutes for the *political class struggle*. The famous phrase in the *Communist Manifesto* 'the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy' is replaced with 'the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise wages so high the capitalists give up'.

Leiman to his credit recoils from his own argument. He warns against 'economic determinism' and stresses 'consciousness' and a 'balance' between 'class' and 'race'. This sort of obeisance is generally made to awkward little facts, like ninety-nine per cent of racists are workers, or racism has existed since the Middle Ages and sexism since the dawn of prehistory. (Engels (1970) dates the oppression of women to about 15,000 BC. Perhaps he was only a 'neo-Marxist'.) But it is no substitute for materialism which, as distinct from economism, explains far more about racism and sexism than individual consciousness.

Traditional Marxism, by reducing material conditions to income, opens the door to non-materialist accounts from people rightly incensed at what is portrayed as Marxist, who retreat into mystical, metaphysical or downright reactionary explanations. The problem is not to counterpose 'material' to

'conscious' determinations but to identify the material conditions properly. Mountains will melt before the wage struggle explains racism. Racism, a political phenomenon, is a material means of maintaining world imperialist domination. It is the only way this domination can be maintained. The false appearance that capitalism governs by consent is a fetishisation of national boundaries, a product of artificial conditions sustained in the metropolis by the superexploitation of the rest of the world.

Capitalism remains the *world* dictatorship of the minority over the majority by the open and violent denial of political rights to the majority, starting with the right to live where you choose. Its ideological expression, racism, is the inhuman doctrine that the majority of the world is not human and has no rights. This is an international culture of repression and any attempt to understand it within a single nation, above all the most powerful in the world, is doomed to failure. Leiman's well-meaning book is a laboratory-pure proof.

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Werner Bonefeld, Richard Gunn & Kosmas Psychopedis (eds.)

Open Marxism: Volume 1, Dialectics and History

Open Marxism: Volume 2, Theory and Practice

Pluto Press, London, 1992

Volume 1: ISBN 07453-05903 £12.95, pp.179.

Volume 2: ISBN 07453-05911 £12.95, pp.172.

Reviewed by Lawrence Wilde

The ten articles which comprise this double-volume work have been brought together under the title 'Open Marxism' by the editors, who supply punchy introductions to each volume. In order to establish the distinctiveness of an approach it is tempting

to caricature or pillory alternative schools of thought, and too many of the contributors adopt this peevish tone, reminiscent of famous in-house altercations of the past. The 'enemy' in this case comprises those who espouse structuralist, regulationist,

rational-choice, and critical realist Marxist (or neo-Marxist) positions. The Open Marxists emphasise class struggle, radical anti-determinism (out with the 1859 *Preface!*), and a dialectic of dynamic internal relations.

The two volumes comprise only 351 pages and the order of the contributions seems odd, since the first two articles of each volume deal with philosophy of method and the others could have been grouped together under 'class struggle and the state'. An important question is skipped in the introductions, namely, for whom are the books written? A specialised knowledge of Marxist epistemology and state theory is presupposed, and I do not think that many of these articles will go to the top of students' reading lists. A number of the articles are written in a dense style which is not always justified by the subject matter. Some of the writers would do well to heed the appeal for accessible writing which appears on the inside cover of *Capital & Class*.

Kosmas Psychopedis begins the first volume with a long and complex discussion of the development of dialectical method in Kant, Hegel, and Marx. It is for professionals only, but his highlighting of the dialectical significance of Kant's antinomies is both unusual and insightful. Here there is a genuine attempt to relate dialectical theory to the problems of theorising not simply about the world but in the world, or, as he puts it, of maintaining theory's 'relational reference to the conditions of its actualisation and its political character' (p.49). The issue of the dialectical relationships between and within the 'subjective' and 'objective' is taken up by Hans-Georg Backhaus in his discussion of Marx's philosophical critique of political economy undertaken in the *Early Writings* and the *Grundrisse*. The use of Adorno in elucidating this approach and its importance for social theory today is interesting

and virtually unheard of in the English-speaking world. However, similar work has been done in this area in the last decade, and Backhaus's most recent reference is to a debate published in 1977.

Werner Bonefeld once again crosses swords with Bob Jessop and Joachim Hirsch on the theory of the state, an argument with which regular readers of *Capital & Class* will be familiar. Bonefeld's emphasis is on the centrality of class struggle and the internal relation between structure and struggle. Simon Clarke's contribution rejects conventional attempts to periodise the state, on the grounds that they fail to get beyond 'the static fetishism of simple essentialist structuralism' (p.149). Once again the point at issue here is the lack of flexibility or dynamism in structuralist or neo-structuralist Marxism, a case which I think is reiterated to the point of exaggeration throughout the book. Clarke's article was clearly written several years before publication, since it speculates that the current boom might be sustained a while longer, and while this is not central to his argument, it should have been edited out. The first volume is completed with an article by Heide Gerstenberger on the conceptualisation of the bourgeois state form, with particular attention to its emergence from *ancien regime* states. The result is a useful contribution to the literature on the transition from feudal society to capitalist society.

The second volume opens with a swashbuckling attack by Richard Gunn on just about the entire corpus of Marxian interpretation. Historical materialism is denounced as unmarxist, a 'blip' in Marx's work which is better understood by its concern with class struggle. Accordingly we are asked to reject such staples as part of the *German Ideology* and the 1859 *Preface*. Gunn faces up to the question of what is left in Marxism minus historical materialism, and although I am not at all convinced by

his argument, at least it is bound to shake readers into a reexamination of the central categories of Marx's thought. The article by Fracchia and Ryan which follows appears mild in comparison. They compare the methodological paradigm developed by Marx in *Capital* with Thomas Kuhn's work on scientific paradigms. Their interpretation stresses the open-endedness of Marx's theoretical work without embracing the radical rejection of basic concepts favoured by Gunn.

The article by Tony Negri is set down in a number of closely argued theses which expose the structural crisis of capitalism. However, the contention that this opens possibilities for socialist alternatives appears to be little more than an act of hope. The erosion of traditional political life may well signal the collapse of the conventional liberal separation of politics and society, but it is not immediately obvious that this offers hope to the victims of capitalism. Harry Cleaver's excellent article helps to give a theoretical basis for understanding potential resistance to capitalism. He argues that Marxism's emphasis on analysing the forms of domination has led to a relative neglect of how those forms might be turned into forms of resistance. Cleaver draws on Ivan Illich's *Tools for Conviviality* and points to its theoretical closeness to the Marxian attack on commodification. He also links it to the work by Negri on autonomy, and it is good

to see Marcuse given a favourable mention, albeit in a footnote. There is no unreasoned optimism here, but in pointing to attempts to identify the potential of autonomous struggle against commodification there is a clear invitation to further research and political practice.

The main themes of the book are recapitulated in a crisp contribution from John Holloway attacking the acceptance by many left-wing academics of the conventional liberal boundaries of the 'economic' and the 'political'. This gives rise to a form of intellectual fatalism which sees crises as moments of restructuring at the expense of recognising that they also indicate a system in rupture, thereby opening up possibilities for struggle. It is beyond the scope of the book to indicate how that struggle might develop, but perhaps this may follow?

It is easy to agree that Marxists should analyse the weaknesses of capitalism as well as its strengths, and identify promising aspects of resistance and new forms of struggle. What I find more difficult to accept is the rejection *tout court* of just about the entire body of contemporary Marxist analysis on the basis that it commits one or more of the mortal sins of being defeatist/reformist/deterministic/positivist. In these dark days, can socialists afford to be so querulous?

Gregory Elliott

Labourism and the English Genius: The Strange Death of Labour England?

Verso, London & New York, 1993, pp.233.

ISBN 0-86091-412-7 £34.95 (hbk)

ISBN 0-86091-671-5 £12.95 (pbk)

Hilary Wainwright

Arguments for a New Left: Answering the Free Market Right

Blackwell, Oxford UK & Cambridge USA, 1994, pp.325.

ISBN 0-631-19189-5 £40.00 (hbk)

ISBN 0-631-19191-7 £12.99 (pbk)

Reviewed by Sheila Cohen

People seem to be writing about the British labour movement again. At least, some resurfacing of this deeply unfashionable topic is signalled in Gregory Elliott's book, as well as some other recent releases such as Willie Thompson's *The Long Death of British Labourism* (1993) and *Labour's Utopias* by Peter Beilharz (1992). As a counterpoint, it struck the present reviewer that Hilary Wainwright might have something interesting to say on the same range of topics in her treatment of the disturbing infatuation of Eastern European dissidents for the 'free-market' recipes of Frederick Hayek.

Both of these new contributions are perspectives on a central contemporary problem — the failure of socialist politics either, on the one hand, to grab the imagination of 'the masses' under late capitalism, or to make much of a success of the exercise of 'actually existing socialism' on the other. However, both approach that problem in, as it were, an underhand and tentative fashion, as if hoping the reality of actually existing capitalism won't fly up and hit them in the face.

With Elliott's book we begin on the familiar terrain of the British Labour movement and the abject failure of its

institutions, perhaps most notably the Labour Party, to break from the most craven forms of accommodation with capitalism. In fact *Labourism and the English Genius...* despite an unpromising start, prefiguring what we will argue are incongruous political conclusions, takes us on an incisive romp through the historical and political inadequacies of the British labour leadership to which it appears there can be only one response — the crucial need to reassert class realities, with all their implications, in the face of an obstinate and illusory reformism. The author himself, in a reference to '...the effacement of class as an analytical or a political category...' in one of Labour's most recent revisionist absurdities (p.19), appears to recognise the centrality of such realities. Elsewhere in the same chapter, Elliott savages the absurdities of the 'mixed economy'. Yet he does not draw what would seem the evident conclusions, in terms of a rejection of reformism and reassertion of the inescapable logic of capitalist production relations, from his analysis.

Instead we are confronted by what appears as an elegant diversion, rather than any attempt to grapple with the pressing material issues raised by both Labour's

inadequacies and the intensified assaults of a deregulated capitalism for a beleaguered working class. Instead of trying to address the crucial task of developing a socialist politics that can begin to make sense to, and inform strategies for, that class, Elliott turns his attention to a rather more esoteric issue — the democratic inadequacies of the British constitution.

In a scathing critique which also takes on, justifiably, the pervasive and craven nationalism of the British labour movement leadership, Elliott exposes how the Labour Party has historically ‘bought’ the myth that Britain is possessed of a democratically progressive constitution, when in fact that constitution and whole system of government is a profoundly undemocratic inheritance from a pre-suffrage, pre-parliamentary *ancien regime* of arrogant aristocratic privilege.

This is a valid point enough, particularly when linked, as Elliott does in an important — and unusual — insight, to the ethical and evolutionary basis of Labour’s whole approach to ‘socialism’. Elliott’s exposure of the myth of British ‘democracy’, set in the context of a well timed challenge to British socialists to abandon their entrenched chauvinism over Europe, could well be addressed to many of the current guardians of Britain’s ‘sovereignty’ in the name of the anti-Maastricht left.

But the political logic of thus prioritising the issue of the constitution, with all its associated baggage (set out on p.193) of proportional representation, written constitution, etc, inevitably postpones the political tasks the urgency of which Elliott’s whole analysis has seemed to indicate. After all, while it may be cruel to point this out, a number of advanced capitalist countries not noted for their internal democracy or egalitarianism exhibit many of the features on Elliott’s list: a written constitution in the USA,

republicanism both there and in most Western European democracies, proportional representation in Italy and Germany. As objectives, while no one would doubt their political rectitude, these clarion calls of *Charter 88*, Liberty and the rest seem somehow to lack immediate relevance to the issues now posed by the increasingly unbridled rule of capitalism worldwide and its impact on workers in countries both more and less formally democratic.

Perhaps in line with his focus on what in this context can be seen as little more than a political side-issue, Elliott ends his book with a final rejection of the case for what, on the surface, his whole book has appeared to argue for: ‘One response, admirable but abstract, can be ruled out for the foreseeable future: socialism’ (p.179). This conclusion is reached despite an acknowledgement in the same chapter of the overriding salience of capitalist production relations that seems to directly belie even Elliott’s more limited ‘constitutional’ priorities.

Against the apparent political defeatism, not to say lack of consistency, of Elliott’s conclusions has to be weighed, of course, the point that he has stressed throughout — the political delusion of ever considering Labour, even potentially, to be a socialist party. Yet what is raised by this in itself understandable dismissal is not only the concurrent rejection of socialism itself ‘for the foreseeable future’, but also a lack of serious consideration given to any alternative forms of political organisation and struggle in Elliott’s analysis.

To make this point is not to pose some naive substitution of ‘revolutionary party’ for ‘Labour betrayals’, but to direct attention to the largely scorned sphere of ‘economism’, conjoined with ‘labourism’ to which Elliott intermittently refers. The one option, it seems, that Elliott never stops to consider is that there might be

significant and politically valid forms of working-class organisation and, potentially, resistance, subordinated within these dismissive categories. Yet it is precisely such forms of struggle and organisation, which overlap with 'labourism' in a more complex and dialectical fashion than Elliott ever examines, that are shown in his historical account to have posed the few truly subversive challenges to Labour's undeviating progress towards collaboration and betrayal.

Any incipient insight, however, that might be derived from Elliott's own account of, say, the strike waves of the First World War period (p.29), is left to wither in the hotter pursuit of Labour's political inadequacies and the final betrayal of its cleavage to the *ancien régime* — no doubt an analytically impressive point, but one perhaps of least assistance to those most affected by Labour's failure.

In the same way, Hilary Wainwright's account of the unsettling infatuation of Eastern European dissidents for the 'free market' appears to evade the implications of its own argument. Taking refuge in an esoteric 'theory of knowledge', with which she counterposes to Hayek's individualistic economic prescriptions the forms of information and intercommunication generated by what are consistently, if bewilderingly, referred to as 'new social movements', Wainwright fails to provide even the most vestigial critique of the market as an institution remorselessly — and ever-increasingly — subject to the exigencies of profitability.

In Wainwright's certainly original analysis, questions of material and economic structure are subordinated to abstract invocations of 'popular democracy', seen as both embodied in and promised by the 'radical' movements whose existence and influence she constantly evokes. Wainwright's critique is of a 'socially engineering state' as well as, implicitly, an

unacceptably unbridled free market. The difficulty is that, just as a 'socially managed', and therefore more acceptable, market is not distinguished by any boundaries of ownership or production relations from the Hayek-approved, privatisation-based variety, so Wainwright's conception of 'the state' floats free from any inhibiting analysis of the precise nature and functions of the state within capitalism.

We are blithely told, for example, that the possible model of a socialised market, based on the theories of Diane Elson, which Wainwright invokes in her chapter on 'New Economic Networks' (pp.170–2) 'would not rely exclusively or even primarily on the state'. But which state? we ask in bewilderment. The question is repeated in the reader's mind on countless occasions as Wainwright refers, for example, to 'the state' not only as 'an external engineer' but also as 'the potential source of a democratic and egalitarian framework for a variety of forms of popular self-government' (p.10). Is this under capitalism? or socialism? or what?

The confusion might be excusable were there not a vast body of theory on the state amongst the left which, to say the least, calls into question this implicit thesis of a neutral or at least uncontentiously manoeuvrable state under capitalism. However, Wainwright fails to refer to this debate. On the issue of 'the market' she is more forthcoming, clearly basing her position on the 'socialised markets' thesis put forward by Elson, Nove and a number of other established writers. However, even here we are confronted with a bewilderingly abstract description of the economic context in which: '...worker-managed public enterprises [are] supervised by public regulators ...who would enforce democratically agreed norms in the utilisation of public assets' (p.171). But how? With what?

The question of the basic structures of ownership and production relations centrally invoked in discussion of both 'market' and 'state' is never confronted by Wainwright, though in her conclusions she airily refers to 'the exact strategies by which present concentrations of economic power ... can be broken up' as 'beyond the scope of this book' (p.275). Even here the reference is to power rather than ownership, profitability or any of the more ruthlessly material parameters which in fact construct fundamentally the issues and processes to which she refers throughout her book.

But such criticism may be seen as cavalier in relation to Wainwright's prime objective, which is to show to Eastern European dissident acolytes of Hayek and the 'free market' a third way between the bureaucratic state machine for which these rebels have an understandable abhorrence, and the individualistic vagaries of unbridled market forces.

In pursuit of this, and the associated socialised theory of knowledge with which she challenges that implicit in Hayek, Wainwright showers us with manifold examples of 'radical movements', 'democratic networks' and 'campaigning groups' exhibiting, from their grass-roots perspective, this alternative to the frying-pan or the fire. Unfortunately, the very profusion of examples, or lists, of 'radical' forms of activity somehow belies their credibility. Reeling from a Swedish feminist school, through the Mondragon co-operative, to the GLC, we are left unconvinced that any of these examples of 'democratic institutions' can actually provide a generalisable or sustainable challenge to what, it has to be reiterated, is the ultimate obstacle of capitalist production relations. Indeed Wainwright's own rather poignant requiem to the GLC seems only to underline this point: 'Relative to the economic problems facing Londoners ... and to the powers of those with a vested

interest in the economy remaining more or less as it is, [the GLC's] resources were trivial. They were certainly hopelessly inadequate on their own to have any significant impact on London's ailing economy' (p.179).

Perhaps, then, it is a process rather than a product that we are talking about — the experience of 'radical' forms of interaction and organisation that may inspire those involved to see society in a different way and thus to challenge our present incontrovertibly undemocratic institutions. That experience of struggle can transform consciousness is a crucial insight. However, even here Wainwright weakens her case by a chameleon-like melding together of a vast range of 'radical social movements', ranging from an obscurely 'radical' trade unionism through women's liberation to the much-vaunted Green associations, into one, certainly rainbow-coloured, coalition.

Yet the question must be raised whether these different 'social movements', if such is the correct term, do in fact spring from one unified impulse towards 'democracy', 'egalitarianism' 'radicalism' or any of the other oft-repeated buzz-words with which Wainwright studs her analysis. By contrast the term 'class' is notable for its absence from this vivid lexicon, in which words like 'socialism' or indeed 'capitalism' also make but an infrequent appearance.

Wainwright's failure to distinguish what are in fact the class-based activities of rank-and-file trade unionists responding to the exigencies of the labour-capital relation from, for example, specifically gender-related or environmentally-concerned campaigns is highlighted when she provides specific accounts of such struggles. Wainwright's 'radical trade unionists', a description in which most activists would find it hard to recognise themselves, turn out to be, in one reference (p.248) those 'sharpened by the industrial militancy of

the years before boom gave way to recession', in others, workers occupying factories in response to threatened closures, and in the most specific cases Ford and Lucas workers organising respectively to build international combines and around the famous Lucas alternative plan for socially useful products.

The Ford case shows clearly that central to the stewards' incentives in building combine links with other Ford plants in Europe during the early '80s were issues such as, in the present Dagenham convenor's own words, "unit build" [ie number of cars produced per worker]... and also the level of cars they are producing and where they are going' (p.157). That this refers to basic issues of labour intensification and the distribution and location of jobs is overlooked by Wainwright, who goes on to enthuse over how, in initiatives like the Ford combine, 'workers' organisations behave a little like tugboat crews ...guiding the state, rather like a large tanker, to where it could intervene with effect' (p.158). Such an approach totally overlooks the issue of how workers' independent class interests, which of themselves separate them from the priorities of a capitalist state, shape forms of organisation and resistance which have less to do with 'radicalism' than with an incipient — and in this case transnational — socialism.

Wainwright's similar misjudgement of the Lucas situation embodies a more serious error, all the stranger since she is herself the co-author of a book on the Lucas Plan which appears in its detailed account of the workers' organisation to directly contradict some of her own analysis (Wainwright and Elliott 1982). For example, on p.162 of *Arguments for a New Left*... she writes of the Lucas Aerospace workers that 'Shop stewards in this company in the forefront of defence technology decided that traditional

industrial tactics (strikes, occupations and so on) were leading nowhere...'

In fact formation of the Plan came in the wake of highly successful examples of just these 'traditional industrial tactics' through which workers in plants across the company had managed to resist redundancies and closures with impressive force. Such successes were entirely due to the crucial *combine*-wide organisation, pre-dating the Plan, which an imaginative shop steward leadership had managed to put in place with an unusual degree of solidarity not only between plants but also the normally separate staff and manual union organisations. Imaginative and prefigurative though the Lucas Plan undoubtedly was, it was the *class* organisation embodied in the successful building of the combine which stands out as the essential feature in Wainwright's own earlier account of the initiative, itself enabling the stewards to go forward to more consciously political forms of action and organisation.

Yet, as in her account of the Ford combine organisation, it is in just those accounts of struggles most clearly related to workers' response to the labour-capital relation that Wainwright again demonstrates her reluctance to recognise either their class character or the impact of the surrounding economic structures in which they are located. For the same reason she also overlooks the crucial need to investigate both the material and ideological obstacles to developing the full potential of grass-roots organisation and resistance — or, indeed, its contradictory character in exhibiting elements of both reformist accommodation and potentially revolutionary undermining of capitalist relations.

The problem with Wainwright's analysis is not her well-intentioned attempt to demonstrate a 'theory of knowledge' through which disillusioned Eastern European

activists can find a new way towards a meaningful politics dominated by neither state nor market. Her comments on the need to 'democratise and socialise economic knowledge' (p.148) are valid enough, if somewhat limited, comparably to Elliott's constitutional preoccupations, in their relevance to those at the sharp end of the issues both purport to address. The disappointment lies in that just such important grass-roots forms of organising and moving towards a genuinely participatory democracy are taken out of a context which could lend them any political or analytical meaning, in either a positive sense (of moving towards class solidarity) or a negative one (of recognising the very real boundaries placed on the room for manoeuvre of either 'the state' or 'the market' under capitalism).

To recognise the nature of this organisation and resistance as impelled by the objective structures of capital rather than by some free-floating 'radicalism'; to understand that modes of resistance, whether located in trade union, feminist, anti-racist or environmentalist spheres, are in fact ultimately linked by their common enemy in capitalist production relations, is to accept forms of 'economism' and 'labourism', or at least their equivalents in terms of a recognition and prioritisation of basic material and class realities, which both our authors are united in their refusal to countenance. Elliott's espousal of 'a more civilised capitalist future' (p.xiv) is matched by Wainwright's identification of her prized social movements in terms of 'radical gradualism'.

In this rejection of the salience and logic of surrounding capitalist production relations, along with an ultimate rejection of the significance of working-class struggle, however, our authors are no more than representatives of a widespread consensus on the left. Since 'Western Marxism' began to provide a Hobson's Choice to economic determinism in the early days of the postwar New Left, such rejection of basic economic issues, as in some way inimical to the political and ideological priorities with which they are most concerned, has been a standard position of socialist intellectuals.

The urgent task of addressing the reformism within the labour movement painfully documented in Elliott's book is thus once again overlooked in favour of a kind of social liberalism which, much as 'labourist' bureaucrats have done through the decades, finally shrinks from even contemplating the task of confronting capitalism. Wainwright's 'radicals' are 'gradualists' indeed, in her analysis; and as such they have no real hope of realising the task she enjoins of *sustaining* the democratic networks and institutions which appear, in her account, rather like fairy castles with no material foundation. In her chapter on 'Parties of a New Kind' Wainwright describes their proponents as neither reformists nor revolutionaries (p.211). Perhaps someone should tell her that there isn't really a third option — unless, that is, you support the continuation of the capitalist system by default. In their different ways, this is precisely what Elliott's and Wainwright's books both seem to do.

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Felton C. Shortall

The Incomplete Marx

Avebury, Aldershot, 1994, pp.508.

ISBN 1-85628-588-X £45.00 (hbk)

Reviewed by Chris Arthur

Shortall's work is reminiscent of Negri (1991) insofar as he concerns himself with the problem that an objectivist reading of *Capital* appears to close the door on revolutionary subjectivity; and it is reminiscent of Lebowitz (1992) in that he argues the unwritten books on Land and Wage Labour remained central to Marx's plan, the topics being touched on in *Capital* only insofar as capital itself takes cognisance of them.

According to Shortall, when Marx got down to work on his theme of 'capitalism and its overthrow' he was forced to enter the terrain of the enemy in order to examine its dispositions. Inevitably then, in his critique of political economy, Marx came to operate within a 'provisional two-fold closure': a) 'Firstly, Marx was obliged to close off class subjectivity in order to grasp the logic of capital as an objective and positive system of "economic laws".' b) 'Secondly, in making his general analysis of what capital *is* Marx was obliged to emphasise the *unity* of capital'; as a result the question of crisis and rupture becomes repeatedly deferred throughout the three volumes.

The closure is only provisional because the dialectic of capital's self-positing is opposed by the 'counter-dialectic of class struggle'; but in focussing on the problematic of political economy the latter dialectic for the most part 'falls below the horizon' of Marx's immediate analyses.

Shortall concludes that if he is right that '*Capital* is in a fundamental sense incomplete; that *Capital* is merely

provisionally closed; that the Marxian project points through and beyond *Capital*'; we can then pose 'a Marx in which human praxis and class subjectivity emerge in their full force on the objective foundations set forth in *Capital*'. In passing, Shortall makes interesting comments on the way Marx appropriated Hegel's dialectic.

His is a very detailed yet accessible argument; and a strength of his presentation of the development of Marx's thought is his concern to locate it in Marx's response to his concrete historical situation. The discussion is excellent, and the book is highly recommended.

At the same time, it has to be said that this work has defects of presentation, fact, and omission (which I hope a second edition might remedy) as follows.

It is regrettable that the text is poorly edited and proofed. Most of the mistakes are inconsequential (but watch out for 'wages' on p.43 instead of 'prices'). However, disaster strikes on pp.216–217, where schemes purporting to represent the general and money forms of value are rubbish, presumably because of typesetting errors.

An error of fact as strange as it is mistaken is the claim that Engels had a 'Jesuit background' (p.488). In fact the Engels family adhered to Pietism, a fundamentalist Protestant current.

A truly astonishing omission is that of any discussion of the chapter in *Capital* on the Historical Destiny of Capitalism. It is astonishing because Shortall's investigation

is supposed to show how the dominance of the dialectic of capital over the counter-dialectic of class struggle closes off the perspective of capital's overthrow, or at least sinks it below the horizon of the text; yet the famous 'Chapter 32' is on the face of it a definite exception to any such tendency to closure; here Marx announces in no uncertain terms that the expropriators are to be expropriated. It is all the more to be regretted that Shortall does not deal with it, for very interesting things could be said about it, even from the perspective of his own theme. It could be argued that it is still written within 'the dialectic of capital' problematic insofar as capital is said to 'negate itself', with its 'gravediggers' from the *Manifesto* hidden in a footnote (see Arthur 1993).

Perhaps Shortall's 'forgetting' could itself be explained, some might argue, by Chapter 32 being an illogical irruption into the argument, hidden away in the 'historical' section on 'original accumulation' into the bargain; hence not part of the overall logic of the three volumes.

Shortall does not mention also the notorious 'objectivist' *Preface* of 1859, or the possible explanation of its tone that has been advanced by Prinz (1969) about the pragmatic problem of publishing in the Germany of the time under the eye of the censor.

Even though things had eased by 1867, this was still a worry, one or two letters

testify. Thus it may be worth adducing such considerations to explain the very odd structure of Volume 1 of *Capital*. Normally an author seeks to sum up the main message or consequences of their work in the last chapter. But Marx provides nothing of the sort. The paragraph on the Historical Destiny of Capitalism could well be taken as such a 'message', but it was hidden away, probably *deliberately*. That is the only sensible conclusion to be drawn from an examination of the first edition in particular. If one looks at the end, all one finds is a discussion of Wakefield's theory of colonisation! The section on the downfall of capitalism is at the end of the previous section on original accumulation *but without any separate heading*. It should be noted that chs. 26-32 of the English edition were together in the first edition as Chapter 6 section 2. Thus a review of the contents would have given no clue that such material existed.

This point does not compete with Shortall's methodological explanation but supplements it in explaining why Marx did not draw much attention to what was 'below the horizon', trusting that intelligent readers would get the message of 'what was to be done'. (By the way, Marx was so successful that *Capital* even passed the Russian censorship! — the panel judging that the scientific presentation would make the book inaccessible to the public!)

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Elmar Altvater (translated from the German by Patrick Camiller)

The Future of the Market: An essay on the Regulation of Money and Nature after the Collapse of 'Actually Existing Socialism'

Verso, London, 1993, pp.274.

ISBN 0-86091-425-9 £34.95 (hbk)

ISBN 0-86091-610-3 £11.95 (pbk)

Reviewed by Colin Hay

Over the past twenty years Elmar Altvater has established an enviable reputation amongst those who read German as one of the foremost and innovative Marxist theorists of the state. This translation of his path-breaking work *Die Zukunft des Marktes: Ein Essay über die Regulation von Geld und Natur nach dem Scheitern des 'real existierendem Sozialismus'* should ensure that he now receives the international reputation that he clearly deserves.

Altvater's extended essay represents the first sustained and systematic attempt to apply the analytical insights of regulation theory, both to the environment, and to the demise of 'actually existing socialism'. The boldness and originality of this work invites comparison with Aglietta's *A Theory of Capitalist Regulation*, Mandel's *Late Capitalism*, and Harvey's *The Limits of Capital*. Indeed, at the risk of creating something of a hostage to fortune, I will put my neck on the line and suggest that Altvater's book may well prove as influential in the development of a Marxist political economy of the environment as Aglietta's has proved for an analysis of the social regulation of capitalist accumulation. Its publication in English is particularly appropriate at a time when the various strands of regulation theory are seemingly beginning to unwind, raising the question of the potential roads *from* regulation theory. German 'eco-regulationism' is likely to prove one of the most fruitful.

The central aim of the book is to reconsider the future of market economies after the organic crisis of 'actually existing socialism'. Altvater develops an account of the contradictions of the state socialist command economies in terms of:

(i) the paralysis and inertia imposed by monolithic central planning; and

(ii) the absence of the democratic political mechanisms necessary to stimulate the degree of self-reform and institutional dynamism required to overcome periodic economic contradictions, failures and crises.

If these contradictions were to militate against economic growth within 'actually existing socialism', then capitalist accumulation in the West was no less contradictory. For while Fordism in the West provided a *sustained* period of post-war economic growth, successfully combining regulation and accumulation, this was not to prove *sustainable*. Fordist economic growth was ultimately limited by its impact upon the environment. Altvater thus emphasises not only the difficulties for centrally-planned state socialist regimes of attempting '...to defeat capitalism on its own ground by means of a different, non-market, rationality' (p.3) but also the specific form of the generic environmental-economic contradiction of the capitalist growth imperative under Fordism. He thus paves the way for a more integrated account of the environmental crisis-tendencies of both advanced capitalist states and

‘actually existing socialist regimes’, linked by a *globalised* and environmentally-unsustainable capitalist growth imperative within which both were necessarily constrained.

Despite its theoretical originality and its many perceptive insights, Altvater’s analysis is, in points, highly problematic and is ultimately somewhat frustrating. Yet given the extremely ambitious — one might even say foolhardy — nature of the project he is attempting, this is not terribly surprising. Nor is this meant as an indictment of what is perhaps one of the most important works of Marxist theory since Aglietta’s *A Theory of Capitalist Regulation*. For, were Altvater to have delivered all that is promised in this book he would have developed not merely a new theory of the environmental contradictions of capitalist accumulation, but also new theories of capitalist crisis; the history and evolution of ‘actually existing socialism’, its articulation with capitalism, its contradictions, crisis-tendencies and eventual demise; and the future of the market; as well as a prescriptive manifesto for a democratic and morally-regulated market economy. Thankfully for the morale, not to say continued employment, of Marxist theorists, Altvater’s achievement has not been to say the final word on these issues, but rather to create the potential for new and productive theoretical dialogues.

This is, then, a book to be disagreed with. Altvater has written a deliberately provocative and immensely challenging work. If his contribution is to be taken seriously it must be engaged with. In the limited space that remains I hope briefly to sketch one potential point of engagement, which might lead to a sympathetic yet critical elaboration of some of Altvater’s themes.

In his attempt to apply the analytical insights of regulation theory to the demise of ‘actually existing socialism’, Altvater

tends to resort to a dualistic, ideal- and stereo-typical counterposing of a dynamic, decentralised advanced western capitalism characterised by the ‘primacy of the economic’ on the one hand, and a static, centrally planned state socialism characterised by the ‘primacy of the political’ on the other. As a consequence, Altvater tends to overlook the various crisis-displacement and crisis-management strategies deployed by capitalist states as means of resecuring their legitimacy at minimum cost in terms of structural change. As a consequence, the *dynamic* nature of capitalist social formations is exaggerated. It is somewhat ironic, given Altvater’s broader concerns, that he should ignore this since such strategies are crucial to an understanding of the failure of advanced western democratic states to respond in anything other than a token fashion to the environmental degradation with which they are so deeply implicated. The tendency to derive the contradictions of ‘actually existing socialism’ from the counterposing of such abstract ideal-types also results in a somewhat static account which emphasises the *generic* crisis-tendencies and weaknesses of state socialism as opposed to the specific *mechanisms* and *processes* resulting in the fusion of contradictions to produce a ruptural unity at a particular moment in time. As a consequence, Altvater’s account can tell us very little about the *direct* causes of the collapse of ‘actually existing socialism’. Instead we are presented with an account of a fragile social formation with a permanent legitimation deficit, perpetually teetering on the brink of oblivion.

Numerous other criticisms could be made, especially regarding Altvater’s tendency to conflate contemporary environmental crisis and the exhaustion of Fordism; and his failure to consider the mechanisms linking crisis and charge. Nonetheless, this is an immensely important contribution to Marxist

theory, at a time when bold conceptual innovation and theoretical elaboration are particularly scarce. Altvater's achievement lies not so much in his resolution of the enduring dilemmas of Marxist theory, but rather in the opening up of

new modes of thinking and in the formulation of new problematics. It is testimony to Altvater's contribution that the solutions it offers may well be surpassed, but the questions it raises will no doubt remain.

David Pepper

Eco-Socialism: From Deep Ecology to Social Justice

Routledge, London & New York, 1993, pp.266.

ISBN 0-415-09719-33 £10.99 (pbk)

Reviewed by Karl Haselden

Pepper's new work represents a significant contribution to the red-green debate and to the development of an ecologically informed socialism. To those on the British left who have followed this often fractious but always fascinating debate, Pepper should be no stranger. His *Roots of Modern Environmentalism* (1987) was at the time the most extensive work in this area by a British socialist. Since then his numerous articles have maintained a much needed vigour whilst others on both sides have shown a tendency to take refuge in comfortable dogmatism (see for example Edward Goldsmith's writings in *The Ecologist* and Mike Simmons' critique of the red-green debate in *International Socialist* 37).

The thrust of Pepper's thesis is that greens of all shades would do well to drop their dependency upon an overly naturalistic, ahistorical and strategically dead-end anarchism. Instead he calls on them to overcome their usual mistrust of the Marxist paradigm and undertake a major re-evaluation since, he contends, there is much within it which can be of considerable use to greens in their search for a fuller understanding of the causes of eco-crisis and for strategies of change towards sustainability

According to Pepper, the Marxian conception of the humanity-nature relationship is not the master-slave scenario usually attributed to Marx by greens (and also of course, a number of socialists such as Ted Benton 1989), but on the contrary a sophisticated eco-anthropocentrism which views humanity's relationship with nature as dialectical. Echoing Grundmann (1991), he argues that Marx looked upon *homo-sapiens* as uniquely equipped amongst living organisms to organise and control its environment through mental and physical labour. Consequently, that we are now faced with profound resource and environmental problems is not, as greens argue, the result of a domination of nature which has pushed us beyond naturally imposed limits to human activity. Rather it is to do with the form this domination has taken so far in human history. In short Pepper points the greens towards the lack of collective conscious control by people over their environments in highly stratified and market led capitalist societies, as the root cause of that which they seek to eradicate.

At this ontological level Pepper's arguments are at their most convincing although two critical comments can be raised. Firstly, he does little to really address

the arguments raised by those on the left like Benton, and the Frankfurt School before him, who see the mature Marxian writings as distorted by a bourgeois-Promethean conception of nature. Secondly, one wonders whether his celebration of humanity's 'slumbering powers' minimises a key point about the future which is partly derived from the green analysis. Namely, those societies that make the move towards eco-socialist sustainability will be confronted (despite a more rational use of resources and changes in production techniques) with serious resource shortages and long term environmental problems. In other words, with socially derived natural limits; and a long term legacy of unsustainable capitalist production.

When Pepper moves onto his critique of green strategies of social change and visions of the better society, we encounter a problem which tends to be endemic to many Marxist approaches.

In the preface he admits that his analysis has some short-comings, most notably in his discussion of actors in an eco-socialist programme of change; nevertheless he does give the reader enough indications as to where he stands. He sees green strategies as replicating the failings of anarchism, that is, in not understanding the real nature of the system they wish to change, they end up in the cul-de-sac of an anti-politics, substituting the working class for the new social movements.

Now there is no denying the strength of Pepper's criticisms here. As Marx pointed out during the contestations of the first International, the failure to confront the nature of the state in capitalist society must be seen as a major weakness in the left-libertarian agenda. And yes, greens have shown a marked tendency to dismiss the toiling masses as the agents of change; here Pepper singles out Murray Bookchin and the social ecologists, who he argues

have taken their cue from post-Marxist thinkers such as Marcuse. Yet one is left speculating whether Pepper is close to rejecting something of real importance here. As a growing body of recent socialist literature is now attesting (Wilde 1994, Melucci 1989, Hulsberg 1987), it would be unwise for the left to underestimate the importance of the new social movements since they may well be the context within which greens come into contact with Marxist ideas (which after all is what Pepper is wanting with his book). A good illustration of this process would be the development of the red-green debate within the German green movement and the corresponding, leftward shift of *Die Grünen's* political agenda during the 1980s. What is more, and as Marcuse anticipated 25 years ago, the new social movements may well provide the best hope for extending the range and nature of anti-capitalist struggles. The strategic imperative is one of building lasting links between the traditional and new movements of the working class.

Pepper could be similarly accused when he turns his attention towards green prescriptions. Undoubtedly he is right to point out that the practice of communalism and alternative lifestyles can often be far from the lofty ideals intended, becoming instead self-centred existential withdrawals, 'anti-pathetical to the collective' (p.200). Likewise, the green emphasis on autarchy often overlooks the necessity for some kind of rational (but democratically derived) central planning of production and resource use. But once again one gets the feeling that Pepper is close to rejecting those ingredients that greens will bring into an eco-socialist movement for change. Ingredients that may well be vital if this movement is to be attractive, innovative and qualitatively different, not just from capitalism, but from past social democratic and communist experiments.

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Simon Clarke

Marx's Theory of Crisis

Macmillan, London, 1994, pp.293.

ISBN 0-3335-4282-7 £40.00 (hbk)

ISBN 0-3335-4283-5 £14.99 (pbk)

Reviewed by Alfredo Saad Filho

One of the most surprising features of the present recession is that it has, so far, failed to spark much debate on the Left (see, however, Moseley 1992a, 1992b, and Moseley and Wolff 1992). Among the difficulties faced by writers, the absence of a clear and broadly accepted framework for the analysis of crisis from a Marxian viewpoint is surely one of the most important. Simon Clarke's main objective with *Marx's Theory of Crisis* is to help fill this gap. This is an arduous enterprise, that has defied several generations of researchers. Of course, this book cannot solve all the problems involved, but I think that any future work on the subject will have to come to terms with the theses developed here.

Simon Clarke's contribution is two-fold; first, he carefully reconstructs the evolution of Marx's thoughts on the crisis of capitalism, and outlines the debates which have, since the late 19th Century, surrounded the issue. This is important in itself, and it makes the book useful, not only to the scholar, but

also to the student of political economy and to all those who want to have a better understanding of Marx's own theoretical development and the disputes which have raged around his theory of crisis (see however, Howard and King 1989, 1991 and Shaikh 1978).

Second, utilising the mass of scattered and disorganised (some would say inconsistent) notes left by Marx (most never published during his lifetime), Clarke tries to outline a theory of crisis. In doing this, he successfully avoids the problem that has plagued many previous attempts: the search for the justification in Marx of a single interpretation of the theory of crisis (either overproduction, underconsumption, disproportion or the falling rate of profit). On the contrary, Clarke's objective is to construct the framework of a broader and more complex theory, which integrates phenomena such as overproduction, disproportion, etc. with one another, and to provide the basis for a more complete understanding

of Marx's crisis theory. I think that this is the most important aspect of the book, and its most enduring contribution.

Clarke's synthesis begins from the fact that unfettered competition within each branch of industry creates an intrinsic tendency to overproduction in all of them. This tendency appears as the uneven development of branches. Therefore, disproportion between branches is the form of expression of capitalist development; it reveals the tendency to overproduction which lies at the heart of the process of accumulation (for an alternative interpretation, see Bell and Cleaver 1982 and Holloway 1992).

However, this does not mean that Marx's theory of crisis is essentially a disproportionality theory (even though most if not all of his examples concern this case). Clarke explains this apparent paradox by pointing out that disproportionality may often be the immediate cause of crisis, but it is not the ultimate cause. For Marx, as Clarke rightly emphasises, the ultimate cause of the crisis is the contradiction between the tendency to develop the productive forces without limit and the limited capacity of the mass of the population to consume the product.

This calls into question the underconsumptionist discourse which many have adopted in the mid-20th Century (especially after Baran and Sweezy 1966; see also Bleaney 1976). Clarke shows that, while Marx's (and Engels's) early writings had an undeniable underconsumptionist tone, this is not the case for Marx's later works (Engels does not seem to have changed his views to a significant extent). In his mature years, Marx stated clearly that the limited ability

of the workers to consume the product was not the cause of the crisis. Instead, the crisis is ultimately caused by the social form of capitalist production, which surfaces as the contradiction between the limited consumption power of the workers and the ever-growing mass of surplus value that has to be realised. This means that an increasing part of the product must be purchased by capitalists and serve the renewed accumulation of capital. It is the growing divorce between production and consumption that makes capitalism ever more prone to crisis. For Clarke, the crisis explodes, not when production has developed beyond the limits of consumption, but when it has developed beyond the possibility of profitable realisation.

One of the most provocative theses of the book is that the debate between different 'Marxian' theories of crisis has not added significantly to the development of Marxist theory. There is a crisis when realised profits fall, which can occur for several different reasons. At the relatively abstract level at which the theory of crisis is located, the precipitating cause of crises is simply irrelevant. Therefore, what is important is not the role which disproportionality, underconsumption or the tendency for the rate of profit to fall play in making capitalism vulnerable to crisis, but how the underlying cause of all crises (the contradictory subordination of the production of things to the production of value) manifests itself.

I think that Clarke's argument is appealing; but even readers who disagree with it will find that this book is one of the most important contributions to this field in recent years.

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Paddy Hillyard

Suspect Community: People's Experience of the Prevention of Terrorism Acts in Britain

Pluto Press in association with NCCL/Liberty, London, 1993, pp.300.

ISBN 0-7453-0727-2 £35.00 (hbk)

ISBN 0-7453-0726-4 £12.95 (pbk)

Reviewed by Paul Connolly

Considering that the Irish constitute the largest ethnic minority group in Britain it is surprising to find that they are still relatively neglected in social research. Whilst there has been a welcomed increase in the number of qualitative and ethnographic studies regarding various aspects of the black communities' experiences of racism there has, in contrast, been very little work concerning the treatment of Irish people and their experiences of discrimination whilst living in Britain. It is against this background that Paddy Hillyard's *Suspect Community* should be regarded as a welcome and long-overdue addition to what

is at present an unjustifiably neglected area. It is primarily concerned with documenting the experiences of those examined, arrested and detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) in Britain. Chapters 2, 4 and 9 outline the various legal aspects of the PTA and detail the scope of its provisions in relation to its powers of search, arrest and detention. These provide the main backdrop to the substantive part of the book which reports upon data gathered from interviews with 115 people who have been examined, arrested or detained under the PTA in Britain between 1978 and 1991.

It is obviously impossible, in such a short space, to even attempt to do justice to the rich and detailed insights that are offered by the book. Rather, what I want to do here is to draw attention to some of the broader themes that run throughout the text and are illustrated by the data. One of the most disturbing aspects of the PTA to emerge from the data is the ever-increasing scope and power of the state in terms of surveillance and control. During 1991 alone, over 101,000 people travelling to and from Ireland had their names checked against a national intelligence register (p.28). Literally millions of people, principally Irish, are also stopped and questioned every year by police at ports and airports (p.32). Of equal concern is the collusion, highlighted by Hillyard, between special branch and other state institutions, including social security offices and educational colleges, in the sharing of confidential information about Irish people.

A second, inter-related theme is the implications that the PTA has for civil liberties and basic human rights. Besides the invasions of privacy already alluded to above, and the provisions under the PTA for people to be detained for up to seven days without charge or reason or notification of anyone, including family or solicitors (p.77). Hillyard documents a number of interviewees' graphic experiences of psychological pressure used on them in police custody including: 'general discomfort, deprivation of sleep, food, exercise and washing facilities, isolation and threats to personal integrity' (p.171).

A final theme of the book is the racist nature of the PTA, and the complex set of processes that articulate in the racialisation and criminalisation of the Irish community in Britain. The scope, scale and channelled nature of police surveillance; the encouragement of the general public to participate in this; the role of the media in depicting the

Irish community generally and in reporting those cases involving the PTA more specifically; all complexly combine to construct what Hillyard terms a 'suspect community'. The very working of the legislation itself, with the denial of basic rights claimed by people under ordinary law, together with intense security and sensational media reporting, aids the criminalisation and racialisation of the Irish.

What I feel could have been more developed in the book, however, is the social and political context within which the PTA is located. What needs highlighting, on the one hand, is the historical continuities concerning the racialisation of the Irish, the construction of them as 'enemies within' and the evolving set of coercive legislation which they have historically been subjected to. On the other hand, the book could have also spent more time drawing out what is particular about the present context which can aid our understanding of the reasons behind the introduction of the PTA and the contemporary nature and form that it has taken. In this sense, and against the background of the present conflict in the North of Ireland, it could be argued that the PTA plays two important roles.

The first is that of gathering and collating intelligence about the Irish living in Britain, highlighted quite successfully by Hillyard. This not only significantly aids the work of the security forces but also plays a highly effective role in discouraging political involvement around the issue of Ireland.

The second is the important symbolic role that the PTA plays in the construction of the Irish as pathologically violent and criminal. Alongside this stereotype of the Irish created through the heavily censored, distorted and de-contextualised reporting of the violence in the North of Ireland, there exists the intense and highly public

nature of the security that surround arrests under the PTA and the sensational media reporting that accompanies them. The actions of the police and media leave the general public in little doubt that the Irish community in Britain is a dangerous and 'suspect' one which essentially provides a haven for 'terrorists' to operate freely. Symbolically, therefore, the problem is defined as purely one of 'terrorism' and internal security — the need to police and control a pathologically violent community — whilst the role of the British state in the continued conflict in Ireland remains unexamined. These are themes that run throughout the book and are constantly alluded to by Hillyard but which could possibly have been drawn out and developed much more.

Overall, however, *Suspect Community* stands as an important and long-overdue

text which sets out the main parameters of the PTA whilst also offering a very significant, and at times deeply disturbing and harrowing, account of how it is experienced. It illustrates just how important it is for critical social scientists to pay more attention to the Irish living in Britain. What stands out is the way in which the experiences of significant sections of the Irish in Britain can offer so many insights into the future direction and practice of the state both in terms of its racialisation and marginalisation of certain ethnic minority groups and its surveillance and control of a wide range of political activity. As such *Suspect Community* is a book that deserves to be read widely and should stand as a clarion call for all those interested in racism, the state and contemporary policing to incorporate the Irish far more centrally in their analyses.

Gita Sahgal & Nira Yuval-Davis (eds.)

Refusing Holy Orders: Women and Fundamentalism in Britain

Virago, 1992, pp.244.

ISBN 1-85381-219-6 £8.99 (pbk)

Reviewed by Kate Mulholland

This book makes a welcome and timely appearance—when debate giving recognition to class and patriarchy has been almost abandoned in feminist circles. The book is a collection of chapters written by women activists and academics and is largely a product of the women's collective 'Women Against Fundamentalism'. The major issue addressed concerns the politics of gender and the ways this affects ethnic minority women in Britain, although women in Ireland and Iran are also a focus of attention. This debate takes place within the complexities of the relationship between colonialism, the state, religion and patriarchy.

One of the strengths of the book is that it demonstrates the centrality of colonial antecedents in fusing authoritarian aspects of religion and patriarchy with the state form which in turn acts as a major influence in shaping the contours of the gender issue, in this context the struggle to control female sexuality. As Sahgal asserts:

When the fundamentalists cannot control a state, the control exercised over women, which helps them to maintain patriarchal control over land and inheritance, becomes crucial. (p.170).

Another important strength of this book is that it dispels once and for all the myth that what is understood as religious fundamentalism is confined to oriental countries; it is an integral part of the western world. Equally important is a demonstration that Islam is not the only religion to take on illiberal and authoritarian forms, the same can be observed in Judaism, Hinduism and the various strands of Christianity, for example Catholicism.

In chapter one Sara Maitland demonstrates this in her examination of the role of biblical texts in the rise and spread of Christian fundamentalism across America and Britain. She argues that the presentation of what is commonly known as 'Fundamentalism' as a straightforward return to an authentic biblical text is misleading. Truly religious fundamentalist movements characteristically adopt secluded, low profile and agrarian lifestyles, rejecting the modern world. By contrast, Maitland suggests that what presents itself as a return to the Bible is in fact a highly politicised and power interested movement which makes use of modern technology, for example the mass media, in the pursuit of its goals. 'Evangelical' in character, and drawing upon specific aspects of biblical thought in the construction of a theology, it accepts authoritarian leadership and intolerance, whilst promulgating individualism, material success, and personal morality as a public matter. As such it is part of the wider political movement of the New Right, whose aim is to wrest the tradition of radical biblicalism from the Left (p.29). Maitland suggests that this casts doubt on the secularism of British politics and the state, in that many of Mrs Thatcher's most important advisers were evangelicals, whose influence permeated pieces of legislation, such as the 1988 Education Act, and the Local Government Act of 1988. Maitland warns against the dangers this has for rights

of women and minorities, and by implication for the poor.

The following chapters by Rossiter, Poya, Foster, Ali, Khanum, Sahgal and Yuval-Davis provide a rich tapestry in their exploration of the contradictory force of religion in the flux of the contestations over power and politics. As these contributions show, female sexuality becomes the pawn in the contest for resources, and thus power. These chapters illuminate the double edged character of religion, which can be used, not only as a means of resistance, but also as a tool of patriarchal control. As Rossiter and Poya show, there are parallels between Iran and Ireland — when the forces of opposition adopt or incorporate religion into forms of national struggle. For women at the moment of post-independence it turns out to be the 'wolf in sheep's clothing', as it results in the political elevation of the clerics. The clerics became the agents of government in Iran, while in Ireland they directly controlled education, health and welfare, wielding enormous power over social policy, thus over the lives of women. Signalling the dangers of a theocratic state, Poya's chapter suggests that the unquestioned use of religion eclipsed other areas of major inequality, such as gender and class, which has inhibited debate. The effects of state clericalism are strikingly highlighted in the theme of exile, when Poya shows the manner in which religious paternalism translated into terrorism for women in a theocratic state. To a lesser degree this is also mirrored in the struggle of Irish women for reproductive rights against the 'fundamentalist' Catholicism underpinning much of Irish state policy.

In chapter three, Rossiter's discussion is a beacon of light on the much neglected issue of British colonialism in Ireland. She challenges the religious stereotyping of Irish people (as if religiousness was a metaphysical phenomenon or a pathological condition). Rather she links the oppression

of women in the Irish Republic with Britain's colonial role in Ireland. Rossiter argues that the theocracy, which constitutes part of the Irish state, is a result of the extraordinary strength of Catholicism which is rooted in Ireland's colonial heritage. It is against this set of bulwarks that feminism in Ireland has begun to roll back the theocratic state, sadly without much solidarity from its British counterpart.

The chapters by Foster and Ali share some similarities, in that in different ways they explore the ways in which ethnic minority men, through a blend of colonial legacy and the experience and politics of living in Britain, carve out a space for themselves in the class hierarchy at the expense of the women. Foster locates male dominance and female subordination in black churches in the context of the particular colonial heritage of the Caribbean, where black men, largely working class and uneducated, were excluded historically from the Christian colonial church. The black Church, argues Foster, provides a space in a racist society in which black men can prove themselves, a claim easily confirmed when considering the position of black men in the labour market. She suggests that the gender inequality characterising wider society can also be mirrored within the Church organisation, whereby men occupy leadership roles, while it relies on its women members for its ongoing maintenance.

Foster illuminates another aspect of patriarchy — the theme of female 'invisibility'; in that women are both numerically dominant and constitute the core of the church activity carrying out spiritual and social work, yet are excluded from positions of influence within the church. That their role is uncelebrated is also explained in the context of female sexuality — in that most of the women, being single, could not conform to the Church's ideal of the primacy of the mothering role. Women

draw on the scriptures to justify their subservient positions.

Interestingly, in Sahgal's chapter the thread of female sexuality reappears and women's struggle versus the desire of men, to command the political and public space surfaces. The backdrop of the colonial heritage, and patriarchal forms, influences the climate of multi-culturalism in which community leaders, under the facade of religion, pursue hidden agendas. Sahgal explains that as a consequence women are able through their own organisations to challenge both the male dominance and agendas characterising community leadership.

The chapters by Khanum, Rossiter, Ali and Poya explore the ways the high premium placed on female sexuality can become an area of contestation in the struggle against male power, whether expressed in the post-colonial state or within the community. The preservation of female chastity or *izzaz*, as expressed in Muslim culture, is seen as a measure of family honour — whilst simultaneously consolidating patriarchy. Ali, however, sees the emergence of single sex schools as much as the result of the politics of racism as emanating from the practice of particular communities. Khanum's chapter brings into sharper focus the significance of education as the battleground for the minds of young women, whilst also suggesting its class bias.

The centrality of class relations, and the politics of multi-culturalism as a means of silencing women and side-stepping the issue of race, is explored by Ali in the fourth chapter. Ali argues that the apparent silence of Muslim women in Northern communities is rooted in a matrix of patriarchy and imperial experience, together with the impact of Orientalism on contemporary European culture. Ali, in illuminating the paradoxical situation of women who are largely invisible yet very

conspicuous, suggests that the stereotypical image of such women as victims, or the collaborators, of mullahs is more complex. In her examination of multi-culturalism, she argues, in so far as it affords autonomy over matters considered social, it facilitates an erroneous view of the 'cohesiveness' of the community, in which a variety of tensions relating to class and gender are concealed. Multi-culturalism as a benign depoliticised form colludes in racist and sexist oppression.

The chapter by Yuval-Davis provides a painstaking account of the different strands within Judaism. By contrast with earlier contributions she argues that women are reconciled with the constraints of the orthodoxies of the different strands of Judaism. She explains the attraction of fundamentalist principles, in that it offers both an identity and a recipe for a lifestyle to a people whose background is founded in diaspora and rootlessness. Ali, too, somewhat cautiously argues that Muslim women find solace in religion. However, the chapters by Poya and Rossiter provide bitter reminders of the importance of secularism

— which affords some safeguards for such women.

Overall this book advances our understanding of the significance of religion in the politics of class, race and gender. It begins to suggest a materialist analysis of female sexuality, whilst strongly suggesting this for race. A disappointing aspect of the book was the omission of a focus on the Irish community in Britain. They do after all constitute the largest immigrant group and as such may be worthy of inquiry. What is also missing is a concluding chapter. However onerous a task, a synthesis of the different and fascinating themes and threads running through the chapters would have magnified the theoretical significance of the book.

Nevertheless, it is an important book, is highly recommendable, and ought to appear on every university course dealing with class, race and gender. This book is a triumph for feminism, in convincingly demonstrating that despite difference, there are still platforms which can be shared, and solidarity developed.

Brendan Martin

In the Public Interest? Privatisation and Public Sector Reform

Zed Books, London, 1993, pp.210.

ISBN 1-86549-215-X £29.95 (hbk)

ISBN 1-86549-216-8 £12.95 (pbk)

Reviewed by Caroline Lloyd

In the Public Interest charts the developments in privatisation and public sector reforms across the world. It is based upon research undertaken by Brendan Martin as part of a Privatisation and Developing World Project funded by Public Services International (a trade union federation representing public sector trade unions

within the ILO). The book examines the role of the IMF, World Bank and USAID, along with various governments, particularly the US and the UK, and right wing 'think tanks', in pushing through privatisation and commercialisation of state-owned companies, public utilities and public services.

Martin argues that worldwide privatisation and the reform of public services have been designed to meet the needs of transnational capital in a globalising market, rather than improving the life opportunities of the world's people. For example, in Third World countries, the emphasis of the World Bank has been on subsidising export business, while reducing expenditure on health and education. Privatisation has become a key policy, claimed to be *the* most efficient form of management and the key to growth and development in Third World and Central and Eastern European countries, and the means to provide continued economic prosperity in advanced industrialised countries.

Martin begins by outlining his ideas on the nature and causes of the trend towards privatisation. He argues that the integration of world capitalism and of the largest companies 'was obstructed not only by the existence of state-run economies but also by state ownership of key industrial sectors in most countries' (p.2). State regulation and public sectors were, therefore, the most serious obstacles to integrated global capitalism, leading to the emergence and dominance of the New Right and the economic doctrines of the 'free market' and privatisation in the 1970s and 80s. At the same time the 'flaws' in both social democratic and 'communist' models of state provision produced crises in socialist theory and widespread dissatisfaction with public services.

The strength of the book lies in the detailed unravelling of the role of agencies outlined in the second set of chapters. The World Bank, IMF, Reagan and Bush administrations, ideological pressure groups and global business in privatisation and public policy consultancy are seen as key players in the shift in economic and political policy making. Martin examines the impact of these policies by focusing on

a number of different areas, such as the privatisations (with undervaluation of the shares) in the UK and the spread of these policies to countries, such as Jamaica and Malaysia, and the take-over of indigenous manufacturers, particularly in the Third World and Eastern and Central Europe, by transnational corporations. The author discusses the privatisation of public utilities, such as electricity and telecommunications, roads, transport and water across the world, outlining who the beneficiaries of this process are in particular countries. The greatest shift from public to private sector was in the south and east, with resources and ownership moving predominantly to the north and west and to transnational corporations (TNCs) and local elites.

The next set of chapters considers the effects of privatisation, mainly in Third World Countries — the increase in poverty, deteriorating health care and education, and the resulting pressures on women, and the failure of these policies to lead to an improvement in the economy and living standards in Third World countries. Martin argues that many countries have faced declining conditions, as a result of the shift in resources, which have also undermined democracy and led to greater threats to the environment. Rational neo-liberal theory has enforced global economic unity on market terms and this has deepened and widened divisions between and within nations.

Martin attempts to address the debate over privatisation by rejecting the public-private dichotomy, where privatisation is either seen as inherently a 'good' or a 'bad' thing. He rejects what he terms 'statism' and 'neo-liberalism' and claims to go beyond this debate to consider the provision and delivery of public services based on a pragmatic and flexible approach. Although this is not dealt with in any detail, examples are that Swedish

home-helpers are being given more say in planning and managing their services, and that privatisation of certain industries could be used to pay for public services. Workers should be involved in planning, designing and managing services, and power should be devolved to users. He argues that adequate provision of public services are of extreme importance as global unity and stability depends 'on people having sufficient power and resources locally to shape their lives and environments themselves and to produce enough to make choice real' (p.187).

This is a well-documented and researched book, which provides a mass of interesting material. If anything, it attempts to cover too many aspects relating to privatisation and covers a large number of very different countries, so that depth is perhaps sacrificed for breadth. It is particularly good at charting the role of the US agencies and consultancy groups in extending their ideological influence across the world. However, a major weakness of the book is the emphasis on the ideological drive for privatisation. Although it is often stated that it is in the interests of TNCs to develop a global market, this is never developed in any detail and fails to establish the ways in which TNCs benefit from global economies

and whether this conflicts with the benefits capital receives from the provision of public services and the regulation of industry in particular countries.

The answer offered by Martin — 'the third way' — is underdeveloped and seems to involve, for example, management giving up some power to workers and users, nation states undertaking joint ventures with TNCs, and former 'communist' countries' states balancing the interests of the public with shareholders. Yet the means by which this can be done is never addressed. What power do nation states have? For example, can individual states overcome the strength of TNCs and stronger states? In the case of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, it is clearly shown in the book that they have been unable to succeed against the force of the US state and capital. In stressing solutions, the book fails to develop a clear conceptualisation of the state. Although not a theoretical book as such, the analysis presented fails to provide a framework for understanding the relationship between the state, the provision of public services and national and international capital. Despite these problems, the book provides a highly readable account of the incessant drive for privatisation and commercialisation on a global scale.

Vic Satzewich & Terry Wotherspoon

First Nations: Race, Class and Gender Relations

Nelson Canada, Scarborough, Ontario, 1993, pp.311.

ISBN 0-17-603506-0 (pbk)

Reviewed by Ken Coates

First Nations issues have moved to the centre of the Canadian political agenda. Over the past five years, dramatic episodes such as the military stand-off at Oka, nation-wide debate about entrenching self-government provisions in the Canadian constitution, announcements about the dismantling of the Department of Indian Affairs, and numerous regional incidents have focused the glare of national publicity and public discussion on aboriginal concerns and protests. The increased politicisation of the First Nations in Canada has not gone unnoticed by Canadian academics. The last decade has seen a major expansion of analysis of indigenous issues, a process marked by an increasingly engaged and activist scholarship.

First Nations: Race, Class and Gender Relations is a solid example of the current genre of Canadian writing about the indigenous peoples in the country. Satzewich and Wotherspoon provide a strongly argued investigation of the contemporary indigenous reality. Their effort stands apart from the general run of scholarship through a reliance on theoretical and conceptual frameworks to inform the analysis. Their goal, at least in part, was 'to draw upon existing British, American, and Canadian literature to help create a "political economy" of aboriginal/non-aboriginal relations in Canada.' (p.xiii). Their analysis of the writings of the Chicago School and the

application of the internal colonisation model in the Canadian context provides a useful, critical foundation for a discussion of the political economy approach to understanding indigenous/non-indigenous relations. *First Nations*, then, seeks to explain 'the theme of domination over and resistance by aboriginal peoples within processes of social and economic production and reproduction... [O]ur emphasis is upon the transformation of native life through the introduction and expansion of capitalism throughout Canada and beyond.' (p.14).

First Nations gives particular priority to relations between indigenous peoples and the state. Following an informative analysis of the role of Indian Administration, Satzewich and Wotherspoon consider such broad themes as economic relations, social reproduction within the context of the welfare state (perhaps the most important chapter in the book), and institutional initiatives including education, health care and the criminal justice system. Chapters are also devoted to the increasingly complex issue of aboriginal political organisation and to the difficult challenge of creating a viable and sustainable economic future for indigenous peoples. Several major themes are not covered in sufficient depth: there is little historical analysis to set the stage for discussions of contemporary events and matters of non-indigenous perceptions/images are not fully developed.

The discussion and use of theoretical approaches is a welcome addition to the analysis of the experiences of the First Nations. While the use of the language and, occasionally, the rhetoric of oppression detracts from the argument in places, the book moves nicely beyond the liberal approach to this subject that has so long dominated scholarly writing. Satzewich and Wotherspoon also give considerable attention to the question of aboriginal agency, making it clear that the First Nations were not simply passive victims, buffeted and traumatised by the depredations of capitalist expansion. Further, the authors have attempted, with somewhat less success, to introduce the variables of class and gender into their analysis, arguing that 'It is not just as natives, but as boys and girls, men and women, employers and employees, and as persons who bear other social characteristics, that aboriginal peoples engage in social interaction and have unequal access to social opportunities and rewards.' (p.263). The authors do not really have enough material at hand to analyse class and gender relations in sufficient depth, and their discussions of these themes are less

convincing than other portions of the book; one hopes, however, that their suggestive analysis will stimulate other scholars to pick up the challenge and expand research in this area.

Satzewich and Wotherspoon have tackled a daunting task, and have succeeded rather well. Because of the survey nature of the book, little attention is paid to the cultures and conditions of specific First Nations (although the authors are very clear in declaring that indigenous culture is an important variable in determining the nature of aboriginal realities). The emphasis on government initiatives, and on government-generated data, further skews the analysis, giving greater emphasis to the operations of the state than is perhaps warranted. The authors also give little heed to the role of individuals, indigenous or non-indigenous, in shaping aboriginal conditions; in several areas, particularly the chapter on aboriginal organisations, this omission is rather glaring. Overall, however, *First Nations: Race, Class and Gender Relations* provides a welcome, informative and provocative introduction to the issues of contemporary indigenous life in Canada.
