

BOOK REVIEWS

TILLY, CHRIS [and] CHARLES TILLY. *Work Under Capitalism*. [New Perspectives in Sociology.] Westview Press, Boulder 1998. x, 326 pp. Ill. £53.00. (Paper: £16.50.)

“The character of work under capitalism has always depended on hard bargaining within stringent institutional limits established by the previous histories of shared understandings and social relations. Future work will continue to depend on struggle – muted, routinized, or openly contentious.” These last two sentences of Tilly and Tilly’s book summarize very well the approach elaborated in their work. The book’s ambitious aim is to develop “a satisfactory theory of work and labor markets” (p. 16). It starts out by sketching three approaches: the neoclassical, Marxist and institutional theories of the labour market and the character of work. The first approach, in which the *homo economicus* (the maximizing individual) is the key player and changes in the organization of labour are largely explained in terms of technological development, is sharply criticized by the authors, a line of criticism that returns in their conclusion. In the rest of the book they build upon models and ideas developed by Marxists and institutionalists (the latter approach is interpreted as the “old” institutional economics and some of the new labour economics). This merging together of these two strands of theorizing is explained briefly as follows: “Marxists have fashioned more fruitful models of conflict, coercion, and deceit than neoclassicists and institutionalists. But they have not produced an adequate theory when it comes to such matters as job finding, careers, and inequality by gender, race, or ethnicity” (implying that institutionalists have specialized in the latter) (p. 17). The Tillys then go on to develop their own ideas, in which historical contingencies play a large role; to make this point, a separate chapter is devoted to the development of the cotton, coal and medical industries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In fact, in the analytical chart which summarizes the Tilly and Tilly approach “history” shapes “culture” and “past social relations”, which in turn affect the objectives of the producers (in relation, for example, to the quality and efficiency of the work), the mechanisms they have to satisfy these objectives (in terms of compensation, coercion and commitment), and the resulting bargaining process between workers and producers (p. 73). History seems to explain everything, but does that explain anything?

In the concluding chapter the approach of Tilly and Tilly is summarized differently – in a classical sociological way: “Drawing on institutionalist, Marxist, and organizational analyses, we have built an interactional model of work. We start with transactions among individuals rather than the individuals themselves, observe the bundling of transactions into different sorts of work contracts, and follow the elaboration of contracts into highly variable systems of production and distribution. We watch the unequal distribution of power affect the content and execution of work contracts [...]”. Here, interaction is the starting point, but again I wonder about the explanatory power of such an approach (and the way the authors put it does seem to imply that they are “only” the passive spectators of these processes – they “observe”, “follow” and “watch”).

These remarks are not intended to imply that the Tillys have not written a very stimulating book. It analyses a large number of interrelated issues – such as inequality at work, labour market segmentation, contention at work – in a new and often

refreshing way, using insights from a very broad range of studies. In a number of cases the well-known “Tillyan” boxes are used to analyse, for example, historical changes in the organization of labour in the three industries studied – the two axes of the box are in this case “extent of time-discipline” and “extent of short-term monetization”. This makes it possible to map the different development paths of the sectors involved, and to analyse the process of the growth of labour markets in general (pp. 144–149). Their analysis of the “triad” structure of the incentive structure of workers, characterized by “commitment, compensation and coercion”, is also very convincing. Although the authors concentrate on work under capitalism in contemporary United States, to make their points they use many fine examples from almost anywhere in time and space.

The book is published in the series *New Perspectives in Sociology*, and it clearly deserves this title. At the same time, as an economist and economic historian, one gets the impression that Tilly and Tilly have not really tried to narrow the gap between sociology and much of the new economic literature on this subject (new labour economics or new institutional economics). In a way, in formulating their starting point and conclusion, namely that work and labour markets are *social phenomena* and should be interpreted as such, they do not leave much room for debate with this neighbouring branch of the social sciences. Economists would ask, for example, “*Why* do people (workers, producers) interact?” (whereas Tilly and Tilly take this for granted), or “*Why* is history so important?”. Much of the new institutional economics combines the “neo-classical” starting point that individuals are rational (i.e. that they try to make the best of a given situation) with explanations of the dynamic interaction between individual (or group) behaviour, steered by the incentive structure of a given set of institutions, and their outcome, for example certain contracts or “governance structures”, which in turn may change the incentive structure of the individuals again. This kind of new institutional economics (following North and Williamson) often arrives at conclusions close to the findings of Tilly and Tilly – for example, they too tend to put the role of technology in explaining institutional change into perspective – but is not really taken seriously by the two authors (although at times the insights from some “institutionalists” are used). Perhaps this is a missed opportunity, because the economics and the sociology of “work under capitalism” seem to have converged much recently, and the subject is highly suitable for such a confrontation.

Jan Luiten van Zanden

SIMONTON, DEBORAH. *A history of European women’s work. 1700 to the present.* Routledge, London [etc.] 1998. xii, 337 pp. £16.99.

Deborah Simonton has written a very useful book. I just wish she had written a more adventurous one. *A History of European Women’s Work* provides a detailed description of the many and varied productive activities undertaken by women over three centuries with illustrations drawn from different European countries. As an accessible and well-written text, I recommend it. But at the same time I doubt that Simonton moves gender history forward or that she will have much impact on mainstream labour history. Why?

Although the book is crammed full of empirical detail, it is saved from empiricism by the use of key themes from women’s history to provide structure and organization.

For example, the social construction of “skill” as a gendered category is a recurring theme, explored nicely in a number of different historical contexts. The problem is that this and other themes – the “invisibility” of women’s work, the social invention of domesticity, the difference between men’s and women’s relationships to machinery, and the gendering of technology – have been widely examined already. Simonton brings these themes together in the context of a longer-run perspective and with cross-country European examples. But other authors have surveyed and synthesized. It is telling that Simonton herself relies heavily on the standard pre-existing surveys. It is not always clear what she has to add. Yet there is evidence of an opportunity missed. Sometimes Simonton appears well placed to provide new research and a fresh perspective. For example, the sections on eighteenth-century apprenticeship and its role in the creation and maintenance of gender divisions, which build on Simonton’s excellent original research, are all too brief.¹ The publisher, with commercial objectives, undoubtedly urged a general text, but researchers might have preferred something more specialized.

Two other weaknesses of the book should be mentioned – not to qualify grudgingly the praise already bestowed – but because they reflect tendencies within women’s history more generally. The first is the lack of quantitative research. The author relies on evidence from a text published in 1968 to provide the quantitative background, with no attempt to update the numbers or even to comment upon them. Moreover, the quantitative commentary is marred by a failure to think clearly about an appropriate measure of women’s work. The participation (or activity) rate is only introduced, and then rather awkwardly, on page 181 as the “coefficient of the utilization of potential female labour”. Raw numbers, and even the proportions of different workforces that were female, are hard to interpret in a context of varying industrial and age structures. Perhaps my disappointment reflects a fundamental disciplinary divide: Simonton writes as a social historian, I read as an economic historian. But a topic as inherently quantitative as a history of women’s work deserves a more determined struggle with the numbers. This weakness carries over into Simonton’s otherwise estimable bibliography. Quantitative studies have been neglected even when they might fill gaps in the broader picture. Some of this material might have been thought too “economic”, but this cannot be said of Angélique Janssen’s excellent book on the family and social change in Tilburg, or Marguerite Dupree’s fine monograph on the Staffordshire potteries, both of which are highly relevant.²

Simonton rationalizes the neglect of quantitative evidence with reference to the well-known tendency in censuses and employment surveys to undercount women workers. “Concentration on measurable statistics obscured women who were rarely counted” (p. 261). But this is to ignore the efforts of researchers who have struggled to gauge levels of undercounting and correct the figures accordingly. It is an argument for adjusting and supplementing quantitative sources, not ignoring them.

An alternative rationalization is that quantification is associated with aggregation and averaging, whereas Simonton’s preference is for a highly nuanced (a much overused word in this book) account, stressing the variety of women’s work and the heterogeneity

1. Deborah Simonton, “The Education and Training of Eighteenth-Century English Girls, with Special Reference to the Working Classes” (Ph.D., University of Essex, 1988).

2. Angélique Janssens, *Family and Social Change: The Household as a Process in an Industrializing Community* (Cambridge, 1993); Marguerite W. Dupree, *Family Structure in the Staffordshire Potteries 1840–1880* (Oxford, 1995).

of their experience. Here Simonton is at one with the current trend in women's history, which is to eschew generalization in favour of an emphasis on variety. Recognizing the range of women's experience is important but neither incompatible with measurement nor without costs. When an emphasis on heterogeneity confounds any attempt to summarize, it leaves women's history fragmented, too nuanced to understand as a whole, and impossible to integrate back into the mainstream.

What I perceive as the second weakness of the book could also be ascribed to my reading of social history through economic spectacles. I am far from an economic determinist, but nonetheless find it difficult to explain trends in women's work without reference to relative wages, productivities, and incomes. In steering clear of economics and emphasizing cultural and ideological explanations, Simonton is in harmony with other historians. But economic theory might provide ways of seeing general patterns within the diverse experience and act as a bridge to the mainstream.

Finally, there are signs that the book was rushed in the final stages of preparation. Sentences are repeated almost verbatim within a few pages and mistakes creep in. The history of the sickle and the scythe, as competitive harvest technologies each associated with a particular gender, is well known. Simonton discusses it twice. But then misrepresents it in the final pages. Women were better at using the sickle than the scythe.

Jane Humphries

CANNADINE, DAVID. *Class In Britain*. Yale University Press, New Haven [etc.] 1998. xiii, 242 pp. £19.95.

The title of David Cannadine's book as it was published by Columbia University Press was *The Rise and Fall of Class in Britain*. I prefer this title to the more anodyne title of the copy reviewed because it captures more exactly the tone and content of the book. (Both versions have exactly the same content). Cannadine continues to believe that class is meaningful for understanding the history of British society, although he is very aware of the prevailing historical fashion to discount the usefulness of the notion. Indeed, his book is welcome precisely because it presents a sustained and coherent argument for the centrality of class as an analytical category. Cannadine recognizes that class is not the *only* identity category in Britain. Yet he does believe that it is the most consistent and important way in which social stratification and social difference have been understood by the British themselves.

Class for Cannadine is both an historical phenomenon and a political device. Thus, he does not regard it particularly useful to try to measure degrees of class or class-consciousness or even, perhaps, to count how many people may be placed in the various divisions of a class structure. Cannadine neatly sidesteps, therefore, the issue of whether class is "real" and thus renders harmless the main argument of postmodernists against the idea of class. Indeed, by repositioning class from a socio-economic category to a political category, Cannadine deftly incorporates the postmodernist emphasis upon language and discourse into a framework that remains resolutely historical. Such a move, incidentally, highlights the usefulness for historians of a Weberian approach to the question of social stratification.

Such a formulation also allows us to talk sensibly about class without getting entangled in theological debates about classes "in themselves" and "for themselves".

Indeed, the most signal contribution of this book lies in its discussion of how class politics in Britain has been shaped and dominated by three different conceptions of the meaning of class in the politics of Britain. Those three typologies are: the hierarchical, which saw multiple gradations ruled over by a traditional elite; the dichotomous, which divided society into the populace and the (generally corrupt) privileged; and the three-class model, whose central character is to link class place to politics. All three conceptions were alive in the culture by the eighteenth century. But only the hierarchical and the dichotomous were vital to politics before the nineteenth century. It was Adam Smith who first formulated the triadic notion of class by adding in the middle section. Yet it was not until the nineteenth century that middle-class identity politics put themselves at the center of the class structure and therefore obliged the adoption of the three-tier model.

But, as Cannadine rightly emphasizes, such an appropriation only reinforced the competing visions of society as a patrician hierarchy or as a site of contention between “them” and “us”. By this reckoning, then, the story of class is not the rise and fall of one group or another, nor is it the story of one typology replacing another. Class in Britain is rather shaped by the relative place of one or other of the three typologies in the political language and discourse of the society. This is a very useful way to formulate the significance of class. It allows us to make sense of continuity and change in the various ways class has been manifested in British society. Thus, to take the most obvious example, the persistence of the hierarchical notion of class capped by the landed aristocracy in both the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries is not an anomalous hangover either in the nineteenth century nor in more recent times. Instead, it is testimony to the continuing utility and power of such a view of social stratification in politics.

These different typologies could exist and coexist in the political culture, even in the same person. Margaret Thatcher went a long way towards destroying and discrediting modern class politics in Britain. She effectively gelded the trade unions and marginalized traditional labour politics. Yet Margaret Thatcher saw the world through a prism of “them” and “us” that bore no relationship to standing or place in a traditional hierarchy. The lower-class Norman Tebbit was definitely one of “us”; the patrician Willie Whitelaw was probably one of “them”. But Margaret Thatcher also loved lords. On that recent day when the House of Lords as we know it was reformed out of existence, she appeared in mourning black. And as Prime Minister she actually used to bend her knee in the presence of lords spiritual or temporal.

Cannadine’s argument goes a long way to restoring the respectability and centrality of class to the history of British society. In addition to providing an explanation for continuities in the culture of class politics, it also allows us to retain a sense of change in our understanding of class. We do not need to see the process of class in history as a close-ended matter, but as something that is continually in motion around axes that do not move in a straight line. Thus, class formation is not bounded by beginnings and ends, but rather by reconfiguration of pre-existing elements into different and (for their time) new formations.

Yet, sophisticated as it is, Cannadine’s argument is not without its absences and limitations, some of which he would readily admit. At the beginning of the book, for example, Cannadine recognizes that class is just one identity amongst many and that any new master narrative must take account of that diversity. Yet he does not provide any guidance as to how are we to fit class into the wider constellation of gender,

national, ethnic and the like. Cannadine recognizes the problem, but he does not address it.

Similarly, his focus on class as political rhetoric allows him to bypass the thorny old question of how class stands in relation to economics. Yet economics remains to hand to be trundled on stage when the sets need to change. As a consequence, changes in the configuration of class politics are located within the familiar positivist framework. Economic and social change are recruited as needed to explain, for example, the introduction of the three-tier model of class which effectively politicized class in the nineteenth century.

Finally, Cannadine's argument has significance for the place of the nineteenth century in the wider narrative of British history. This account continues to privilege the nineteenth century as the locus of class history, arguing that it was the nineteenth century when ideas about class were developed both politically and intellectually. Yet, as Cannadine shows, ideas about class and even the politics that flowed from them had been active long before the mid- or late nineteenth century. Not enough is made of the fact that it was the eighteenth century when the varied typologies of class action and meaning first emerged.

Still, this book is a valuable contribution to the whole debate about class and how it should be treated by historians of Britain. It will not gratify committed poststructuralists; it avoids the kinds of questions that Marxist social history aspired to confront. Yet it is a curiously satisfying book for all that. Free of jargon or tortured theorizing, the book returns class to its rightful place as one of the centers of British identity. It provides a reasoned narrative to the history of class politics since the eighteenth century.

Richard Price

GRAF, ANGELA. J.H.W. Dietz 1843–1922. Verleger der Sozialdemokratie. Mit einem Nachwort von Horst Heidermann "Zur Nachkriegsgeschichte des Verlags J.H.W. Dietz Nachf.". [Politik- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte, Band 50.] Verlag J.H.W. Dietz Nachfolger, Bonn 1998. 357 pp. Ill. DM 48.00; S.fr. 46.00; S 350.00.

Of the many prominent individuals who helped shape German social democracy in the period after the 1870s, Heinrich Dietz is one of the last one might feel warranted a biography. Though Dietz laid the foundations for social democratic publishing and gave his name to a successful publishing house, as an individual he was never more than colourless, and he lacked the charm of people like August Bebel, Wilhelm Liebknecht and Karl Kautsky. Even in photographs, Dietz appears to have had "a non-too striking personality" (as Angela Graf puts it on p. 265 of her book).

Unlike many of his active contemporaries in the German social democratic movement, the life of Johan Heinrich Wilhelm Dietz (1843–1922) could hardly be described as exciting. Dietz was born in Lübeck in northern Germany, trained as a printer and later worked as such in St Petersburg and Hamburg. In the early 1870s he became active in the book printers' union and the social democratic movement. In 1875 his work as a printer and his involvement in social democracy became directly and inextricably linked when he was appointed manager of a printing cooperative that printed and published periodicals for the social democratic and trade union movements. In 1878, when the

Anti-Socialist Law was introduced in an attempt to emasculate social democracy, a bogus construction was used to make Dietz the formal owner of the printing cooperative. The company moved to Stuttgart in southern Germany in 1881, and Dietz continued to steer it through all manner of political difficulties until the Anti-Socialist Law was repealed in 1890. A man with sharp business acumen, he succeeded in guiding what was by then a respected and flourishing publishing house through very difficult times. His success paralleled that of the social democratic movement as a whole. The personal consequences of the Anti-Socialist Law for Dietz were limited to his once being forced to move house, and being imprisoned for six months, and in this respect he was better off than many of his colleagues. One of the periodicals Dietz published (after 1883) was *Die Neue Zeit*, the internationally celebrated journal on the theory of social democracy, edited by Karl Kautsky. In 1881 Dietz was elected to the *Reichstag*, and he remained there until 1918, always on the conservative wing of the party. Though the Anti-Socialist Law was not renewed in 1890, it was not until 1905 that the Social Democratic Party again took over definitive control of the publishing house of J.H.W. Dietz, a private company since 1890. Dietz continued to manage the business until his death in 1922.

In a letter to Friedrich Engels, August Bebel wrote that as a businessman Heinrich Dietz was indispensable to the party (p. 214). Kautsky likened him to major German “bourgeois” publishers such as Cotta and Campe (p. 11). For the general public, though, he was simply a name on the title page of the books and periodicals he published. Unlike most other prominent social democrats, Dietz himself actually wrote very little: his entire output runs to just sixteen articles, some of them very short. In the *Reichstag* too, he was similarly inconspicuous: in his thirty-seven years as a member he spoke on only thirty occasions.

J.H.W. Dietz 1843–1922. Verleger der Sozialdemokratie by Angela Graf, and published by Verlag J.H.W. Dietz, confirms the picture of Heinrich Dietz that emerges from the existing historiography: that of a conservative social democrat, lacking real charisma, a consummate businessman who, as a result, became a successful publisher. Graf provides an impressive list of sources, but it obscures the fact that there are almost no biographical sources on Dietz other than the traces people, and especially people in prominent positions, leave behind. Marriages, addresses, legitimate and illegitimate children are in the population register; we know from police files and the extensive histories of the labour movement the names of those who were active social democrats in the nineteenth century; publishers leave a legacy of printed material. A biography, certainly one of an unobtrusive person like Dietz, needs personal documents, and in the case of Dietz these are almost entirely lacking. No personal legacy of Dietz has been preserved, nor did he leave an archive relating to his work as a publisher: for example, he himself said he usually destroyed letters once he had dealt with them (p. 11). Graf has been able to make use of several hundred letters *from* Dietz to various social democratic colleagues, but most of these are business letters and reveal scarcely anything about the real Dietz.

The real Dietz is not actually to be found in this book. What Graf has written is a solid study on German social democracy and the history of a left-wing publishing house, in which Heinrich Dietz is given a special place; but it contains no surprising new information, and Dietz is either absent for whole stretches or has only a walk-on part. An example is the paragraph on p. 126 on the funeral of the Stuttgart social democrat Albert Dulk in 1884. The author tells us that Dulk died as the result of a heart attack, that he wanted to be cremated, that because there was no crematorium in Stuttgart his coffin had to be taken to Gotha, that estimates of the number of mourners at the funeral

varied from 5,000 to 25,000. Graf tells us who spoke, that the police, though present in large numbers, retained a low-key presence. And then, in the final sentence, that Dietz too was among the many who marched behind the coffin, “all wearing red flowers in their buttonholes”. If there had been enough biographical material on Dietz, this paragraph would have been redundant. *Of course* Dietz was there to pay his last respects to a fellow party member and Stuttgarter. Only if Dulk had played a role in Dietz’s life or if Dietz had spoken at the funeral, or if for some reason Dietz was *not* present – that *might* have been worth mentioning. Moreover, and this is a problem that recurs frequently in this book, Graf implies in her use of quotation marks that she is quoting, but from where she has obtained her information on the funeral she does not say.

At the beginning of the book’s penultimate chapter Graf unexpectedly presents a character sketch of Dietz, almost by way of a summary: he was friendly, but acted assuredly, self-conscious, and he was not exactly susceptible to revising opinions once formed. On the other hand, he was also a phlegmatic north German who had become irritable as the result of continual (and possibly excessive) work. Perhaps, Graf suggests, Dietz had become arrogant as the result of his self-assurance, but he had a talent for compromise, a strong need for harmony, and he wanted recognition from within the party, something others in turn regarded as opportunism (p. 246). It would have been more appropriate to have had such an analysis at the end of the book, as the conclusion to an argument. For example, the view that Dietz was an opportunist would have fitted in nicely in an analysis of his relatively conservative views as a member of the *Reichstag* and of the opinions of others both within and outside social democracy. Heinrich Dietz’s status as publisher of, as he himself put it, “*socialistica* packaged in capitalist elegance”, as a social democratic capitalist who lived a comfortable “bourgeois” life, might well have provided a useful peg on which to hang a successful biographical sketch. At several points in the book we read that Dietz maintained good relations with non-socialists. However, instead of looking for interesting sources to illustrate these contacts (in the archives of other “bourgeois” publishers for example) Graf attempts to explain Dietz’s “in retrospect reformist behaviour” (the author is referring to his conservative politics) in terms of the need he felt to be recognized as a politician and as an individual. Lacking the political forthrightness and oratorical skills of someone like August Bebel, Dietz was forced to try and achieve his objectives through contacts with non-social democrats, at least according to Graf’s curious reasoning (pp. 127–128).

In general, one must conclude that *J.H.W. Dietz 1843–1922. Verleger der Sozialdemokratie* does not succeed in solving the problem presented by the lack of sources. It is a pity the author fails to reiterate in her book the same reservations concerning the sources that she expressed in her 1996 thesis, on which this book is based. The subtitle of her thesis was “Biographische Annäherung an ein politisches Leben”, and in it Graf argued there could be no real biography of Dietz because there were too few personal biographical sources. What she *has* reiterated in her book is something resembling a hypothesis: Graf wonders (p. 14) whether Heinrich Dietz’s career was a “typical” one, whether it contained “paradigmatic aspects of the genesis, structure and behaviour of social-democratic party elites”. Unfortunately, neither the thesis nor the book makes any attempt whatsoever to answer this. This is not entirely surprising, since doing so would have required comparative or prosopographical research.

Graf’s book concludes with an informative postscript by Horst Heidermann, “Zur Nachkriegsgeschichte des Verlags J.H.W. Dietz Nachf.,” which outlines the history of J.H.W. Dietz publishers. The firm still exists; indeed, it published the book being

reviewed here. Heidermann discusses the liquidation of the publishing house by the Nazis in 1934, its resurrection after 1945, the creation – for ideological and political reasons – of two publishers bearing the name Dietz, one in West Germany and one in East Germany, and the legal difficulties that prevented the two firms merging after German Unification in 1989.

Jan Gielkens

O'NEIL, PATRICK H. *Revolution from Within. The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and the Collapse of Communism.* [Studies of Communism in Transition.] Edward Elgar, Cheltenham [etc.] 1998. xviii, 257 pp. £55.00.

A decade after the collapse of state socialism in Hungary its study is still dominated by the paradigm characterized by the notion of transition. According to this line of argument the state socialist regimes began political and economic reform during the 1960s and 1970s. As a result the beginnings of market relations in the economy emerged, followed by the creation of an embryonic civil society in the 1980s. As a result the regime collapsed and out of the embryonic civil society sprang the institutions of a new democracy. Using the framework that such explanation provides, political scientists have produced a multitude of studies of party formation, the creation of constitutions, or of an emerging Hungarian parliamentarianism. Few of these scholars have even attempted to question the dominance of the “transition” framework even though events over the past decade have made it progressively less tenable. The victory of the post-communist Socialist Party in the 1994 parliamentary elections, the catastrophic performance of the Alliance of Free Democrats – the political successor to the democratic opposition of the socialist years – in the 1998 election have raised important questions about the appropriateness of this framework. One real merit of Patrick O'Neil's book is that it is a well-focused empirical study that interrogates the dominant theoretical framework laid about above and finds it wanting.

On a superficial level Hungary's 1989 seems exceptional when compared with its east European neighbours. There were no spectacular confrontations, violent or otherwise, between the crowd and the state like those in Berlin, Bucharest, Prague or Sofia. There was no powerful umbrella group to rally the opposition like Poland's Solidarity, the Czech Lands' Civic Forum or Slovakia's Public Against Violence. On closer examination the trends that eroded state socialism quietly from below across the region during the 1980s were visible in Hungary also. Economic stagnation, the rise of peace, environmental and citizens' organizations independent of the state, and growing distrust of the state by the citizenry were marked in all countries – Hungary included. Why did this discontent manifest itself spectacularly in other states, and less comprehensively in Hungary?

O'Neil answers this question by examining the nature of Hungary's communist party – the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. He argues essentially that the party was a child of Hungary's 1956 Revolution, the institutionalization of a tacit compromise that existed between regime and people following the suppression of the revolution. In exchange for accepting Hungary's status as a member of the Soviet Bloc the party effectively incorporated the country's emerging middle class into the system during the 1960s in a subordinate, but nevertheless significant role. As state socialism's crisis deep-

ened during the 1980s, the party was characterized by tension between the ideologically minded, older leadership and a more technocratic, intellectual younger generation. This tension created open conflict within the party in the second half of the decade as the political climate in the country altered leading to the formation of “reform circles” that pressed for a democratization of the system from within.

O’Neil documents the internal power struggles using the contemporary press, some newly accessible archival materials, and in-depth interviews with the key participants. The wealth of fascinating material is judiciously used, the account of the power struggles from the formation of the original “reform circles” to the intrigues of the last congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party in September 1989 are superbly written. The result is that at the heart of the book is a solidly-researched, well-written account of a ruling party collapsing from within as the cold winds of external change turned its dictatorship over Hungarian society to dust. If only for this reason, this work deserves to be widely read outside the ranks of specialist researchers in political science, because it forms a key work of contemporary history. To date it is probably the best single original study of the events of 1989 in Hungary, and is perhaps the most original contribution to the history of the collapse of state socialism in the region as a whole.

Moving from the specifics of the empirical study that lies at the book’s core to the general theoretical implications, this book is one that deserves to be read widely. Its second chapter, which is comparative, suggests fruitful lines of research for contemporary historians and political scientists working on other countries. Because of the way in which it documents change within a ruling communist party it points to the need for more serious work on the phenomenon of post-communist political parties in countries as diverse as Bulgaria, the former GDR, Hungary, Lithuania and Poland. The implication of the evidence used by O’Neil surely points to the value of enquiring about the degree to which reformist tendencies both within the Hungarian and other communist parties influenced and shaped the formation of their post-communist successors.

The second major implication of this work is that it suggests fruitful ways of conceptualizing the east-central European experience of state socialism. The implicit assumption of O’Neil’s analysis is that the dynamics of political change under state socialism were pushed by interaction between state and society, rather than dictated by the party-state alone. This suggests that, rather than continue to pursue the approaches of a tired political history that concentrates on meetings of the Politburo, or the deeds of party general secretaries, contemporary historians of east-central European communism would do better if they examined the interactions between the state and social groups. For this historian of east-central European communism that implication is one to be welcomed.

Following on from this second major implication is a third. O’Neil’s work points to the need to examine the events of 1989 in their full historical context. For too long accounts of the momentous events a decade ago have employed modes of explanation based upon frameworks that ignore, or underrate the importance of, what occurred prior to 1989 to what followed it. O’Neil’s tightly-focused study points to the need for a more general contemporary history of Hungary during the last twenty-five years of the decade.

Mark Pittaway

SCHROEDER, KLAUS, unter Mitarb. von Steffen Alisch. *Der SED-Staat. Partei, Staat und Gesellschaft 1949–1990*. Carl Hanser Verlag, München [etc.] 1998. xvi, 782 pp. Ill. DM 78.00; S.fr. 71.00; S 569.00.

The author, one of the heads of the research unit on the SED state based at the Free University of Berlin, wants this substantial book to be a comprehensive reference work and even a standard in its field. This claim has been endorsed by a number of reviewers. But seemingly going against this aim, Schroeder and his collaborator do not shy away from expressing some strident political opinions and judgements or from polemical attacks on West German research on the former East Germany.

This useful study is based not on a study of original sources, but on the by now extensive scientific literature. Judging from the acknowledgements and thanks on the title page and in the introduction, the other researchers attached to the unit made substantial contributions to the work.

The structure of the book provides clear evidence of its intended reference character. There are three major sections: part A, on the political and historical developments of the Soviet-occupied zone and the German Democratic Republic from 1945–1990; part B, on the structure of East German society; and part 3, on the “determinants and trends” of East German history. Every chapter is headed by a summary, which gives the outlines of Schroeder’s views, as well as a chronology. Keywords in the margins are meant to improve the accessibility and further underline the reference nature of the work.

In comparison with the overall length of the book, the introduction has come out remarkably short. Yet it is important, because in it Schroeder sets out clearly and boldly (without detailed substantiation and without reference to the key part C) his interpretive framework and guiding values.

In the introduction the author states bluntly, for instance, that many of the studies on East German history published before 1989 are, in the light of the now available information and documentation, “worthless” (p. xv) or at the very least in need of serious correction. That is certainly true for the SED and East German histories commissioned by the party. But Schroeder also applies this verdict to most of the West German researchers on East Germany, which in his view painted a false picture of the GDR. This is also true to some extent. He commends only a few authors, in particular Karl C. Thalheim, who studied the East German economy, and Karl Wilhelm Fricke, who studied the opposition movement. To this short list Schroeder adds authors such as Martin Draht and Ernst Richert, who, he postulates, analysed the GDR in the 1950s from theoretical democratic and anti-totalitarian perspectives. This book is intended to pick up this thread.

It is unclear why Schroeder cites a historian of the calibre of Hermann Weber in the bibliography and also in the book itself, but otherwise does not seem to consider him worth mentioning, especially not in the introduction, which of course often holds a pivotal position in scientific works. I certainly find this surprising and irritating, since Weber’s studies (and others from his circle) on East German history are widely regarded as standards in the field, and their judgements and assessments have largely stood the test of time. That has little to do with the additional knowledge of details now that the East German archives are accessible, but rather with fundamental evaluations. And Weber was never equivocal.

Already in the introduction Schroeder set out his interpretation of the demise of the GDR, and he elaborates his views in the subsequent sections with varying intensity, but with pedagogical (and probably also political) intentions. Against the background of the ongoing debate on the theoretical and conceptual classification and characterization of the GDR, he argues for a “post-classical” totalitarianism model, because in his view this is particularly suited to describing and evaluating the GDR’s history and development. “In general, from its external conditions the GDR can be characterized as a Soviet satellite state, and on the basis of its internal structure as a totalitarian or late-totalitarian welfare and surveillance state” (p. xvi).

In this broadly very readable and impressive work, Schroeder wants to make a contribution to the understanding of the period of the divided Germany, by reconstructing the history of the GDR on the basis of the key research findings and by revealing the key controversies on the evaluation of historical events and central structures. This is all the more necessary in his view because he does not want to leave the field of historical interpretation to those who were responsible for the dictatorship and their publications and biographies. This is a persuasive argument, but it does ignore the fact that the dictators and their lackeys are not the only players; there are also those people whose political views may be at variance with the author’s. This would explain a number of assessments which cannot be regarded as balanced.

It should be borne in mind that Schroeder is primarily interested in the political history of the GDR, which for him is a history of the SED party dictatorship. Within the framework of the political and social system imposed by the Soviets or constructed in their image, he attributes the SED with total executive control in the state, the economy and society. With regard to the early period, when the structures Schroeder describes were established and imposed, this is a pragmatic approach and generally also convincing. Accordingly the first 400-odd pages cover the political development of the Soviet zone and the GDR from the occupation of Germany by the four victorious powers until the reunification process in 1989/90. The next 200-odd pages deal with the social structures. Here Schroeder’s main interest is clearly the 1980s, and thus he focuses on the end. In the final 50-odd pages the previous expositions and research findings are interpreted under the heading “determinants and trends”. These include both the considerable Soviet influence, the GDR’s existential dependence on the Soviet Union and the regime’s “willingness to collaborate” from the beginning, and the complex relationship between the two German states. The latter the author places within the widely used model of an interplay between demarcation and rapprochement.

Both the appendix of documents and the bibliography are thoroughly researched and very useful. In the context of academic teaching, for instance, these will certainly help to facilitate and promote the use of this work.

Even so, it must be said that the rather vivid style and approach lead, inevitably, to omissions, for instance in terms of the complex social conditions from the beginning (given the wartime destruction), which remained complex in future years. Here the exposition becomes rather too linear, so that fundamental events and processes such as the uprising on 17 June 1953 and the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961 are not fully analysed as elements in complex social processes. Occasionally the behaviours of both the politicians and those affected by their actions, or the victims, are not sufficiently explained. Especially for the later period, that between the erection of the Wall and the impending final crisis, the explanations for social developments – with the exception of the dictatorial control methods employed to maintain the system – are not sufficient.

And not enough attention is paid to the economic and social system and people's daily lives. That may also be due, however, to the fact that there are still considerable gaps in the research on this period and on these problems in particular. Then again, the author's assessments are also influenced by the assumption of the regime's inevitable collapse.

The political evaluations also become clear, even though they are not identified as such. For instance, Schroeder is not very persuasive when he puts a much more negative gloss on intra-German relations during the centre-left coalition period (1969–1982) than during the Kohl era. (Most researchers generally see continuity throughout these years.) Whether the author's tendency towards not always balanced but certainly unequivocal judgements will help to make his book into the intended standard reference work remains to be seen. In any case, some of his insights do not take us beyond what we could read years ago in Hermann Weber's studies.

Beatrix Bouvier

STERNHELL, ZEEV. *The Founding Myths of Israel. Nationalism, Socialism, and the Making of the Jewish State.* Transl. by David Maisel. Princeton University Press, Princeton 1998. xv, 419 pp. £25.00.

This book is an important contribution to the historiography of both Labour–Zionism in Palestine during the British Mandate and of the ideological creation of Jewish nationalism in general. Based on meticulous empirical research, and on a penetrating textual analysis of the ideology and practices of the political leaders of the Labour movement, it exposes the importance of Labour's nationalist approaches in the complex construction of the Jewish community in Palestine and of pre-state institutions. It places Labour's Zionist nationalism in the larger context of European integral nationalism, and demonstrates the basic nationalist assumptions and intentions which guided the mobilization of Labour's institutions and social bases in the cause of building a Jewish national home. Apart from long-established critiques of leftist circles outside and inside the Zionist movement, and some earlier and no less important historical treatments of Labour's major role in the Zionist project, this emphasis on the overriding nationalism of Labour was long overdue. Furthermore, it adds, though recurrently in a provocative manner, to the wide-ranging attacks on Labour's pre-state non-democratic practices and non-socialist stances. Hardly ever before has there been so clear and detailed an ideological explication of the intended social costs of state-building in Palestine, of the manipulative practices of Labour–Zionism's professional politicians, and of the myths which served in political mobilization. No wonder that the original Hebrew publication of the book in 1995 triggered a heated debate in Israeli historiographical and sociological circles – focusing as it did on Sternhell's total discarding of the socialist elements in Labour's ideology and praxis, on his contextualization of Labour–Zionism in European National Socialism, and on his devastating attack on Labour's pretensions to uphold universalistic values and to build a new and equal Jewish society in conflict-ridden Palestine. It is one of merits of the book that a historical treatment of central factors impacting the mentality and identity of some of the main architects of Israeli society brought about such public interest, responding forcefully to the paucity of Labour

historiography in Israel and, no less significantly, to urgent calls in Israeli society for social and political rethinking of its past.

This rethinking and supposed myth-breaking is offered by Sternhell's threefold argument. First, that under the leadership of the founders and politicians of Labour Zionism, the Labour movement was unable either to contain Zionist aspirations for territorial expansion or to build a just and an egalitarian society in Palestine. Secondly, that these failures were not the consequence of objective conditions which were beyond Labour's control, but the result of a conscious ideological choice made at Labour's initial formation, which continuously informed its practices throughout the period of the British Mandate. Finally, that this choice was never fed by a unique ideology (propagated at the time as Labour's constructive socialism), but overwhelmingly by a local version of organic nationalism and nationalist socialism. The latter, Sternhell argues, consciously abandoned the universal aims of socialism and the creation of an alternative for capitalism in favour of the particularistic objectives of Zionist nationalism. These arguments are substantiated by analysing, on the one hand, the writings, speeches and platforms of the main ideologues and leaders of the Labour movement such as Aaron David Gordon, David Ben-Gurion and Berl Katznelson; and, on the other hand, by sketching Labour's policies on a variety of political, social, economic, and cultural issues as outlined in the actions of the politicians and the *Histadrut* as a whole. These sources allow Sternhell to decipher the way of thinking of Labour's ideologues and leaders and their true intentions; but also to expose their manipulative discourses, hidden assumptions and blatant discursive and non-discursive tools of social and political mobilization for the non-socialist, non-democratic nationalist cause. For the admirers of Labour's pre-state leaders and state-builders, and for those who, for one reason or another, believe in the ideological formulations, social building and heroic legacies of the Labour movement, this explication is truly shattering. But beyond this integrative portrayal, does the book really offer any interpretative and methodological novelty? Does it really provide what Sternhell defines as a revolutionary correction of a politically- and historiographically-distorted past?

The book is about a Labour movement but can hardly be considered a Labour history. Rather, it is an ideological and a power-political history of a small elite of Zionist nationalist state-builders who sought to manipulate socialist ideologies and socially progressive policies. The latter purported to mobilize Jewish immigrants to Palestine for the national cause of building a Jewish state – at the expense of the local Arab population, and even of the social and mental needs of individual Jewish immigrants. Whatever socialism there was in this elite's political vocabulary, whatever aspirations it had for social change in the Jewish diasporic situation, these, so Sternhell contends, only served to mask the real and power-schemed orientation to erect a nationally-powered society that would serve the elite's nationalist and socially manipulative ideology. In this way Sternhell's angry diatribe against the powerful Labour elite and its national project turns into a history of a local explication of a form of a socialist nationalism, while abandoning any pretension towards being a history of those led by this elite. But can any nationalism of Labour, including European Labour with which Sternhell compares his case (and which was no less national), be explained while ignoring the experiences of its social bases and their formative influence on what Labour leaders said and did?

Undoubtedly the Jewish Labour movement in Palestine was national, and its role in bringing about the establishment of a Zionist state was crucial. This was already being

argued, however, by Labour's elite itself before the 1920s, and more vocally throughout the period of the Mandate. Moreover, the leaders were proud of it, and never concealed the fact that their social and political policies had Zionist materialization at their core. Their notions of land conquest, ousting Arab workers from the Jewish economic sector, and of segregating Palestine's economy along national lines, so as to assure the absorption of Jewish immigration and Palestine's demographic transformation, were outspoken, and openly served in recruitment and mobilization. Scholarly readings of Labour's attacks on workers' individualism, and on Jewish communists and strikebreakers, of Labour's massive attempts at persuading Jewish employers to prefer Jewish workers over Arab ones, long ago gave a clear impression of the extent of the presence of nationalist thinking in Labour's discourse and practices. National terminology fed Labour's institutional building (such as the *Histadrut's* labour exchanges and sick fund), and in reading the speeches, daily letters, and platforms of leaders such as David Ben-Gurion and Berl Katznelson (well documented in excellent biographies of them), it would be hard to ignore the role played by Zionist thinking in justifying and legitimizing the submission of the social to the national. Workers' individual interests were often restrained for the sake of central control, for the enhancement of collectivism and for the realization of Labour's national aims in Palestine's labour market. This restraint was, however, far from hidden – it featured widely in autobiographies and biographies, and the rich workers' press during the Mandate (in Hebrew and Yiddish) referred to it continually. Furthermore, historians and sociologists, in numerous publications since the 1970s, exposed the national aspects of inequality in the Labour movement, focusing on issues such as labour market strategies, discrimination against women, the contradictory roles of Labour as an employer, and the discouragement of trade unionism and workers' militancy against employers. Analysis of these matters began long ago to explicate the processes and mechanisms (and not only the leaders' policies) which affected the preference of the national over the social.

Moreover, could a revolutionary rereading of the texts and policies (which Sternhell promises) ignore a much-needed juxtaposition with the mountain of texts produced by the rank-and-file of the Labour movement? The basic, though unspoken, assumption of Sternhell's excellent exposition of Labour's nationalism is that what Labour's leaders thought, wrote, said and did reflected the reality of Labour's experience during the British Mandate. No doubt the *Histadrut* was politicized from the start. The leaders controlled the dominant *Achdut Ha-Avoda* Party which, in the early 1930s, turned into *Mapai*, the Labour Party which dominated the political life of the *Yishuv* and Israel for many years. The Party dominated the *Histadrut*, the unions and the *Histadrut's* social and cultural institutions, and, from the 1930s onwards, also central facets of the Zionist movement. No doubt the *Histadrut* was a centralized and hierarchical organization, operating as it did through a variety of country-wide and local institutions, again dominated by politicians and bureaucrats. But was this skeletal and structural nature of Labour reflective of the reality of workers' lives, of the conditions which affected Labour's institutional building, and the processes which affected workers' nationalist attitudes? The picture was in fact much more complex and polymorphous. In many ways the *Histadrut* had to exert tremendous efforts to control and mobilize its social bases. Despite its national-driven ideology, which was oriented towards social selection, it hardly controlled the social structure of the incoming Jewish immigrants. Its ideology of social formation often lagged behind the changes in the social, economic, and cultural characteristics of incoming immigrants, veteran labourers and skilled workers. The local

Labour Councils, though heavily dependent on *Histadrut* budgets, were in unceasing conflict with the power centres in Tel Aviv, and Jewish workers in Palestine's towns were far from being an easily mobilized and obedient mass. The most salient example of this was the leaders' attempt to exclude Arab workers from Palestine's Jewish labour market. Throughout the Mandate period this project failed, despite Labour's national ideology and contacts with the Jewish middle class. It failed not only because Jewish employers resisted raising their labour costs, and not only because Jewish workers found it hard to compete with Arabs workers' skill and low wages, but also because the *Histadrut* found it difficult to control its own members and contain the labour market survival strategies of workers at large. It seems that Labour's nationalist mobilizing project determined the centralist nature of the *Histadrut* and its social control mechanisms not only because ideologically it intended to do so, but no less because it faced insurmountable resistance at the local level. The hegemony of the politicians was often contested both by local Labour bureaucrats and by workers themselves, and these conflicts often provoked feelings of frustration among the political leaders that the ideological paths they paved did not correspond to the reality of workers' experiences and needs. This was one of the causes of the further centralization and bureaucratization of the *Histadrut*. The latter evidently entailed not only non-democratic practices but also a widening of the gap between leaders and led which affected Labour's cohesion. To draw, as Sternhell does, a synchronic portrayal of the Jewish working strata and of the *Histadrut* would fit the national and social engineering orientations of Labour's elite, but does not necessarily correspond to the polymorphic historical reality, and to the complexity of origins and motives which constructed the national identity of the Jewish worker.

Another question which Sternhell's approach is too narrow to answer is that of the totalitarian nature of *Histadrut* institutions. Why did the nationalistic Labour elite need social and cultural institutions to achieve its national goals at all? Why was it necessary to employ so much institutional force to coerce its social bases and enforce its policies? Moreover, why was it necessary to produce and reproduce so many masking devices and manipulative schemes? Labour's social and cultural institutions achieved much more than mere social control. They often sprouted not because of the elite's policies but despite them. These institutions allowed (despite the leaders' intentions) the evolution of local decentralized and uncontrolled local "institutional kingdoms" that placed *Mapai's* political and electoral hegemony under strong pressures. Finally, though these institutions served in the making of the state, their economic and social failures during the Mandate period affected Labour's national path much more than its initial ideological designs. Labour's complex institutions were meant to serve Jewish workers "from cradle to grave". But their rich variety produced not only mobilization for the national cause and the filling in of an institutional vacuum, but to a large extent also a significant defensive umbrella for immigrants and workers who experienced serious threats to their survival in Palestine partly entailed by the Zionist project itself. Why were these institutions necessary for the realization of Zionism? Why cater for the social needs of the worker in employment – health, accommodation, insurance and the like – and supply these services with Labourist language? If Sternhell could have contextualized Labour's institutions not only in the national project, but also in the defensive needs of the Jewish workers and of the weak Labour institutions in a "hostile" labour market, the whole picture of the nature of the *Histadrut's* project would seem different. Furthermore, what is lacking in Sternhell's explanation is that the workers' labour market

weaknesses and their inability to limit the power of employers forced them and their leaders to defend themselves not only by creating a variety of protective institutions, but even a language of a solidarity and moral community. No one doubted at the time that this language excluded class struggle, and avoided serious and committed cooperation with Arab workers and supra-nationalistic values. But these exclusionary discourses and practices were not only the consequence of an elite-inspired ideology, but of workers' daily reactions to objective conditions. As in the question of Labour's control, here also only a social history of Labour's nationalism can clarify the picture which a history of ideas as such cannot.

Furthermore, the questions Sternhell so skilfully provokes cannot be answered fully by the methodology he uses. While it is important to analyse what the elite said and attempted to do, it is misleading not to refer to what it failed to do; in particular, to the conditions in which it operated and to the wider system of Labour's external relations with Arab workers and Jewish employers on the one hand, and internal relations with its own rank-and-file on the other. The elite on which Sternhell focuses was undoubtedly ideologically motivated, but it was also pragmatic and responded to its own weaknesses, to changing circumstances, and to the impact of factors which were often beyond its control. Its nationalist policies and practices cannot therefore be analysed only on their own terms. Labour's failure to persuade Jewish employers to prefer Jewish over Arab workers was more the consequence of the power of private capital in the local Jewish economy, and much less of Labour's own doings. Despite the mobilizing powers of the *Histadrut* Labour Councils in the towns vis-à-vis Jewish workers, and despite the growing recognition by Jewish employers of the legitimacy of the *Histadrut* labour exchanges, Labour could hardly be described as having total control over its membership. The nationalism of the rank-and-file of the *Histadrut*, its meaning to the everyday life of the workers, and the role it played in creating bonds among them, was much more a complicated phenomenon than a mere acting out of the what their leaders said. This raises some further questions. If Labour leaders marketed a certain vision of social renewal only in order to mobilize Jewish immigrants and workers for the national cause, why was so much effort exerted to mask its true intentions? Was the social base so resistant or militant that such manipulations were badly needed? Moreover, if the elite's socialism was nothing but an empty creed, why was it used in the first place? Was the nationalist creed not sufficiently strong and convincing so that another set of ideas was needed to assist it? Sternhell's book does not confront these questions because the only context he refers to is that of the political and bureaucratic elite. A history of the national identity of any political and social movement cannot stop short at that.

It is crucial to remember that within the contexts of Labour's national declarations and policies, of its segregationist and discriminatory practices, and of its blatant forms of elitist condescension (oriented significantly not only against Arabs but also against oriental Jews, Jewish women, communists and individualists in general), a certain social experimentation took place which could not be thrown out with the bath water. When we look at the fate of Jewish immigrants and workers in Palestine's urban sector, particularly in Arab-dominated towns, this social experimentation cannot be ignored. It was largely focused not on creating a socialist alternative as such, but on defending the rank-and-file. The *Histadrut's* defensive frameworks, though serving Labour's national aims well, did many other things too; and they failed, not necessarily because of ideological distortions or discursive manipulations, but because of economic, social, political, and cultural conditions which Sternhell totally ignores. Trade unionism, hardly

mentioned in the book, well illustrates the point. From the start the *Histadrut* was hostile to unions as leaders feared their militancy. They were suspicious of potential class contacts between Arab and Jewish workers, and opposed both the unions' threat on Labour's national consensus with employers, and their interesting closed-shop anti-immigrant orientations. But the restraint of trade unionism was not only a consequence of ideology and political phraseology, but also of conditions on the ground. The British threats to militancy surely played a role, as did the fears of many Jewish workers that cooperating with Arab workers might influence their working conditions. No less important were the fierce conflicts among the ranks of the Jewish workers, and the resistance of Jewish employers to union representation at the workplace, a resistance which had more to do with their employment traditions than with Labour's ideology. A fine history "from above", this book would surely benefit from some history "from below".

David De Vries

HARVEY, NEIL. *The Chiapas Rebellion. The Struggle for Land and Democracy*. Duke University Press, Durham [etc.] 1998. xviii, 293 pp. Ill. Maps. £34.00. (Paper: £11.95.)

Since the onset of the Chiapas Rebellion in 1994, many books have been published about the intricacies and the social context of the Zapatista rebellion in this most backward state of the Mexican federation. This multi-level analysis of the complex Chiapas situation is certainly one of the best documented among such works.

Harvey began his study of Chiapas with extensive fieldwork almost ten years before the onset of the Zapatista Rebellion by examining several *chiapaneco* peasant organizations and their impact on the political system through their ability to erode the established corporatist and clientelist patterns of authoritarian political control and to promote respect for constitutional rights. Following his experiences with and analysis of the pre-1994 peasant mobilization, the next logical step was to ask the same questions about the popular movement EZLN, the "well-organized indigenous army with a mass base support" (p. 3) that started its rebellion on 1 January 1994. Did the EZLN break with existing patterns of rural protest and pave the way toward political change? In Harvey's poststructuralist view it did so through its break with established corporatist citizenship, which had sought to determine and regulate acceptable political behaviour in Mexico for many decades, and by presenting a new citizenship and rights which are not so much the reflection of liberal-constitutional rights as the result of a continuous process of construction and transformation in the course of multiple local struggles.

He reveals this course of action through a series of long-term case studies of communities restructured in the continuous process of resistance and involvement with Latino (i.e. non-indigenous) society and the state. In highland villages, the state and the ruling party supported Latino and indigenous *caciques*, expelling or forcing young dissidents to migrate. In adjacent, more peripheral zones, the role of the state was weaker and enabled Latino elites to manipulate the state-led introduction of agrarian reform to their advantage. Conversely, the state's weakness provided opportunities for resisting these Latino elites. Here, the elites tried to force out dissidents, and the tropical Lacandon forest area became the refuge for migrants from the highlands and the sur-

rounding hills, who already numbered 100,000 by 1970. In the isolated valleys of the forest, the absence of state and party facilitated the Church's role in establishing more horizontal base-type communities – quite different from the local bossisms in the other zones. Here, colonists refashioned native Mayan traditions into a new discourse of liberation and struggle, recreating ethnic identity through organizational militancy and shared religious beliefs.

The author subsequently places these community processes in the national perspective of the 1970s and 1980s. Government and party tactics of cooption or repression fomented increasing restiveness. The 1968 student revolt – a symbol of heightened political awareness – intensified radical leftist student connections with rural Mexico in efforts to implement Maoist tactics. In the Chiapas communities they met with catechists from the San Cristobal diocese, imbued with Liberation theology. The 1968 experience also intensified distrust of political parties and official labour unions. Post-1968 governments tried to soften this attitude with more populist policies but continued deploying the same tactics. Dissenting peasant organizations thrived, although they had to cope with increasing debate on whether confrontation or a constructive dialogue on government proposals was the national strategy to be pursued. This debate became even more difficult because of widening networks and participation by a great variety of popular groups, reflecting objectives and priorities of their own. In this situation of vulnerability, national organizations had to face the mid-1980s embrace of neoliberal policies, including privatization of *ejidos* and free-market policies.

In these same years the Mexican government and the United States became worried about security in Chiapas, due to the expanding civil war in Guatemala and the influx of refugees. State strategies now defined Chiapas as a national security problem and proposed undoing the neglect of centuries with infrastructure development programmes, social services and agrarian rehabilitation. The plans failed for several reasons. The interests of national security and the ranchers' elite drew the landowner General Castellanos into the governorship and instituted a repressive regime. Latino elites now felt free to act and managed to suppress, once again, an agrarian rehabilitation programme. Moreover, the road programme ended as soon as the threat from across the border subsided. Local *chiapaneco* organizations such as the peasant organization Emiliano Zapata (OCEZ) and the Union of Peasant Unions (UU) launched forceful actions simultaneously in Chiapas and Mexico City and suffered reprisals, while other unions benefited from political divisions higher up at the state level in their struggle for land, but at the cost of a local schism. Amid this repressive environment in Chiapas, a radical group of activists, originally from the FLN urban guerrilla organization, met a group of local *guerrilleros*, who began their efforts as peasants defending themselves against violent evictions from their communities. This was where sub-comandante Marcos entered the scene and witnessed how the "ideological discourse of Marxism ran up against the distinctive cultural beliefs of the indigenous communities" (p. 196). This clash of ideas forced Marcos to accept the convergence of local oral history and his own critical interpretation of Mexican history. By accepting his loss of the ideological initiative, he acquired political control of the movement.

President Salinas de Gortari (1988–1994), who had come to power in an election that was extremely fraudulent, even by Mexican standards, intended to promote a new policy in state–peasant relations to be expressed in various modernization programmes. In the end, however, this policy was sacrificed in favour of Salinas's major objective, namely Mexico's entry into the NAFTA. The conditions included complete liberalization of

trade and reduction of state intervention in the economy, as well as a decrease in public credit for peasants, abolition of the relative protection of maize and beans production, privatization of the *ejido* sector and opening of the market to cheaper products. Although the impact of these reforms on Mexican subsistence agriculture is well known, Harvey reveals that in Chiapas these reforms, combined in a diabolic cocktail with persistent local repression and subverting Latino elites, led to disastrous conditions, especially in the Lacandon forest. In this region the EZLN developed from a peasant organization, radicalized by broken promises, halted reforms, and deteriorating conditions. By 1992 the Lacandon communities voted for war. When the order for the uprising was issued, Marcos saw his opportunity for legitimizing the movement. His perception was accurate, as its military power proved weak soon after the rebellion started.

The Chiapas Rebellion features a very revealing analysis of the four main objectives of the EZLN and its effects: discrimination against the indigenous people by denying them the "right to have rights", discrimination against women, the social costs of neoliberalism and the democratization of Mexico. These effects, placed in the context of the recent debates in Mexico, have been impressive. One can agree with the author that a return to the status quo ante will be impossible, but will the innovations introduced by EZLN be conclusive? Will Mexico become a multi-ethnic state because of the drive by EZLN for recognition of the rights and cultures of indigenous people? Will the novelty of EZLN's base-oriented political organization and strategies be accepted by the existing popular opposition to the *priista* regime? The talks between the EZLN and the government, which began one month after the rebellion started, led to only a minimal accord on indigenous rights and culture and seem to have stalled. Millions of Mexicans from the north and urban areas may support democratization but do not necessarily sympathize with the novel course of the EZLN. The encounters with the leftist opposition have not been wildly successful either.

While the EZLN may very well be something of a novelty in Mexican history, the attempts to dismantle authoritarian structures, the convergence of local oral history with external, generally Western ideologies, leading to new languages and forms of organization, as well as many of the tactics deployed, were used by the 1810 insurgents and the 1910 *Zapatistas* as well. The same holds for the role of women in uprisings as providers of food and care, as messengers and political activists, and sometimes soldiers or even officers, learning to read and write in between their duties. What is new is the span and scope of the movement's impact on the media and its consequent capacity to imbue large groups of the Mexican population with new zeal in demanding reforms promised for ages but never implemented.

Raymond Buve