Stefan Berger

What is New in the History of Social Movements: a Review Article

Jürgen Schmidt: *Brüder, Bürger und Genossen: die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung zwischen Klassenkampf und Bürgergesellschaft 1830–1870*, Bonn: J. W. H. Dietz, 2018, 651 pp., ISBN: 978-3-8012-5039-3.

Reiner Rhefus: *‚Empor aus Nacht zum Licht': die Revolution von 1918/19 im Wuppertal. Schauplätze, Ereignisse und Akteure*, Essen: Klartext, 2018, 456 pp., ISBN: 978-3-8375-2028-6.

Heike Christina Mätzing: *Georg Eckert, 1912–1974. Von Anpassung, Widerstand und Völkerverständigung*, Bonn: J. W. H. Dietz, 2018, 592 pp., ISBN: 978-3-8012-4262-6.

Lewis H. Mates: *The Great Labour Unrest. Rank-and-File Movements and Political Change in the Durham Coalfield*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016, 328 pp., ISBN: 978-1-5261-4560-4.

Horst Lademacher: *Die Illusion vom Frieden. Die Zweite Internationale wider den Krieg 1889–1919*, Münster: Waxmann, 2018, 658 pp., ISBN: 978-3-8309-3840-8.

Talbot C. Imlay: *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism. European Socialists and International Politics, 1914–1960*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, xi, 480 pp., ISBN: 978-0-19-964104-8.

Greg Patmore/Shelton Stromquist (eds.): *Frontiers of Labor. Comparative Histories of the United States and Australia*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2018, 394 pp., ISBN: 978-0-252-04183-9 (hardcover).

Flemming Mikkelsen/Knut Kjeldstadli/Stefan Nyzell (eds.): *Popular Struggle and Democracy in Scandinavia, 1700–Present*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018, XI, 457 pp., ISBN: 978-1-137-57849-5 (hardcover).

Philipp Gassert: *Bewegte Gesellschaft. Deutsche Protestgeschichte seit 1945*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2018, 308 pp., ISBN: 978-3-17-029270-3.

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Rüdiger Graf: *Oil and Sovereignty: Petro-Knowledge and Energy Policy in the United States and Western Europe in the 1970s*, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2018, 474 pp., ISBN: 978-1-78533-806-9.

Agata Zysiak/Kamil Śmiechowski/Kamil Piskała/Wiktor Marzec/Kaja Kaźmierska/Jaceck Burski, *From Cotton to Smoke. Łódź—Industrial City and Discourses of Asynchronous Modernity 1897–1994*, Łódź: Łódź University Press, 2018, 308 pp., ISBN: 978-83-8142-102-7.

Ingrid Krau: *Verlöschendes Industriezeitalter. Suche nach Aufbruch an Rhein, Ruhr und Emscher*, Göttingen: Wallstein, 2018, 144 pp., ISBN: 978-3-8353-3255-3.

Andreas Komlosy: *Work: The Last 1000 Years*, London: Verso, 2018, 272 pp., ISBN: 978-1-78663-410-8 (hardcover).

The editors of this journal see the labour movement as a social movement and hence they have consistently included articles on labour history in its pages. The same is true for the review articles that have been appearing under my name since 2012. Hence it is with great pleasure that I discuss a masterpiece of labour history—Jürgen Schmidt's extremely learned and wide-ranging survey of the history of the German labour movement in the middle years of the nineteenth century. Part one of his book accounts for the very early beginnings of attempts to build workers' associations in the 1830s. Part two deals explicitly with the revolution of 1848 in the German lands that is described in terms of pushing the formation of a labour movement but at the same time showing the limits of organisational efforts. The third and final substantive part analyses what amounts to a second foundational phase of the German labour movement in the 1850s and 1860s, in which the precursors of today's Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) come into existence. Throughout the volume Schmidt emphasises that we are dealing with a period, in which the labour movement was not yet a powerful force for social change. At the same time he underlines how the social question of the nineteenth century powered attempts to build organisations, including trade unions, political parties and co-operatives who all aimed at providing programmes for social reform and actions to ameliorate the suffering of workers in the German lands. Unlike in Britain, any attempts to build alliances with political liberalism and middle-class social reformers ultimately failed in the German states[1]—one of the reasons why we witnessed a relatively early formation of an independent labour movement in a country just on the

1 In comparative perspective, see John Breuilly: Labour and Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe. Essays in Comparative History, Manchester 1992.

cusp of massive industrial change. The German labour movement in these early years, Schmidt argues, was not yet the powerful socialist force that it would become in Wilhelmine Germany after 1890. It practiced a language of brotherhood and democracy that did not yet put class centre-stage in its political struggle. It was a democratising force more than a force for class struggle, although the book also shows convincingly that a class society was in the making in the middle years of the nineteenth century. In its midst, an ideologically divided labour movement was forging a vision of the future on which it mobilised support and built stable organisations that provided foundations for what would become the most powerful labour movement in the world before the First World War. Whoever wants to learn about its origins will in future have to refer to Jürgen Schmidt's magisterial account that is based on a stupendous knowledge of the secondary literature as well as in-depth original research in many labour archives in Germany and internationally. Furthermore, his volume takes up the challenge provided by theoretical innovations in the writing of history, such as the history of emotions, and shows itself to be at the cutting edge of contemporary debates surrounding labour history.

Given the successes of an independent labour movement in Imperial Germany, many socialists all over the world expected the world socialist revolution to begin in Germany—the country that had overtaken Britain as the foremost economic power in Europe, where just before the First World War, roughly one third of the population voted socialist and where the SPD had over one million individual members.[2] Yet for those who had hoped for this revolution, the years of the First World War and its aftermath were a deep disappointment. Shortly before the outbreak of war, the SPD still mobilised hundreds of thousands to demonstrate for peace and against war, but in early August 1914 the parliamentary party backed the Imperial government by passing the war credits in the *Reichstag*—unanimously. Four years later, the right-wing Majority Social Democrats tried everything possible to end the revolution as quickly as possible and leave all decisions to a newly elected constitutional assembly, whilst the Independent Social Democrats, who had been forced out of the party over their opposition to the war, developed no decisive revolutionary leadership either. The one hundredth anniversary of the revolution in 2018 saw a revival of academic interest in the German revolution.[3] It had last been hotly debated in the late 1960s and 1970s, when the *Zeitgeist* still stood on the left and the 1968 revolution had been

2 Stefan Berger: Social Democracy and the Working-Class in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany, London 2000.

3 Some of the more prominent titles include Bernd Hüttner/Axel Weipert (eds.): Emanzipation und Enttäuschung. Perspektiven auf die Novemberrevolution 1918/9, Berlin 2018; Wolfgang Niess: Die Revolution von 1918/19. Der wahre Beginn unserer Demokratie, Berlin 2017; Mark Jones: Founding Weimar: Violence and the German Revolution of 1918/9, Cambridge 2016.

an inspiration for many. Much of the path-breaking analyses regarding the revolution was from the 1970s[4] and since the 1980s it had gone quiet again, although some local studies about revolutionary events continued to appear. They stressed how diverse the revolution was in different parts of Germany. A more complete understanding of the revolution thus necessitates more local and regional studies.

Hence Reiner Rhefus's book on the revolution in Wuppertal is entirely welcome. Wuppertal is, of course, the home town of Friedrich Engels and his 'letters from the Wupper valley' amounted to an acerbic critique of early industrial capitalism, on which he would later build with his more famous account of Manchester capitalism: *The Condition of the Working Class in England*.[5] Rhefus's book thus starts with a chapter on the strength of the Social Democratic labour movement in Wuppertal before 1914. The second chapter then deals with the intra-party opposition to the support of the parliamentary party for the war and with the economic difficulties that the war brought for the population. All of this led to a significant radicalisation of the Wuppertal workers, who, in their majority, supported the party left. In great detail, Rhefus analyses the formation of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council in Wuppertal and the increasing radicalisation of parts of the Wuppertal working class who wanted political and social change. When military units marched through Wuppertal on their return from the front, the workers' and soldiers' council disarmed them swiftly so as to prevent the formation of counter-revolutionary units. Rhefus also painstakingly accounts for the positioning of the Wuppertal and Rhenish delegates to the National Council Congress in December 1918. Many had high hopes that the council movement would be the basis for a more democratic re-ordering of Germany after the First World War. But the Majority Social Democrats were steadfastly opposed, preferring a swift transition to a parliamentary system. Hence, it was only logical that the local Majority Social Democrats left the workers' and soldiers' council in Wuppertal on 7 January 1919. In the Weimar Republic, Wuppertal was to become a stronghold of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), and early communists from Wuppertal participated in the January rising in Berlin. During the same months, Wuppertal deputies were elected to their seats in the National Assembly. In February 1919, a general strike was called in the Rhenish-Westphalian industrial district in order to demand the socialisation of key industries. It was to be a major defeat for the revolutionaries, as key elements of the Social Democratic labour movement did not put their weight behind the demand for socialisation. At the same time as the socialisation of key industries was discussed by the left, right-wing paramilitary formations entered the district and also Wuppertal

4 See, for example, Reinhart Rürup: Probleme der Revolution in Deutschland 1918/19, Wiesbaden 1968; Eberhard Kolb: Die Arbeiterräte in der deutschen Innenpolitik 1918/19, Düsseldorf 1962; Peter von Oertzen: Betriebsräte in der Novemberrevolution, Düsseldorf 1963.

5 On Engels, see Lars Bluma (ed.): Friedrich Engels. Ein Gespenst geht um in Europa, Wuppertal 2020.

and began a campaign of murder and terror. Rhefus can cite many illuminating examples of the legal system being a major anti-revolutionary force in the years 1918 and 1919, often protecting right-wing violence. The regular police in Wuppertal was *de facto* militarised in 1919 to be ready for use as an additional anti-revolutionary force should it be needed. In March 1919, the municipal elections in Wuppertal brought women onto the town councils for the first time, whilst the local workers' and soldiers' council largely stood by and watched developments from which it was increasingly sidelined. There continued to be important strikes in Wuppertal, like the railworkers' strike in January, and the workers of the city also rose to challenge and helped defeat the right-wing Kapp *putsch* in 1920. Rhefus underlines that the period in which the left in Germany was dominant was a period of major achievements for the working class: the eight-hour day, the recognition of trade unions, industrial bargaining, and initiatives to make Labour Day a public holiday all originate in the tumultuous years following the First World War. Rhefus shows how the municipal institutions dealing with health, education and culture all were strongly influenced by the revolution in Wuppertal. Towards the end of his fascinating book, Rhefus includes chapters on the memorial cultures surrounding the revolution in Wuppertal both in the Weimar Republic and in the early post-Second World War years. Overall, on every page of his book, Rhefus underlines his life-time's engagement with the history of Wuppertal and his deep and unsurpassed knowledge of the revolutionary developments in Wuppertal between 1918 and 1920. His account includes many powerful vignettes of personalities and events. In sum, they provide illuminating insights into the power structures that eventually were to dash the hopes of those who had wanted to transform Germany more thoroughly than the German revolution of 1918 eventually did.

The Weimar Republic that emerged out of the revolution of 1918 was the home of Imperial Germany's outsiders who had become insiders because of the revolution.[6] These included the Social Democrats who were increasingly able to attract idealist middle-class members committed to republicanism and parliamentary democracy. One of those was the geographer, ethnologist, historian and adult-education activist Georg Eckert (1912–1974), a fascinating personality and now the subject of a major biography by Heike Christina Mätzing. Eckert is best-known today in those academic circles that research international schoolbooks, for his name adorns the 'Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Resarch' in Brunswick, Germany.[7] Indeed, Eckert had tried very hard to reform the German school curricula and devise new materials for the democratic re-education of Germans after the National Socialist years. Under British occupation, because of his personal friendship with high-ranking British occupation officers, he did indeed gain some influence, but after 1949 he was increasingly

6 Peter Gay: Weimar Culture. The Outsider as Insider, New York 1968.

7 http://www.gei.de/en/home.html (accessed on 4 September 2020).

marginalised in a climate of restoration that did not want to know about National Socialism and victims of National Socialism and instead concentred on the 'economic miracle' and the victimhood of Germans in the Second World War.[8] But Eckert is worthy of a major biography not just because of his ideas surrounding democratic education. As Mätzing's biography underlines, his was a fascinating life in more than one respect. Born into a multi-cultural family—his mother's family came from Bohemia and Russia—, he grew up in Berlin and studied at Berlin University, where he was politically socialised into the Socialist Youth Movement and republican paramilitary formation—the Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold. The socialist student body was a small minority among German students who overwhelmingly stood on the political right.[9] When the Nazis took over, Eckert had to go into hiding and he kept a low profile in the 1930s, even joining the National Socialist Party in 1937 which, according to Mätzing, not so much an act of camouflage—he himself had claimed that he joined the party in order to work more efficiently underground on behalf of the illegal SPD—, as an act of accommodation of the young teacher who did not want to have his career as a teacher jeopardised by his previous SPD membership. In the Second World War he served in the Wehrmacht in Greece between 1941 and 1944—as a civil servant administering occupied Greece, fostering an academic career in war time and keeping contacts with the Greek resistance that would eventually lead him to desertion, when he joined the resistance in 1944. The British still made him a prisoner of war in 1945, but also allowed Eckert to restart his academic career at the High School of Education in Brunswick. The Social Democrats again became his political home, and he left his most lasting legacy as an innovative thinker of a new way of teaching history in schools. The revision of German school textbooks became his great post-war mission, although Mätzing's book clearly shows that most of his ideas became an inspiration only to later generation of reformers who did indeed reform school textbooks from the 1970s onwards. The last substantive chapter of Mätzing's book is dedicated to Eckert as a social historian, founder of one of the most important German journals for social history, the *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, still going strong today, and an inspiration behind the formation of the Archive of Social Democracy at the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation in Bonn.[10] Overall, Mätzing is to be congratulated for having produced a landmark biography, extremely readable and fascinating in its details and in its careful

8 Bill Niven (ed.): Germans as Victims. Remembering the Past in Contemporary Germany, Basingstoke 2006.

9 Michael Kater: Studentschaft und Rechtsradikalismus in Deutschland 1918–1933, Hamburg 1975.

10 On the *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, see https://www.fes.de/afs (accessed on 4 September 2020); on the Archive of Social Democracy, see https://www.fes.de/archiv-der-sozialen-demokratie/ (accessed on 4 September 2020).

contextualisation of a life that was not free of the political entanglements of the twentieth century, but still, in many respects, admirable in its commitments and judgments.

If local studies, like that on Wuppertal reviewed above, have been invaluable in shedding light also on larger national developments, the same is true for local studies in other national contexts. Lewis Mates's outstanding study on the syndicalist-inspired great labour unrest in the Durham coalfield deals with the period before the First World War, when the powerful Miners' Federation of Great Britain (MFGB) shifted its political allegiance from the Liberal Party to the Labour Party, thereby giving this working-class party, established only in 1900, considerably more political clout. At the centre of this book stands the Durham Miners' Assocation (DMA), which represented many of the 170,000 miners working in the Durham coalfield just before the outbreak of the First World War. The union's entrenched allegiance to Liberalism, symbolised by the DMA's long-time president, John Wilson, a Liberal Member of Parliament and staunch admirer of William Gladstone, was challenged by a new generation of labour militants who were dissatisfied with the union's collusion in wage reductions and the atmosphere of conciliation with employers. These militants formed the Durham Forward Movement, which was to campaign for the political re-allegiance of the DMA to the Labour Party. Mates shows how the workforce in the coalmines was badly divided between different occupations who had diverse interests when it came to collective wage bargaining. It was certainly not an easy task for a union to represent them all. However, the young radicals had popular demands, such as the Eight-Hour Day and the Minimum Wage that were able to appeal to them all. Mates makes extensive use of the minute books of the DMA and many of its affiliated lodges as well as the local press which reported extensively on union affairs, especially around the annual Durham Miners' Gala that gave political debate a prominent platform. What emerges clearly from his sources is the importance of local activists in building a language of class that could unite the different occupational groups in the coalmine and bring them behind the more radical demands of the militants shifting the membership away from its long ties with Liberalism. Mates argues convincingly that the work of these militants prepared the ground for the Labour Party's political dominance not only among the miners but in County Durham generally. From the interwar period down to the present day it is a labour stronghold, albeit one that voted overwhelmingly in favour of Brexit in 2016.[11] This would have galled many of the labour militants a century earlier, who were, for the most part, staunch internationalists.

Socialist internationalism had indeed been the prime hope of the European working classes for peace and a more just social order at the beginning of the twentieth

11 On the Brexiteers' use of the past, see Ben Wellings/Chris Gifford: The Past in English Euroscepticism, in: Stefan Berger/Caner Tekin (eds.): History and Belonging. Representations of the Past in Contemporary European Politics, Oxford 2018, pp. 88–105.

century. Horst Lademacher examines the Second International's struggle against war between its foundation in 1889 and the Versailles Peace Treaty of 1919. His volume falls into two substantive parts. He dedicates two hundred pages to the International's struggle for peace before 1914 and, in the second part, he writes almost four hundred pages about the socialists' desperate search for a way out of the First World War during and immediately after the event. Lademacher has been an expert on the Second International for decades and his intimate knowledge of its history is present on every page of this hugely learned and impressive volume. What is also very present in the book is a deep sense of disappointment at the failure of the Second International to prevent the outbreak of world war. Lademacher argues convincingly that the main blame for this lies with the penetration of national(ist) thinking into the minds of European socialists which made internationalism an add-on to the primary orientation towards the framework of the nation-state at best. In the first part of his book, Lademacher accounts for the regular congresses of the International before 1914. He underlines to what extent the issue of war and peace increasingly dominated these congresses from the 1904 Amsterdam one onwards. Under the leadership of the German Social Democrats, a Marxist understanding of war dominated the discussions: war was intricately connected to capitalist rivalries. The International managed to pass several resolutions against capitalist war-mongering, but it never succeeded in developing a specific plan of action, should war actually break out. The French and the German socialists would have been key to any such planning, but they did not always see eye to eye. The French socialist leader Jean Jaurès sharply criticised the German Social Democrats for their attentism, i. e. their inability to develop concrete plans of action for change. Instead, he argued, they were happy in their rhetorical revolutionary radicalism that had, however, few consequences in practice.[12] That was as true nationally as it was internationally. It was, however, not only revolutionary Marxist rhetoric that prevented the International from developing specific plans to counter war. As Lademacher shows, the socialists increasingly adopted liberal ideas about international conflict management which were based on the assumption that global capitalist entanglements turned war into a disaster for everyone. After war had broken out and after most socialists in those countries going to war supported their national governments, it was socialists from the neutral countries who tried to start initiatives to revive socialist internationalism. Whilst there were many individual contacts and even some meetings, ultimately the war split the socialist movements in many countries and marginalised their internationalist presence meaning that the socialist movement would play no role at all in the peace negotiations following the end of the war. Despite the best efforts of the Dutch and Swedish socialists, in particular, communication channels between the warring socialists remained, by and large, blocked until well after the end of the war. During the war, the revolu-

12 Geoffrey Kurtz: Jean Jaurès: The Inner Life of Social Democracy, University Park, PA, 2014.

tionary left of the internationalist socialist movement was most active in meeting and discussing strategies. Lademacher follows these discussions in great details and concludes that even here, most of the delegates present in Berne, Zimmerwald and Kiental were morally enraged about the war and keen to condemn it, but they failed to come up with working strategies of how to use war to bring about the socialist revolution. The only ones who did this were Lenin and the Russian Bolshevis.

Despite the failure of the Second International in 1914, socialist internationalism was revived in the 1920s. In many respects, therefore, Talbot C. Imlay's path-breaking study about *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism* continues Lademacher's story. His first chapter, entitled "International Socialism at War", recounts many of the debates also present in Lademacher's volume, but for Imlay, the failure of the Second International is only the opener that carries him from the interwar period to the early years of the post-Second World War era, dominated by issues of reconciliation, the Cold War and decolonisation. Imlay concurs with Lademacher on the basic premise that internationalism always played second role to the national framework in which all socialist parties continued to operate from the 1920s to the 1950s. Yet he also points out that the international dimension added an important facet to socialist politics. In other words, he argues that ignoring socialist internationalism and its manifold entanglements with national politics, fails to understand the positioning of socialists towards key problems and concerns in the period under discussion here. As he convincingly shows, European socialists never tried to substitute the nation by an internationalist outlook. Rather, they internationalised the national frame, seeking to justify national interests within an international framework and at times letting this internationalism influence their national positions. Imlay puts his emphasis on *practices* of internationalism, i. e. concrete initiatives around real issues. Those issues are, first, the reconstitution of the International between 1918 and 1933. Secondly, he looks at socialist internationalist attempts to influence the emerging new international order after the First World War. Thirdly, he examines the International's efforts to promote disarmament between 1925 and 1933. Fourthly, he analyses its attitudes towards empire in-between the wars. After the outbreak of the Second World, Imlay again investigates the efforts to reconstitute the International between 1940 and 1951. Socialist internationalists had to position themselves towards the emerging European Union in the post-war decades, the fifth major issue covered by Imlay. Sixthly, he comments on socialist internationalists' stance towards the Cold War and European security. Finally, he looks at the issue of decolonisation. In the end, he concludes, in an uncanny analogy to Lademacher, that the socialist International, in the 1930s and again in the 1960s, failed to overcome national and nationalist frameworks, as the pull of the nation-states proved stronger than socialist Internationalism. Imlay's book thus confirms the failure of socialist Internationalism in the twentieth century. Another important theme of Lademacher's book is also continued by Imlay, namely the dissolution of socialist internationalism into liberal internationalism. The concerns of

the International about peace, disarmament, European unity and decolonisation were ones shared by many liberals. Hence, there often was nothing distinctly socialist about the positionings of socialists on these issues. Imlay thus puts his finger on central shortcomings of socialist internationalism. Yet, throughout the book he also emphasises that socialist internationalism at certain times and places, in the 1920s, and again in the 1950s, had the power to influence policy stances made by socialist parties in different nation states of Europe. Thus, a look back at socialist internationalism allows for both disillusionment and hope.

Histories of socialist internationalism are necessarily international histories of socialism. They have to rest on an in-depth investigation of transnational entanglements. In that they are methodologically different from comparative labour histories. Indeed, there has been much debate over recent years which of the two methods, entangled history or comparative history, is the better one to yield important historical insights. The end result is, in my view, that both methods have an important role to play in examining the histories of labour.[13] Two of the leading comparative labour historians in Australia and the U.S., Greg Patmore and Shelton Stromquist, have joined forces to produce an outstanding edited collection comparing key aspects of Australian and American labour history. The first part of this volume deals with the First World War highlighting state repression and labour's counter-mobilisation against such repression in both countries. The latter included the opposition to the war itself as well as to conscription. Further chapters highlight the particular opposition by women of the labour movement to the war and the predicaments of municipal socialists in both countries when faced with war-related challenges. In the second part of the book labour coercion moves centre-stage—with illuminating comparative analyses of the impact of convict labour in both countries as well as comparisons of wage developments and anti-union strategies. The third part investigates the Irish diaspora drawing attention to the intersectionality of class, religious and ethnic identities in the making of a contested multi-cultural labour movement. The fourth part looks at labour regulation using case studies from labour conflicts on the railroad in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and from mutinies in the armies of the U.S. in 1863 and in Australia in 1918. The fifth part examines issues of economic democracy, including internal trade union democracy. The role of consumer cooperatives in the forging of democratic frameworks as well as the impact of welfare policies in producing liberal hegemonies in 1930s Australia and the U.S. are at the centre of attention here. The final part of this rich collection underlines the importance of the transnationalism of anarchists and industrial unionists in both labour movements. There is also a fascinat-

13 Stefan Berger: Comparative and Transnational History, in: Stefan Berger/Heiko Feldner/Kevin Passmore (eds.): Writing History: Theory and Practice , 3rd edn., London 2020, pp. 292–316.

ing chapter on the transnational activist Harry Bridges.[14] In the concluding chapter to what can only be described as an advertisement for comparative labour history, the editors underline the far more coercive framework of the state in the U.S. in comparison with Australia. State regulation of labour was far more developed in Australia than in the U.S., helping Australia to become a pioneer of early welfare state development. The sustained comparison in this volume often produces innovative and unexpected insights. Take, for example, the history of the cooperative movement in both countries. Despite a far more individualist political culture in the U.S., American trade unions heavily supported the building of a strong cooperative movement that far outweighed anything that existed in Australia. Another intriguing example comes from the much stronger welfare state orientation of Australian labour that made them look towards the state as key provider of welfare. A contributor principle, i. e. one where the workers' themselves paid for benefits, such as old-age insurance, was therefore unpopular and led to the defeat of old-age insurance proposals in the 1930s in Australia. In the U.S., by contrast, contributory schemes did not meet with the same hostility, which meant that the labour movement, by and large, put its weight behind key New Deal legislation in the 1930s. Ultimately, Patmore and Stromquist rightly point out that there is no comparative history that is not also transnational, and their volume is a fine example of the enormous benefits and promises that such a combined approach brings to labour history.

This can also be said, albeit in a more limited way, of the volume on *Popular Struggle and Democracy in Scandinavia*, edited by Flemming Mikkelsen, Knut Kjeldstadli and Stefan Nyzell. The big disadvantage of this volume, in comparison to that of Patmore and Stromquist, lies in the organisation of the comparison. The three parts of the volume are organised nationally: part one is on Denmark, part two on Norway and part three on Sweden. Thus, we get, over more than four hundred pages, three parallel national storylines, whereas all of the articles in Patmore's and Stromquist's collection are in themselves comparative. In Mikkelsen's, Kjelstadli's and Nyzell's volume, too much therefore rests on the comparative chapter concluding the volume, especially as national histories, written without an overall comparative framework, tend to follow national logics and, therefore, are often an inadequate basis for comparison. Having said this, the volume does nevertheless succeed in producing some powerful insights into the relationship between popular struggles and the development of democracy in Scandinavia. In all three countries peasants were crucial to the mobilisation of popular protests in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, in Denmark the strong position of the landlords left little room for protests,

14 On transnational activism, see also Stefan Berger/Sean Scalmer (eds.): The Transnational Activist: Transformations and Comparisons from the Anglo-World since the Nineteenth Century, Basingstoke 2018.

where more independent farmers in Norway and Sweden led powerful rebellions that, particularly in Sweden, were met with the full force of a repressive state. However, Mikkelsen and Nyzell in their concluding chapter, emphasise the importance of the Swedish diet, which gave peasants a degree of representation, and therefore became an alternative outlet of protests to that of violent rebellion. Peasant rebellions in all three countries focussed on years of bad harvests. Political conflicts based on urban forms of contentious politics occurred in Norway in the years between 1847 and 1851, when diverse protests centred on issues of political rights for the common man, and on property rights. Political issues were far more contentious in Denmark and Sweden, with the political systems of both countries coming under direct attack from the late eighteenth century onwards on several occasions. The impact of international events, such as the French revolutions, were very visible. From the last third of the nineteenth century onwards, labour movements appeared in all three societies and formed a new major challenge to their political systems. However, the latter had stabilised over the course of the nineteenth century with powerful alliances between royal power, nobility and large landowners neutralising contentious politics whilst also providing a legal framework for grievances that made it less necessary to react with repression. The authors highlight the parliamentarisation, democratisation and nationalisation of politics in all three societies throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, starting in earnest from the 1840s onwards, with Denmark playing a pioneering role in this respect. In all three countries liberals took a powerful lead in democratising their respective countries and they were supported by strong social movements that often incorporated the nascent labour movements, but also teetotal and religious movements. Eventually, the labour movements became the key movements fighting for the extension of political rights to the economic and societal spheres, with the Danish labour movement being the strongest of the three before the First World War, even if, after 1918, it was increasingly overtaken by the Swedish labour movement, which became, in the twentieth century, a global model for social democratic movements. Far right-wing and far left-wing mobilisations occurred in twentieth-century Scandinavia but were never powerful enough to break the social democratic hegemony throughout much of the twentieth century. The same is true for the new social movements that occurred from the 1970s onwards. Intriguingly, the comparative perspective in this volume remains largely silent about the crises of this social democratic model in Scandinavia from the 1980s onwards[15],

15 See already James Fulcher: Labour Movements, Employers and the State. Conflict and Co-operation in Britain and Sweden, Oxford 1991. See also Robert Geyer/Christine Ingebritsen/Jonathon A. Moses (eds.): Globalization, Europeanisation and the End of Scandinavian Social Democracy?, Basingstoke 1999; Henry Milner: Can the Swedish Social Model Survive the Decline of the Social Democrats?, in: Michael Keating/David McCrone (eds.): The Crisis of Social Democracy in Europe, Edinburgh 2013, chapter 7.

although the title of the book suggests that it would go to the present day. Instead, the comparison ends with a self-congratulatory section celebrating the achievements of democracy in Scandinavia and relating it to the relatively low levels of violence that accompanied contentious politics in this part of the world.

Contentious politics in a national frame, namely the German one since 1945, is the subject of Philipp Gassert's extremely readable survey. He moves chronologically through the history of the two Germanies, starting with protests coming from the displaced persons during the occupation period after the end of the Second World War, hunger revolts, protests against the allied policy of deindustrialisation, the forgotten general strike of 1948 and protests by refugees and expellees—an extremely heterogeneous mix that makes up the contents of chapter one. Chapter two is focussed on 17 June 1953 in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), followed by a chapter on protests during the Adenauer era in West Germany: the peace movement, the labour movement, youth protest and popular culture figure prominently here. Chapter four is on the new left and the *annus mirabilis* of 1968. It also includes a sub-chapter on generational conflict and the National Socialist past. Chapter five is on the new social movements of the 1970s and 1980s—with much room given to the usual suspects: women's, environmental and peace movements. Chapter six deals with the labour movement that was severely challenged by the new social movements and found itself uncomfortably situated between occasional class war rhetoric and the practices of concertation and co-determination that was such an important element of the Rhenish capitalist model in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Chapter seven then returns to the GDR and looks at protest and opposition to really-existing socialism, including the independent East-German peace movement and reflections on the contribution of dissident movements towards the fall of the GDR in 1989/90. The last two substantive chapters of the book are taking the story of protest cultures from the reunified Germany to the present day, highlighting the importance of the anti-globalisation movement and charting the fate of the peace movement after the end of the Cold War. Furthermore, Gassert pays close attention to right-wing populist movements and the everyday racism that accompanied migration, first of the so-called '*Gastarbeiter*' (largely labour migrants from southern Europe and Turkey) and later of asylum-seekers and refugees. Throughout the book, the author analyses protest as indicator of social anxieties, hopes and expectations and as a sense-producing machine that provided identity to those participating in the protests. Protest is often a response to societal changes and reflects the existence of social conflicts in society. He concludes that most of the protest movements he analysed ultimately failed to achieve their immediate objectives, but ironically they often succeeded in making societies rethink their constitution and their projected path into the future. Social change is thus deeply related to forms of social protest. Gassert's excellent attempt to provide a much-needed survey of German protest cultures from 1945 to the present underlines the growth of a vibrant civil society in

West Germany during the 1960s and 1970s that is alive and kicking in the reunified Germany of today.[16]

Protest is often a response to a perceived threat or a key societal challenge. The oil crisis of 1973/4 was both such a perceived threat to the industrialised nations of the global north and a major societal challenge for them. One of its key consequences, as Rüdiger Graf emphasises in his fascinating book *Oil and Sovereignty*, was indeed the emergence of a global environmental movement in the 1970s. However, Graf's focus is clearly not on social movements. In the first substantive chapter of his thoroughly researched tome, he traces the rise of oil to the central energy commodity in the global north after 1945. Economic life became unthinkable without it, and so became the people, the 'oilmen' and their institutions that were behind this rise to power of oil. Industrial nations in the global north had been extremely aware of their vulnerability to the disruption of oil supplies, something that Graf demonstrates beyond the shadow of a doubt. His account of the actual crisis emphasises the limited successes of the oil embargo, as the United States, in particular, was successful in redirecting oil supplies, even if this came at a considerable cost. Ultimately, the embargo could not force Israel to leave the territories it had occupied in 1967, but it raised an awareness among northern industrial nations that they could no longer ignore the political ambitions of the Arab oil-producing nations. The crisis is convincingly portrayed as a key challenge to the national sovereignty of industrialised nations in the global north. The response in the United States and Western Europe was to develop policies of national autarky in relation to energy production. Various governments sought to centralise political decision-making about energy policy intervening heavily into allegedly 'free markets'. Whereas the U.S. felt directly challenged in its global leadership role, other countries, such as West Germany, feared for the stability of their democratic institutions that were supposed to rely on economic stability and prosperity. The oil crisis of 1973/4 in that respect amounted to a first series test for the young and untested institutions of democracy in post-National Socialist West Germany. Whilst Graf locates significant attempts to find international solutions to an international crisis, he ultimately concludes that the crisis revealed the ongoing strength of the national framework in international politics. Overall, many of the industrial nation-states of the global north used internationalism to serve their national interests. This is particularly true of the U.S. whose policies were geared toward re-asserting its global leadership role. Among its allies in Western Europe and the Far East, only France opposed America, whilst others were reluctant to endanger their respective good relations with the U.S. Furthermore, all the industrial northern nations had a common interest in opposing the so-called 'Third World' in its attempt to put the international economic order on

16 V. Finn Heinrich/Lorenzo Fioramonti (eds.): CIVICUS Global Survey of the State of Civil Society, Volume 2: Comparative Perspectives, Bloomfield, CT 2008.

new foundations that would be less favourable to the global north. The international political and economic debates around oil were based on research produced by social scientists and economists. Graf underlines the importance of that research in influencing a new understanding of oil markets and their influence on the international economic and political order. In no small measure the scholarship on oil contributed to a new understanding of national security that now came to include not just military and political concerns, but also economic ones. The oil crisis put into sharp relief how globally interconnected the economic order had become and it underlined to what extent it could also threaten the sovereignty of nation states. One of the key strengths of Graf's book is its comparative dimension, because it allows him to follow the entangled reactions of different nation states to the crisis, in the process showing how internationalism and national frames influenced each other.

Transnational and comparative studies certainly have the power to provide new perspectives on local, regional and national developments.[17] This, however, does not make the latter superfluous. Quite the contrary. This is beautifully underlined by the fascinating multi-author history of Łódź, Poland's foremost industrial city between the end of the nineteenth and the end of the twentieth centuries. The Polish Manchester provides an intriguing case study of the economic and social changes associated with capitalist modernisation. The authors trace those changes through an analysis of newspaper debates at four decisive moments in the city's history. The first period is one of rapid economic growth in the context of being a borderland of the Tsarist empire from the late nineteenth century to the end of the First World War. Here, industrialisation led to a complete re-imagining of the city. Out of the industrial squalor emerged not only a thoroughly ethnicised economy but also movements for reform working towards the creation of a proper urban infrastructure, the provision of welfare, working-class education and the promotion of urban citizenship. The second period is that of the reconstitution of the Polish nation state in the interwar period, where visions of a modern city coincided with class warfare, municipal socialism, anti-Semitism and the rise of the radical right. The third period is the communist rebuilding of the city in the post-Second World War era, when Łódź was meant to represent an archetypal proletarian city. Planning the new proletarian city beautifully became the task that the Communist regime set itself. It was a vision that contrasted the dark capitalist past with the bright modern metropolitan future in which the working classes benefitted from the profits of a regime no longer in the service of capital. However, the real-socialist city always stayed way behind those promises causing disillusionment among the workers who could see for themselves the gulf between the promises of the regime and their everyday lived reality. The fourth period is that of the neoliberal Poland after the fall of Commu-

17 See, most recently, Angelika Epple/Walter Erhart/Johannes Grave (eds.): Practices of Comparing: Towards a New Understanding of a Fundamental Human Practice, Bielefeld 2020.

nism. It saw massive deindustrialisation that came as a shock and produced helplessness among those directly affected by unemployment and social deprivation. Introducing the market as a solution to everything resulted in a city that found itself in permanent crisis. Until this very day, Łódź is arguably struggling with reigning in an unfettered capitalism and searching for ways to re-embed capitalist structures.[18] The illuminating analysis of the narratives that newspaper debates developed about the industrial city reveals the construction of different 'imagined communities'[19] under conditions of industrialisation and deindustrialisation. The constant renegotiations of the meanings of becoming modern in Łódź allows for cross-temporal comparisons within the space of one city that was often 'othered'—in an economic, social, cultural and ethnic sense.

The history of Łódź cries out for comparison with other industrial centres. One such centre, focussed on heavy industry, is the Ruhr region in Germany.[20] Ingrid Krau's study on the vanishing industrial age in the Ruhr is concerned with the region's history of deindustrialisation. Her book is more like a lengthy essay that touches on diverse aspects of that history. Thus, she starts with vignette-like scenes from Duisburg and Essen, throwing light on aspects of their industrial history and the crisis of their key industries, steel and coal, that started from the 1960s onwards. Over the best part of one hundred years, these industries determined almost everything in the Ruhr region of Germany, from urban structures to the everyday life of the people living here—around 7 million at the height of the post-Second World War development in the 1950s. Krau accounts for the development of the idea of the Ruhr centred on heavy industry and she subsequently analyses the diverse ways in which memories of that past have dominated the mindscape of the region long after coal and steel had left. The last coalmine closed in 2018, and although there still remains a significant steel industry in the region, it is in deep crisis—with much speculation about its future. An industrial memory landscape has been in the making that is unique in the world in its attempt to preserve an entire industrial landscape complete with steel works, coalmines, working-class housing estates, train lines, canals, slagheaps and urban infrastructure associated with the industrial development of the Ruhr. One of the most interesting chapters in the book is about the region's city halls, urban forums and police buildings, which are all testimony to the region's ambition to develop the hallmarks of industrial modernity. Krau asks how this landscape, which points to the past of the region, is related to its future. She contrasts the dire social deprivation in the northern Ruhr, using the example of Gelsenkirchen, with the self-representation of the Ruhr as containing blossoming post-

18 On the constant need to re-embed capitalism, compare Karl Polanyi: The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time, Boston 2001 (first published in 1944).

19 Benedict Anderson: Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism, London 1983.

20 Michael Farrenkopf et al. (ed.): Die Stadt der Städte. Das Ruhrgebiet und seine Umbrüche, Essen 2019.

industrial landscapes. She pinpoints what she sees as missed opportunities, e. g. the development of alternative forms of energy production, the neglect of the Ruhr's once significant machine-building industry, and the similar neglect of a once world-leading mining technology. There are new promising developments that Krau also records, especially around higher education and education more generally. Here she sees potential for further development when she argues that only a further increase in the investments in education will provide the necessary skills to lift the region out of its ongoing crisis and lay the foundations for its renewal and a structural change that once again makes the Ruhr a central economic hub in Germany. Overall, her balance sheet is one that sees much room for improvement, in terms of economic development, municipal politics and social cohesion. Her essay is an interesting read for all those who know the Ruhr region well, whilst those who do not will often be confused by the lack of context. Here, her deliberate mixture of personal experiences and accounts with more abstract analysis does not always work well, as it breaks the lines of argumentation. Experts on the Ruhr will also find much to criticise in this essay, which lacks overall cohesion and a central argument—both crucial preconditions for successful essay-writing.

A beautiful example of a long scholarly essay is provided by Andrea Komlosy's book about *Work*. On just 225 pages of text, she manages to deal with the history of work in global transcultural and comparative perspective in a way that is both insightful and innovative.[21] She surveys a wide range of activities in different parts of the world that constituted work—from agricultural work and house work to handicrafts and industrial work. Komlosy decided to home in on six historical epochs represented by specific years. Starting in 1250 she accounts for the rise of the Eurasian world system at the heart of which stood processes of urbanisation. Moving on to the year 1500, she analyses the impact of Western European expansion into the Americas highlighting, in particular, the impact of slave labour and the increasing division of labour. The centres of commercial production, she shows, were then squarely located in western, southern and eastern Asia, with Europeans only beginning to participate in these markets. Around 1700, the putting-out system was introduced, and guild craftsmen dominated production in urban centres. Whilst Asian, in particular Indian craftsmanship still dominated global trade, a new capitalist world system began to produce a dazzling array of local working conditions, increasingly directed by Western Europe. By the 1800s, the Industrial Revolution had shifted global commodity chains almost entirely to the west, especially Great Britain. The rise of factory work introduced the antagonism between capital and labour that was to structure labour conflicts to a considerable

21 Major handbooks on the history of work have appeared recently that treat the subject matters discussed in Komlosy's book in much greater depth. See, for example, Karin Hofmeester/Marcel van der Linden (eds.): Handbook: Global History of Work, Berlin/Boston 2018; Deborah Simonton/Anne Montenach (eds.): A Cultural History of Work (vol. 4), London 2018.

degree. The definition of work now became increasingly restricted to paid wage work. This understanding of work became dominant after 1900. Yet, as Komlosy powerfully underlines, other forms of work, including housework, slavery, subsistence and artisanal work all remained prominent in global perspective. Yet the legalisation of work practices, state planning of work and the imagery connected to work were almost exclusively dominated by wage work. Today, we live through an era of the flexibilisation of work practices that are tied to neoliberal economic processes and the marketisation of all social relations on a global scale. Before Komlosy embarks on her chronological journey through the history of work, she gives room to discussions that have focussed on terminologies and conceptualisations of work. The chronological chapters follow and they are structured along similar lines. Following an overview of the economic and political foundations of the age, she provides a survey of the working conditions to be found in this age, focussing on divisions of labour, specialisations, and transregional exchanges, and she ends with discussions of the underlying reasons for changes in the conceptualisations of work. Trade relations, commodity chains and labour migration figure strongly in all chapters. The results of her extremely readable survey points to the existence of some long-term tendencies in the history or work which include monetisation and commodification. Gainful employment was increasingly seen as a sphere of life separate from other spheres. Whilst coerced and unfree forms of labour never disappeared, there was a long-term trend for free and voluntary work to become the dominant form of labour. Such 'free' labour regimes were characterised by proletarianisation and, in turn, by regulation and formalisation. Housework became unpaid work and was allocated in highly gendered labour regimes to the women's sphere. A new informalisation of labour regimes accompanied processes of formalisation for a minority of privileged workers. Tributary work gave way to payments made to owners and tributes to noblemen were replaced by state taxation. The abolition of slavery was followed by new forms of slavery, bondage and debt regimes. Scarcity continued to produce conflicts over land and resources. Many rival labour regimes co-existed simultaneously, not only across different regions, but also within the same region. Overall, Komlosy's book extends traditionally narrow and Eurocentric conceptions of work as paid work carried out in separate workplaces. In this sense, her book is a powerful plea to historians to widen their geographical interests and develop global perspectives on central concepts that have the power to structure human lives, such as work.[22]

Stefan Berger is Professor of Social History and Director of the Institute for Social Movements at Ruhr University Bochum. He is also executive chair of the Foundation History of the Ruhr and head of the House for the History of the Ruhr. Furthermore, he is Honorary Professor at Cardiff University, UK.

22 See also Sebastian Conrad: What is Global History?, Princeton 2016.