

ethical traditions at the existing institution at Leiden University. The sugar companies, just like the oil companies, had a vested interest in not taking too soft a stand with respect to demands for higher wages. Another point concerns the survey of the industry as a whole. It would have been most helpful if an appendix had been added with a complete list of all the sugar companies operating in Java during the period under study. After all, the total number of companies is not prohibitively large and a published serial source with detailed data on individual firms and estate, cited in the bibliography, could have been used more extensively.<sup>3</sup> Such information would have enhanced the book's value as a standard work on the Java sugar industry. The strength of this book does not lie in rigorous quantitative analysis, including many tables and figures, but rather in the qualitative argument and the eloquently presented synthesis.

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BANTMAN, CONSTANCE. *The French Anarchists in London, 1880–1914. Exile and Transnationalism in the First Globalisation*. [Studies in Labour History, Vol. 1.] Liverpool University Press, Liverpool [etc.] 2013. xii, 219 pp. £70.00.  
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Studies of classical anarchism and syndicalism (1860–1939) have been rejuvenated by the adoption of transnational approaches. This is particularly the case for exile communities and their interaction with the dynamics of diaspora and globalization during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Constance Bantman's study of the exile community of French anarchists in Britain, centred in London, is an excellent example of a thriving genre. Bantman's approach is enlivened by her enquiry into the intermeshing and cross-pollination of modes of organization and ideas, which constituted the basis for syndicalism in France from the 1890s and the British "syndicalist revolt" of the years leading up to the outbreak of war in 1914. Although Bantman's book is relatively short, it packs in a great deal of lucid analysis that will be beneficial for readers interested in the history of cities, labour, and social movements, the circulation of ideas, the surveillance of "subversive" movements, and the limits of nineteenth-century British liberalism.

Bantman examines the several hundred French anarchists resident in London from the 1880s to 1914. But she also notes that current transnational studies have been stimulated by more recent developments. It is now a commonplace to compare the "Londonistan" of the 1990s and 2000s with London, the "anarchist Mecca" of the 1890s. The movement of peoples and ideas through the two iterations of this capital of globalized worlds, and the copy one could garner through sensational reporting of globalized terrorism during the infancy of tabloid culture on both sides of Channel in the 1890s or in our own time, are two striking parallels. But as Bantman shows, although some of the exiles were engaged in terrorism or attempted plots, for the most part their criminality was of a more pedestrian and less violent sort (swindling or the moonlight flit) and in any case many

3. *Handboek voor Cultuur- en Handelondernemingen in Nederlandsch-Indië* (Amsterdam, 1888–1940) [published annually].

of the exiles were busy securing their material needs and had no time to conspire against society, as one of the more perceptive police spies noted. The alter-globalization movement of the last twenty years might also be imaginatively compared with the internationalist syndicalist movement of the *belle époque*, in which London and Paris acted as hubs for peripatetic organizers and movement intellectuals.

In six well-organized chapters, Bantman masters a vast range of sources in order to carry out a truly transnational study. Chapter 1 accentuates the differences and similarities between French and British anarchism in the formative period of the late 1870s and 1880s. Chapter 2 presents a sociological study of the exile circles, including an analysis of labour markets, residential patterns, and forms of sociability (clubs, restaurants, and other meeting places). Chapter 3 discusses the forms of print propaganda and the manner in which various political ideologies were internationalized in cosmopolitan hubs such as London. Chapter 4 is a finely crafted discussion of the myths and realities of French anarchist exile terrorism. In a new approach to a widely studied topic, Chapter 5 explains how anarchists, and French anarchists in particular, were key participants in facilitating the passage of the 1905 Aliens Act which revised Britain's apparently liberal immigration and asylum policy, a policy that had been an important part of the British self-image in the nineteenth century, endlessly contrasted with the despotism of the continent. Chapter 6 is a dramatic and complex story of ideological intermeshing, as varieties of syndicalism take centre stage on both sides of the Channel. Finally the collapse of these networks is touched off by World War I, which initiates the eclipse of anarchism and anti-statist syndicalism in Britain and France.

Although her story concentrates on prominent intellectuals and their personal networks, which facilitated ideological transfers, through an in-depth perusal of police files in Britain and France, the combing of the rather scant memoirs of the exiles, and the comprehensive reading of the socialist, anarchist, and bourgeois press, Bantman brings to life the "wretched" as well as "the luminaries". Most of the exiles arrived and left in a relatively short period of time (1890–1895), when the wave of terror attacks in Paris culminated in the so-called *lois scélérates* [the wicked laws] and generated a wave of refugees to London, Switzerland, and elsewhere. Many of the London-bound refugees were skilled or unskilled male workers in their thirties and forties from the Greater Paris area, and although Bantman admits that it is more difficult to identify the women, aside from celebrities such as Louise Michel, police reports and the press noted a considerable number of women at the social and political events at the anarchist clubs.

The French anarchists congregated in Fitzrovia and Soho, but the pontificate, as one spy called the intellectual elite, tended to migrate to more suburban settings such as Hampstead (Charles Malato) or East Dulwich (Louise Michel). Bantman also insists on expanding her remit to anarchists who were fluent in French, such as the Italians (Errico Malatesta and the notorious "illegalist" Luigi Parmeggiani, who "stole" his way as a fence of antiquities into the respectable bourgeoisie), or even Kropotkin, whose first experiences of western Europe were in France or francophone Switzerland. This is an important point: language communities did create boundaries but the cultural importance of the French language in the Mediterranean and Russia, made it an important medium of anarchist transnational transfers in cosmopolitan metropolitan hubs.

Three points of comparison deserve greater discussion. First there were the images of the anarchists produced by the host community and the French anarchists' image of British culture, which Bantman discusses in a series of lively and amusing passages. The stock response by the French anarchists was a collective shudder: dull British reformism fitted the coldness of social life, the grey weather, the drink-sodden locals, and a coarse cuisine. The flamboyant Zo d'Axa thought that the English symbolized their country's geography, so that these insulars were like so many inaccessible islands. But Malato and Michel were anglophiles who praised the liberalism and tolerance of British political culture. Zo d'Axa was more sanguine: the much trumpeted British liberalism was a decoy.

To some extent Bantman proves Zo d'Axa's point. The chief scourge of the anarchists was Inspector William Melville, an Irishman, fluent in French, who would go on to greater things in MI5. Melville and his predecessors carried out their own discrete form of political policing, but the British were careful and were annoyed by the blundering police spies employed by the French and other "continentals". The French anarchist exile community featured in the Walsall Bomb plot of 1891–1892 (perhaps most importantly, the *provocateur* Auguste Coulon), the opaque Greenwich Park bomb explosion of 1894 (Martial Bourdin), the extradition of Jean-Pierre François in 1892 and Théodule Meunier in 1894, and the visit of the terrorist Émile Henry to London between late 1892 and early 1893. These events led to a famous High Court decision, which declared that anarchism might not be considered a political movement because it was not against a given state or regime, but against all states and regimes and therefore against civilized humanity. Bantman goes on to argue that, although the drive against "pauper immigrants" and the rise of anti-Semitism were not unimportant for the bill's passage, the role of the French anarchist affairs of the 1890s laid the foundation for a formal shift in British asylum and immigration policy, which the Aliens Act of 1905 signalled.

The final theme to be discussed is Bantman's concept of informal internationalism. Although the anarchists, and later the syndicalists, sought to create formal organizations arising from conferences held in London or Amsterdam (1881, 1907, and 1913), these failed because of personal, ideological, and geo-political differences, but most importantly because of the inherent tensions arising from the autonomous spirit found in libertarian forms of socialism, on the one hand, and the demands for fairly hierarchical and reasonably financed forms of international bureaucracy to sustain a global presence, on the other. The anarchists and syndicalists were far better at international solidarity and transnational transfers of forms of organizations and repertoires of action through the exilic networks of friends, migrant workers, and comrades which linked anarchist and syndicalist urban hubs such as London, Paris, Barcelona, or Buenos Aires. Thus, Bantman has a fascinating account of how Émile Pouget in Islington (another "suburban anarchist") was won over to the labour road to militant organization by his fellow Islingtonian, Errico Malatesta. The origins of much of the most effective propaganda in the CGT can find its roots during this period of London exile in the early 1890s. Later Tom Mann and Guy Bowman (half-French, though Bantman does not realise this) would be deeply intertwined in a series of encounters with French syndicalists and the French movement, which would fuel labour unrest in London and elsewhere in the shadow of 1914. The attractions of British reformist trade unionism, and even the more radical New Unionism, were ambiguous for Pouget, but he realised that the self-educated trade unionists of the British trade-union movement had learned the science of self-organization much better than the more formally educated political revolutionaries of Paris.

War came suddenly and these networks collapsed, not only due to the role of the barriers erected by warring states, but also the civil war which erupted amongst the elites of the anarchist movement itself, not least in London. If I have one quibble with Bantman, I think greater discussion of the roots of French pro-war patriotism within the movement might have been included. When the loudmouth anti-militarist Gustave Hervé came to Shoreditch in October 1912 to hold a meeting, Errico Malatesta was suspicious, as he reminded him of the demagogic *duce* of militant socialism, Benito Mussolini.

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