



comprehensive engagement with Foucault and Derrida, and sees the process of articulation understood increasingly through discourse analysis. These are also the only pieces in the collection that were written after the *New Times* period, which became associated with the reformation of the left and the Labour Party in the 1990s. The turn to post-modernism also appeared to accompany this political move.⁴ Yet, it remains debatable how far Hall had actually turned towards post-Marxism. He certainly engaged with the concept of post-modernism from the mid-1980s onwards, but regarded it as a cultural process as opposed to a political approach that specifically moved beyond class.⁵ This is aptly discussed by McLennan in his notes at the end. He also mentions, in his last paragraph, Hall's self-criticism of such an engagement and his admission of failure to fully account for the sheer economic might of neoliberalism (p. 349). An acknowledgement perhaps that the flirtation with post-modernism had more to do with the globalization-obsessed era of the 1990s than with any rejection of Marxism.

In sum, this is an excellent selection of Stuart Hall's approach to Marxism that Gregor McLennan has expertly put together and commentated on. If I were to have a minor complaint, it would be the omission of "The Great Moving Right Show", a highly significant piece in *Marxism Today* concerning the nature of crisis, and one of Hall's later pieces from the journal *Soundings*, on neoliberalism. These would have provided the finishing touches to the collection and presented a more rounded overview of Hall's wider ontological outlook. Nevertheless, it remains an essential collection for scholars and students alike seeking a true overview of how Hall uniquely understood the social world.

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NYGAARD, BERTEL. *History and the Formation of Marxism*. [Marx, Engels, and Marxisms.] Palgrave Macmillan, Cham 2022. xvii, 251 pp. € 108.99. (E-book: € 85.59.)

Marxism is, by definition, a multidimensional phenomenon (unless you follow a programmatic or normative idea of what Marxism *should* be – truth be told, such an idea informs most writings about Marxism). From the vantage point of a history of knowledge forms, it covers a broad range from scientific paradigm, through intellectual *Weltanschauung*, or resource for social movements, to ideology of state power. It denotes a body of knowledge apt for both highly specialized expertise and everyday use "from below". Such a view of Marxism – or, rather, Marxisms – implies that its own development cannot be locked into a neat genealogy but has to

⁴Alex Callinicos, "Stuart Hall in Perspective", *International Socialism*, 2:142 (2014), [online, no pages]. Available at: <http://isj.org.uk/stuart-hall-in-perspective/>; last accessed 10 October 2023.

⁵Stuart Hall, *Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, D. Morley and K-H. Chen (eds) (London, 1996).

be historicized as a contradictory, intricately entangled, and highly contextual phenomenon. Comparisons and a focus on the cross-border circulation of ideas – two imperatives of more recent global intellectual history – are both fundamental and useful in such an undertaking.

One of the areas where Marxism has had a deep impact is “history”. This is not only true for academic historiography proper (where various kinds of Marxism became some of the most influential and contested references after World War II), but also for other kinds of writing as well as thinking/narrating history. As Stefan Berger and Christoph Cornelissen have recently made clear in an edited volume, “historical cultures” in the broadest sense have to be taken into account if the complex interaction of “Marxism” and “history” is to be understood.¹ In a similar vein, but adopting much more of a long-arch cultural history approach, Enzo Traverso has suggested that, since the nineteenth century, “history” has been a fundamental cognitive and affective resource for the “left”.² Most research on such topics, however, focuses on the decades after 1945; rarely do we find studies on the interwar period, even less so on the decades before. This is, as Bertel Nygaard suggests in his book *History and the Formation of Marxism*, not only a technical lacuna, but something that tends to distort our image of what Marxism is and how it emerged. Considerations of history, he argues, were fundamental to the becoming of its particular set of ideas and practices. There is, therefore, a need for, as he says, a “double historization of Marxism”, i.e. a historization both in terms of its history and in terms of the importance of history in its very formation.

The focus of Nygaard’s study is on the debates, various readings, and different invocations of the French Revolution, certainly the most important historical reference for emerging Marxism and the late nineteenth-century labour movement in general. His book can and should be read as following up on older research, most particularly Beatrix Bouvier’s, and in close dialogue with the more recent study on the topic by Jean-Numa Ducange (both studies are focused on Germany, Nygaard thus contributes a regionally much broader view).³

Prior to considering how, from the late 1880s, reference to the past became a fundamental *modus operandi* through which intra-labour-movement debates were held, Nygaard devotes a chapter to the role of “history” in the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels themselves. This is not the place to discuss Marxian theory of history or Nygaard’s take on it. In more general terms, however, he also intervenes in an ongoing debate about how to “picture” Marx. More recently, as could be seen during the bicentenary of his birth in 2018, what predominated was either “Marx, the timeless philosopher of political economy” or a radically contextualized “Marx, a man of the nineteenth century”. While the latter was very

¹Stefan Berger and Christoph Cornelissen (eds), *Marxist Historical Cultures and Social Movements during the Cold War: Case Studies from Germany, Italy and Other Western European States* (New York, 2019).

²Enzo Traverso, *Left-Wing Melancholia: Marxism, History, and Memory* (New York, 2016).

³Beatrix W. Bouvier, *Französische Revolution und deutsche Arbeiterbewegung. Die Rezeption des revolutionären Frankreich in der deutschen sozialistischen Arbeiterbewegung von den 1830er Jahren bis 1905* (Bonn, 1982); Jean-Numa Ducange, *The French Revolution and Social Democracy: The Transmission of History and Its Political Uses in Germany and Austria, 1889–1934* (Leiden, 2018).

much the base note of Gareth Stedman Jones's biography,⁴ the former has been the main thrust of a number of authors for several decades now, foremost among them the German philosopher and political scientist Michael Heinrich, a leading voice of the school of *Wertkritik* (in English sometimes referred to as the “monetary theory of value” school).⁵ Nygaard, however, makes a point of defending “Marx, the historian” as fundamental to the latter's whole intellectual and political endeavour. Both history in general and the history of the French Revolution in particular were training grounds for Marx's (and Engels's) analytical style of “concrete abstraction”, in which the argument was constantly oscillating between (grounded) categories and (categorized) empirical realities.

In the main chapters of Nygaard's study, readers meet the whole ensemble of leftist, labour-movement-embedded theorists and activists between the late 1880s and 1914, an ensemble that has come to embody Marxism in its early historical development: Lafargue; Guesde; Jaurès; Mehring; Bernstein; Kautsky; Luxemburg; Plekhanov; Lenin, *et al.* We are thus in the middle of the drama of competing notions of “socialism” in the contexts of both rising workers' parties, the Second International, and the revisionism debates, all of them assigning a different role to “Marxism” in their notion of politics. This is a period that has the reputation of being a “classical”, but over-researched topic of labour history. It has nevertheless been revisited with fresh eyes in recent years, for example in Christina Morina's study about Marxism's emergence – “invention”, she says – in that period.⁶ Nygaard adds an important layer to such new readings: he shows the degree to which “history” has functioned as one of the main currencies in which political ideas were exchanged and the treasure stock of Marxism built. He also tries to rehabilitate the reputation of history in these debates. When it figures at all, “history” has been seen as a prime example of a simplistic notion of unilinear, teleological progress, which, in many cases, was inflected by Darwinian ideas and which postulated a “lawful” development of societies, to be accounted for with the certainties of natural-science positivism. As Nygaard shows, debates about “history” in that period, particularly when it comes to such obstinate historical events as the French Revolution, were often more complicated and contradictory, able to question certainties and argue for complex arrangements of, as academic debates much later called it, “structure” and “agency”, as well as for the overlap of varying “temporalities”.

Nygaard's approach for a methodologically updated historization of Marxism is a particular one. Although it is not explicitly stated, it might best be qualified as a variant of conceptual history. He remains very close to the texts analysed and takes longer quotations as the starting point of his analyses. Conceptual history has had a peculiar global career. Whereas in its country of origin, Germany, it is certainly not among the most prominent schools, in other places it has enjoyed a continuous and

⁴Gareth Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion* (London, 2016).

⁵Michael Heinrich, *How to Read Marx's Capital: Commentary and Explanations on the Beginning Chapters* (New York, 2021). Heinrich's “anti-historicist” stance, however, is not unambiguous, as he has embarked on providing the most detailed biography of Marx to date; so far, only the first volume has been published: Michael Heinrich, *Karl Marx and the Birth of Modern Society: The Life of Marx and the Development of His Work* (New York, 2019).

⁶Christina Morina, *The Invention of Marxism: How an Idea Changed Everything* (New York, 2022).

stunning popularity, including in parts of Latin America and in Scandinavia. Often, it is the more philosophy- and theory-inclined form of conceptual history à la Koselleck that predominates there. Nygaard's study can be seen in that tradition. It has a number of highly stimulating references to theoretical debates from Bloch to Adorno, Traverso to Bensaïd, and Koselleck to Rüsén. Yet, for an extended historization of Marxism, which Nygaard's calls for and which, as he says, should include "historical cultures" – and, for that matter, institutions, individual, and collective biographies, varying media, etc. – his study remains too closely tied to a limited number of published texts and a selected number of authors. Certainly, Nygaard offers important, decentred variations to the standard ensemble of authors by introducing, for instance, Gustav Bang, a Danish Marxist emblematic of the thousands of non-remembered labour-movement intellectuals of that period, who moved in the "middling league" and often engaged in popularization (as Nygaard shows, even from such "mediocre" popularization rather complex nuances in historical narratives can be teased out). Still, the broader interplay between "ideas", "actors", and "social movements" remains under-explored. This is less a critique than a self-critical reflection (including by me). Whatever the methodological claims and hopes for an extended, integrative view, most of those doing studies in the history of Marxism still stick close to published texts and add some contextual information. That begs the question what research designs, methods, and materials would allow for a much broader view, better able to add depth to the notion of "historical cultures". In the meantime, Nygaard's study has already given us a firm sense that, in the decades following the death of Marx, the "shoals" of emerging Marxism were moving, to a stunningly high degree, in the compact and elusive waters of "history".

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RUSO, GIUSI. *Women, Empires, and Body Politics at the United Nations, 1946–1975. [Expanding Frontiers: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality.]* University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln (NE) 2023. xiii, 287 pp. Ill. \$99.00. (Paper, E-book: \$30.00.)

It is well known that, in the last four or five decades, women's rights have received increasing attention in human rights discourse, as well as within international organizations. How and when this emphasis on gender in human rights came about, however, remains partially obscured. Giusi Russo's book on the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), founded in 1946, now provides us with better knowledge on the early stages of the development of women's rights as human rights.