

leading to conclusions that, however intriguing, are sometimes questionable and usually unduly limiting.

Bryan D. Palmer

School for the Study of Canada, Trent University
1600 West Bank Drive, Peterborough, Ontario, K9J 7B8, Canada
E-mail: bpalmer@trentu.ca
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DUKE, SHAUL. *The Stratifying Trade Union. The Case of Ethnic and Gender Inequality in Palestine, 1920–1948*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke [etc.] 2018. xvii, 312 pp. Ill. \$99.99; € 90.09. (E-book: \$79.99; € 69.99.)

The history of trade unions in British Mandate Palestine is a fascinating case study of the inseparability of labour power from colonialism, state-building processes, and national conflicts. As much as that power was dependent on labour union bureaucracy of the Zionist labour movement, or on workers' collective action in Palestine's workplaces, it has never been isolated from the political contexts in which it rose and fell. However, global labour historiography – that has for long recognized this inseparability in many other cases – has often regarded the case of unions in Mandate Palestine as merely manipulative organizational entities in the hands of nationally oriented politicians, and thus a less interesting example of trade union history. Shaul Duke's book seeks to correct this approach by tackling the role of the Zionist labour movement in Palestine, and the impact of the Histadrut as its organizational expression in particular, on social stratification. Focusing in particular on the role of the Histadrut in constructing and shaping labour market and workplace inequality among ethnic and gender groups, Duke's book offers an opportunity to bring the case of Palestine back into the larger debate on the changing roles of unions in society and power relations in the workplaces, and their adaptability to particular political circumstances.

To understand the impact on inequality, Duke argues, the unions' strategies are paramount. It is their "uses" of organizations, of workers, of group formations along ethnic and gender lines, and of competitive forces in the labour market to which we should divert our attention. The variety of ways unions advance their particularistic interests exposes their non-static character, their capacity to accommodate to the sophisticated policies of business managements in colonial circumstances. Furthermore, they demonstrate the unions' ability to mask the manipulation of their own electorate with blurred ideological formulations. Still, as much as political ideologies and nationally oriented practices of labour unions are important in understanding social stratification, the creation of labour market and workplace advantages may be even more so.

The examination of these questions in the case of Mandate Palestine is telling, not only because of the industrialization and urbanization the country experienced, in particularly in the 1930s and 1940s, but also because of the multiple divisions running through local society: Arabs and Jews, Muslims and Christians, Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews, men and women, veteran and newly arrived immigrants, skilled and unskilled workers, rural and urban labour. These divisions changed over time and expressed themselves differently in different locations across the country. Thus, if labour unions affected the relations between

these groups, if their strategies shaped how these strata and groupings fared materially and organizationally, then the unions' role in shaping the social stratification was essential.

Duke employs this "functional" vested-interest approach by examining the fate of three strata of workers in Mandate Palestine: Arabs, women, and Yemenite Jews. Basing himself on earlier historiography on the social history of Mandate Palestine, and less on his own ground-breaking empirical research, these choices are interesting in themselves. Arab workers were the majority in Palestine until the 1948 war (particularly in rural areas), and the policies of the Zionist labour movement towards them has long attracted the attention of historians seeking to understand labour's role in advancing labour-market advantages for certain groups of workers. Jewish women workers, who since the beginning of the 1920s consistently formed half of the Yishuv's labour force, are of great interest, because of their underrepresentation in the Histadrut, in specific unions (e.g. clerks, teachers), and in town labour councils such as in Haifa, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem, where they were such an essential part of the population. No less important were Jewish Yemenite workers, who offer an emphatic reflection of labour's approach to questions of immigration, ethnicity, and bureaucratic discrimination, split as they were between consistent support for labour's dominating political party (Mapai), and the political Revisionist Right who promised them workplace backing.

Arab workers, Duke argues, deserve special attention both because they were perceived as a major labour market competitor for Jewish immigrants and workers, and because of their limited access to union organization. Recognizing the limited extent of unionization among Arab workers during the Mandate era, Duke emphasizes the question of what advantages unionization could provide them in the first place. Seeking to enrich the existing literature on the Histadrut's exclusionary policies regarding Arab workers and its nationally oriented justifications for this, Duke highlights the material interests of Jewish workers in the total exclusion of Arabs. Here, Duke overstates the extent to which one can separate the varieties of origins of these exclusionary practices – national, materialist, and organizational. Unfortunately, the chapter does not go further than the literature it criticizes and lacks a much needed examination of the various occupations, professions, and workplaces where the exclusions occurred in practice. The archive materials on the latter are very rich and still largely under-researched. Earlier top-down treatments of the Histadrut's policies towards the Arab workers and "bottom-up" approaches could well have benefited from integrating such empirical research with Duke's notion of "Union Uses".

Among the implications of "union uses", Duke notes the union's partial exclusion of Jewish Yemenite immigrants and workers. Arguing that the Histadrut union systematically discriminated against these workers, he demonstrates the extent to which ethnicity-based discrimination took place among Jews and within a labour movement that considered itself inclusively national and socialist. In some areas, however, the anti-Yemenite discrimination was partial and often contradictory or ambivalent at the high political and bureaucratic echelons of the Histadrut; while on the local level, among the bureaucracies of the town labour councils in particular, it was more assertive and aggressive. It was partly for these reasons that the Yemenites had a separate ethnicity-based organization within the labour movement, without the latter succeeding in bringing the Yemenite workers any significant advantages. Still, more research is needed with regard to Yemenite women workers, who fared much worse than their male counterparts. As many researchers on the history of the Yemenites in the Yishuv have showed, they could largely only find work as homemakers in the service of Ashkenazi women. In certain workplaces where the Histadrut was less in

control, Yemenite men fared better, which begs the question of the extent and effectiveness of the Histadrut's discriminatory policies.

The question of effectiveness brings Duke to a discussion of what he defines as the "moderate partial union exclusion" of Jewish women workers. As Duke and many historians before him recognize, the Histadrut political elite and institutional bureaucracy were dominated by men and by Ashkenazi men in particular. It was in the interest of the latter that the Histadrut mostly aimed to advance. Men served as its main social base, and the political and bureaucratic leaders of the Histadrut who needed them for their power preferred not to cause too many splits among their ranks. While women workers could have had more access to union organization, and to the centres of labour decision-making, they suffered systematic discrimination. Stemming largely from the preference for men, in practice, the Histadrut harmed women's positions in the labour market. The women's labour council, which was intended to serve as a women's union and represent their interests within the Histadrut, failed to bring about more gender equality. Furthermore, Duke should have emphasized that the fact that the failure was not total (also because of the partial material services the Histadrut provided to Ashkenazi women) meant that they still fared better than the Yemenite workers, both male and female.

The lack of empirical research on particular industries and workplaces limits these important arguments to the levels of policy and top-down exertion of organizational power. This is particularly true with regard to differentiated groups of industrial workers in Palestine's urbanizing sectors. One example is male diamond cutters who dominated the war-related diamond workshops during World War II. The Histadrut's strategies could hardly influence their conditions, the exclusion of women from the skilled work by management, or the widespread entry of Yemenites despite Mapai's concerns. Another example is the production of essential and non-essential foodstuffs. The latter was dominated by women, often by young female workers, on low wages, many of them organized in the Histadrut (either directly or as wives of Histadrut male workers), but they lacked organization in specific unions. This may explain why Yemenite and Ashkenazi women could work alongside each other in these workplaces without the Histadrut managing to impose standardization among them. Managerial policies and the power of employers – which hardly feature in Duke's analysis – were more influential in both cases.

In the final instance, Duke's analysis demonstrates that the strategies employed by the Zionist labour movement should be understood not only in the context of the specific circumstances of Mandate Palestine, but also as a reproduction of union behaviour in ethnically split societies. In the specific case of Palestine, these strategies affected inequality among workers in direct and indirect ways. This is made clear with regard to the interests of unions of "strong workers" – the more powerful social bases of the Histadrut – to enforce standardization and equality among its members, while other workers (Arabs, Jewish women, Jewish Yemenite workers) paid the price. So much in need of the support of the stronger workers, of industrial workers in particular, the Histadrut was able to contain the tensions between these workers and cater to their needs. It could not do so with regard to the weaker workers. However, the more decisive impact of these approaches towards inequality among workers stemmed from sheer exclusion.

The Palestine case, therefore, demonstrates the extent to which unions were highly sophisticated organizations. They could move easily between a variety of strategies, and along a wide spectrum of inclusionary and exclusionary practices. This is particularly true in the case of ethnically divided societies where the evolution of material inequality depends

less on the power of the state – in this case, the British colonial government – but on the more organized sectors of workers themselves. It is this interesting perspective that the book contributes to the extensive literature on the complex relations between labour, colonial power, and national movements.

David De Vries

Department of Labor Studies, Tel Aviv University
P.O. Box 39040, Tel Aviv 6997801, Israel
E-mail: devries@tauex.post.tau.ac.il
doi:10.1017/S0020859018000615

SEIDMAN, MICHAEL. *Transatlantic Antifascisms. From the Spanish Civil War to the End of World War II*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2017. xi, 339 pp. Ill. £69.99. (Paper: £21.99; E-book: \$23.00).

The historiography of anti-fascism has been rejuvenated over the past decade or so by new perspectives, particularly through challenges to nation-centred understandings of anti-fascist politics, which have shed new light on left politics in the interwar period and beyond.¹ In this context, Michael Seidman's *Transatlantic Antifascisms*, which traces diverse constructions of anti-fascisms from the Spanish Civil War to the end of World War II, promises to be a decisive intervention in these debates. The book locates anti-fascism as "perhaps the most powerful Western ideology of the twentieth century" (p. 1) and proposes a tripartite anti-fascist minimum. In Seidman's view, this "minimum" comprises political movements and governments that made "working against fascism top priority", which refused "conspiratorial theories" of economic, social, and political grievances, and "refused pacifism and believed that state power was necessary to stop both domestic fascisms and the Axis war machine" (p. 2).

The book opens with a discussion of Revolutionary Anti-fascism in Spain, before discussing, in Chapter three, the anti-fascist deficit in the French popular front, which is based on the argument that the popular front was more concerned with fascists within France than with external fascist threats, particularly those posed by the rise of Hitler. Chapter four introduces one of the central themes of the book, what Seidman terms "counter-revolutionary antifascism", which the subsequent chapters develop through engagement with Britain in the first years of World War II and then through a discussion of the United States context. Chapter seven examines the way different articulations of anti-fascisms coalesced between 1941 and 1944. In Chapter eight, which has some of the richest empirical material in the book, Seidman offers detailed engagements with what he refers to as "refusals to work" in Britain, the US, and France. The final chapter signals the divisions that (re-)emerged between different anti-fascisms, which served to both hasten and pre-figure the Cold War.

Arguably, the book's central contribution is the way that it pluralizes anti-fascism by placing the "counter-revolutionary anti-fascisms" of Churchill and Roosevelt alongside the

1. H. Garcia, "Transnational History: A New Paradigm for Anti-fascist Studies?", *Contemporary European History* 25:4 (2016), pp. 563–572.