

Luxembourg et Karl Kautsky. Malgré des divergences majeures quant aux orientations politiques, il a porté une affection particulière à Jaurès et a travaillé régulièrement avec Jules Guesde. Par conséquent, il a largement participé à tous les débats qui ont animé les cercles de militants et à toutes les polémiques qui ont alimenté leurs congrès. Le lecteur peut profiter de son regard critique et entrer avec Rappoport dans les discussions de l'époque sur de nombreuses questions, telles que l'opportunité pour les socialistes de participer à des gouvernements bourgeois, le réformisme, le problème de la violence révolutionnaire, le grand dilemme de la participation à l'effort de guerre, le rôle de Moscou dans la 3^e Internationale. Même si ces thèmes ne sont plus d'une actualité brûlante, ils n'en gardent pas moins un intérêt historique considérable et permettent de mieux comprendre plusieurs attitudes et décisions de l'époque, de même que certaines causes du dérapage du socialisme et de son discrédit actuel.

Malgré un itinéraire peu flamboyant, Rappoport n'en était pas moins une personnalité haute en couleur, à l'esprit rempli de finesse et d'humour. Généreux et combatif jusqu'à la fin, ses qualités premières demeurent cependant sa lucidité, son honnêteté intellectuelle, son indépendance à l'égard de tous et son sens critique. Il a tenté, de l'intérieur, et c'est l'histoire de sa vie à partir des années 1920, de mettre en garde contre la dissociation entre la liberté et le socialisme et contre l'hégémonie de Moscou sur les partis communistes occidentaux. Il prônait le dialogue et le droit de parole. Il n'a jamais accepté de se faire imposer un comportement politique contraire à ses convictions par des dirigeants la plupart du temps beaucoup moins érudits et cultivés que lui et dont les connaissances du marxisme étaient certes moins approfondies que les siennes. Il s'est vite senti en porte-à-faux dans ce Parti communiste dont on peut déjà percevoir le sectarisme et, cette prise de conscience progressive combinée à sa volonté de rester fidèle à la cause révolutionnaire, explique, selon Haupt, les multiples versions de ses mémoires qui constitueraient autant « d'essais d'auto-analyse d'un révolutionnaire en proie à une crise politique profonde ». Amer de se sentir marginalisé, il en a tiré, en réaction, une valorisation de ses attitudes et ses positions frisant parfois l'auto-suffisance. Son échec cuisant au sein du Parti et sa mise au rancart discrète mais efficace témoignent significativement des tendances déjà prises au sein du PCF et de l'ensemble du mouvement communiste international.

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Michael J. Childs — *Labour's Apprentices: Working-Class Lads in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992. Pp. xxiii, 223.

Good books begin with good questions. It helps too if the questions are asked of interesting topics. In *Labour's Apprentices*, Michael Childs's topic is political socialization. His question is what prompted English workers born between the

1880s and the 1900s to move so decisively to the Labour Party after the Great War, especially during the elections of 1918 and 1928. Childs argues that English labourers who voted in significantly greater numbers for Labour candidates during these elections had developed a strong sense of social, cultural, and industrial solidarity during their late Victorian and early Edwardian youth and early manhood. It was, he suggests, the development of a pragmatically defined sense of labour community rather than massive ideological changes that led this generation of workers to move from the traditional Liberal or Conservative political loyalties of their parents to the new and non-doctrinaire Labour Party. The effect of Childs's argument is to shift our understanding of Labour Party history from the abstruse realm of political theory to practical considerations of voters' learned behaviour and life experiences. Although less sensitive to the nuances of regional or urban-rural differentiation than it should be, Childs's argument is remarkably convincing.

The study is infused with the Thompsonian conviction that political behaviour is learned and that the moment of most effective education comes early in life, upon entry into the labour market. The subjects of Childs's study were urban, working-class male adolescents — transitory beings who retained some ties with family but were no longer fully part of it, who were part of the work force but as yet only fringe players. They were learners and apprentices rather than fully qualified labourers. He discusses their late-century experiences in the home and at school, in the workplace and on the street, in sport and commercial entertainment centres as well as in organized youth movements. Childs carefully estimates the contribution each activity made to the development of a separate culture. His general conclusion is that these experiences “were, as a whole, helping to create a more homogeneous working-class, less fragmented by occupational or regional differences and more conscious of itself as a distinct stratum of society” (p. 158).

Influences were generally of two kinds. Positive influences included the workplace, which contributed directly to a more uniform and coherent sense of working-class interests. The late-century economy was changing, creating less of a demand for highly differentiated skilled craftsmen and more of a demand for adaptable semi-skilled workers. The result, Childs argues, was to create a stronger, more unified sense of labour community. Other influences, such as street life (including exposure to the music hall, the cinema, and sport) also worked positively to help form coherent class attitudes.

Other activities, however, contributed to a sense of labour cohesion in a more negative manner. The school experience, for example, was supposed to inculcate a system of values essentially alien to the working-class experience, as was membership in formal boys' organizations. Most working-class children were either indifferent to or cynical about their formal education, however, thus offsetting the social propaganda reinforced within the classroom. Similarly the boys clubs, whose memberships were in any event limited, had increasingly to pander to the boys' interests rather than to those of their middle-class patrons and organizers.

The evidence upon which Childs builds his case consists of the expected range of secondary and primary literary sources and two collections of material in oral history: those at the University of Essex collected by Paul Thompson and at the

Centre for North-West Regional Studies at the University of Lancaster. He knits this evidence into a coherent whole, creating a generic portrait of age, class, and experience. What Childs does not do nearly so successfully is to account for other variables, some of which must surely be relevant. Despite his assertion that regional differences diminished at the turn of the century, the book contains little evidence to substantiate the point. Sensitivity to regional variations might well reveal differences among southern, midland, and northern experiences. There were, indeed, many Englands and many occupations, producing, one may suggest, a more variegated reality than the one that appears here. This reservation aside, Childs's book is a good one, intelligently structured, cogently argued, and generally informative.

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Susan Lynn — *Progressive Women in Conservative Times: Racial Justice, Peace, and Feminism, 1945 to the 1960s*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992. Pp. xi, 218.

Recently a number of historians have set out to challenge the 1950s as a decade of consensus in a range of ways, from analyzing the media to pursuing domesticity in politics and the atom bomb. Susan Lynn's book is decidedly in the camp of scholars in both women's and political history who seek to challenge the accepted wisdom. From the perspective of this new revisionist wave, politics in the 1950s were not solely the domain of conservatism. Less patterned by McCarthyism than constrained by it and far more independent of the virtues of family and domesticity than Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* led us to believe, the immediate postwar decade gave rise to a reformulated progressive politics that saw racism and poverty as the central problems on the American agenda and viewed the role of the United States in world affairs — whether from pacifist or liberal internationalist assumptions — to be open to democratic debate.

Lynn's subjects, the women of the American Field Service Committee (AFSC) and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), were central actors in the transformation of liberal politics in the postwar years. Beginning in the 1940s, both the AFSC and the YWCA became increasingly aware of the importance of racial inequality, our "American dilemma". With the coming to power of the labour movement in the war years, both organizations now redirected their energies from class (especially workplace and union) issues and invested their resources in civil rights and peace activism. Women who were otherwise constrained by the politically conservative climate organized against discrimination, violated segregationist laws, strove to integrate their two organizations, worked for job and educational opportunities for minorities, and mentored other women in leadership skills. While neither organization was explicitly feminist (a term which, as Lynn argues, came exclusively to mean the National Woman's Party and the Equal Rights Amendment by the 1950s), both the YWCA and the AFSC offered women the opportunity to