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Gareth Dale, *Karl Polanyi: A Life on the Left* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), pp. xii, 381, $40 (hardcover), $27 (paperback). ISBN: 978023117608-8

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Karl Polanyi's work has attracted increasing attention from different social sciences in the last decades. At least since the recent financial crisis and in its aftermath, this has also included economics, where he is known best for his criticism of liberal laissez-faire utopianism. Polanyi's *Great Transformation* is read more widely among economists today than ever before. The increased interest in his works from diverse social sciences reflects that Polanyi himself was not merely an economist, historian, sociologist, political scientist, or anthropologist, but was frequently crossing the lines of these subjects. Unsurprisingly, this increased interest in his work has also led to an increased interest in Polanyi's life. Gareth Dale's *Karl Polanyi: A Life on the Left* is filling a void, since a detailed intellectual biography had been lacking so far. Dale is well-placed for such an endeavor. He established himself as a scholar of Polanyi, having written extensively about him, most notably his 2010 book *Karl Polanyi: The Limits of the Market*, which was written as "a critical introduction to the work of Karl Polanyi" (Dale 2010, p. vi).

For his biography, Dale uses a huge amount of material from five archives in four countries (Canada, Hungary, the UK, and the US) as well as interviews with Polanyi's family members and acquaintances. Dale's motivation is to (partly) solve the "puzzles and paradoxes" of Karl Polanyi's work, which "provided the initial impetus for the writing of this biography" (p. 7). He aims to understand Polanyi's thoughts against the background of his intellectual formation and political developments of the first six decades of the last century. He portrays Polanyi's life as "above all a twentieth-century life, one whose narrative dramatizes, parallels, intervenes in, and sometimes seems to encapsulate the events and processes, the soil and rubble, on which we stand today" (p. 10).

Dale starts with Polanyi's parents and his childhood in Budapest, where young Karl—born in 1886—was exposed not only to Hungarian and Jewish culture, but also to Russian (from his mother) and Western (from his father) culture. He received a liberal-minded education and went on to study in Budapest, majoring in law. He became entangled in Hungarian politics as a leading figure in both the Galileo Circle and the Radical Bourgeois Party, but he was also haunted by the death of his father, whom he admired greatly. During the First World War, Polanyi served as a lieutenant in Galicia without ever being involved in direct fighting. He had suffered from depression for some time, and when he fell ill with typhus, his involvement in the war ended. He found solace in the New Testament, converting to Protestantism, being mostly drawn by the Christian teachings that promote humanism. He would remain a mostly non-practicing

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Protestant. To fully recover from his illness, he went to Vienna, where he would end up staying for several years. He met his future wife, Ilona Duczynska, there, starting an affectionate relationship that would last until Polanyi's death. Duczynska was at this point "an exiled professional revolutionary, fiercely idealistic and committed to the spread of communist revolution" (p. 76). She would remain more activist-oriented than her mostly intellectually minded husband. Their only child, Kari, was born in 1923. While in Vienna, Polanyi met many leading scholars and he engaged in intellectual debates. He took part in the socialist calculation debate, attacking both the planning approach of Otto Neurath and the market liberalism of Ludwig von Mises, championing "a guild socialist Third Way" (p. 92). He started working for the magazine *Der Österreichische Volkswirt* (The Austrian Economist) and became its editor.

Polanyi witnessed the establishment and consolidation of Red Vienna, but also its fall when an Austrofascist government came to power in Austria. This would also end Polanyi's time in Vienna, and he emigrated with his family to the UK. However, the UK brought personal distress, because Polanyi had trouble finding a permanent job. After he gave lecture tours in the United States, he would eventually secure a temporary position at Bennington College, Vermont, where he would finish his *Great Transformation*. Dale includes the build-up to *The Great Transformation* as well as the reception during Polanyi's lifetime—or, rather, the lack of reception. Since much has been written about *The Great Transformation*, he sensibly omits an intellectual analysis of this book itself.

Polanyi could see a future in the United States, but his wife was opposed to moving permanently. She and their daughter continued to live in the UK, which led to a strained family life. After Polanyi secured a position at Columbia University in 1947, she was willing to move. However, by this time, the McCarthy era had dawned and she was unable to attain a visa with her communist background. They would eventually settle for Canada and Polanyi would commute from Pickering, Ontario, until his retirement. Polanyi was contractually obliged to write a follow-up on his *Great Transformation*, which he never did. Instead, he focused on studying the (economic) life of early (pre-capitalist) societies. Dale describes in detail the problems Polanyi was working on, often in collaborations with other scholars. The only other major work he published during his lifetime was the edited volume *Trade and Markets in the Early Empires*, which left an imprint on economic anthropology, even though his own contribution to it was perceived critically. Two further books were published posthumously: *Dahomey and the Slave Trade* and *The Livelihood of Man*. Late in life, Polanyi's love for Hungary rekindled after the revolution of 1956 and he would visit his native country several times.

Polanyi remained a convinced reformist socialist his whole life, even though the emphasis changed—Dale depicts his journey from a liberal socialist to a guild socialist and to an adherent of Christian socialism. As a reformist socialist he experienced the ups and downs of a movement that sought incremental change through parliamentary means to inch closer to a socialist society. As Dale points out, Polanyi "lived through the heyday of that movement" (p. 10)—a movement that seems distant nowadays because it barely exists anymore, but was very much alive during his lifetime: for example, in the Fabian Society in Britain. Dale suggests that much of the rather new interest in Polanyi's life might be attributed to the appeal of this "marginal, even lost" (p. 283) movement. In his biography, Dale depicts Polanyi as a "typical

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character" in the sense of Georg Lukács's literary theory: that is, as "a person in whom general aspects common to the mass are synthesized with the peculiarities of their own singular life story" (p. 283).

Dale also compares Polanyi to three other contemporary Hungarian-born intellectuals who appear from time to time in the biography: Georg Lukács, Karl Mannheim, and his brother Michael Polanyi. The relationship with his brother Michael, who is the most important secondary character next to Ilona Duczynska in this biography, is depicted in detail, which included brotherly affection as well as tensions and political differences. Apart from them, a multitude of intellectuals from both the Eastern and the Western world make an appearance in this biography—many of whom will be familiar names to historians of economic thought. The reader might struggle from time to time to keep up with all these characters, but this only shows the depth of Dale's research. Additionally, a reader who is completely unfamiliar with Polanyi's works might miss some of Dale's allusions. For example, Dale refers to Speenhamland only once when discussing Polanyi's relationship to the New Left, an allusion someone unfamiliar with *The Great Transformation* will easily miss.

To conclude, Dale brilliantly traces Polanyi's life and his intellectual development, depicting his protagonist as a cosmopolitan "freethinking humanist on a quest for community" (p. 3), who "was a genial and engaging man" (p. 8) and whose works are characterized by an "engagingly maverick character" (p. 7). Dale illuminates why Polanyi's work is met with an increased interest today. It is, however, not a mere eulogy. Dale points out contradictions in Polanyi's thoughts and is in places critical of him. The last chapter, for example, includes a discussion about how Polanyi was misled by the "Fabian belief in the sociological neutrality of the state" (p. 285). The result of Dale's endeavor is an engaging and well-written book, which will probably be the definitive intellectual biography of Polanyi for the foreseeable future.

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The importance of sports as an industry (already at multi-billion dollars), its obvious worldwide popularity, growing interest in and investment by the media, and heavy governmental involvement, coupled with a high availability of data, led to a rise in the number of contributions of economic literature to the study of sports. These studies bring together theoretical and empirical approaches covering almost every area in

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