

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.

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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.

left anti-fascisms that have dominated recent historiography. Seidman prioritizes the importance of such counter-revolutionary articulations of anti-fascism, arguing, for example, that “[d]espite the revolutionary rhetoric of many in the Resistance, France’s Liberation would be integrated into an Atlantic counterrevolution that would restore or continue democratic government domestically and empire internationally” (p. 178). In this regard, and perhaps surprisingly for a book that seems to explicitly indicate an Atlantic perspective, Seidman’s account is structured around a discussion of different national contexts, notably Spain, the UK, the US, and France. While there is a significant depth of archive work in these different contexts, the relations and connections between differently placed anti-fascisms and anti-fascists are not really considered, beyond tracing some of the interactions between elite figures such as Roosevelt and Churchill.

Thus, the book largely eschews the methods and approaches associated with transnational history that have so energized recent work on anti-fascist internationalisms, which has also been far more attentive to the ways in which anti-fascisms were articulated and experienced “from below”. A whole range of work inspired by such approaches, including research on the International Brigades by Helen Graham, Fraser Ottanelli, and others, and Jean Michel Palmier’s *Weimar in Exile* on the trajectories of German anti-fascist exile have brought new perspectives to the study and understanding of anti-fascism.² The way Seidman approaches questions of transatlantic fascisms, however, remains largely structured by a methodological nationalism that treats Britain, France, and the US as largely coherent and discrete spaces, rather than considering the diverse connections through which they were shaped. That said, there are interesting hints of such connections, including fascinating material about the “recruitment” of unemployed French workers under the Vichy regime to work in Germany, a practice which was resisted.

Further, Seidman adopts a very narrow usage of the transatlantic in the title employing it in a restricted way to refer primarily to relations between the US, France, and Britain, and predominantly around elite actors. The second chapter swiftly dismisses the importance of transnational organizing in relation to China and Ethiopia, arguing that “[n]either Japanese aggression against China (1931–1933) nor the Italian conquest of Ethiopia (1935–1936) aroused the same level of international emotion and commitment as the Spanish Civil War and Revolution”. Downplaying the significant international anti-fascisms shaped in opposition to Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia has important consequences in limiting understandings of antifascism, particularly in terms of recognizing diverse articulations with anti-colonialism. It also hinders an engagement with the differing and conflictual perspectives of anti-fascists on empire. Such an engagement would have been a potentially productive exercise and would have been something that strengthened Seidman’s engagement with different articulations of anti-fascisms.

As Tom Buchanan has argued, it was not only the political right, but also elements of the left that were silent on articulations of anti-fascism and anti-colonialism.³ The absence of

2. H. Graham *The War and Its Shadow: Spain’s Civil War in Europe’s Long Twentieth Century* (Brighton, 2012); F. Ottanelli, “Anti-Fascism and the Shaping of National and Ethnic Identity: Italian American Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War”, *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 27:1 (2007), pp. 9–31; M. Palmier, *Weimar in Exile: The Antifascist Emigration in Europe and America*. Translated by David Fernbach (London, 2006).

3. T. Buchanan, “‘The Dark Millions in the Colonies Are Unavenged’: Anti-Fascism and Anti-Imperialism in the 1930s”, *Contemporary European History*, 25:4 (2016), pp. 645–665.

sustained discussion of these questions here is compounded by a scant treatment of colonial contexts. Places under colonial rule only seem to appear here, as in brief mentions of Martinique and West African countries, when they are of strategic relevance or significance to colonial powers. Furthermore, in Seidman's account, anti-fascists in these contexts lack agency and there is no sense of how they shaped distinctive left political cultures through their engagements with anti-fascism. There is certainly no space here for anti-fascist activists and intellectuals like the Trinidadian George Padmore, who articulated a persuasive and important notion of "colonial fascism", which emerged from articulating anti-fascist and anti-colonial commitments together. In this respect, the book also fails to engage with the importance placed on centring questions of "race" in relation to fascism and anti-fascism by theorists such as Paul Gilroy.⁴

Indeed, not only is there a general lack of engagement with questions of race, there is even an attempt to offer a tortuous justification of why the Ku Klux Klan can't be seen as fascist, and, moreover, to claim "the Klan's antifascism" is apparently based on their hostility to Mussolini's links to the Pope (p. 141). This characterization of the Klan is something that prominent African-American intellectuals such as Langston Hughes, who articulated a strongly anti-racist variant of anti-fascism, would have vehemently disagreed with. Seidman's discussion of the US South raises questions about the capaciousness of his notion of anti-fascism, which are also raised in relation to his discussions of workers' struggles in the context of World War II. Thus, one of the contributions of Seidman's work is to foreground the persistence of labour struggles during World War II.

There is fascinating material across French, British, and US contexts of workers' struggles around this time, of the sheer variety of grievances, from access to canteen meals to different contestation of time, to challenges by boiler makers and the production of standardized ships, the latter struggles animated by concerns over de-skilling. These struggles, however, are all rather narrowly understood through a conceptual lens based on a refusal to work, and are seen as undermining anti-fascism re-envisioned as an elite political project. Crucially, such interventions are seen as possessing no agency to intervene in the terms on which anti-fascism was envisioned or produced. Seidman's account could have deepened his arguments by positioning this material on the "refusal to work" in relation to literatures on the ways in which some of the class dynamics of World War II were understood and negotiated.

Tony Lane's work on merchant seafarers, for example, usefully challenges the myth of classlessness associated with the conflict in Britain, arguing that the ways in which the war was experienced and articulated were strongly classed. Lane notes that "social relations in Britain were no more harmonious than they had been before [the war], and that the longer the war continued, the more divided Britain became".⁵ Seidman's framing of workplace struggles as isolated refusals to work, which are seen as transcending fascist-anti-fascist contexts, tends, by contrast, to abstract them from such broader antagonisms over the terms on which "the war" was conducted and over how the "sacrifices" that it entailed were distributed. A motion proposed in 1941 by the Glasgow Trades Council for that year's Scottish Trade Union Congress conference referred to "the grave discrepancy in the sacrifices demanded from the worker and from the employers".⁶

4. P. Gilroy, *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge, MA, 2000).

5. T. Lane, *The Merchant Seamen's War* (Liverpool, 1990), p. 8.

6. Glasgow Trades Council Executive Committee Minutes, Glasgow City Archives, 1941.

Seidman's book makes a significant contribution to understanding the plural ways in which anti-fascisms were generated across different geographical contexts. Ultimately though, it fails to fully recognize and account for the dynamism and multiplicity of Atlantic trajectories of anti-fascist activists and solidarities.

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PITTAWAY, MARK. *From the Vanguard to the Margins. Workers in Hungary, 1939 to the present. Selected Essays by Mark Pittaway.* Ed. by Adam Fabry. [Historical Materialism Book Series, Vol. 66.] Brill, Leiden [etc.] 2014. x, 333 pp. €134.00; \$165.00. (E-book: €128.00; \$168.00).

"Rereading Mark Pittaway" would be an apt title for this review. The volume, edited by Adam Fabry, contains twelve previously published papers by Mark Pittaway, many of them in leading international journals. The book is not only a commemoration of the life work of a renowned labour historian, who died at a tragically young age, but it brings together many inspiring ideas about the interpretation of Eastern European history and, in particular, labour history from a global perspective. Mark Pittaway was a Western scholar, who pioneered in the discipline of Eastern European social and labour history. Today, he is widely recognized by a younger cohort of "native" historians, who seek to go beyond both the "socialist glorification" and "post socialist disavowal" of the working class in the region. To reread Mark Pittaway is intellectually all the more rewarding because of his many instructive prognoses in the contemporary Eastern European social and political context, making his studies relevant not only for the past, but also for the topical political situation and the future of the region.

Mark Pittaway's interest in the Hungarian labour history originates in his PhD thesis, from which grew the book *The Workers State: Industrial Labor and the Making of Socialist Hungary, 1944–1958* (2012), which his supervisor, Nigel Swain, has labelled pathbreaking (p. 293). Challenging existing orthodoxies about Hungarian Stalinism and the nature of Stalinism in general, with the help of extensive archival research, Pittaway demonstrated that Stalinist strategies of industrial reorganization in fact supported the individualization of production, rather than collectivism, as suggested earlier by the totalitarian thesis. Pittaway rejected both this totalitarian interpretation of Stalinism and the state capitalist thesis. He argued that legitimacy can be constructed in different ways than those offered by Western liberal democracies, and convincingly demonstrated that at certain historical moments Stalinism enjoyed a degree of legitimacy, necessary *and* sufficient for the regime to effectively function and maintain political order.

This re-interpretation of legitimacy led Pittaway to original conclusions about the nature of Stalinism: that the terror of high Stalinism was, in fact, the result of the *weakness* of the state power, rather than a demonstration of its totalitarian character; and that the state essentially failed to build a socialist working class, which, in the imagination of the Party,