

RYLEY, PETER. *Making Another World Possible. Anarchism, Anti-Capitalism and Ecology in Late 19th and Early 20th Century Britain*. Bloomsbury, New York [etc.] 2013. xxviii, 233 pp. £60.00. doi:10.1017/S0020859014000546

Peter Ryley's *Making Another World Possible*, one of the first volumes in Bloomsbury's "Contemporary Anarchist Studies" series, is a stimulating take on Victorian anarchism which is also contemporary in its focus. It is an insightful, erudite, yet genial book, which fills a gap with its account of "anarchism, anti-capitalism and ecology in late 19th and early 20th century Britain".

In the dynamic field of anarchist historiography, Ryley's book converges with ongoing research on the anarchist canon and the critique of overly narrow or rigid understandings of anarchist ideas and their genealogy. Adopting a broad perspective on anarchism, Ryley defines it as "a debate, an exploration of an ethical commitment and a living way of thinking [...] an ethical choice, to live without hierarchy" (pp. x–xi), which expresses itself in many different spheres, both personal and political, from gender relations to education systems, and from social status to approaches to the natural world. Accordingly, Ryley provides a far more inclusive picture of late nineteenth-century anarchism, which diverges from prevailing accounts with its focus on indigenous rather than exilic radicalism and its deliberate exclusion of syndicalism. His approach is also tied in with a depiction of the late Victorian radical milieu as characterized by a "free exchange of ideas, robust but comradely debate, profound disagreements but a mutual recognition" (p. xiv), away from the picture of sectarian divisions and conflicts which so often accompanies histories of anarchism. This libertarian milieu with its sociabilities, connections, and occasional enmities always underpins Ryley's intellectual history, and he excels in writing pithy portraits and depicting these circles.

The first chapter is a critical examination of the anarchist canon through the notions of property and progress: Rousseau, Godwin, Hodgskin, and then Proudhon. The second chapter focuses on Peter Kropotkin, with an interesting analysis of *Fields, Factories and Workshop* as "a study in sustainability" (p. 42). The most thought-provoking inclusion in Ryley's account comes in chapter 3, with the individualists: Ryley takes care to distinguish between "the English individualists" and "Individualist anarchism" (discussed in chapter 4). The latter self-identified as anarchists and represented the left wing of the broader individualist movement. They were "a distinctive fusion of these three traditions, American, European and British" (p. 88), united with their anarchist communist counterparts in their "untrammelled hostility to the state as an agent of class rule and the protector of injustice" (p. 98). The ideals of social and sexual emancipation represented another area of consensus. Slightly more problematic were the individualist anarchists' ideas on economics, as they advocated self-interest without exploitation, but with a "closet conservatism" (p. 110) palpable in their positions on property, for instance. Overall, Ryley stresses, this strand seemed to cumulate handicaps with respect to its public reception, since it attracted little support from the working class, offered no easy and instant solutions, and was deprived of romantic appeal.

The English individualists were a more complex and heterogeneous group. In this chapter, Ryley explores ideological fine lines, where some individuals and ideas that are easily portrayed as proto-neoliberal can be reinterpreted as anarchist fellow travellers. These individualists tended to identify with the ideas of Herbert Spencer, and clustered around groupings such as the Liberty and Property Defence League, the Personal Rights

Association and the voluntaryist movement. Some of them have usually been perceived as conservative rather than radical, notably Joseph Hiam Levy, although Ryley points out that their hostility was aimed at state socialism rather than socialism itself. They were not socialists, but put forward cutting critiques of gender inequality and class oppression, sought to mitigate the damages of corporate capitalism, and offer a libertarian alternative through self-regulation and economic justice for manual workers. Their activism crystallized in a wide range of causes and initiatives, such as Josephine Butler's campaign against the Contagious Diseases Act and Wordsworth Donisthorpe's advocacy of labour capitalization as the first step towards stateless democracy. In the broader late Victorian political landscape, they were a group "that swam against the tide of the growing influence of Marxism, democratic socialism and the New Liberalism" (p. 59) which was then emerging. Discussing them in the context of anarchism allows Ryley to present a reading of the period which adds complexity to traditional narratives centring on the rise of parliamentary socialism and organized labour.

Another crucial inclusion is that of "ecological anarchism", a very important yet largely neglected area of anarchism, whose main actors as presented here are Elisée Reclus and Patrick Geddes. Far from having a single-issue, narrow agenda, ecological anarchism "united many of the pre-existing themes of anarchist thought into a coherent critique of progress" (p. 156). While Reclus is well-known as a central inspiration for late-century anarchist communism and subsequent generations, Geddes is in the paradoxical position of having developed numerous anarchist connections and having been hugely influential (a legacy which can be traced to Colin Ward) while being rarely included in the anarchist pantheon. It is therefore especially important to "resurrect [him] as a political figure" (p. 173), primarily in order to highlight the anarchist posterity of his ideas.

The more conventional topic of anarchist communism, considered here through the prism of violence, is revisited quite innovatively. Ryley distinguishes between three traditions. First, there was indigenous working-class radicalism, of which the notorious Socialist League was a good example. This enables Ryley to reclaim a tradition of native anarchism, inspired by working-class radicalism and Chartism with an insurrectionary streak, which has been almost systematically obliterated because of the prevailing historiographic focus on the importance of exiles in the development of late Victorian anarchism. The anarchist communism of continental refugees which evolved in journals like *Freedom*, *Liberty*, and *The Torch*, with the towering figures of Peter Kropotkin and Errico Malatesta but also lesser-known thinkers and activists like James Tochatti, Charlotte Wilson, and Louise Bevington, is then examined. The third strand is Christian anarchism, which was absolutely pacifist and committed to non-violence.

One of the book's strengths lies in its contemporary resonance, which Ryley constantly but casually brings out. The preface locates nineteenth-century libertarian and radical currents in relation to today's alterglobalization or ecological activists, and similar parallels are drawn throughout the book. This highlights the relevance and modernity of these writings, resurrecting the dynamism, innovativeness, and significant intellectual legacy of the late nineteenth-century radical milieu in a truly meaningful way rather than as a formal academic exercise in tracing militant genealogies. Ryley also concludes lucidly that despite all these parallels, nineteenth-century anarchism posited the revolution as one of its two core myths, while we are now in "the era of an anarchism of small things" (p. 193).

The book is written in an engaging style, combining effortless erudition with a strong sense of ideological filiations, including contemporary ones. Ryley's take on the anarchist

canon may be open to some challenges, for instance because of the omission of syndicalism, but it is a thought-provoking and well-argued questioning of the usual ideological fault lines, where no partisan attempts at appropriation and exclusion appear to be at stake. Also of note are interesting nods to the striking presence of gender discrimination and anti-semitism within the movement. The study discusses Charlotte Wilson and Louisa Bevington, who are usually treated as background figures, and highlights the many instances when progressive ideas coexisted with backward positions on gender roles. Similarly, anti-semitic leanings are repeatedly pointed out, from Proudhon in the first chapter to Geddes in the final one, eventually hinting at a possible red thread in the anarchist tradition. These are also important sub-themes, calling for further exploration.

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FRÖLICH, PAUL. *Im radikalen Lager. Politische Autobiographie 1890–1921*. BasisDruck, Berlin 2013. 415 pp. Ill. € 29.80. doi:10.1017/S0020859014000558

The memoirs of Paul Frölich (1884–1953), a left-wing radical within the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) and a founder of the German Communist Party (KPD) in 1919, can be considered one of the true archive sensations of recent years. Written in 1938 at the request of the Amsterdam-based International Institute of Social History, the unpublished manuscript was lost during World War II and rediscovered only in 2007. While a French translation was published in 2012, this German edition by Reiner Tosstorff presents the text in its original language, adding sources on its origin as well as an afterword by the editor on Frölich's post-1921 political life. A list of abbreviations, a well-researched index of names, and an extensive list of annotations provide detailed contextual information and make this volume accessible to both scholars in the field of communist studies and a general audience.

Frölich's political autobiography covers the course of the German labour movement from the 1890s to 1921 and provides a detailed account of the birth of German communism. At the time of its writing, Frölich had been expelled from the KPD and had founded the *Kommunistische Partei Opposition* (KP-O), an opposition current ridiculed by his former comrades as "KP-Zero". Frölich, who had himself been among the left-wing radicals within the SPD before 1914, was thrown out of the party because he rejected a new strategy known in Germany as *ultralinks* and internationally as the "third period". It was guided by the view that in the third and final period of capitalism any reform would merely prolong its agony. Frölich, socialized as a radical since his youth, was expelled for being "rightist". He left the party along with other protagonists from the "old guard" of the KPD, such as Heinrich Brandler, August Thalheimer, and Ernst Meyer – a process regarded by many scholars as marking the end of the Stalinization of German communism. Nevertheless, Frölich's memoirs avoid the dogmatism of the sidelined, and