the volume, are already apt to engender new ideas, of which we will probably hear and read a lot on the occasion of the revolution's 100th anniversary.

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Rogan, Tim. The Moral Economists: R.H. Tawney, Karl Polanyi, E.P. Thompson, and the Critique of Capitalism. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ [etc.] 2017. viii, 263 pp. $39.95; £30.00

Intellectual histories often rest on assertions and assumptions, followed by arguments. The results are not always wrong, and certainly not routinely disappointing. But their foundations, depending on whether they are erected on stable and sustainable premises or on sands that shift with any tremor of challenge, are always open to question. In the process, what has been given the appearance of illuminating insight can appear strained, even little more than a creative construction of an author committed to a particular stand.

It might well be suggested that this is true of any historical work. But the pitfalls are perhaps greater within a genre such as intellectual history. Research and writing can take place in ways that rely almost entirely on specific texts, either written by subjects of study or commenting on particular historical developments, which are then boiled down to the interpretive meaning assigned to them by the author responsible for the assertions, assumptions, and arguments at the core of their particular analytic undertaking. Tim Rogan's recent historiographic essay on three critics of capitalism, R.H. Tawney, Karl Polanyi, and E.P. Thompson, whom he classifies as moral economists, reveals some of these pitfalls.

Rogan's study rests on an initial assertion/assumption. Criticism of capitalism has, Rogan claims, undergone "a radical truncation" from the 1800s to present times. An earlier stream of thought accenting the "moral or spiritual despoliation" associated with capital's reign has been displaced by our latter-day unease with poverty and widening "material disparities" (p. 1). Enamored of the extent to which Thomas Piketty's *Capital* has supposedly elevated inequality to the prime consideration in economic discussions of capitalism, Rogan turns to Tawney, Polanyi, and Thompson to insist that a now "abandoned" moral critique of capitalism needs to be resurrected (p. 2). Abandoned, where, when, and how? That Piketty's social democratic focus on inequality can stand in for the totality of contemporary critique of capitalism, and that there exists some kind of binary opposition between those who oppose capitalism because it fosters poverty and inequality and those who insist that alternatives to the regime of acquisitive individualism rest more properly on a moral critique of the profit system's debasement of humanity, can certainly be questioned, even rejected. Thompson, for instance, can hardly be said to have lacked an interest in the poor, and he cited Tawney as linking, not severing, issues such as poverty and the treatment of children as touchstones indicative of the character of any social philosophy.

Also open to interrogation and possible challenge is Rogan's insistence that the three authors addressed, and their major works that he scaffolds his arguments on – Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1926), Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* (1944), and Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) – reveal previously unknown synergies. "Thompson emerges here as a successful innovator within a critical tradition pioneered by Tawney. More surprisingly, Karl Polanyi stands revealed as an intermediary between Tawney and Thompson" (p. 3).

Rogan's argument can be read productively. But it should not be accepted uncritically. To suggest that Thompson was a follower of Tawney is no more appropriate than to insist he was an innovator building on the work of J.L. and Barbara Hammond and Sidney and Beatrice Webb. As Rogan reveals, Tawney was influenced by these authors, agreed about much with them, but also raised concerns, even objections, relating to some of their views. Tawney and Thompson certainly shared common experiences, as Rogan indicates, including working in adult education outside the metropolitan center of London, the former in Lancashire and North Staffordshire, the latter in Yorkshire. Here, they learned, in Wordsworth's words, "[f]rom mouths of lowly men and of obscure/A tale of honour". But Thompson's method was one of breaking out of received wisdoms. The pages of *The Making of the English Working Class* draw on and defend Tawney, the Hammonds, and the Webbs. They also bristle with critique of the failure of such pioneers to address particular issues. Most importantly, Thompson challenged rigorously the assumption that an ideological predisposition to respectable reform has always trumped the politics of revolutionary refusal in the English working-class experience.

A weak argument in the linkage of Rogan's three authors is the claim that "Thompson perfected the argument Polanyi had attempted to frame in *The Great Transformation*". Indeed, Rogan claims that the success of Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* "explains the revival of Polanyi's intellectual fortunes", and he stakes his study's innovation and worth on "[r]evealing Polanyi as intermediary between Tawney and Thompson […]" (pp. 54–55). To be sure, Rogan does present interesting documentation that Polanyi, in a private letter to his brother Michael, regarded Thompson's late 1950s writings on socialist humanism as "somewhat akin" to his own positions (p. 157), but he is bedeviled by the reality that Thompson nowhere refers to Polanyi. Rogan strikingly asserts that, "*The Great Transformation* probably was among Thompson's key sources in writing *The Making of the English Working Class.*" Because Thompson and Polanyi shared a common sensibility about the Speenhamland system, Rogan reasons, Thompson must have relied on Polanyi. Thompson thus advanced his predecessor's arguments with new evidence and imaginative appreciation of how to reconstruct the experience of the past through recourse to the agencies of the plebeian masses. This Polanyi influence, Rogan suggests, explains as well how Thompson "defended his departures from Tawney's authoritative chronology" (pp. 163–164).

There is, it must be insisted, no convincing evidence for such conjecture. Tissues of inference tie Rogan's subjects together and what is *not* addressed is perhaps as significant as what is. The kinds of simplifications that emerge distort as much as they illuminate. Thus, in addressing the economistic turn in historiography in the late 1950s, Rogan alludes to E.J. Hobsbawm's "steadfast focus on the economic base", citing his 1957 essay on the standard of living debate (p. 141). What this misses is that two years later Hobsbawm's first book, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the Nineteenth and*

Twentieth Centuries (1959) would appear, a text that fits uncomfortably in Rogan's categorizations of an oppositional clash between economistic and humanistic, utopian Marxisms. Too much is made, as well, of a division between the Thompson brothers, Frank and Edward, during the anti-fascist campaigns of World War II. Frank is presented as prone "to love," while Edward apparently insisted on the virtue of a more rigorous analytic approach (pp. 135–136). How much this distinction could be carried into the post-1956 historical writing of Thompson is questionable and, in any case, the letters of two communist youths, written at a specific cataclysmic moment of their lives, cannot bear the weight of differentiation suggested by Rogan.

Oddly, as well, Rogan spends too little time in his discussion of Thompson as the final innovator in the tradition of twentieth-century moral economists on the writing that would seem most pertinent: the collection of essays – including "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century" and "The Moral Economy Reviewed" – in *Customs in Common* (1991). Given Rogan's often useful comments on religion and the critique of capitalism, in which Tawney's *oeuvre* was clearly of central importance, it is somewhat surprising that Thompson's *Witness Against the Beast: William Blake and the Moral Law* (1993) goes unmentioned. It was there, after all, that an irreverent and impish Thompson announced that he had once startled an American campus audience in 1968 by proclaiming himself part of the obscure sect of Muggletonian Marxists founded by Blake. But this is a reflection of Rogan's limited reach across the now expansive library of Thompson books and commentaries.

This is not to say that *The Moral Economists* does not have its moments. Readers interested in Tawney, Polanyi, and Thompson cannot help but benefit from engaging with this book. Rogan's discussion of Tawney complements a substantial existing literature, capped in 2014 with the publication of Lawrence Goldman's *The Life of R.H. Tawney: Socialism and History*, while the chapter on Polanyi extends certain topics recently addressed in Gareth Dale, *Karl Polanyi: A Life on the Left* (2016). The treatment of Polanyi (unlike that of Thompson and Tawney), moreover, benefits greatly from the use of archival sources. These prove especially helpful in elucidating the importance of "Red Vienna" in the 1920s, described by the Hungarian socialist humanist as "one of the high points of Western civilization" (p. 63).

If Rogan's study constitutes an analytic adventure quite rich in suggestion, drawing us into all manner of important discussions, it nonetheless bears the stamp of a dissertation in need of more research and, perhaps, more focus. A rambling chapter on capitalism's changing nature in the 1940s works through the contributions of diverse thinkers, among them Tawney's protégé, Evan Durbin; sociologist Karl Mannheim; political economist A.C. Pigou; Labour Party revisionist Anthony Crosland, and, of course, John Maynard Keynes. The ideas canvassed help to situate Tawney, Polanyi, and Thompson, and they further contextualize Rogan's conclusions about the importance in the evolution of the moral economy critique of an iconoclastic figure such as Amartya Sen. That said, this chapter, separating the discussions of Tawney and Polanyi from Thompson, disrupts the continuity and flow of the text. It will undoubtedly divert many readers' attention from the central preoccupations of the book.

Certainly, we need the critique of capitalism that Rogan associates with his chosen three moral economists. But the assumptions, assertions, and arguments of this book are too often drawn out in ways that reveal a partial appreciation of the complexities of comparison,

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

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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