

present that should open the way to a broader concept of working-class culture as part of the general "process of civilization".

*Siegfried Mattl*

BALFOUR, SEBASTIAN. *Dictatorship, Workers, and the City. Labour in Greater Barcelona since 1939*. Clarendon Press, Oxford 1989. xii, 288 pp. £ 30.00.

Balfour's study tries to explain how the Spanish labour movement, so long the scourge of the Franco regime, became the poor relation in the new democracy it had helped to create. From one of the most militant, the working-class movement has become one of the least organized in Europe. While most interpretations of the so-called "crisis of unionism" in Spain have centred on the economic recession and the political process of the post-Franco period, Balfour's study seeks the explanation also in the conditions of the dictatorship itself. Therefore, the book traces the experience of the Spanish working class, concentrating on the area of Greater Barcelona, from the victory of Franco's armies in 1939 to the devastations of recession in the late eighties.

The book, comprising seven chapters, is set in a broad chronological framework. The first chapter examines the destruction of the old institutions of the labour movement after the Civil War and the degradation of working-class life in the forties. The particular emphasis of the book is on the period between 1962 and 1976. The second chapter describes the social transformation brought about by economic growth in the sixties. The rise of new forms of labour organization and militancy is analyzed in the third chapter, as well as the vicissitudes of the clandestine organizations of the opposition. The fourth chapter analyzes the local patterns of protest (tradition and leadership, industrial and urban structures); it makes a comparative study of the labour movement in the four main industrial centres of the province of Barcelona (Terrassa, Sabadell, Baix Llobregat, Barcelona) pointing out that it is more correct to speak about "several labour movements, separated by occupation and by geography, each with their own patterns of activity and their own subcultures" (p. 110).

The fifth chapter analyzes the rise of militancy in the early seventies with particular reference to the immigrant community, and the variation in the area (textiles, engineering plants, construction). The sixth chapter examines popular and political dissent in the last years of the dictatorship (local mass strikes), tracing the rise of the new union movement within the broader context of political change in this period. The last chapter discusses the relationship between the crisis of unionism in the eighties and the effects of economic recession, political reform (subordinate role of the unions), and the heritage of Francoism (fragmentation of struggle, lack of experience of unionism, legacy of state intervention in industrial relations) on the labour movement. These three factors weakened the emerging unions.

Balfour's conclusion is that the history of the labour movement between 1939 and the present day is marked by discontinuity. His conclusions are, in general terms,

correct, although not all his insights are as new as he pretends. In the Preface the author says that the history of the Spanish labour movement has relevance for the experience of workers in other countries and other periods; unfortunately, the parallels drawn with other labour movements in the very last pages of the book are very short. But for the history of the Spanish labour movement this is a good and useful book; particularly interesting are the chapters based on the archives of Franco's secret police in Catalonia.

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