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Brookfield, S. and Holst, J.D., 2011, *Radicalizing Learning: Adult Education for a Just World*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Reviewed by Maeve O'Grady

The title of this book indicates the nature of the radical learning to be done - to make the world more sustainable. To this effect, various chapters deal with different aspects of adult education whether we are working in and with social movements or are employed in academia but wish to provide a critique of neo-liberalism in a way that will help social and socialist change. The type of change that is sought is described by the authors as democratic socialism, which they define in different ways: one is a reclaiming of the use of the word 'socialist' in the context of the demonising of the term in the U.S.; another is educating for democracy in order to hold decision-making in economics and politics accountable; yet another is to maximise the participatory element in those fields and to extend ideals of participatory democracy into economics.

Radical educators (in the socialist rather than the far-right tradition) already critique neoliberalism. So what does this book offer them that they haven't known before? It identifies a real change in the conditions and mode of production that provide new conditions for challenging the common sense understanding of how the world should work. It argues that it may now be more possible for the working class to see that: the American dream is unattainable; the working class as the majority group in society can have a more unified sense that the way things were up until recent years will never be seen again; and the underlying trends that were visible for a long time have now become endemic in an era of globalization.

The work starts with a reconceptualising of adult learning and education. The writers are concerned with adult education's egalitarian mission of "encouraging learning about the creation of democracy in political, cultural, and economic spheres. Political and cultural democracy entails learning how to recognize and abolish privilege around race, gender, status and identity; economic democracy entails learning how to abolish material inequality and privilege around class" (Brookfield and Holst 2011 p.4). Such a project is socialist in nature, and in the early chapters a very optimistic view of socialism is implied, in that it provides the possibility of learning to make the world more sustainable. The transformation project is framed as educational in nature, because people need to learn how to view the world differently and overcome the failures of neoliberalism by seeing it as an ideology with weak explanatory power when it comes to the allocation of resources and opportunities.

The second chapter critiques common sense understandings of adult development, and calls for a broader approach that connects developmental work with a moral purpose. The ideology of capitalism is blamed consistently throughout the book, and all other critical factors of race, gender, ableism, and sexuality are attributed to the spread of capitalist ideology. The assumption is

that if we get rid of capitalism we will get rid of patriarchy, but feminists such as Starhawk (1990) attribute the foundation of patriarchy to the foundation of monotheism. However, there is no doubting the strength of the argument criticising capitalism that is presented in this work but perhaps only the converted will pick up such a book in the first place.

The role of the educator is considered throughout, especially in relation to the social or collective nature of educational activity for development and the modelling of democratic forms of being. Not only is reflection and action to be combined, but there is a differentiation in relation to reflection: objective reframing “involves critical reflection on the assumptions of others” and subjective reframing “involves critical self-reflection of one’s own assumptions” (Brookfield and Holst 2011 p.35). The democratic educator models this and facilitates a simple democratic idea: “that those affected by decisions should be the ones to make those decisions” (ibid p.41). Ways of doing this are identified in later chapters.

There is a welcome recognition of the increasing prominence of sociocultural models of development, but models informed by psychology are acknowledged to still be prominent. These latter models deflect attention away from the need to prepare people for collective and democratic means of association which sociocultural models incorporate and work with. Socialist or radical pedagogy does not deny individual needs, but when these are heard alongside the needs of others, then the structural nature of the problems can be understood. The personal can then be related to the political, and each person can see how their own needs are part of a wider class and societal need.

If the first task is to enable agency to be developed in and against structure, then the next task is to develop the ability to work collectively and to organize. This is dealing with the educational aspects of social movement activism, and different examples are given of support groups organized by feminists in the radical rather than the reformist tradition (hooks 2000), with “individual and collective identity” understood to be “intertwined” (Brookfield and Holst 2011 p.53). The space has to be sufficiently safe for developing an emerging identity. The next task can be to teach “for radical development,” using critical theory to enable people to think critically while developing common interests. A “pedagogy of ethical coercion” is needed so that educators can be sufficiently directive in keeping a focus on the critical thinking rather than common sense thinking (ibid p.59). Marcuse’s ideas around repressive tolerance and ethical coercion are dealt with in greater detail towards the end of the book.

Critical theory makes us aware of the damage caused by the capitalist ideology and its “invasion of the lifeworld” (ibid p.59). Habermas, Fromm, Foucault, Davis, hooks – all are referred to in the argument for a directive stance by the critical educator, and four particular ‘clusters’ are identified as to what kind of methodology is recommended.

The next chapter contradicts the common sense and dominant contemporary understanding of training by referring back to examples such as Che Guevara,

the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee training teachers to conduct Citizenship Schools, and the Civil Rights Movement amongst others. The radical tradition has a broad conception of training which incorporates democratic and participatory forms of education, and of course the context is by and with people rather than the contemporary co-option of the term for profit by business. This chapter identifies many resources for social movement educators as well as the hidden histories of such training. The goal of any training plan should be political independence of the participants, and ways to do this are described. A very useful set of criteria to aid evaluation of such programmes is provided, and this is a good checklist for participatory research activities as well as educational programmes.

The chapter on teaching adults considers the similarities between radical and other forms of educational practices. Practices differ in the way experience is used and in the desire to challenge capitalist forms of organizing the world. Marcuse's idea of repressive tolerance indicates that providing students with choices is not appropriate, even though it is often thought to be so in the humanist and progressive traditions. "Students' previous ideological conditioning will always predispose them to choose what for them are commonsense, socially sanctioned understandings" (ibid p.109). The educator must be responsible for providing ideas that would be avoided if presented as a choice in order to prevent the marginalisation of challenging ideas.

The next chapter compares and contrasts two narratives of globalization and examines them for their implications in radical education. The dominant understanding is critiqued, and it is claimed that what we are witnessing in contemporary society should be understood "as a historical process" (ibid p.137). The problem is not production, as we live in a time of surplus. It is a problem of distribution, of getting the goods and services to people who need them but cannot afford them.

Marcuse's aesthetic dimension of learning is then considered in Chapter Eight, with the role for the arts in disturbing and challenging "White culture's conception of Black life," along with a reminder that "the revolution will not be televised" (ibid p.150). Marcuse identifies the role of radical aesthetics in raising consciousness: a song can encapsulate argument and anger, build self-respect and the desire to challenge, teach history and subvert from within (ibid p.161-164).

The chapter on Researching Learning highlights the role of research in planning, and how this fact-finding can also be participatory and democratic, combining investigation with pedagogy. This chapter also provides an unexpected but valuable critique of Freirean literacy methodology, and how research and pedagogy were linked in order to identify generative themes for discussion and action. Participatory research precedes planning, and ensures not just relevant programme content but also an understanding of the best times of the year and the day for attendance. Again, a useful checklist is

provided from the description of the principles and key questions for participatory research to ensure the co-creation of knowledge for action.

The final chapter deals with the ways in which diversity is understood in adult education. Recognising diversity presents the danger of co-option: recognition does not mean resources. Greater detail is provided about Marcuse's idea of repressive tolerance and how treating alternative ideologies alongside neoliberalism will result in a tolerance of the alternatives, but the status quo is maintained. Marcuse recommends the educator to use 'coercive morality' in an ethical objective to "free people from prevailing indoctrination" (ibid p.197-199). Marcuse's analysis of how the Nazi movement grew stands as a warning to us all.

Privilege needs to be dismantled. Educators are well placed to challenge racist microaggressions in collective learning groups. Racism becomes more subtle in an era when overt racism is curtailed by legal means (ibid p.208). The hope for challenging White supremacy is more realistic now that "the objective basis for White privilege is weakening" (ibid p.215).

Sometimes the tone of the book is certain in that the socialist frame of reference could be seen as the solution to the problems of White supremacist and capitalist neoliberalism, ableism, homophobia, and patriarchy. The work does not address the dangers of certainty: uncertainty could avoid the danger of uncritically replacing one ideology with another. However, the value given to the combination of reflection and action is implicit throughout the work.

The book is written in such a way that the educator can deal with chapters discretely, with each chapter presenting a coherent argument. However, the entire work needs to be read to be more assured of its explanatory reach and power, as some chapters do not address the kinds of questions posed above. Its value is that the cases and writings used are part of a hidden history which gives the educator a sense of the global and interconnected nature of radical pedagogy. While this provides a sense of pride and identification with radical pedagogy and its role in social movements, it is also good to get practical information and checklists.

This book presents a convincing argument for the role of teaching and training in skills and knowledge for change. For the social movement activist who may not have given much consideration to the role of adult education, it explains the relationship between the function of change and the form it should take. Change is an educative process.

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Daza, Mar; Hoetmer Raphael; & Vargas, Virginia (eds.), 2012, Crisis y Movimientos Sociales en Nuestra América: Cuerpos, Territorios e Imaginarios en Disputa. Lima: Programa Democracia y Transformación Global. 498 pp.

Reviewed by **Edgar Guerra Blanco**

One of the fundamental epistemological principles in scientific work is the striving towards objectivity in research. To be objective is to approach the object of study from outside, in possession only of the theoretical and methodological tools necessary for the observation and interpretation of the social fact. Of course it is necessary, in accordance with the rules, to support that process with the use of corresponding methods of data collection and analysis. The result of this process is an investigation of a scientific character based upon the certainty of total separation from value judgments and subjectivity. Hence, compared to this model, ‘activist research’ or that which “departs from a clear commitment to the processes of organization and social mobilisation” (Hoetmer 2012: 242) places itself at the opposite end of the field which, at least explicitly, gives distance to the case and its social and political implications.

On the one hand, such a dispensation of distance seems illusory, and yet on the other hand, it is the explicit stance towards an already old and innocuous debate in the social sciences (that of the objectivity of the researcher). But it is precisely that which allows one to build a rich debate on research results, with theoretical and methodological proposals, on the basis of the combination of activism and research. For this reason, in introducing the book “*Crisis and social movements in our America: Bodies, territories and imaginaries in dispute*”, one must not fail to inform the reader of the manuscript’s stance on the matter; rather than siding with immaculate objectivity, it poises itself on the threshold where object and subject -- or the social movements and the researchers involved -- are engaged in a determined manner without bias to science or to politics.

To begin with, it is necessary to note that the texts presented in the volume in question are based upon the “*Gathering of Knowledge and Social Movements: Between the crisis and the other possible worlds*” that took place in Lima, Peru, from May 26 to June 2 of 2010. Activists, journalists, critical artists and social researchers attended and took part in workshops, exhibitions, conferences,

photography exhibits, and poetry recitals. Hence, the volume also offers a visual testimony of the gathering by presenting an interesting graphic collection of the various meetings and activities. But first and foremost the book is an anthology of a wide range of texts, including theoretical essays, political analyses, case studies and research notes that together form a harmonious whole that invites the reader to reflect on the potential benefits of the partnership between research and informed activism. The editors are emphatic in stating that the goal of the meeting and what came out of it (which has now acquired book form) was to encourage the construction of concepts that, both in form and in content, give expression to the concrete praxis of the social actors and the concepts or imaginaries that feed them. In other words: the event incited a transformation in knowledge, powers, methods, theories and epistemologies, and with them, the social environment.

The book participates in an explicit challenge to the objectivist paradigm of 'normal science', which must be evaluated and taken as a basis for reflection on our own scientific tasks. Through the reading of the texts, the question arises: how useful is activist research for the production of knowledge? Where does the renunciation, dislocation, or open porosity between the old distinctions North/South, theory/praxis, subject/object and skills/knowledge lead? In challenging the objectivist science literature, the editors and authors of the collective volume place themselves in the centre of the 'epistemological struggles' that are being waged against the hegemonic positions within these binaries. That is to say, they face some of the classical postulations of social science around its procedures and objectives. In doing so, their approach is profusely and solidly documented: the literature cited and the arguments within the different chapters of the manuscript are evidence of a prior systematic study of the socio-historical processes that have led current social theory to its hegemonic position and have allowed the predominance of 'instrumental action' paradigms and 'uncritical' theorising. Hence, the editors and authors offer, on the one hand, a look at societal processes of organization and mobilization (social movements) from the perspective of what is called 'our America' and, on the other hand, interpretative and transformative conceptual frameworks that are built upon the very basis of the protest movements -- on both their concept as well as the concrete activity.

Although the compilation has a clear political agenda, it should be noted that its research plan and the theoretical framework that feeds it are presented in a timely manner and systematically on the basis of a series of observations of modern society. The activism does not burden or diminish (and claims to not weaken) the scientific research. On the one hand, the different texts of the manuscript utilise the framework of a pointed and critical diagnosis of contemporary global society, one that forms the origin and the purpose of the new global protest demonstrations. The main thesis of the editors and authors is that the current global situation is in a state of systemic crisis (which implies economic, political, ecological, epistemological crisis, etc.) and that even the western model of civilization is at stake. On the other hand, such a diagnosis of

the crisis has as its basis (among other theoretical developments) the theory of the colonialism of power, which is marked by the differentiation between the Global North and the South, and is built on the basis of binary power relations: science vs. practical skills; white vs. indigenous; subject vs. object - distinctions which, historically, have underpinned the political and scientific projects of western modernity, allowing the oppression and colonization of nature, of the indigenous, and of women through their objectification. Thus, the texts take a disappointing perspective, since the political and economic crisis (with its ecological, social etc. implications) is accompanied by the depletion or inability of the current explanatory models (the tradition of European and American thought, primarily) to provide adequate diagnostic and political solutions to global problems.

It is in this context, and even more so from the theoretical diagnosis and political position, that the volume offers texts that address the various facets of modern-day society. As it was in 'our America', for the publishers and authors of the texts, the Global North -- with its intellectualism and neo-liberal capitalism - - is where the contradictions and modern paradoxes are most obvious. The increase in expectations for social improvement collides against the daily experiences: dreams of progress and happiness are marred by nightmares of reason in the forms of exclusion, racism, domination, and violence. It is this "malaise in globalization" (Stiglitz 2003, cited in Daza, Hoetmer and Vargas 2012:35) that has resulted in a "new international cycle of struggle" (Hardt and Negri 2004, cited in Daza, Hoetmer and Vargas 2012: 35) that questions the neoliberal hegemony.

Hence, in order to present the multiple facets of the social struggles in America, the volume provides two sections that are notable for their inclusion of the voices of the activists. The irony of the confrontation between indigenous movements and progressive governments is revealed through various essays and articles: the struggles of the indigenous movement in Amazonian Peru; the efforts of the afro-Peruvian movement by "blackened feminism" (Muñoz 2012:251) or the ups and downs of Latin American feminism and the different conflicts and struggles of the TLGB movements. It is advisable to read the two sections of the book separately. The theoretical texts provide a general interpretation, introducing the topic and giving context to the general thesis of the volume (such as the one by Raphael Hoetmer on social movements in Peru, or reflections on the art of Jorge Miyagui), whereas the texts written by political party members and activists, while rich in first-hand information and interesting for the portrait that they paint of their struggles and activities, only treat the discussion topics with broad brushstrokes. However, the majority of them fulfil their commitment to illustrate the discussion points and the huge variety of internal paradoxes in social movements and contemporary political strife.

The current conflicts in 'our America' emerge from the crisis of modernity/capitalism, which is patriarchal-colonial-imperial in different geopolitical scales and geo-historic spaces. There are, however, three key areas

of dispute in the constitution of the inequality and the reproduction of the logic of the colonialism of power, knowledge and being: the dispute over control of the bodies; for the control of the territories; and for the control of the imaginaries. It is these large spaces of conflict that cut across academic theorising and the presentations of empirical cases throughout the text. And it is on the basis of this new matrix of conflict that the social movements appear as the social and political instrument of change towards an alternative to modernity.

The introductory text to the collective volume does not idealize (as is common in activist books) the notion of social movements; on the contrary, it recognizes its internal contradictions and the remnants of the hegemonic culture in its interior -- for example, the verticality, the presence of social relations of domination and violence. However, it does presume that, given the context out of which they arise, social movements are innovative and transformative, being more sensitive to violence and domination. It sees social movements as a fundamental factor of change. On the other hand, although a certain criticism is developed throughout the manuscript of vices that have proliferated in the social movements, at the theoretical level the book seems to present an incomplete picture of the classical theories and conceptions of social movements. In effect, its criticism of the hegemonic theories aims to dismantle three prevailing notions: 1) that the movements are characterized by an ironclad structuring and organization; 2) that there is a strict separation between the social and political dimensions; and, 3) that in general terms the social movements react only in relation to the State.

However, theories of contemporary social movements are far from providing such images of collective action. While the North American tradition, despite recent developments, continues to build upon mechanistic foundations, European traditions have stood out precisely for offering rich paradigms based on phenomenological and communicative conceptions of social movements. That does not, however, discredit the general criticism of the concept of social movements; on the contrary, it is enriched with the writer's idea of societal and prefigurative movements.

Finally, it is necessary to say a few words about section IV of the volume, which incites some reflections on art. Contrary to the reductionist views that prevail within the political parties and in social movements, which see art as an "instrument of struggle" (Miyagui 2012:285), Jorge Miyagui advocates for a comprehensive view in which art is appreciated "as a system." The author's proposal is very fruitful in terms of empirical research, because it goes beyond the aesthetic and political-ideological considerations with which artistic products that inundate public protests and rallies are commonly evaluated. According to the author, besides observing and evaluating the shape and the contents of the artistic products, one would have to look at the art circuit: the milieu in which it was produced and through which it travels; the places in which it opens a wide spectrum of possibilities for the construction of meanings and for the impact on subjectivities. Miyagui's proposal demands an analysis of the institutional and organizational framework behind the work of art. It implies

that such a framework contains and is governed by its own distinctions, interests and values (power, legitimacy and economic success) and becomes a factor of hierarchical differentiation and social exclusion between sectors and within their own forms of art (between art/crafts; language/dialect; music/folklore). That would necessitate the formation of the "artist-activist" that fully assumes responsibility for a political project, rather than organizing artistic events.

Upon finishing the book, one is faced with the question whether it is possible to dispense, in a radical way, with European social theory? To renounce the analytical categories founded upon perspectives of meaning that lie outside of the Latin American reality and that helped to perpetuate descriptions that legitimize domination, hegemony and exclusion? The book is an exercise in answering this question and provides a whole coherent and imaginative language that, in principle, would make a radical difference. However, sometimes one has the feeling, and even the certainty, that the categories and dimensions of analysis are not so far from those already proposed by Foucault, Bourdieu or even Luhmann. Or perhaps it remains just on the far side of the distinction, but ultimately forming part of the whole?

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Roy, Srila, 2012, *New South Asian Feminisms: Paradoxes and Possibilities*. London: Zed Books (208 pages; £19.99 | \$35.95)

Reviewed by **Sara de Jong**

New South Asian Feminisms: Paradoxes and Possibilities maps recent developments as well as dilemmas in mobilisation around gendered issues in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and the UK. The inclusion of the UK as a space for (diaspora) South Asian feminism already signals the book's problematisation of the label 'South Asian' as merely a geographical reference. In the introduction of the book, Editor Srila Roy explicitly regards South Asia as a complex category that is undercut by Indian power politics and other regional political power struggles. At the same time she understands it as marked by fragments of shared history. In all of these locations this is a gendered history in which nation-state building and cultural assertion became premised on gender norms.

Following the unpacking of the label 'South Asian' in "*New South Asian*

Feminisms”, Roy interrogates the other part of the title, ‘Feminisms’, as well. The use of the plural in the title of the book already signals the (by now standard) awareness of the heterogeneity within the movement(s). The term is further complicated by the negative (post-)colonial association of feminism with westernisation and elitism, which some of the book’s chapters also refer to (e.g. chapter 5 and chapter 7). At the same time, the introduction presents South Asian women’s movements as having a rich history, characterised by connections with other social struggles, starting with anti-colonial movements and extending to various post-independence issues.

In this line, the book convincingly addresses issues and concerns that transcend the South Asian region as well as the field of feminisms and will resonate with researchers and activists interested in social movements more broadly. This can already be gauged from Srila Roy’s contextualisation of the edited volume:

In showing how emergent feminist articulations are contending with key contemporary concerns (the neoliberal state, politicized religion and secularism, neoliberal government, political conflict, and new modes of governance and regulation in tandem with new assertions of rights and identities), the essays present ways of (re) thinking the feminist political for the predicaments of the present, globally. (p. 3-4)

Evidently, encounters with the neoliberal state, new modes of governance, and political conflict are not restricted to feminisms only and leave their imprint on other social movements as well. Also, the remaining three of the four broad themes (in addition to the already discussed theme of ‘South Asian’ feminisms), which the introduction presents as common threads of the different contributions, are relevant issues for various other social movements: 1) new modes of activism and new generations; 2) violence; and 3) institutionalisation and NGOisation, a topic that the book’s editor has also written about in her own work (Roy 2009; Roy 2011).

True to publisher Zed books’ reputation, “*New South Asian Feminisms*” is very much a ‘movement book’ rather than a (mere) consideration of the theoretical developments in feminism in the South-Asian region. The dilemmas, paradoxes, and possibilities that are discussed in relation to these themes in the respective chapters are very much grounded in (analysis) of movement practices. For example, chapter 1 on ‘Sex Workers’ rights and women’s movements in India’ by Svati Shah addresses the history of negotiation around sex worker rights, while in the second chapter Sadaf Ahmad documents step by step the reflective lobbying strategies employed by the Pakistani Alliance Against Sexual Harassment (AASHA) with, among others, Pakistani government officials and bureaucrats, that culminated in a legal amendment that criminalised sexual harassment.

Chapter 3, ‘Family Law Organizations and the Mediation of Resources and

Violence in Kolkata' by Srimati Basu, discusses the paradoxes and possibilities that emerge in the daily practices and navigations of three organisations engaged in marriage mediation: one state-related, one 'non'-governmental organisation that in fact has very strong links with the governing political party and an autonomous feminist organisation. Through tracing the decisions and interventions of each of these organisations at the micro level of individual cases, the author convincingly demonstrates that despite their varying histories and ideologies, the contextual structures and constraints lead them to maneuver in similar ways. And while the reader is still left with the impression that the author would align herself with the autonomous feminist group, she effectively deconstructs clear-cut distinctions between radical and reformist politics present in much theoretical writing. Similarly, in chapter 2, Ahmad finishes her discussion on the work of AASHA in Pakistan with a section in which she successfully interrogates the dichotomies that would have framed AASHA's "cooperation with the state and private corporatized bodies [as] not being autonomous and of having 'sold themselves' to demonized structures" (p. 61) by arguing that such judgment would have failed to observe the dynamic and varied nature of mobilisations.

The fourth chapter, 'Contemporary feminist politics in Bangladesh: Taking the Bull by the Horns,' written by Sohela Nazneen and Maheen Sultan confronts the themes of NGOisation and generational divides head on. Interestingly, the chapter indirectly challenges the 'catching up' paradigm of 'the West versus the Rest' by highlighting that Bangladesh has been at the very forefront of NGOisation. Hence, Bangladesh is in the position to teach the lessons it has learned to the rest of the world. Drawing on interviews, document analysis and other qualitative data, the authors trace the developments that occurred in response to donor funding, concluding that this resulted in fundamental changes, especially for the smaller local and regional organisations. They also manage to connect the phenomenon of NGOisation with the intergenerational tensions experienced in the movement by, for example, describing varying attitudes to voluntarism which are rooted both in different ideological and material positions. Lacking from this more descriptive chapter is a more reflective stance of the authors on their own positionality in relation to the topic of their research. While the short biographical descriptions of the authors at the back of the book mention their affiliation to BRAC university (established by the large NGO BRAC), and one author presents herself as member of one of the organisations discussed in the chapter, there is no reference to these personal linkages in their chapter.

Personal involvement of the authors with the movement described also surfaced in chapter 8, the final chapter of the book, entitled 'Feminism in the Shadow of Multi-Faithism: Implications for South Asian women in the UK,' which is a co-written contribution of PhD graduate Sukhwant Dhaliwal from Goldsmiths, University of London and Pragna Patel, director of Southall Black Sisters (SBS), a UK based ethnic minority women's organisation. What makes it different from chapter 4 is that a footnote under the title immediately mentions the positions

of the authors and explains the fact that part of their contribution draws on Patel's long history of engagement with the organisation as well as a SBS report. Arguably, however, again a chance is missed here to more explicitly and productively take up the classic issue of the relation between academia and activism, and, to borrow, from the book's title, the 'paradoxes and possibilities' that the interconnection of activism and research raise. In their productive collaboration, the authors argue that in the UK a shift has occurred from a policy of multiculturalism to 'multi-faithism' in which the state increasingly facilitates space for religious groups. According to them, this has had an adverse effect on secular ethnic minority women's organisations, such as SBS. In their own bold formulation: "We take issue with the way in which a renewed focus on religious identities has been matched by a simultaneous deauthentication of secular feminist concerns by tainting these with allegations of racism and 'state co-optation'" (p. 173). Indirectly, this chapter thereby also underlines the relevance of an intersectional approach to understanding women's mobilisation, which can reflect on the cross-cutting of gender with categories such as religion, ethnicity, class, and caste.

Debarati Sen, in her chapter 'Illusive Justice: the Gendered Labour Politics of Subnationalism in Darjeeling Tea Plantations', which offers an ethnographic study of the Darjeeling Nepali women plantation workers' political positionalities in relation to sub nationalism, explicitly states that ethnicity and gender have to be analysed together. As she argues, without such intersectional frame capturing their "multiple marginalities" (p. 132) - as women, as workers, and as cultural minority community - their political activism and navigations in relation to hegemonic politics cannot be understood. On the other side of the spectrum, Trishima Mitra-Kahn's chapter 'Offline Issues, Online Lives? The Merging Cyberlife of Feminist Politics in Urban India', has to situate the activism she investigates as (predominantly) urban, young, educated, English-speaking and middle-class. In contrast to a positioning based on multiple marginalisation in the case of the female Nepali tea pluckers in India, Mitra-Kahn's research participants were compelled to reflect on "how their multiple markers of privilege shape their understanding of violence, the solutions they propose, [and] the politics they expose and the manner in which they do so" (p. 124). While this chapter's topic of online women-led campaigns might be seen to fit most obviously the tag of *new South Asian Feminism*, the author eloquently shows interesting parallels with the theatrical expressions of some early activism by the urban Indian Women's Movement and challenges assumptions about a clear-cut separation between online and offline activism.

While the cyber campaigns analysed in Mitra-Kahn's chapter, such as Stand up to Moral Policing, comfortably fit the label 'feminist', in chapter seven "Speak to the Women as the Men have All Gone": Women's Support Networks in Eastern Sri Lanka', author Rebecca Walker has to do some more work to argue that her study's focus on a Sri Lankan Tamil informal human rights group, constituted predominantly by women, can be understood under the frame of 'feminism(s)'. In her chapter, she explicitly takes up this challenge and suggests that this

group, named Valkai, “do not start from or solely identify with the ideals of feminism and activism but form and shape themselves according to risk and need and the configurations of ‘active living’” (p. 164-165). As such, the chapter effectively demonstrates again the relevance of the considerations of the book “New South Asian Feminisms” for researchers interested in social movements more broadly. Walker’s argument stretches, however, beyond merely integrating the Valkai group and similar informal networks into the frame of feminist activism, and productively extends to an explicit challenge of how the boundaries of what counts as such activism are drawn.

Debarati Sen’s analysis of the Nepali women plantation workers in Darjeeling would have benefitted from a similarly reflective discussion of what is particularly feminist about their political actions and how the concept of ‘feminist activism’ might need to be reframed based on analysis of their practices. Such conceptualisation, grounded in the rich empirical work that this chapter offers, could have shed further light on the relation between women’s groups and feminism as well as linking back to the consideration in the editor’s introduction on the shifting (understandings) of feminism(s). Sen’s is not the only contribution in which it appears a struggle to combine rich ethnographic description, grounded movement-relevant research, reflective research practice, (re-)conceptualising and theory development in the relatively limited framework of a book chapter. The book “*New South Asian Feminisms: Paradoxes and Possibilities*” emerges therefore as a whole both as an illustration of the challenges involved in presenting rich case studies and at the same time transcending the particular and the descriptive by offering a deeper analysis, and as a pivotal example of the fact that the synthesis of painstaking empirical reflective research with theoretical depth can render the richest conceptual insights.

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Harvey, David, 2012, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. New York: Verso.

Reviewed by **Kristen A. Williams**

In this most recent work, David Harvey makes another significant contribution to the field of geography as well as to interdisciplinary studies of globalization and its economic, political and cultural operations and manifestations. An expert on both classical Marxism and urbanism, Harvey has long been uniquely poised to critique the conclusions of Marx's *Capital*, and he continues to do so here. But Harvey goes beyond scholarly analysis and issues a reproof and a call to action to leftists who have sought to appropriate Marxist tenets as a means of revolutionizing the intersecting cultural, financial and political economies of urban areas throughout the world. Labelling many such movements as at best, inefficient and at worst, ineffective at achieving economic justice for the burgeoning population of urbanized global citizens, Harvey offers both an analysis and a playbook for social change, with the first part of this text exploring the intertwined origins of Marxism and the city and charting the development of urban citizenship, and the second, shorter, section offering case studies as examples of how leftists might more effectively achieve their goals for the city.

In the first section, entitled "The Right to the City," Harvey lays out a detailed theoretical framework, one which he has adapted in relation to Henri Lefebvre's 1967 essay of the same name inspired by the conditions of urban life Lefebvre observed in Paris. He also makes clear that he understands the circumstances that inspired Lefebvre's work. Disenfranchised city-dwellers were uttering, in various ways, "both a cry and a demand" for the powers that be to look more closely at the current living conditions in urban areas and to do something to ameliorate peoples' feelings of alienation and despair (x). Harvey argues that recent times have seen a "revival" in the sort of demands observed and evaluated by Lefebvre, but makes clear his belief that "it is not to the intellectual legacy of Lefebvre that we must turn for an explanation" of this current sociopolitical condition (xi). Instead, Harvey cites James Holston when he asserts that the model of "insurgent citizenship" emerging now among urban dwellers around the world has more to do with the struggles of everyday life.

But Lefebvre's work remains relevant in 2012, Harvey argues, because it represents one model of how an intellectual might respond, largely within academic discourse, to this state of emergency experienced by so many urban dwellers around the globe. Accordingly, Harvey is currently interested in figuring out how similar intellectuals should respond now and argues that Lefebvre connected the notion of revolutionary activism with urban areas explicitly, despite the fact that traditional Marxist thinking "had never accorded the urban much significance" in the past (xiii). It is the fact that Lefebvre insisted on the centrality of cities to the crisis of capital which marks his

primary contribution to the contemporary intellectual and political discussion about the right to the city. Accordingly, one of Harvey's significant interventions is the ways he reshapes both Marxist theory and Lefebvre's application thereof to better accommodate the increasingly urbanized global community of the twenty-first century.

Indeed, the problems associated with urban life and public space that existed in Lefebvre's time and place still exist now, though specific conditions and key players have changed slightly. While the laborers associated with Lefebvre's moment were described by Marx as the "proletariat," the new urban class of working poor are more accurately referred to as the "precariat": people facing "insecure, often part-time and disorganized low-paid labor" (xiv). Offering specific numbers from contemporary China, Harvey makes clear that more people are currently living in the city than ever before in human history, suggesting that the number of the class of "precariats" is correspondingly larger as well.

The trouble is, however, that traditional leftist responses to the urban economic crises faced by the majority of the world's population are inadequate. These responses traditionally valorize horizontal organizations of power over vertical, and public control of resources over private. These types of dichotomies, Harvey argues, are no longer adequate (if they ever were) to make sense of the complexities of modern urban life on a global scale. Instead, movements seeking to ameliorate the alienation of contemporary urban citizens need to be guided by three major precepts:

1. several popular forces must be united in struggle, not just workers, to make anti-capitalist resistance more effective;
2. ideas of work as separate from everyday life need to be revised to understand that work is actually a constitutive element of daily life; and finally,
3. sites of work need to be re-imagined to involve vernacular spaces such as homes—those places too need to be revitalized and revamped (138-140).

Harvey offers the successful case study of Bolivia, where there are: neighborhood associations at work; a variety of types of work and workers included; and more unions representing more different types of people and workers (148). But there is also another important element at work: shared culture and collective identity which bring the people together "in common citizenship" (149). According to Harvey, "...it is indeed possible to build a political city out of debilitating processes of neoliberal urbanization, and thereby reclaim the city for anti-capitalist struggle" and this can happen in large U.S. cities such as New York if the three conditions above are effectively met, though achieving these criteria may require embracing counter-intuitive models of the distribution of power and resources (150).

Accordingly, Harvey offers Section II, "Rebel Cities," which features one full-length chapter in which he advocates a more flexible application of the ideas

explored in Section I as well as several shorter chapters focusing on specific case studies of the types of leftist anti-capitalist interventions that do seem to effectively counter and/or resolve the financial, political and cultural injustices of contemporary urban life.

This book is every bit as comprehensive and intensely thoughtful as Harvey's previous work, and makes a significant contribution to the field of interdisciplinary global studies insofar as Harvey refuses to separate the political, cultural and financial origins and current manifestations of the urban crises articulated by contemporary scholars of globalization, advocates for social justice and everyday urban-dwellers. Instead, Harvey insists on accounting for the complicated relationship between these elements, and the result is a more far-reaching and holistic analysis of the forces of globalization than is often presented by scholars whose allegiance is to one primary discipline.

Rebel Cities, while providing extraordinary philosophical and historical context for contemporary global iterations of the classic economic and social problems attendant to capitalism, nevertheless seems less politically relevant than Harvey's earlier work, however. Harvey's suggestions for effective anti-capitalist struggle are well-reasoned but require such revolutionary strategies that it seems unlikely they will ever be adopted widely enough among reformers to effect real change. Indeed, Harvey himself observes that these strategies are not currently embraced (or perhaps even understood) by the majority of the far-left who will, for all the good reasons Harvey outlines in Section I of the text, be chary about appropriating neoliberal organizational strategies, even for their own ends.

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Book review: Choudry, Aziz, Hanley, Jill, and Shragge, Eric (Eds.), 2012, *Organize! Building from the Local for Global Justice*. Oakland: PM Press.

Reviewed by **Markus Kip**

In 1897, Eduard Bernstein made a controversial announcement to his comrades. “I openly admit it, I have very little interest or feeling for what is commonly understood as the 'final goal' of socialism. The goal, whatever it may be, is nothing at all to me, the movement is everything” (Bernstein 1897, quoted in Weikart 1999:202). Bernstein intervened within Marxist debates at the time in order to come to grips politically with the fact that broad segments of the working class were more concerned about resolving everyday concerns, rather than revolution. Instead of succumbing to a quasi-religious hope of impending socialism, Bernstein sought to prepare his comrades for the long haul. Rosa Luxemburg, who emerged to become his main counterpart in the “Revisionism” debate, rejected such stance in the strongest of words in the following year. “It is the final goal alone which constitutes the spirit and the content of our socialist struggle, which turns it into a class struggle. And by final goal we must [...] mean [...] the conquest of political power” (Luxemburg 1971:28). Luxemburg claimed that without maintaining a clear focus on revolution, disparate endeavors for reform would soon become obstacles for socialist transformation.

Times have changed, but the polemic of reform versus revolution remains vibrant. A recent attempt to rethink this problem and to go beyond this dichotomy has been offered by the collection “*Organize! Building from the Local for Global Justice*” edited by Aziz Choudry, Jill Hanley, and Eric Shragge. Summarizing their concern, they write: “[r]adical organizing is a balance between the struggle for short-term gains and the longer-term objective of social transformation. For us, the links between the two are crucial” (p. 10). The book is a welcome contribution to the literature on organizing, offering honest and self-reflective accounts from organizing practice, mostly in Canada, but also in the US and Aotearoa New Zealand. The overall character of the book ostensibly is to raise questions rather than offering definitive answers. Instead of professing a “holier-than-thou” attitude, the appeal of the chapters lies in the candor of the analyses. Its perspective aims at enriching practice rather than remaining caught within what the editors describe as a self-referentiality in contemporary social movement studies. One of the great achievements of the collection is that it encouraged organizers to document their struggles and reflect on them in the bigger picture of movements. The chapters are written in concise and accessible language and, in fact, have the potential to reach an audience of “students, activists, organizers, and the wider public” as the book cover promises.

In the introduction, organizing is conceived as a “process of continually building a base of people from the wider community, supporting a process of building

organizations or movements of people to challenge, control, or influence power in their daily lives” (p. 3). The editors distinguish this approach from “activism” which “is more about people who already share the same viewpoint, often not directly affected by the issues, taking action to demand social change” (p. 3). Most chapters present analyses of organizing experiences and argue that in spite of highly vulnerable positions, people do not necessarily walk in the direction of least resistance. Although the results of organizing may be mixed, these accounts are testimonies to the way in which people can organize and develop motivations beyond short-term successes.

The contributions cover a broad range of topics and cast spotlights on the variety of struggles, including Indigenous sovereignty, migrant and racial justice, women's and LGBTQ liberation. They set up a landscape of diversity in which the collection's quest for “global justice” is to be achieved. These contributions suggest that pursuing liberation in one particular instance requires addressing others as well. Robert Fisher argues that seeking justice in a local community is more effective when connected to a national strategy. But even a national strategy would not seem to be sufficient, as Joey Calugay links the struggle for migrants' justice in Canada to the political struggle in the Philippines. Dave Bleakney and Abdi Hagi Yusef also show that a struggle for workplace justice is not just about class but raises questions of race and gender relations. Any struggle short of such perspective on the complexity of power dynamics risks becoming undermined by the divisive character of inequality.

Organizing practice should not be reduced to spectacular battles and outcomes. Several contributions start from the experience of internalized oppression such that it inhibits the articulation of grievances. Edward Ou Jin Lee's organizing with queer people of color in Montreal grappled with “feelings of solitude, internalized oppression, and mental health struggles [...] linked to the colonial and imperial legacies of white supremacy” (p. 88). Underscoring the need to develop self-expression, Dolores Chew asserts with respect to her experience of organizing women in a South Asian community: “Strength and courage are required to articulate subject positions that remain unrecognized and unvalidated by the mainstream. To claim space and assert identity is a struggle. It gets compounded when those who, because of gender or class should be allies, are not” (p. 175). Besides racialized and gendered divisions, organizing also needs to confront the persistent promise of capitalism. Commenting on Maori struggles in Aotearoa New Zealand, Maria Bargh notes: “one of the dangers of the dominant entrepreneurialism rhetoric is that it portrays itself as optimistic and suggests that it is more capable of supporting happy and healthy Maori families than a noncapitalist agenda” (p. 129).

In view of such challenges, the selection also provides several useful considerations on the potentials of employing a variety of skills and methods for organizing including fundraising, local community organizing, legal strategies, research, poetry, music, and gardening. Significant attention is paid to the perils of demobilization and cooptation. In this respect, the chapter by Alex Law and Jared Will is particularly insightful in analyzing the double-edged sword of

pursuing a legal strategy in organizing. While “discovering” rights can facilitate the organizing process by animating people to claim “their right” and step up mobilization by cashing in on the symbolic value of legal cases, the discourse and dynamic of the legal system may also demobilize a movement eager for fast victory. Rather than revealing the collective character of a case, it may just as well individualize the issue.

In her illuminating chapter “Rights, Action, Change: Organize for What?” Radha D'Souza grapples with one of the challenges facing activists in Western democracies. “The leaders of national liberation struggles had a 'final end' toward which oppositions to particular laws or policies were a step. In Western democracies today, there is no 'final end,' nothing for which activists plan or act; there is no conception of the future toward which their opposition is a step” (p. 77). Clearly, the reason for the lack of a “final end” is the predominant stance to reject grand narratives for veiling hegemonic intentions behind a universalist stance. Seeking to replace this absence, social movements have increasingly put emphasis on process and prefigurative practices. Harsha Walia's contribution exemplifies this in her insistence on the “ethic of responsibility” (p. 246) as the crucial framework in non-Indigenous organizing for decolonization in British Columbia. Devising a proper ethics as a way forward is also embraced by the Research Group on Collective Autonomy analyzing the anarchist organizing of (pro-)feminist and queer groups in Quebec: “The more people who are exposed to these ideas and practices, who get to experiment with them and feel empowered in their experience, the greater the chances that a mass movement will emerge—and is perhaps already emerging—from the grassroots” (p. 171).

Are ethical procedures thus the decisive feature of radical organizing? If we adopt the editors' conception of organizing, the answer must be no. Organizing may produce a radical ethics, but should not presuppose it. Thus, if we are not to presuppose a radical ethics for organizing, but conceive of it as an outcome of organizing, we need to think about the “final goal.” Radha D'Souza writes: “Often scholars are afraid to articulate the need for a higher principle because of fears that the authority for such principles will need to draw on religion or parochial ideologies. Drawing on ideologies, religious or secular, is not the same as reaffirming ontological awareness that [...] the social domain is a condition precedent for life to exist” (p. 80-81). Criticizing the predominant fixation on rights in organizing and the implicit submission to liberal politics, she urges us instead to “start to worry about what kind of society is conducive to human well-being” (p. 81). Can we devise a strategy for such a society in which the realization of our different desires is dependent on each other—rather than in competition? Although the book raises this question, it fails to engage it, leaving the issues presented in the chapters somewhat disparate.

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About the review author

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Cox, Laurence, 2013, *Buddhism and Ireland: From the Celts to the Counter-Culture and Beyond*. Sheffield and Bristol: Equinox.

Reviewed by **Eilís Ward**

This book sets itself an enormous and impressive goal: to track and render coherent the history of Buddhism and Ireland from, as the title suggests, the 'Celts' right up to today. Author Laurence Cox posits an overarching theoretical framework: that this history can be understood through transnational flows involving circulation and receptivity of ideas and relationships mediated by historical variants of capitalist systems. Specifically, the author is interested in exploring western Marxism and western Buddhism not, as traditionally supposed, in oppositional terms, but as speaking to liberatory collective agency. The emphasis, however, is not on Marxism but on Buddhism, located firmly within and mediated by the capitalist world system.

Hence, although the focus is on Ireland, the author could not be accused of methodological nationalism. One strength of the book is that it challenges ideas about the 'national' in terms of both culture and identity. Thus while little perhaps can be said about Buddhism and 'Ireland,' there is something to say about Buddhism and Ireland within the 'broader world system,' from the early processes of trade and missionary endeavors between Europe and Asia, to the

colonial system and finally to cultural movements of the 20th and 21st century, all of which created circuits of ideas and people related to Buddhism between Ireland and Asia. As is clear from the opening pages, this book's argument could not be contained by any particular discipline (e.g. sociology, history) but draws from many without losing coherence. It is a rich, magisterial book, lively and surprising in its many twists and turns as Cox brings to life --often wrestling information from scraps of archaeological and archival sources -- a transnational story of Buddhism and 'Ireland'.

And what was that story? Or, can we talk about a single story? And, for readers of this journal, what might this story tell us about Buddhism and its relationship to social movements?

Cox tells us the story in three distinct parts. Part One, treating mediaeval and early modern Ireland, presents evidence of transmission of Buddhist images, icons and ideas largely through texts and experienced differently by two circuits: one Protestant, 'English' and imperial, the other, Catholic, diasporic and 'Irish.' In turn, this theme, viz that two competing hegemonies dialectically structured both the reception and transmission of Buddhism to Ireland, suffuses the entire book. Part Two treats the late 19th and early 20th Century from which period more substantive evidence of contact emerges. Here, there is evidence from Irish people as participants in the colonial and imperial exercise in Asia, as Christian missionaries, and from the theosophical strain of Celtic revivalism. Throughout this time, the numbers of individuals involved were not significant and knowledge was indeed largely scrappy. Nonetheless, Buddhism served a dissonant, provocative role: allowing people to step outside cultural constraints, find personal relief and express resistance -- a set of roles embodied in the emergence of the first (known?) Irish Buddhists, including some very remarkable and colorful individuals.

Part Three treats the recent decades from the counter cultural years to the possibility of Buddhism's cultivation in Ireland today and here, too, Cox posits Buddhism as offering an alternative to religious and cultural sectarianism. It is this last section that is perhaps of greatest interest to readers of this Journal. In 1960's Ireland, knowledge about Buddhism was still fragmentary and marginal but by the 1990's, it had begun to creolise or hybridize and, moreover, inward migration brought Asians with their own native Buddhist practices. Within the decade, all three major school of Buddhism and many of the lineages were present in Ireland. Some were constituted in small, mobile groups; others were rooted in retreat centers or permanent homes. Census data for 2011 showed 3,500 Buddhists living in Ireland. And what of their Buddhism? For the author it had, by this time, cast off its exotic sheen and become 'respectable': a badge of gentle, upward mobility even, congenial to the myriad new age and holistic values, and mostly to do with individual life style choices and desires for a simple life.

Thus, Cox argues, while Ireland had not brought forth 'prosperity Buddhism,' neither had it produced the kind of social engagement that he, in the final pages

of the book, advocates and that indeed is characteristic of American Buddhism. This is sticky and endlessly debated ground. Buddhism is without *substantive* ideas that constitute political or social prescription to speak to the modern world and yet it is, as scholar Peter Hershock argues, both seamlessly political and engaged by virtue of its concern for human suffering. It may be that the most politically radical Buddhist idea is the least tangible and the most maddeningly difficult to translate into the kinds of manifestos that direct political activism. That is its fundamental repudiation of the 'I' of modernity: the autonomous, distinct, ontologically separate human being. The manner in which adherents manifest that radical thought in their lives cannot be anticipated or predicted or, indeed, necessarily shepherded. Sometimes it is not at all evident, at least not in accordance with any conventional measures.

All that aside, this is an enjoyable book and a rewarding read. There are details with which to quibble -- especially, for me, when the author's conclusions are deduced from the logic of his overarching theoretical framework rather than induced from evidence. For instance, from my own experience as a long time practitioner of Buddhism in Ireland, I'm not convinced that those who have adopted a Buddhist practice are, as he suggests, motivated by a "shapeless discontent with religious orthodoxy" (p 11), and, that in this motivation they share the same process with working class or feminist activists who consciously seek radical, alternative forms of being and resistance. Or in other words, I am not convinced that Buddhism can be seen *a priori* as constituting a social movement and when it doesn't can be justifiably criticised as failing. But in fairness to Cox, he does accept that much more research needs to be done - most especially ethnographic work that would allow deeper digging into the lived experiences of the many and diverse forms of Buddhism in Ireland today. The author acknowledges the tentativeness of our current knowledge and this masterful book may be the beginning of a very fascinating dialogue.

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