

Reviews

layman; there are enough theories and facts to feed a thousand conversations. For the professional economist or bureaucrat however, there are too many ideas which are too loosely connected so that it is difficult not to feel uneasy all the time. Still, it would require a very unimaginative economist or bureaucrat not to learn something from Professor Thurow.

R.G. Gregory
Economics, RSSS
ANU

Jim Falk, *Global Fission: The Battle over Nuclear Power*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1982, pp. 410. \$29.95, \$14.95 (paper)

The worldwide movement against nuclear power was, arguably, the most significant grassroots social movement in the 1970s. Yet in spite of the prominence of the public debates over nuclear power which raged in nearly every industrialised capitalist country, documentation of the movement and analysis of its dynamics has been rather meagre. *Global Fission* contributes a great deal towards filling this gap. The author, Jim Falk, is highly qualified to study the anti-nuclear power movement, with extensive personal involvement in the anti-uranium movement in Australia plus relevant academic experience.

There are two basic aspects to *Global Fission*. First, it presents a detailed account of the struggles over nuclear power in countries around the world, especially in the United States, various European countries, and Australia. The chronicle includes development and promotion of nuclear power, but focusses on the history and effect of the opposition, including legal intervention, lobbying, publicity, demonstrations and occupations. For this documentation alone the book is a valuable contribution.

The second aspect to the book is a focus on the relation of the state to the promotion of and to the opposition to nuclear power. Nuclear power by its nature—highly expensive, potentially quite dangerous, and dependent on experts—is ideally suited for systems of centralised political and economic power. Not surprisingly therefore, the chief driving force behind nuclear power has been the state itself.

Falk structures his accounts of anti-nuclear struggles around their relations to the state promoting nuclear power, leading to valuable insights into the dynamics of the struggle. In the United States, the legal and regulatory systems provide avenues for citizen intervention, and the result has been delay of plants and more stringent safety requirements leading to nuclear cost escalations which have crippled the industry. In countries such as France and Britain, with strong centralised state apparatuses, the nuclear opposition has been linked with regionalist movements. In other countries, anti-nuclear struggles have proceeded via referenda or parliamentary forums. Falk also includes a valuable discussion of the questioning of nuclear developments in communist countries and in Western socialist parties. His treatment is important in understanding what appears likely to be the first major enterprise promoted by powerful states around the world which has been halted by decentralised citizen efforts which cut across traditional class and political boundaries.

Falk's account does have its weaknesses and omissions. Its two main aspects get in each other's way: the detail of anti-nuclear history obscures the general themes, while the structuring of the history around relations to the state makes the history disjointed. In the history itself, Falk deals almost exclusively with events, and gives little feeling for the internal dynamics of the anti-nuclear power

movement, including conflicts, splits, misjudgements and failures. Only a little of the conscious development of anti-nuclear strategy is mentioned. Also not treated are the different social interests served by the anti-nuclear struggle. For example, nuclear power has been widely opposed by humanists, social scientists and writers and widely supported by engineers. This split represents a significant divergence of interests of the intellectuals and the technical intelligentsia (using Alvin Gouldner's terminology). Finally, Falk's analysis could have been considerably enriched by taking into account some of the extensive literature on social movements.

Brian Martin
Mathematics, The Faculties
ANU

Mary Nolan, *Social Democracy and Society, Working Class Radicalism in Dusseldorf, 1890-1920*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp. 376. £27.50

Mary Nolan's study of working-class radicalism in Dusseldorf from 1890-1920 is an informative and well written book on one of the most left-wing local branches of the German Social-Democratic Party (SPD). Her work adds to the steadily growing literature on the German labour movement in recent years emanating from Germany and elsewhere. Much of this work challenges both the conventional view, depicting the SPD as a highly centralized organisation with the party leadership enforcing a placid and undecisive course upon a passive and receptive membership, and more recent interpretation claiming that the SPD was becoming negatively integrated into Wilhelmine Germany.

Professor Nolan's book follows recent British and American studies on working-class history which have analysed work, culture and community in order to integrate the history of the working class with the history of the workers' movement. In the process political organisation and ideologies are restored to their rightful place as crucial—but as the author stresses—not the sole determinants of class formation and class relation. This is a commendable approach as long as exclusive validity is not claimed for it and certainly helps us with our understanding of the labour movement. Other factors listed by previous historians such as for example the degree of proletarianisation and political tradition ought not to be dismissed, as is shown in particular by the Dusseldorf example.

One may also wonder why her 'Dusseldorf formula'—powerful Catholicism, powerful capitalism and powerful bureaucracy curbing moderate alternatives—failed to produce equally radical organisations in cities where the sociological background did not substantially differ from Dusseldorf. Finally, the author seems to underplay the exterior circumstances which brought about the collapse of the revolution in Dusseldorf in 1919 and instead over-emphasises the alleged inadequacies of the Dusseldorf radicals. The extreme left political stance advocated in Dusseldorf could succeed only if there were a strong national basis for such a radical course, and this was of course not the case. But this does not detract from an excellent new book on the German labour movement.

Jurgen Tampke
History
University of NSW

Betty Vernon, *Ellen Wilkinson*, London, Croom Helm, 1982, pp. 254. £14.95

Ellen Wilkinson (1891-1947) emerged from the grime of working-class Manchester to become, at the time of the