

require a new organizational structure, and focus on practical action. Buschak sketches the emergence of worldwide company groups in the interwar period, and investigates the attempts of the labour movement to meet the new challenges of this internationalization of capital. However, it took the shock of the deregulation offensive begun by the Single European Act of 1992 to stimulate attempts within Europe to develop the concept of a 'social Europe'. In his fine text on the internationalization of workers' rights, French draws an impressive picture from the founding of the International Labour Office to the present, showing how and to what effect trade unions have been trying to establish and legalize labour rights and standards on the international level.

The essays dealing with trade unionism from the perspective of more recent developments address various points. In highlighting the issue of solidarity, Schoeler states that globalization does not create mutual interest and solidarity, but rather competition among workers, especially between developed and less developed countries. Munck poses the question whether there is a chance for a new phase of 're-embedding' after the economic globalization of the past twenty years has freed capital from social restrictions. In identifying the most important power patterns within the production process in the contemporary global labour force, Harrod postulates a transition from tripartite to corporate labour relations, leading to the rising power of corporations and an increase in the size of an underclass. This phenomenon hinders the emergence of global unions. Other essays deal with changing unions in Eastern Europe, labour migration in China, and the impact of globalization on labour in Latin America. While Herolds emphasizes a distinct Eastern European type of capitalism, and therefore a specific model of trade unionism, Zhang describes the modernization of the Chinese economy by using the example of Wenzhou. Arinskind investigates the economic development in Latin America in the 'lost decade' of the 1980s, stating that commercial and financial liberalization, privatization, and the deregulation of labour led to a 'foreignization' of the Latin American economy.

Newell's essay is not only the longest one, but is also very inspiring. He considers labour and environmental movements as global social movements that share common interests. He provides a number of examples where labour and environmental issues are interrelated, and demonstrates how internationally coordinated campaigns have had sweeping effects. In introducing the experiences of the

environmental movement, Newell draws 'lessons' for the labour movement in terms of imposing regulations for transnational corporations.

Altogether, the volume displays different ways in which to come to terms with the relationship between the globalization process and the labour movement, and yet this relationship remains somewhat obscure, at least in the historical accounts. Except for Aronskind's contribution, no empirical data are presented to show the effects of economic globalization on the international working-class movement. The main topics are global solidarity, trade unionism, and global labour action, but as the authors see the latter as a counter-movement to neo-liberal globalization, their pessimism is obvious. Except for Newell, there is hardly any reference to other social movements, and the reader also misses studies on workers' movements in peripheral regions of the globe, which – according to this volume – are gaining power and might shift the traditional foci of the international labour movement. This volume underlines a process of social decline of the traditional labour movement but lacks suggestions for the future that might help to situate it within the global context.

### **The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons**

By C. A. Bayly. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004. Pp. xxiv, 540. ISBN 978 0 631 18799 8

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Some historiographical paths are more frequented than others. Perhaps the most familiar in global history at present is that which tries to establish how, when and why modernization, or globalization, first began. Into this crowded and lively body of scholarship is now added C. A. Bayly's *The birth of the modern world*, a work that claims to break new ground in tracing the rise of 'global uniformities in the state, religion, political ideologies and economic life' (p. 1), which were more 'complex' and 'modern' than what had come before (p. 27).

The global scope of the evidence that shapes Bayly's analysis of modernity is unprecedented. Africa, South America and Oceania receive more than passing references, and his deft understanding

of Indian and South Asian sources adds new dimensions to his arguments. These sources are usefully combined to fill out Jan de Vries' concept of 'industrious revolutions' – gains in family labour productivity that result from the increasing use of consumer items (p. 51) – and his own work on the phases of globalization. The many contours in argument that result from this combination are difficult to bundle up into a single thesis. This is a good thing, for modernity and globalization emerge as dynamic and multi-phase processes rather than ahistorical analytical frames.

The structure of *The birth of the modern world* suggests at least four major phases in the history of modernity. The first, presented in 'The end of the old regime', was characterized by the 'rippling' out from Europe of religious, political, cultural and economic practices. The result was a 'step-change in human social organization' towards uniformity (p. 12). In this period of 'archaic' and 'early modern' globalization, societies came to resemble one another more and more in key ways, while at the same time becoming more stratified and complex. Bayly's explanation for European dominance includes both external and internal factors. Mining and exploiting the Americas gave the Europeans a head start in world trade, as did the lucrative slave trade. On the other hand, Europe had natural resources – the most notable of which was coal – relatively stable legal institutions, and independent financial institutions. Further, Europeans fostered a close relationship between war, finance and commercial innovation. Finally, he argues that 'Europe and the North American colonies were information-rich societies in which inquisitiveness and cupidity turned information into tools for world exploration and, later, world conquest' (p. 55). This inquisitiveness was to be found in clubs, societies and meeting places, and could also be transformed into consumerist acquisitiveness. Other societies showed more regard for tradition and religion (p. 75).

Phase two, 'The modern world in genesis' (c. 1815–65), was marked by a period of political, economic and ideological instability. This instability was global as a result of the ever-strengthening connections and interdependencies between nations. Upheavals in Europe, the Americas and East Asia were shaped by ideologies, financial resources and even fighters transposed from other locations. In the process of transposition, ideas and practices were appropriated and refashioned to suit local needs and conditions. So it was with the various nationalisms that arose in the Americas, Asia and Africa, which incorporated local beliefs and

practices. Similarly, industrialization took on different forms in rural and urban settings across the world.

Between 1850 and 1870, the state assumed a more definite profile as economic developments and military engagements were used to demand the loyalty of citizens. Nation-states were important during this period, Bayly concedes, but not as important as new imperial historians and Foucault have suggested. They have, in his estimation, fallen prey to 'myths' about the power of states that 'echo the aspirations of nineteenth-century rulers' (p. 254). Historians, he warns, ought not to assume that ordinary people were the dupes of elites 'stamped with state power'. As with earlier periods, nationalism was pliable, and was shaped to serve the interests of both colonizers and the colonized. Further, nations were intertwined with other global social networks such as those organized around the Christian, Islamic, Buddhist and Hindu 'empires of religion'. Finally, a time of 'change, decay and crisis' (1890–1914) was ushered in, as social and imperial hierarchies were asserted and even reasserted. Bayly ends his analysis with a nod to the deleterious consequences of governance 'by force and conservatism' (p. 399), particularly for women and colonized peoples.

At first sight, the scope of Bayly's evidence suggests that *The birth of the modern world* is history writ global. In the end, though, he simply delivers a new twist on European history. In part, this is due to limitations in his concept of modernity itself. Present-day understandings of modernity owe much to studies of European phenomena, and best fit those phenomena. Bayly shows little commitment to broadening the cultural base of the concept, and does not address the question of whether it provides the best frame through which to view the past. Might another analytical frame have led Bayly to look at events and phenomena in North America in more depth? As it is, *The birth of the modern world* gives us little inkling as to why the twentieth century may have been called 'The American century'. And, on another scale, might this have led him to look more closely at variations in experiences of clubs and societies within Britain? Should histories of modernity register differences between Scottish and English intellectual engagements, or between the intellectual engagements of men and women in those locations?

Indeed the closer one looks, the more Bayly's work resembles previous histories of modernity. Divergence between the 'West' and the rest of the world emerges as a theme by p. 46, and China is made to perform the now standard role of an

economic bridesmaid. And while he acknowledges European and North American exploitation of the Americas and the expansion of the slave system as key factors in the 'great divergence', these take a back seat to his celebration of Western 'inquisitiveness and cupidity', economic, intellectual and political dynamism and liberation from tradition and religion (pp. 52, 479, 72). By contrast, Southeast Asia slumped into a 'zero sum game' (p. 59), 'Black slaves in the Caribbean seized on the idea of revolution for their own emancipation' (p. 83) and Africa 'acquired the cargo [of modernity] too late ... and proceeded to misuse it' (p. 68). Bayly's use of the word 'cargo' is illuminating, exposing how his work aligns with colonial narratives of how 'the poor south' and 'developing world' (p. 171) genuflected before Western technology, political ideology and even fashion. In short, the West created, owned and then distributed 'modernity'. Themes of adoption and adaptation eclipse that of force, and non-Western ingenuity is brushed aside or ignored. Bayly's work brings an important historiographical question into focus: do histories of modernity, like those which bestow power to nations in the nineteenth century, 'echo the aspirations of nineteenth-century rulers'?

Little is to be gained, as Bayly himself notes, by simply 'heaping up' facts, but one would expect the 'texture' of history to be more than threads that run to a monolithic modern 'West' (p. xxiii). One of the key insights of global history is that there are rarely clear lines of origin and dispersal, and that the communities people imagine are fluid and fixed, uniform and varied in ways that we are only now beginning to understand.

### Globalization: A Short History

By Jürgen Osterhammel and Neils P. Petersson.  
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I began reading this useful introduction to globalization in Cairo airport, and continued reading it on a long flight to London, Chicago and San Diego. That may have put me in a receptive mood for its clear and coherent 'circumnavigation' of

globalization in world history (to borrow a phrase from the title of chapter 1).

The authors are two German historians teaching at the University of Konstanz. Their shared expertise includes the history of imperialism and colonialism, as well as Chinese history and modern economic history. The translation from German, by Dona Geyer, is clear and engaging, and the book is admirably short, with 152 pages of text, and another 40 or so of introductory material, endnotes and further readings. Shortness is good! The authors tell a clear and coherent story, but manage to pack in an enormous number of ideas, and enough detail to flesh out their story and give it substance, plausibility and nuance. As they are well aware, globalization is too contradictory and paradoxical a subject to yield a simple, linear narrative, and the story they offer is both rich and complex. The book also includes a valuable guide to further reading, broken up by categories.

Chapter 1 discusses the history of the term, 'globalization', and various different approaches to the phenomenon. As the authors point out, the term 'globalization' has long been used only in specialist writing, and mainly within economics. Then, in the 1990s, it caught on in several different scholarly fields and now it is hard to escape (p. 1). It has been taken up primarily by scholars in fields such as international relations and sociology (particularly useful are the works of Manuel Castells and edited collections by David Held and Anthony McGrew).<sup>1</sup> Now historians, too, are beginning to grapple with the term.<sup>2</sup> Will they find it useful? At first sight, it may seem the term has little to offer historians, for, as the authors point out, many of the themes of globalization have already been studied within sub-disciplines of history, in particular within economic history, migration studies, international relations, histories of imperialism, and world history or global history. (As an aside, most North American world

1 David Held and Anthony McGrew, eds., *The global transformations reader: An introduction to the globalization debate*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000; David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt, and Jonathan Perraton, *Global transformations: Politics, economics and culture*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999; Manuel Castells, *The Information Age: economy, society and culture*, 3 vols., Oxford: Blackwell, 1996–98.

2 Important recent works by a historian are A. G. Hopkins, ed., *Globalization in world history*, New York: Norton, 2002, and the same author's forthcoming *Global history: Interactions between the universal and the local*, London: Palgrave/Macmillan; another forthcoming work