

Bensimon, Fabrice; Quentin, Deluermoz; Moisand, Jeanne (Hrsg.): *„Arise Ye Wretched of the Earth“. The First International in a Global Perspective*. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers 2018. ISBN: 978-90-04-33546-2.

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This open access edited volume, published in Brill's esteemed *Studies in Global Social History* series, presents the results of an international conference held in Paris on the 150th anniversary of the International Working Men's Association (IWMA), commonly also known as the First International.¹ It forms an outstanding scholarly volume presenting the current state-of-the-art regarding the history of the IWMA, its central characters (also beyond Marx, Engels and Bakunin), its transnational networks, national federations and local connections. Ideally the volume can be perceived as a part of a continuum, where the previous main station was the Centenary conference held in Paris in 1964. In fact, one of the chapters dealing with Switzerland is written by Marc Vuilleumier who was present at both conferences. The volume could also be seen as an attempt to pick up the torch after Marcel van der Linden and Frits van Holthoorn's 1988 classic edited volume *„Internationalism in the Labour Movement, 1830–1940“*, although the focus here is limited to the second half of the 19th century. The new collection comprises all in all 24 chapters which were initially presented at the conference held at Université Paris-Sorbonne in June 2014.

The editors provide in the introduction a fine analytical and historiographical framework for the volume, but somewhat surprisingly the introduction does not offer a summary of the IWMA's history. It is therefore assumed that readers have a good background knowledge of the organization and the main debates relating to the IWMA. It would have been convenient to address new readers, e.g. students and/or activists who are unfamiliar with the IWMA's history, with a concise historical overview. Nonetheless, the editors convincingly show the lasting importance of the IWMA for the long history of labour inter-

nationalism and for the formation of internationalist practices, trade union solidarity and strike support in Europe and beyond. Despite the global ambition and perspective, it is clear that the IWMA's activities were mainly concentrated to Great Britain, France, the German states, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, and the USA. The volume as a whole contributes to transnational labour history and brings to the forefront various transnational networks, exchanges, the role of translations, and transfers of ideas, people and practices. However, as Horacio Tarcus shows in his chapter, very few sources have survived for example describing the IWMA's activities in Latin America which makes it incredibly challenging to verify the potential influence of the IWMA. Alternatively, it must be concluded that the IWMA's global influence in its own time was geographically relatively limited. In order to advance the global perspectives of the volume, it would beyond doubt have been important to include a final chapter or afterword dealing with the IWMA's global legacy that would have underlined its global significance and lasting role as a myth and model that was not limited to the marxist and anarchist movements.

While there is no room to comment the merits of each chapter, I have chosen to highlight the contributions that are especially worthy of mention and that truly are inspirational in their approaches and critical rethinking of the First International. Special praise must firstly be given to Fabrice Bensimon's chapter that presents the IWMA's precursors in London between 1830 and 1960. It provides an important introduction to the role of exiles and migrants for the formation of internationalist cultures in Great Britain. Quentin Deluermoz's chapter on the IWMA and the Paris Commune makes again a significant effort to identify future research leads that for example ask for a deeper understanding of the relation between the local sections and the General Council in London, or more in depth studies about the internationalist trajectories founded in the era between 1848 and 1871. Carl Levy's chapter on the Italians and the IWMA makes a compelling argument for the relevance of

¹ <https://brill.com/view/title/33815?contents=editorial-content>

the IWMA's foundation as a milestone for the histories of Italian anarchism, syndicalism, socialism and communism. Levy suggests moreover important future avenues of research that could shed more light on the transnational exchanges and the role of different networks within the IWMA in Italy. Jeanne Moisand's chapter on the Spanish Empire deserves especial praise for the ways that it interconnects the history of the IWMA to sailors, seamen and the Spanish colonies, and particularly to Cuba. It is an outstanding example of how we can approach the global history of the IWMA through the framework provided by the European empires, or how labour internationalism could function within the framework of colonialism and imperialism. Antony Taylor's chapter on the IWMA in New York and London shows in a fascinating way the development of overlapping ideas, communities and goals in radical milieus on both sides of the Atlantic. Lastly, Antje Schrupp's longstanding efforts to track down the biographies of the women in the IWMA needs to be recognised. Her analysis of these pioneering efforts to bring together feminism and socialism seem especially relevant.

In conclusion, the book offers a welcome update to history of the IWMA and it certainly offers new perspectives and findings beyond what has been available in the previous research. It gives a solid overview of the research findings produced during the past decades, and offers at the same time an ambitious vision of what the future history of the IWMA could look like. Hopefully, the volume will work as a new opening and thus manage to show the path of future research related more broadly to 19th century transnational internationalism. If it will last until 2064 when we see the next international conference and volume dedicated to the history of the IWMA, I certainly hope that it will follow the pathways and new perspectives highlighted here. For the book series itself, the volume could again present an opportunity to follow up with similar updated accounts of both the Second and Third Internationals.

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