CrossMark

institutional spaces, and their increasingly ambiguous positioning continues to resonate in spite of and because of arguments allied with calls for repatriation. The ethical question of contending with the construction of otherness bears some resemblance to Lévinas's philosophical approach, but it is more firmly grounded in how the circulation of meanings and arguments about the colonial predicament are staged and exhibited in the photographic record. Dell has made an important contribution largely because the photographs tell much of the story in relation to his descriptive text. I will continue to refer to Dell's discussion of ethics, and the provocative details of the Bamum Cameroonian legacy in future considerations. While the prose is sometimes obtuse in its theoretical aspirations, unraveling the story of the photographs included is a source of ongoing fascination. The reader might start with Atangana in front of the throne of Njoya while visiting the Musée du Trocadero with his secretary, paired with Dell's remarkable discussion of its significance. The level of detail and layers of meaning concerning the French colonial imaginary indirectly reference and go well beyond Roland Barthes's reference to the African youth's salute as the "exemplary figure of French imperiality" appearing on the cover of *Paris-Match* (25 June–2 July 1955) that takes center stage in *Myth Today* (1957).

Peter J. Bloom
Department of Film and Media Studies, University of California
2433 SSMS, Santa Barbara, California 93106-4010, United States
E-mail: pbloom@ucsb.edu
doi:10.1017/S0020859021000614

ZYSIAK, AGATA (*et al.*). From Cotton and Smoke. Łódź: Industrial City and Discourses of Asynchronous Modernity, 1897–1994. Columbia University Press, New York [etc.] 2018. 308 pp. Ill. Maps. $60.00; £47.00.

This volume represents a comprehensive history of the Polish city of Łódź from the end of the nineteenth century to the post-communist transition. Łódź, often dubbed the "Polish Manchester", is an exceptional story amongst Polish towns: it was created during the late but rapid industrialization of the Russian Empire and since then has developed very differently to Polish centres such as Warsaw, Cracow, or Gdańsk. At the same time, it has been a contested place, where nationalism, capitalism, and modernity have been at the centre of contention in both local and national discourses. The authors have made a compelling collective effort to tell the story of Łódź. They focus on four distinct periods of urban development: the decades before 1914, the interwar era, the post-war introduction of Soviet socialism (1945–1949), and the post-communist transition (1989–1994). Thus, they concentrate on times of rapid social and cultural upheaval while backgrounding the period of German occupation during the two world wars (1915–1918; 1939–1945). Methodologically, they use the city as a prism to analyse how urban modernity as well as the rise and the crisis of capitalist production were negotiated in the Polish context.

Łódź's growth started with the rise of the textile industry. Initially, it was more a production hub than a proper city. From the beginning, national minorities – Germans and Jews, but also Russians – were present in Łódź. Many of its large mills were owned by merchants not considered Polish. It faced problems similar to those of other fast-growing industrial

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859021000626 Published online by Cambridge University Press

cities: Manchester, for example, but one might also think of Chicago or, within the Russian Empire, Moscow. Industry expanded faster than urban infrastructure and housing could be built; a weak and overstretched state could not provide for its citizens. Rather, the city was initially left to develop on its own. Łódź was producing for a vast hinterland: the entire Russian Empire. The authors show how the industrial boom continued despite the political upheaval of 1905. Yet, the rapid growth was stopped by the German occupation and the independence of Poland, which disrupted the economic ties with Russia.

Ethnic strife and nationalism – already present under the old regime – became more visible as a democratic public emerged in the Polish republic. But there were antagonisms not merely between Jews, Germans, and Poles, but also between different visions for the city: national capitalism and municipal socialism competed. Both the Polish socialists and the right-wing Endecja enjoyed strong support in the city. Before the background of economic crisis, different visions of urbanity, capitalism, and Polish nationhood were discussed. The Polish nation state became a new actor and tried to use its limited resources to establish urban infrastructure such as sewers and to improve life for the inhabitants. In the end, however, the city never fully recovered from the loss of the Russian market.

During World War II, Łódź was one of the few Polish cities that suffered only minor damage. The city left physically intact, its population was persecuted under the Nazi occupation of "Litzmannstadt", as the city was called. The Jewish population was first deported into a ghetto and then murdered in the Shoah while the *Volksdeutsche*, who had long been a part of the elite, were expelled in 1945. Thus, as a result of war and genocide, Łódź was Polonized. The new Soviet-backed government wanted to make it an example of modern urban planning in order to develop the town for the working class. Wild growth was to be replaced by rational planning that would improve all aspects of urban life. Representative building for the new state and its elite was projected. But Łódź had to compete for resources with Warsaw and Gdańsk, important Polish cities that had been destroyed during the war. Again, the Polish state lacked the means for investment. Still, the social make-up of the city changed considerably because parts of the Polish *inteligencja* moved into its undestroyed buildings. Łódź became home to a university, attracted students, and in 1948 its famous film school was started. Still, its mainly female workforce in the textile industry was never as privileged as Silesian miners or Baltic-coast shipbuilders had been under communist rule. They remained a second-class working class.

The end of state socialism hit Łódź hard. The industries that had supported the city for 150 years were no longer sustainable. Western hubs of industry such as Manchester or Chicago had experienced similar problems in the second half of the twentieth century. But the post-communist experience was peculiar: it meant that regaining freedom went hand in hand with unprecedented economic downturn. Many workers were laid off and lost their livelihood. Again, strikes and protests were organized, but to little avail. Many people started their own small business to pull through. Once again, the urban public discussed what the future might hold. Frustration with representative democracy resulted in low political mobilization. A post-industrial Łódź was envisioned by those who saw not only despair but also opportunity. Still, the economic decline led to the degradation of large parts of the population and a substantial social crisis. Only with Polish accession to the European Union were new large-scale developments possible.

Often relying on local newspapers, politicians, and activists as sources, the book places the history of Łódź into the larger context of East European modernity as an urban experience. Throughout Eastern Europe, between 1880 and 1960 peasants became city dwellers. This brought a rapid transformation in housing, production, culture, and politics. The example

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859021000626 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of Łódź serves to illustrate the bumpy road travelled by eastern cities, their development being interrupted by the collapse of empire, war, revolution, genocide, and dictatorship. Still, amazingly, cities like Łódź have begun to bounce back from some of the worst nightmares of the twentieth century. Thirty years after socialism they are – despite many problems – attractive places for business, academics, culture, and tourism. Yet, they are also haunted by problems familiar from the past: loss of population, a weak state, nationalist politics, and a divided urban public. *From Cotton and Smoke* takes readers on a fascinating journey through Polish urban history. It is recommended not merely for scholars and students of Poland and Eastern Europe, but also for those generally interested in urban studies and the discourse about modernity.

Jan Claas Behrends

Leibniz-Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung
Am Neuen Markt 1, 14467 Potsdam, Germany
E-mail: behrends@zzf-potsdam.de
doi:10.1017/S0020859021000626

HERRERÍN, ÁNGEL. The Road to Anarchy. The CNT under the Spanish Second Republic (1931–1936). [Sussex Studies in Spanish History.] Sussex Academic Press, Brighton [etc.] 2020. xi, 300 pp. £85.00; $99.95.

In July 1936, the anarcho-syndicalist trade union the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) was instrumental to the suppression of a military coup in several of Spain's major cities and towns. As this abortive coup gave rise to a civil war, the division of Spain was accompanied by a revolution in which the CNT was prominent. This was the "anarchy" to which the present title by Ángel Herrerín, which focuses on the history of the CNT during the Second Republic (1931–1936), refers.

The title is misleading, however, since the author does not present the CNT on the road to anywhere but nowhere in the years preceding the civil war. Presenting a top-down political history of the organization, which will be familiar to specialists in the area, Herrerín depicts the CNT as dominated by a bitter factional dispute that left it beholden to an unrepresentative minority of doctrinaire fantasists, who, "despite having taken the CNT to the edge of extinction, still controlled the organisation" on the eve of the civil war (p. 239). The constructive role it was able to play in the conflict was, therefore, accidental. Herrerín accounts for this apparent contradiction with a single sentence at the end of the book: "The CNT, which had sought via every means possible to bring about the revolution, would see how a military rebellion paradoxically cleared the road to anarchy" (p. 249).

Insofar as *The Road to Anarchy* narrates a pre-history, it is not that of the Spanish revolution, but of the collapse of republican democracy, of which the CNT's infighting and radicalization appear as symptomatic. Born in 1931, amidst widespread jubilation, the young regime, anomalous in the Europe of the 1930s, was unable to consolidate itself. In its early years, under a liberal-social democratic coalition, it failed to rein in the violence of the police in response to strikes in the cities and unrest in the countryside, with fatal consequences. In this context, according to Herrerín, radical anarchists in the Federación Anarquista Ibérica (FAI) were able to enact an opportunist takeover of the CNT, unseating

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859021000626 Published online by Cambridge University Press