

DECHESNE, GUY. *Un siècle d'antimilitarisme révolutionnaire. Socialistes, anarchistes, syndicalistes et féministes 1849–1939*. Atelier de création libertaire, Lyon 2021. 206 pp. € 12.00.

Dechesne offers a compact and powerful overview of antimilitarism as a philosophy and as a movement. Though he focuses primarily on the period 1849–1939, Dechesne begins his narrative in the Roman Republic in the fifth century BCE, thereby establishing the ancient roots of antimilitarism protest against the exploitation of military service for the narrow gains of the elite. The French Revolution brought forth a second theme, the responsibility of citizens to defend their liberties against oppression.

Multiple interpretations and definitions of antimilitarism coexisted, though they all shared a common emphasis on liberty. This assertion is not new, but Dechesne offers a far more detailed and much needed explication. Antimilitarism commonly focused on issues of class, and antimilitarists sought to liberate the proletariat from bourgeois oppression and a “powerful military placed in the service of capital” (p. 28). This definition also encouraged the link between antimilitarism and anti-patriotism, as they viewed patriotism as another bourgeois tool for controlling the masses. Even this definition had fault lines, however. Antimilitarists disagreed over the best way to achieve their goals. From the Franco-Prussian War until approximately 1908, antimilitarism focused on a commitment to peace – as the Second International affirmed in 1891 – the refusal to serve or obey orders that violated the liberty of citizens, and the use of the general strike as a tool to stop war. These policies would protect the people from being sacrificed on the altar of bourgeois interests, and satisfied many of the more mainstream socialists. In contrast, anarchists and more radical socialists rejected the emphasis on peace and instead saw the general strike as the start of the proletarian revolution. Antimilitarists formed, merged, and split from numerous organizations to pursue competing visions of antimilitarist goals. Local branches of national or international groups adopted their own policies, often in an attempt to push the larger organization towards a particular policy. On any single point, agreement remained elusive.

Dechesne reveals that the international nature of antimilitarism, representing the movement's greatest strength and most serious point of vulnerability, compounded this challenge. Dechesne succeeds admirably in revealing antimilitarism as a truly international movement that extended beyond a few industrial, Western European nations and moved across the ocean to the United States in 1917. Though the early portion of the book might lead a reader to wonder if the title should focus more narrowly on the French, Dechesne allows the reader to see the growth of antimilitarism within its context of the growing Workers' International, first, and then across all areas of Europe, including the Balkans. Policies that seemed to make sense in the context of France or Germany, such as the general strike, threatened to worsen tyranny and weaken socialist goals elsewhere. National representatives at international meetings often negotiated official policies and statements to the point that those policies offered only general platitudes rather than a guide for action.

Dechesne's effort to capture the shifting range of perspectives, individuals, and organizational actors also reveals the labyrinthine nature of the movement that is, at times, difficult to follow. Dechesne identifies some clear chronological benchmarks

that nonetheless allow a reader to understand the evolution of key themes. The failure of the French antimilitarists to stop the Three Years' Law in 1913 revealed that the movement was simply too fragmented to be effective. Other events in France, most notably the use of the military to break up strikes at Fourmies (1891) and in the Midi (1907), among others, proved especially influential on the international movement. For the more radical antimilitarists, these events reinforced their beliefs. For others, however, these same events, coupled with the Paris Commune, the French Revolution of 1848, and the subsequent failure of the Second Republic, and the Revolution of 1789, all demonstrated that a generic opposition to the military would not be sufficient or wise. Instead, the old "permanent" military, controlled by and used for the elite, needed to be replaced with a new, "nation-army", controlled by the proletariat, as described in various ways by Jean Jaurès, Édouard Vaillant, and Austrian antimilitarists. This strain of antimilitarism focused on defending liberty against all forms of oppression – bourgeois, imperialist, reactionary, or despotic – and, after 1908, became the more influential, though not the loudest, of the antimilitarist positions. Such an argument allowed antimilitarists to differentiate their resistance so that they could support military service in defense of the Republic while rejecting the function of the army as a defender of the bourgeoisie (p. 19). The general strike waned in its importance. Antimilitarism took on a patriotic tone as it linked proletarian liberty with national defense against oppression as a universal enemy.

How antimilitarists defined the nature of that oppression proved to be the sticking point, however, and explained the apparent failure of antimilitarism in 1914. Whereas before 1914 antimilitarists focused more on the international dilemma of bourgeois oppression, the declaration of war refocused that oppression into nationalist terms. Though they still sought to defend liberty in general, French antimilitarists identified German tyranny and Prussian militarism as the forces of oppression that had to be defeated, and German antimilitarists focused upon Russian despotism. Yet, Dechesne carefully emphasizes that the strain of antimilitarism that opposed war unequivocally endured, rather than disappeared, and what has often been seen as its reappearance after 1916 and, most powerfully, in 1917 appears instead as the product of its patient commitment to the principles of the general strike and opposition of war for any reason.

Dechesne's discussion of 1914–1918 makes up the plurality of his study, and the majority of his focus is on the period from 1849–1918, but his post-1918 is equally significant. In Dechesne's narrative, the experience of the Great War encouraged a general focus on peace, but did not eliminate the importance service in defense of the nation. As French biologist Marie Goldsmith declared, "failure to resist invading armies constitutes at the very least the violation of the fundamental principle of resistance to oppression, the abandonment of the great spirit of revolt" (p. 127). Antimilitarists had a responsibility to continue to fight not only against "reactionary militarism", but also against the "exaltation of imperialism, domination, and national pride" (p. 127). As the threat of fascism and particularly Nazism increased, pacifism declined and antimilitarists became less tolerant of pacifists and conscientious objectors.

Dechesne's narrative makes clear that at no point did antimilitarists achieve a consensus over the definition of antimilitarism or the policies they should espouse as a result. Antimilitarists could not agree on what mattered more: total class warfare, in which the military and war served solely as bourgeois weapons of oppression, or ensuring power to the people, which entailed a truly popular army made up of the

working class that could defend itself and protect their liberty against despotism. Dechesne's own analysis asserts that the "effects of the movement were weak and neglected key groups within the nation", which he identifies as peasants and women (p. 190). Indeed, it is difficult to see the extent to which these ideas permeated wider society. Dechesne suggests at least some success by equating the number of antimilitarist pamphlets and newspaper issues distributed within French military barracks as evidence of the popular embrace of antimilitarist arguments and by mentioning, as one example, some popular demonstrations and unrest within the French barracks in 1913. Still, when combined with the lengthier discussion of the mutinies in 1917, the context for this unrest appears to be influenced less by antimilitarism as a movement and more by the length of service and the conditions under which soldiers had to serve. By and large, antimilitarism remains a movement largely confined to an intellectual elite within the socialist, anarchist, and some feminist circles.

Dechesne's conclusion that antimilitarists failed to focus sufficiently on women might come as a surprise to the reader, as one of the notable strengths of *Un siècle* is its inclusiveness. Women are fully present as actors who shape the various interpretations and evolution of antimilitarism within this period. Dechesne's equal treatment highlights the ways that female antimilitarists saw women as a fundamental part of antimilitarist goals and consistently situated larger antimilitarist arguments in the context of women's lives. In turn, feminist antimilitarism drew attention to the centrality of women within the nation.

Dechesne allows the antimilitarists and their opponents largely to largely for themselves, and the narration skilfully allows the reader to see the ways that their ideas flowed or broke from each other. In the process, Dechesne reveals the complexity and layers of many antimilitarisms that shifted in response to the world around them. What brought all of these ideas together was a common understanding that military service, the employment of the military as a police force at the national level, and war among nations all reflected the same sense of injustice and inequality that brought these thinkers to socialism and anarchism, and gave them some shared visions as to what they hoped to achieve. Antimilitarism, in all of its conflicting forms, offered one way of explaining injustice and their imagined picture of liberty and equality.

Elizabeth Propes

Tennessee Tech University, Department of History, Cookeville, TN, United States

E-mail: EPropes@tntech.edu

doi:10.1017/S002085902200044X

IMLAY, TALBOT. *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism. European Socialists and International Politics, 1914–1960.* Oxford University Press, Oxford 2018. xi, 480 pp. £100.00.

On the eve of World War I, the network of socialist parties known as the Second International brought together millions of working men and women from almost all European countries and, to a much lesser extent, other regions of the world, such as the