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Fabrice Bensimon, Quentin Deluermoz and Jeanne Moisand, eds., *“Arise Ye Wretched of the Earth”: The First International in a Global Perspective*. Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2018. xiv + 404 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, appendix, and index. \$168.00 (U.S.) ISBN 978-90-04-33545-5 (hb.); ISBN 978-90-04-33546-2 (eb, open-access).

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Fabrice Bensimon, Quentin Deluermoz, and Jeanne Moisand have edited a fine collection of essays that illuminate the global and transnational dimensions of the International Workingmen’s Association (IWMA), commonly referred to as The First International. This book is the outgrowth of a conference held in Paris in 2014 marking the 150th anniversary of the founding of the First International in 1864 and fifty years since an important centenary conference on the First International was held in the same city in 1964.

The editors provide compelling reasons why such a conference and subsequent publication are justified. First, the volume updates the scholarly literature of the IWMA since 1964. The editors note that scholarship since the 1990s is less burdened by the political and ideological stakes of the Cold War era, even if the amount of research on the IWMA has declined. Bensimon, Deluermoz, and Moisand do a fantastic job in the introduction of synthesizing the broad themes of that literature, while suggesting further research paths and gaps in knowledge.

The volume also reflects how trends in transnational and global labor and working-class history—pioneered by Marcel van der Linden since the 1990s—help reframe our understanding of the First International. Instead of a predominant focus on ideological debates and confrontation (Marx versus Bakunin) or national sectional histories, greater consideration in this book is given to the “actual spaces of exchanges and connections” of historical actors (p. 5). For example, the book refreshingly goes beyond Europe to encompass the United States, Latin America and the Spanish Empire. Bringing a transnational and global perspective to the research agenda of the IWMA is certainly fitting since the organization’s aims were self-avowedly internationalist. As Jürgen Herres aptly puts it: “In light of this, the history of the International deserves to be reconsidered without any ideological distortions. Notably, the International is hardly accorded a footnote in the current interpretation of world and global history—although it was the International which conceptualized certain terms still important for present debates” (p. 302).

Furthermore, the volume attempts to engage the popular political cultures from which socialist and labor ideas and institutions emerged as well as the sociology of militants. This is no easy task given the limitation of sources, and some essays succeed better than others. These contexts

are nonetheless critical for better understanding well known figures, such as Marx and Bakunin, female internationalists like Victoria Woodhull, as well as rank and file members.

The book consists of three parts: “Organization and Debates,” “Global Causes and Local Branches,” and “Actors and Ideologies.” The first part includes seven essays, the second eleven, and the final six. Each essay is self-contained and stands alone on its own merits. The series of country-specific contributions contain valuable references to the current literature, and as such, these essays serve as good primers to the key issues and scholarship for those countries. The volume also includes two valuable appendices: a brief chronology of the IMWA by country, and a profile of membership.

For the section on “Organization and Debates,” Bensimon starts with an incisive discussion of the roots of the IMWA in London by carefully tracing what defined internationalism from 1830 to 1860 as distinct from cosmopolitanism or international fraternity. London as a city of exiles and refugees was critical for the emergence of internationalist ideas and associations due to its liberality and the intermingling of diverse nationalities. This resulted in the founding of the Fraternal Democrats in 1845, “presumably the first international organization” (p. 25). Members of the FD embraced an internationalism in which workers alone would be able to bring about the fraternization of the nations, which Karl Marx would articulate in his 1848 Communist Manifesto. In the wake of the 1848 revolutions, exiled refugees from the continent formed groups like the International Committee (1854–56) and International Association (1856–1859) that anticipated the First International. Structural changes in the early 1860s global economy—migration flows, strike activities, formation of trade unions—as well as political causes like Polish independence created a set of issues that spurred Karl Marx and other continental militants to set up the IWMA in 1864. Bensimon expertly melds external and internal factors to explain the origins of the IWMA.

Detlef Mares continues a focus on London by examining the charge of foreign sections that the General Council of the IWMA also served the interests of British labor groups. Karl Marx rejected this assertion, and defended the unique arrangement of the General Council also representing England, because London was the capitalist capital of the world. By examining the issue of Irish independence and the activities of the London Trades Council, Mares shows that the charge was essentially correct in that British working-class radicals were “autonomous political actors who managed to use the General Council for their own purpose” (p. 50). Although Mares does not pursue this point beyond the case of England, such insight reveals that the specific interests of labor groups and their own conceptions of international solidarity within the First and subsequent Internationals were shaped by national and cultural biases.

The next four chapters take up specific labor issues with transnational dimensions: industrial conflict, transnational solidarity and money flows, the machinery question, and the Paris Commune. Iorwerth Prothero delves into the world of French and British labor organizations and migration. Organized labor, sometimes in coordination with the IWMA, could gain concessions from employers by thwarting usage of foreign blacklegs. The International, as Prothero persuasively shows, “was original in creating a permanent labour organization that mobilized international support for strikes” (p. 64). Nicolas Delalande’s excellent essay extends Prothero’s focus to an analysis of the financial resources of the IWMA. Here a profound difference existed between the public perception of the IWMA as a wealthy organization and the reality of its meager funds. Interestingly, the General Council did not attempt to challenge this

false view and even encouraged it, although it limited its activity mainly to facilitating communication between different labor organizations across Europe and acting as a liaison between continental and British sections. Even so, Delalande demonstrates that the First International “provided a framework for developing ways of using money for transnational campaigns, which formed long-distance bonds of solidarity between groups that did not know each other personally” (p.77). François Jarrige addresses one of the key sources of industrial conflict: the mechanization of industry. Technological change imperiled the status of artisanal and small-scale workers such as watchmakers in Switzerland. Jarrige traces the debate on machinery at the IMWA congresses, where the majority view recognized the importance of technology for material progress, while asserting machinery ought to be under collective ownership. Quentin Deluermoz concludes the first part of the book with a reassessment of the role of the IMWA in the Paris Commune in France and across Europe. Similar to Delalande’s point about the so-called wealth of the IWMA, the First International’s actual role in the Commune versus public perception diverged markedly. European governments and the broader public falsely—and sometimes deliberately—claimed that the First International was the instigator of the Parisian uprising. Deluermoz calls for a transnational study on the repercussions of the Commune. Both as event and symbol, the Commune had important impacts across the globe on governments, public policy, perceptions of revolutionary activity, and the formation of modern worker and socialist movements.

The second part of the book, “Global Causes and Local Branches,” entails a survey of IWMA activity in specific countries as well as imperial and local contexts.

A common thread is that, unlike the Second International, the national framework of identification among militants and workers was much less evident than local and regional identities. The strongest essays in this section take up explicitly those transnational and global linkages within local or regional contexts, while others are narrower in scope, limiting the focus mainly to organizational or ideological aspects of the IWMA in a given country.

Jürgen Schmidt’s fascinating essay explains that while membership in the IWMA was illegal in German states due to associational laws, ideas and actions of worker emancipation and international solidarity emerged during the 1860s through transnational migration patterns and networking of specific individuals. Likewise, the circulation of international and global ideas in the bourgeois public sphere occurred via worker newspapers and journals. In contrast to the German states where the IWMA had minimal organization and membership, it flourished in Belgium. Like England, Belgium offered a haven for exiled revolutionaries due to its neutrality and thus several IWMA congresses took place there. Jean Puissant argues that the 1868 Brussels congress gave vitality to the Belgian section of IWMA. The IWMA crystalized into a shared historical experience for future socialist and labor leaders and “was at the origin of the contemporary socialist movement” (p. 159). Marc Vuilleumier traces the personal connections of individuals to the establishment of the IMWA in Switzerland and outlines several examples of IWMA strike activity. Vuilleumier reminds researchers to be cautious in attaching ideological labels to militants because it simplifies the complexity of rank-and-file views and imposes rigid ideological constructs like Marxism and anarchism that at the time were not “well-defined and coherent doctrines” (p. 177).

In Krzysztof Marchlewicz’s rich contribution on the Poles in the IWMA, we learn about the debates the IWMA had with reference to support of Polish independence as well as the sociology of Polish emigrés, most of whom came from the nobility. Similar to the status of Polish IWMA

members—exiled patriots and revolutionaries—most Russian IWMA militants operated outside of the Russian Empire, as Woodford McClellan demonstrates. McClellan surveys the range of Russian populist and European revolutionary ideas that influenced key members from Nikolai Utin to Bakunin and Nechaev. Carl Levy gives a strong synthesis of Italian involvement in the IWMA, including origins, main actors, ideas, and disputes as well as regional variation. In providing a sociological sketch of IWMA membership, Levy importantly notes that hundreds or thousands of women were active in the International “who still deserve their historian, whose history so far has been limited to biographical treatments of leading figures” (p. 215).

The next three excellent essays cover the geography of Spanish-speaking areas of the world. In perhaps the best chapter of the book, Albert Garcia-Balañà masterfully weaves together the main themes of the volume—transnationalism, sociology of militants, and historiographical trends—to illuminate the interplay of militants in the Spanish Regional Federation of the IWMA and the government around the time of the Paris Commune in Barcelona in 1871. One key finding is that the Spanish government “used the Commune’s image as a plebeian insurrection that was finally (and happily) defeated to legitimize its simultaneous political and police offensive against trade unions and Barcelona’s democratic and popular Republicanism” (p. 233). Jeanne Moisand examines the connection between Spanish republicanism and internationalism amid revolutionary resurgence within Spain and its colonies, most notably Cuba and the Philippines, asking whether an anti-imperial internationalism might have united center and periphery within the Spanish Empire. Moisand spotlights revolts in Spanish ports and in the Philippines, finding no direct solidarity, but instead suggests that “(e)ven if they were coerced, Spanish cantonalists and Internationalists thus participated in the expansion of the imperial state of Asia” (p. 247). Horacio Tarcus persuasively dispels the myth that the International had no influence in Latin America by looking closely at Mexico City, Montevideo, and Buenos Aires. Tarcus sums up his argument: “As opposed to the cases of Mexico City and Montevideo, the sections of the International did not leave much of an imprint in the working classes of Buenos Aires” (p. 269).

The final two chapters in part two of the book shift the focus from South America to North America and back to London again. Beyond an excellent overview of the historical literature of the IWMA in the United States, Michel Cordillot reflects on the long-term impact of the IWMA on American socialism. The sectarianism of socialist groups along largely ethnic lines impeded, Cordillot suggests, “the emergence of a genuinely American brand of socialism,” because the movement and ideology was seen as a foreign import anathema to American traditions (p. 278). Antony Taylor’s contribution dovetails nicely with Cordillot’s by bringing to light the fact that non-Marxist radicals in New York and London drew upon similar ideas and currents in bohemian culture (spiritualism, overlap with the women’s movement, dietary and currency reform), and arguing that scholars should not discount those radical traditions of the IWMA and their legacy.

The essays in part three of the book, “Actors and Ideologies,” cohere much less with the main themes of the volume in comparison to the chapters in the first two parts of the volume. Their quality also varies considerably from essay to essay. Jürgen Herres’s piece on Karl Marx and his role in the IWMA could very well serve as a fitting conclusion to the book since it contains several refreshing and pertinent insights about research on the IWMA as a whole and complements wonderfully some of the bigger themes teased out by the editors in their introduction. Herres characterizes Marx’s position within the IWMA neither as dominant nor as peripheral: he held no official position within the IWMA, yet his role “was first and foremost an intellectually dominant one” (p. 305). Herres then broadens his lens to suggest that “The

IWMA ... be seen as an attempt, to develop ideas, concepts and techniques transnationally. That way it partly succeeded in making the globality of the interests of the workers beyond national borders and their union reality. Until then this globalization had only been imagined" (p. 303).

Three essays examine individuals: Professor Beesly, an important English Positivist, Mikhail Bakunin, and the Italian militant Carlo Cafiero. Gregory Claeys investigates the divergence between Marx's and Beesly's views of internationalism and patriotism. Marianne Enckell notes how Bakunin's ideas found resonance in the Jura region of Switzerland, while Mathieu Léonard casts light on the life and ideas of Carlo Cafiero, and provides a resumé of his activity as a revolutionary caught in a struggle between Bakunin's and Marx's ideas. In these essays, the authors could do more to address the main themes of the volume. Léonard acknowledges that his piece "does not seek to bring any new insights into Cafiero's life, which has been examined in good detail" (p. 368).

The remaining two chapters in part three of the book point to possible new and exciting directions in future research of the IWMA. Samuel Hayat brilliantly combines social and cultural historical methods to illuminate the entrance of Proudhonism as an ideological construct into the International through the Paris section known as the Gravilliers in the years 1864-1867. There is much richness and complexity to Hayat's chapter. He asserts that scholars should keep in mind that workers "speak and act on their own behalf" and do not simply absorb the ideas of intellectuals or leaders, that ideas and ideologies themselves are social and cultural constructs in specific contexts, and that the close analysis of the language of IWMA documents can yield new insights: Hayat writes: "In a way, the Gravilliers 'made' Proudhon rather than the reverse: it is *they* who invented a certain image of Proudhon" (p. 329). Antje Schrupp offers important reflections on bringing greater attention to women and gender in the history of the IWMA. She notes that in its early years, the IWMA projected an anti-feminist image and did not include many women among its leaders. In her search to find a "female" voice through analysis of four female internationalists--Virginie Barbet, Elisabeth Dmitrieff, André Leo and Victoria Woodhull--Schrupp found little: "The only interesting thing seemed to be the fact itself: that they were members of the International despite being feminist" (p. 347). The author proposes to examine the relationship between feminism and socialism and ascribes the main importance of these female militants to their relationships with others through "the politics of personal intermediations" (p. 352).

In sum, this book succeeds overall in its objectives to provide up-to-date historiographical accounts of specific aspects of the IWMA, cast the IWMA in a global and transnational light, and provide some detail about the social location of IWMA leaders and rank-and-file members. The editors (and perhaps the original conference program committee) are commended for effectively bringing together somewhat disparate essays and giving them thematic coherence. Only section three on "Actors and Ideologies" is somewhat forced. While the book highlights well the state of research on the First International, it also illustrates that many aspects of the IWMA, such as gender and cultural history, can be approached with fresh eyes and insights. Likewise, no longer wedded to ideological or political party concerns, there is an opportunity to re-examine the sources again. As Herres writes, "[t]he International opens our view to the debates of the European workers and opposition movements about important questions of foreign, constitutional, union and social policy in the age of the first modern wave of globalization" (p. 311).

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