

of leftists through Marx's notoriously difficult *Capital: Volume I*, the *Companion* is very successful. While I am not exactly convinced that "we have, in short, been very much in the world of *Volume I* over the past thirty years", it seems clear that workers' share of profits relative to capitalists have been diminishing, while corporate monopolization, structural unemployment, economic crises, and social inequality have been surging under contemporary conditions of neoliberalism (246). Harvey is surely correct in insisting that the conceptual framework Marx lays out in *Capital* offers indispensable insights into this dire political and economic situation. As such, *Capital* remains essential reading, and one would be hard-pressed to find a better guide than David Harvey.

Scott De Groot  
Queen's University

**Silvio Pons and Robert Service, Eds. *A Dictionary of 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Communism*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).**

For many students of the Left, particularly those in the formative stages of their academic career, the study of communism can often be overwhelming. Once a topic is selected, one must become an expert not only on the subject in question, but also the ways in which it interacts with larger national and international experiences and narratives. This is complicated by what can seem like a never-ending stream of abbreviations and acronyms, coupled with the reality that since the fall of the Soviet Union the historiography of this field has become one of the most dynamic in academia. It is with this in mind that *A Dictionary of 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Communism* – advertised as “the first encyclopaedic reference work since the end of the Cold War on international communism” – should be welcomed into the historiography of the left.

Edited by established scholars Silvio Pons (University of Rome Tor Vergata) and Robert Service (University of Oxford), *A Dictionary of 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Communism* contains over 400 alphabetic entries which can be divided into three distinct categories: leading political figures, organizations (political and otherwise), and ideas or concepts. Entries range from concise biographical sketches to longer multi-page articles detailing the main historiographical contours of contested topics. What really makes this volume stand out is its commitment to re-write, or re-think, entries vis-à-vis the enormous amount of information that has become available since the opening of the Soviet archives (vii). *A Dictionary of 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Communism* represents one of the most up-to-date sources of general information pertaining to international communism available at this time.

For many the value of this work lies not just in the entries themselves, but in the excellent indexes and references that are provided at the end of each

article. For example, those who are interested in the Catholic Church are provided not only with an informative entry, but are also directed to five related topics that may be of interest within the volume itself. For those who want to engage with the subject in a more in-depth manner, the authors provide a brief bibliography of important scholarly works. In so doing, Pons and Service have made this volume accessible to the general public while maintaining its value to scholars and specialists in the field.

No matter how voluminous a work, however, there are bound to be omissions. Scholars of the Canadian left will quickly realize that there is no discussion of the Canadian experience, be it in regards to personalities, organizations or ideas. The only time Canada is mentioned anywhere in the 921 pages that make up *A Dictionary of 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Communism* is in regards this nation's participation in the Grand Alliance against Nazi Germany (353). In a dictionary that contains entries detailing the lives of Henry Pollit, Evgeny Preobrazhensky, and Earl Browder, there is no reason that comparable space could not be made to briefly address Tim Buck, Section 98 of the Criminal Code or the Communist Party of Canada. Likewise, there is very little content pertaining directly to the Communist Party of the United States of America or the American experience outside of its interaction with the Soviet Union or other communist nation states.

Indeed, one of the problems facing this work is that there is still a tendency for some contributors to write from a Soviet or Sino-centric point of view. Important topics such as "Family" or "History and Memory" – both of which have the ability to touch upon communist experiences in every corner of the world – are addressed only from a Soviet perspective (317-320, 381-383). Similarly the indexed links and recommended readings largely focus on nation-states that were governed under the communist system. Those with limited second language capabilities may also find the recommended readings frustrating, as many of the monographs listed are available only in Italian, French or Russian.

Though students of the left in North America are likely to find little in *A Dictionary of 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Communism* that pertains explicitly to the Canadian or American experience, these omissions do not negate the important role that this volume will play in the months and years to come as the go-to reference work for scholars of communism in the twentieth century. Indeed, for those who are already familiar with the historiography of communism in North America, this work will likely be the first volume to which many turn when exploring the implications of the international communist movement on local and regional experiences. I can only hope that if and when a second printing is undertaken, the editors see fit to reconsider the level of Canadian and North American content they include.

Kyle R. Franz  
Queen's University