

ab dann Impetus für die Entstehung neuer Wissensordnungen an der Schnittstelle zwischen Umwelt und Gesellschaft wurde.

Es handelt sich hierbei ebenso wie in den vom Autor beschriebenen Fallstudien um dialektische Aushandlungsprozesse zwischen bestehenden selektiven Wahrnehmungsmustern über das, was gewusst werden darf, und der ebenso selektiv vermittelten Herstellung von Bedingungen und Regeln, unter denen Wissen über Umwelt als vermittelnde Instanz zwischen Natur und Mensch entsteht. Dass dies plausibel wird, darin liegt fraglos die Stärke und Besonderheit des Werkes.

**Neville Kirk: Labour and the Politics of Empire. Britain and Australia 1900 to the present, Manchester: Manchester University Press 2011, 319 S.**

Rezensiert von  
Nick Dyrenfurth, Melbourne

This volume is a welcome addition to the burgeoning field of comparative and transnational histories of the labour movement and to studies of the so-called 'British World'. In this generally well-written, deeply researched and cogently argued book, Neville Kirk explores the role and influence of ideas about empire, nation and race upon the ideological development and electoral fortunes of the British Labour Party (BLP) and Australian Labor Party (ALP) over the twentieth century. As he sees it, the 'deep-seated' connections

between Australian and Britain have been under-explored by historians. The politics of empire is crucial to understanding this complex relationship.

This book from Manchester University Press's 'Studies in Imperialism' series is not the first account of the relationship between the British and Australian parties – one thinks here of Andrew Scott's perceptive study "Running on Empty: 'Modernising' the British and Australian Labour Parties" (2000). Nor is it the first Australian scholarly encounter with comparative and transnational labour history. Scott's work on the links between Australian and Scandinavian social democracy and Robin Archer's "Why is there is no Labor Party in the United States?" (2007) testify to that enterprise. In some respects Kirk's book can be seen as a companion volume to his excellent "Comrades and Cousins: Globalization, Workers, and Labour Movements in Britain, the USA, and Australia from the 1880s to 1914" (2003). But whereas the latter examined a range of labour movement attitudes, this study, whilst more narrowly focussed on 'empire' and case studies of Britain and Australia, encompasses a broader and more ambitious timeframe.

The book is divided into five, broadly chronological sections. Kirk begins with an overview of research in the field, outlines his methodology and discusses the strengths and weaknesses of a cross-national comparative method, and restates his commitment to the E.P. Thompson school of cultural materialism (though it is clear that he has applied the lessons of the much dreaded 'linguistic turners' to his study), before exploring, in turn, four distinct historical periods: (1) the foundational years

of both parties up until the disastrous ALP split of 1916 during the Great War; (2) the ideological tumult and shouting of the inter-war period; (3) the post-World War II economic golden age that ran from the 1940s until 1970; and, finally, (4) the 1980s through to the present day, an era marked by both parties' turn to so-called neo-liberal economics, a mutual urge to 'modernise' and, at differing times, unprecedented electoral success.

The early sections are the strongest of Kirk's study, where he shows how Australia enjoyed quite precocious electoral success in the years before World War I, especially compared with Britain. The ALP was the first party of its type to form a national government, whether as a minority administration (1904) or in its own right (1910). Here, Kirk argues, much of Labor's success owed to its command of a highly-racialised Australian nationalism – represented most starkly in its advocacy of the (bipartisan) racially-discriminatory immigration policy known as 'White Australia' – and electoral appeal beyond the narrow confines of working-class voters. And yet as Kirk shows, Australian Labor, though adopting a form of anti-imperialist politics, was by no means opposed to the interests of the British Empire. Conversely, British Labour leaders and activists took a keen interest in and even toured Australia (for example Tom Mann) seeking to draw inspiration from the social democratic trailblazers of the antipodes. The ALP's ability to hold together the competing claims of nation, empire and class was destroyed by the events of the Great War, when the party split in two over the issue of military conscription in aid of Empire. Kirk's account of the interwar years deftly demonstrates

how the ALP's forward march was further halted by the growth of a conservative nationalism which linked notions of national and race 'loyalty' to faithfulness towards the British Empire vis-a-vis foreign threats such as Bolshevism (and the revival of the sectarian divide between Catholics and Protestants which saw the former accused of owing their loyalty to Rome and running the ALP as a 'junta'), although this was an anti-Labo(u)r strategy that played out with notably less success in Britain.

The final two sections demonstrate how the ALP and BLP appeared to drift apart in the years after World War Two. As the British Empire morphed into the Commonwealth, and Britain headed into the European Common Market, Australia increasingly looked towards America, becoming embroiled in Cold War politics with disastrous effects for the ALP (it split for the third time in 1955), before the re-emergence of close ties from the 1980s onwards. For instance, in the lead up to the 1997 general election, Tony Blair's 'New Labour' consciously sought to learn from the Australian experience of the Hawke-Keating Labor governments of the 1980s and 90s, which set the template for a 'modern' Labo(u)r government. Here, Kirk might have usefully explored in more detail the ways in which Mark Latham, federal ALP leader during the mid-2000s, explicitly argued for the adaptation of British 'Third Way' thinking, even though it clearly had its origins in his own party.

This seems to point towards what I thought was a serious structural weakness of the book. Kirk's preference is to analyse Australia and Britain in separate, consecutive sections whereas my sense is that an approach looking at periodic developments

concomitantly would have rather more successfully fleshed out Kirk's comparative argument.

There are a number of minor errors within the text, such as the reference to the Australian Workers' Union General Secretary, Errol Hodder as 'Edward'. Some readers will find what amounts to a fetish for single-quotation marks to be highly-distracting.

Despite these quibbles, Kirk has provided an extremely useful addition to political and labour histories of Australia and Britain. His pre-eminent standing in the fields of comparative and transnational labour history is confirmed.

**Frank Wolff: Neue Welten in der Neuen Welt. Die transnationale Geschichte des Allgemeinen Jüdischen Arbeiterbundes 1897–1947 (= Industrielle Welt, Bd. 86), Köln: Böhlau Verlag 2014, 558 S.**

Rezensiert von  
Gertrud Pickhan, Berlin

Bereits 1981 kam Jonathan Frankel in seiner fundamentalen Studie „Prophecy and Politics“ zu dem Schluss, dass die Hinwendung osteuropäischer Juden und Jüdinnen zu linken politischen Konzepten und deren Übertragung auf die jüdischen Lebenswelten nur in einem nach dem damaligen Sprachgebrauch „internationalen“ Referenzrahmen zu verstehen ist.<sup>1</sup> Frankel untersuchte zunächst die Entstehungsgeschichte dieser „new politics“ im Russlän-

dischen Reich und folgte dann den Wegen ihrer HauptprotagonistInnen. Er hielt fest, dass in Wilna, Minsk, Białystok, im Londoner East End und in der Lower East Side in New York die gleichen politischen Subkulturen zu finden waren. Die Lebenswege der politischen AktivistInnen beschreibt er als peripatetisch und zugleich an das russisch-jüdische Milieu rückgebunden.

Einen ähnlichen Zugang wählt auch Frank Wolff für seine Dissertation über den Allgemeinen Jüdischen Arbeiterbund „Bund“, der 1897 in Wilna gegründet wurde. Somit ist dieser nicht wirklich neu, und es klingt ein wenig vermessen, wenn der Vf. in seiner „sozial- und kulturhistorischen Pionierstudie“ (S. 459) immer wieder betont, dass er erstmals eine Sozialgeschichte des Bund in seiner globalen Vernetzung vorlege (S. 19) und eine „von Grund auf neue Vermessung der durch Handlungen konstituierten sozialen Räume des Bund“ vornehme (S. 26). Es ist mittlerweile Konsens, dass jüdische Geschichte immer auch Migrationsgeschichte und damit zwangsläufig „transnational“ ist – ein Adjektiv, das in diesem Buch leider überstrapaziert wird. Dies gilt auch für den zweiten Begriff, den Frank Wolf zu einer Leitkategorie der Bund-Geschichte erklärt: „Aktivismus“. Es versteht sich eigentlich von selbst, dass politisches Handeln für jede Partei absolute Priorität hat. Insofern vermag das, was Frank Wolf selbst immer wieder als die großen Vorzüge seiner Untersuchung anpreist, nicht wirklich zu überzeugen. Zudem erschwert die Überfrachtung des Textes mit zahlreichen Theoremen und Tafeln die Lektüre erheblich, und man vermisst mitunter klare, stringente Argumentationslinien. Gleichzeitig wird der immer wieder verwendete Begriff „Iden-