

academic schools and university education served to privilege some women in their competition with other women. There was less success in equipping women to compete with men. Again, it would be instructive to note the feminist arguments of the time.

There can be no objection to Purvis' last sentence: "the patterns of social class and gender differentiation established in girls' and women's education in the Victorian and Edwardian eras are still echoing in England today" (p. 130). However, one would like to know how loud is the echo, especially in light of the educational reforms after the Second World War and those in the 1970s, neither of which are mentioned. This is a useful book which identifies and raises as many questions as it answers.

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Hilda Kean. *Challenging the State? The Socialist and Feminist Educational Experience 1900-1930.* London: Falmer Press, 1990. Pp. 217. \$25.90.

In *Challenging the State*, Hilda Kean asks to what extent British socialists and feminists were able to mount a thorough-going challenge to the system of state education developed in early twentieth-century Britain. In doing so, she raises ques-

tions that are both particular to the history of the British Left from 1900 to 1930, and remain relevant to a persisting political dilemma: can education be used to challenge the political and economic status quo, and if so, how?

Kean attempts to answer her question by examining both state strategies for education and the ideas and strategies of socialist organizations and feminist teachers who tried to mount a critique of education or offer an alternative to state education. State policy, she argues, consciously used education to "dilute class conflict" (p. 11). The state's success in pursuing anti-socialist aims resulted from its ability to cloak its true ideological intentions in the guise of "equality of opportunity" or extension of services to the disadvantaged. Ironically, she points out, while some of the government's anti-socialist policies were severely critiqued by the labour movement, state control and extension of education went virtually unquestioned, and indeed were popular policies, including in the Labour Party.

On the other hand, Kean concludes that few socialists were "anti-statist" in their view of education, and almost all failed to develop a sophisticated or effective analysis or praxis around the issue. Early socialists like those in the Social Democratic Federation or British Socialist Party simply called for the extension of state education to all, or criticized the economic function education played for capitalism. In other cases, socialists did not develop a "coherent strategy" (p. 40) relating to education (as with the *Workers Dreadnought*) or they utilized unrealistic organizing tactics

which alienated them from labouring people (as with the Socialist Labour Party). The Communist Party both critiqued the school curriculum and advocated that a new form of education be developed to fit the needs of the working classes and of the revolution (very much a Leninist approach), but it too failed to develop effective strategies for change.

Kean directly challenges the arguments of historians like Martin Lawn about the incipient radicalism of some teachers in the post-World War I period. Using detailed research and carefully integrating discussion of the complex arguments over state funding of education, she suggests that teachers' unions, and even socialist teachers, were "statist" in their outlook and that they accepted the "framework for educational debate set out by the state" (p. 125), desiring only the right to more extensive control of their classroom. To a very limited extent, the feminist National Union of Women Teachers (NUWT) did develop a more critical view of the state, the result of women's political experience both outside and inside the profession fighting for the vote, equal pay, and the right of married women to work.

One of Kean's best chapters deals with the NUWT, as she carefully explores the social and political influences shaping its feminism, and the strengths as well as limitations of its critique of education. Most of the book, however, deals with traditional socialist organizations, and occasionally these could be better contextualized. Changing Communist notions of education, for instance, could have been situated within the

Party's broader politics and its relations with the international communist movement. Though socialist and feminist advocates sometimes overlapped in this period, they were just as likely to propose opposing views. Unfortunately, Kean does not offer, in her conclusion, a hint of what an integrated socialist-feminist critique of education might have looked like at this time.

The chapter on socialist youth organizations does provide insightful analysis of early attempts to set up alternative education for socialist children. Her findings reveal some ironic contradictions in socialists' own efforts; while on the one hand socialist elders urged youth to rebel, they could simultaneously be paternalistic (as with the Socialist Sunday Schools) or carefully control the political discussion (as with the Young Communists). Although Kean shows these youth organizations to be innovative in developing a cultural alternative to the school system, she ultimately portrays them as constrained by their inability to mount a satisfactory critique of the state and develop a strategy for change.

This rather rigid equation of "true" socialist opposition/critique with an anti-statist view is one problem with the book. By using this strict measurement, Kean inevitably finds the vision of almost all socialists (and ultimately feminists) to be lacking. Moreover, the state is presented as a somewhat monolithic, undifferentiated, and extremely coherent self-conscious force which carefully (and invariably successfully) pursues its anti-socialist aims. As a result, one is

left with a rather depressing view of a smart state and groups of naive, inadequate socialists. A more carefully developed analysis of the state and a more nuanced view of socialist consciousness would have improved the book. While many socialists of this time period undoubtedly had a rudimentary critique of education, their experiments were sometimes daring for the time, and reflected, as Kean points out well for the feminists, existing political theory and practical precedents.

Extending her research into one more decade, so that the innovative, though admittedly "reformist," politics of the Communists during the Popular Front could be examined, might have provided Kean with the opportunity to explore more fully the contradictions of using education to oppose the state, and also have given the book a more uplifting and interesting ending. Unfortunately, the book contains a fair bit of repetition and detailed historiographical debate which could have been edited; this "dissertation" style of writing sometimes makes for dry reading. Nonetheless, the questions Kean raises about the difficulty of developing a critique of the state and education are provocative; they are still timely and troubling dilemmas, needing our further attention.

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John L. Rury. *Education and Women's Work: Female Schooling and the Division of Labor in Urban America, 1870-1930.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991. Pp. xix, 279. \$19.95 U.S.

Educational history has undergone a wonderful transformation in recent years. There is now a growing interest in and a growing scholarship that attempts to link educational history with women, labour, ethnic, class, and regional history. Historians have begun to look at the effect of schooling on individuals, families, communities, and the world of work. Studies have demonstrated that schooling was given and received differently by boys and girls, rich and poor, natives and immigrants, urban and rural residents, and members of various religious persuasions. Rury's *Education and Women's Work: Female Schooling and the Division of Labor in Urban America, 1870-1930* is a welcome addition to this scholarship. It provides us with an exploration of the linkages between school and work as opportunities for women for schooling and employment increased.

Rury has an important thesis, has asked provocative and fundamental questions, and has used diverse and rich sources to support this thesis and answer the questions posed. *Education and Women's Work* explores the relationship between school and work with women as the focal point. It argues that this relationship shifted profoundly as both schools and women's work changed between 1870 and 1930. The result, says Rury, has