

analysis and documentation that has come to define professional historical practice.

After reading Smith's account, however, it becomes difficult even to formulate such criticisms without an uncomfortable awareness of all that is at stake in disagreements over "professional standards," and of the ways in which the profession continues to be shaped by the gender of its history. Smith has drawn our attention to the ways in which historical praxis has been structured by hierarchies and dichotomies: between "low" and "high," amateur and professional, bodies and texts, feminine and masculine. The play of modern historical debate — whether over theory, method, content, or audience — is always located within these hierarchies and dichotomies. At the same time, it remains difficult to see how we should evaluate our own locations within these structures. Smith herself does not fully resolve this. She refuses, for example, to endorse a model which would valorize the "mature" female professional over the "immature" amateur. Yet she clearly writes as a professional historian: a chapter which deals, among other things, with the fetishization of the footnote, itself contains over one hundred detailed notes. This is an unsettling account of the history of our profession, one which raises as many questions as it sets out to answer. The questions it raises remain crucial, however, not only to history's past but also to its future.

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Philip M. Katz, *From Appomattox to Montmartre: Americans and the Paris Commune* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

In keeping with the globalizing trends of the late twentieth century, U.S. historians are increasingly peering beyond the nation's borders, trying to situate the United States in a wider international context. Comparative, transnational, borderlands, and imperial studies are all manifestations of this wider project. In his elegantly written and very engaging study of the Paris commune, Philip M. Katz contributes to the internationalizing endeavor by showing the extent to which the tumultuous events in Paris in the spring of 1871 impinged on Americans' consciousness. Even as he argues that American conceptions of the Commune had less to do with events in France than with events at home, Katz reminds us of the importance of the world beyond U.S. borders in helping to shape U.S. political culture in the post-Civil War period.

Although the bulk of the book covers Americans' reactions to the Commune, Katz begins with a chapter on General Gustave Paul Cluseret, a French soldier and adventurer who served in the Union Army and then became the War Minister of the Commune. Exceptional though he was, Cluseret helps

make the point that there were ideological as well as human connections between the two conflicts; that even before Americans scrutinized the Paris Commune, Communards had reflected on (and, in a few cases, participated in) the American Civil War. Katz follows Cluseret's changing political principles to highlight three themes that linked the Commune to the recent American war: republicanism, centralization, and the emancipation of labour. Like the American observers who fill the bulk of the book, Cluseret compared the two conflicts on these counts. The tendency to search for, and often find, parallels between the two events suggests that historians have not been the only ones to cast the mid-nineteenth century as an age of democratic civil wars, but that many people at the time also had a sense of living in such an age.

In considering the reverberations of the Commune on Americans, Katz starts with the expatriate American community in Paris and then, after an illuminating section on the dissemination of news, shifts his gaze to those who commented on the Commune from across the Atlantic. Having just fought a civil war of their own, Americans had plenty of recent experiences to bring to bear on their interpretations of the French struggle. But as it became a central reference point in American political culture, the Commune in turn affected understandings of postbellum politics. The strength of this book lies in its rhetorical analysis. Katz makes no grand causal claims, but he convincingly shows that the Commune became a "cultural event of national scope in the United States" (83).

Not surprisingly, whether in Paris or Peoria (or, given Katz's leaning toward nationally-distributed middle-class publications, it might be more apt to say whether in New York or Boston), observers disagreed on the meaning of the Commune. Some equated it with the Confederacy, regarding both as truly republican uprisings and as protests against a strong, centralized government. Others construed it as a warning against enfranchising black men or, from a very different perspective, as a radical effort to undercut capitalism. Walt Whitman lauded it as an exercise in popular sovereignty; Herman Melville regarded it as the unfortunate outgrowth of materialism and license. The Reverend Henry Ward Beecher attributed it to irreligion, best put to rest by evangelical Protestantism. William James exclaimed: "the gallant Gauls are shooting at each other again!" and then blamed the Catholic church (152). Boston Brahmin Charles Eliot Norton equated the uprising with U.S. efforts to depose spoilsmen; less sanguine men of his class apprehensively viewed it as a harbinger of class warfare in the United States. Euro-American writers compared "Red" Communards to "Red Indians." Anti-suffragists found similarities between the *pétroleuses* who set Paris afire and Susan B. Anthony. And mediocre playwrights downplayed the politics of the Commune, simply adopting it as a thrilling setting for melodramatic plots.

As these examples suggest, the Commune served as a kind of Rorschach test for post-Civil War Americans. Besides amplifying anxieties and

encapsulating aspirations, it symbolized developments in U.S. political culture that may have been hard to articulate without an outside reference point. If not a keyword in U.S. political discourse, the Commune was certainly a key concept, judged by the frequency with which it was invoked. In the course of his research, Katz managed to dig up references to the Commune in poems, memoirs, novels, plays, letters, speeches, articles, and sermons. Searching for responses to the Commune apparently was like searching for hay in a haystack, with one startling exception. Workers, a group one might suspect would be eager to use the Commune as a rallying cry, rarely mentioned it at all.

The Commune appears to have served the forces of reaction in the United States better than the forces of reform, but that conclusion may stem, in part, from Katz's tendency to pay more attention to those who feared disorder than those who advocated social change. Workers remain on the periphery of the narrative until 1877, the year of the Great Strike. By then, argues Katz, the Commune had come to seem too radical and un-American to win a central role in U.S. workers' protests. Conservative critics did not hesitate to equate the Commune and the strikes, going so far as to call for French-style repression and to attribute the upheaval to foreign agitators, but workers proved reluctant to draw comparable parallels between the two movements.

It is not clear, however, how bourgeois Americans seized the lead in defining the meaning of the Commune, for Katz provides some evidence for its resonances among working-class Americans. He observes that "reenactments of the Paris Commune in the form of plays and tableaux vivants ... became part of the radical subculture of the labor movement, especially among German Americans" (83), and he describes a remarkable New York parade to commemorate the movement. Organized by "native-born radicals" and members of the European-based International, it featured an African-American honour guard; the Skidmore Light Guard (a black militia unit); French and Cuban political refugees; veterans of the Garibaldi Guard; French, German, Swiss, and Bohemian sections of the International; reformers such as Victoria Woodhull and Theodore Tilton; Irish nationalists; and many ordinary members of the working class. Katz alludes to a newspaper report of an "unusually large crowd of spectators" (164), but rather than follow up on what this event may have meant to working-class participants and onlookers, he turns his attention to "nervous bourgeois observers" (164). In a similar vein, after mentioning that Communards who came to the United States held public meetings, addressed workers' rallies, and gave interviews to the press, Katz concludes: "the larger community did take notice, but not very much" (163). By the "larger community," Katz seems to mean the middle-class and wealthy Americans who are so prominent in his account. He does not elaborate on what these events meant to workers, something that calls for a more thorough consideration.

Even if the Commune seemed too suspect to figure large in workers' protest rhetoric, it nonetheless may have fired their imaginations. But Katz

does not pursue the extent to which the French example shaped working-class militants' sense of the possible. Katz does acknowledge that foreign-born workers, most notably, those active in the International and in the Workingmen's Party of the United States, were more likely than native-born workers to join with middle-class reformers to embrace the Commune. Given that few of those foreign-born workers had actually participated in the Commune, why did the struggle resonate more with them? What does the disparity between native-born and foreign-born workers tell us about the dynamics of international awareness? In this account, it is primarily foreign-born workers and the bourgeoisie who demonstrate a sense of living in an age of civil wars. Native-born working people seem bounded by a more local, less expansive sense of their times.

Despite leaving questions about the implications of the Commune for working-class Americans, *From Appomattox to Montmartre* is well worth reading. It takes a significant step toward de-exceptionalizing U.S. history, both by situating it in an international context and by addressing just how exceptional nineteenth-century Americans (especially bourgeois Americans) considered themselves. Using the Commune as his reference point, Katz tackles the difficult problem of periodizing exceptionalist sensibilities. His conclusion? In the early 1860s, Americans liked to imagine themselves as being on a convergent path with the rest of the world, for they considered republicanism the ultimate destination. But after the Civil War, and especially after the Commune, they were increasingly dismayed at the thought that the U.S. and Europe might be converging. "Instead of exporting self-government, free labor, and liberty, the United States seemed to be importing ignorance, class warfare, and tyranny" (192). The Commune, in sum, appears to have contributed to the appeal of an exceptionalist outlook.

Beyond his specific claim that the Commune occupied an important role in American thought in the 1870s, Katz makes a larger point: that the international setting is of great relevance to U.S. history. He builds such a convincing case for Americans' captivation with the Commune that his book serves as an admonition to U.S. historians to pay more attention to the reverberations of foreign events.

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Craig Heron, ed., *The Workers' Revolt in Canada, 1917-1925* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

The Workers' Revolt in Canada 1917-1925, edited by Craig Heron, is a long-awaited study of Canadian labour history in the late teens and early twenties, a