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Review of *From Mobilization to Civil War: The Politics of Polarization in the Spanish City of Gijon, 1900-1937*, by Pamela Beth Radcliff

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sonnel department whose research on its employees allowed it to lay employees off strategically, making sure that several discharges within a single family were balanced by several family members still at work.

This hitching of family loyalties to the cause of industrial efficiency facilitated Phillips's propagation of its philosophy of self discipline and efficiency. The reverse side of this was many children's sense that they were being used by parents who traded their youthful possibilities to better parental position. Kalb brilliantly captures the razor-edged compromises implicit in the Phillips family economy; the plight of families that desperately needed supplementary income of children but also the paternal pride based on daughters' exploitation.

This is magnificently subtle and sensitive work which combines materialist explanatory factors with a deep rooted concern for understanding the mentality of working-class people.

*New School for Social Research*

Michael Hanagan

#### ENDNOTE

1. Aihwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987).

*From Mobilization to Civil War: The Politics of Polarization in the Spanish City of Gijón, 1900–1937.* By Pamela Beth Radcliff (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996. xviii plus 354pp. \$59.95).

In 1999, as Spaniards reflect on last century's Generation of '98 and the cataclysmic changes that have followed, historians and citizens still face questions about the struggles that pitted many Spains against each other. Radcliff's carefully structured analysis of place and process in Gijón illuminates the ways in which powerful upheavals took shape in smaller yet nonetheless important cities. Hence she allows us to re-explore the human choices and actions that led to fratricidal destruction.

Gijón provides an excellent vantage point as a smaller industrial city, developing later than Madrid and Barcelona, whose neighborhoods, personalities and events can be clarified by close readings in their economic, political and socio-cultural meanings. Yet Radcliff consistently underscores the knowledge and associations that linked both local working classes and elites to other areas of Spain. While Asturias took national stage most clearly under the Republic, we understand its conflicts within the framework of both national changes and local forces that pitted a "Gijón of lights" against smoke-darkened neighborhoods.

Radcliff begins with a complex presentation of the city around 1900, blending economic development with spacial transformation. Urban growth included elegant new central zones and the suburban periphery where industry and housing without infrastructure demarcated spacial and social polarization. Her maps

clearly guide the reader in understanding the fundamental places of urban confrontation which recur throughout the next three decades (although I lament the absence of photographs which would give more life and faces to urban promenades and slums). She adds a careful discussion of Restoration politics, identifying elite players in conflicts that follow as well as nascent organizations among industrial workers.

In her examination of the economics and demography of development, Radcliff carefully distinguishes the ideological constructions of social divisions from residence and mobility that complicated the city and its politics. Moreover, she carefully links demographic development to working class culture embodied in associations and neighborhoods through a stabilization of population and repetition of conflicts over time. Radcliff also underscores how different interests, especially those of women, related to the conflictive realms of republican, socialist and anarchist public discourse. Her use of periodical and archival sources here is extended by judicious reference to works in geography, social theory and anthropology that illuminate general and concrete issues of the formation of a public sphere. The juxtaposition of the domestic concerns and the polarized complexities of the Miss Gijón pageant with male-dominated activities of taverns, unionization and education, for example, allow us to understand how dramatic political events could still encompass only part of the population even on the eve of the Civil War.

In later sections, Radcliff examines processes evolving between 1900 and 1936, focussing on republican and worker institutions, oppositional culture, and conflicts. The first section provides a more traditional examination of urban political history, centered on the conflicts between Republican parties and anarchosindicalist movements. Radcliff defines a continuing tension between opposition to a conservative central government (1900–1930), which brought together potential allies on the left, and the actual models of politics and government that divided them. From the elections of 1909, in which Republicans took over the city council, to paralyzing divisions during the Republic itself, the author cogently structures debates and parties while underscoring the continuing currents that separated forces of reform.

The next section recasts politics through oppositional culture. Radcliff's definition of this elusive phenomenon includes the ideologies of different groups/political formations and the actions that nuanced them. Thus, Republican notions of a broader nation of citizens who might differ in class and values and the workers' vision of a more just and egalitarian Spain were both challenged by events in the streets. It is striking, for example, to see their shared anti-clericalism underpinning one of the few areas in which any headway was made in reform. Meanwhile, patronal associations fought violently to avoid concessions to workers or changes in social welfare—issues by which these elites could also seduce factions of the Republicans, who became uneasily divided by class interests. Direct competition in education and organization between grass-roots movements and intellectual visions of an abstract new Spain also illuminate the continuing lack of real reform.

The final section of the book contrasts conflicts between 1901 and 1930 with the changing context and impact of similar actions during the Republic. Here, Radcliff's analyses of place, party, and culture intersect. Strikes and street

conflicts provide a unifying thread through which a kaleidoscope of actors and associations shift positions—and sometimes find themselves confronted by unexpected actors, including women in both domestic strikes and enforcement of public politics. The author synthesizes events and interpretations that allow this work to become a narrative of tragic possibilities rather than an inevitable march towards war. This proves especially compelling in her careful depiction of the impotence of those striving for change during the Republic—whether from a divided government or a highly mobilized population of workers and allies. Here, indeed, the complexities of Gijón allow us to understand polarization that would darken decades to follow.

Radcliff's ordering of the text (including separate overviews for each section) keeps polarization and process central yet may, nonetheless, create a sense of repetition as we follow the trajectory 1900–1936 from different perspectives. Her judicious choice of events differentiates each chapter, but it also somewhat undercuts longterm connections of individuals, neighborhoods and issues. The shadowy and monolithic elite (church, military and industrial patrons) to whom she opposes alternative hegemonic strategies might also merit more detail, especially along the fringes of the Republican movement where social status and political visions produced interesting alliances.

While Radcliff points to resonances in structure, development and actions between Gijón and other industrial centers, especially Barcelona, she has chosen wisely not to develop these in any lengthy fashion. Yet in her exhaustive research, clear writing and cogent questions, she has not only illuminated the past but also raised questions which must, in fact, be answered for the present and future of Spain.

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*Party, State and Society: Electoral Behaviour in Britain since 1820.* By Jon Lawrence and Miles Taylor (Aldershot, England: Scolar Press, 1997. xii plus 207pp. \$72.95).

This collection of essays on electors and electoral behaviour in England from the Reform Act of 1832 to 1960s reexamines the standard assumptions and prevailing historiography about the ever expanding English political national and the culture of what some have called 'public politics'. Challenging the explanations of political 'deference', the existence of a 'natural' two-party system, an increasing class-based electorate, structural changes within political institutions, and increasing political partisanship, the seven essays systematically examine voting patterns and the ever-expanding English electorate in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, their underlying social forces and the culture of popular politics. Together, it is the hope of the editors, they will "examine critically 'electoral sociology'"(2)

The volume succeeds on that level and far more. A marvelous introductory essay by Lawrence and Taylor take the reader through an essential review of all the important studies—historical, sociological, political, and anecdotal—which