most studies of the Latin American Cold War have sought to integrate the internal and international dimensions of the conflict, McKenzie and Dunne privilege the AIFLD. Latin American voices — both primary and secondary — are largely missing from the narrative. The authors also neglect the use of diacritical marks and incorrectly cite several Latin American surnames. A deeper awareness of Latin American culture and history, then, would have significantly enhanced the book.

Despite these shortcomings, *El Golpe* reflects a collaborative approach to popular historical writing that will resonate with many general readers. Rob McKenzie learned about the 1990 assault in Cuautitlán while working at a Ford assembly plant in the Twin Cities. He was also an active member of his UAW chapter, where he later served as president. Appalled by what he discovered, McKenzie invited two survivors of the attack to speak at a local UAW event. Through activist circles and dogged sleuthing, including many FOIA requests, he eventually found the evidence that led him to his conclusions. While poring over AIFLD records at the University of Maryland on the anniversary of the Pinochet coup, McKenzie met Patrick Dunne, who was completing his dissertation on the AIFLD's involvement in Chile. Dunne later helped McKenzie revise *El Golpe*, and the two writers also enlisted support from historian Paula Cuellar Cuellar, who interviewed some of the participants in the Ford Cuautitlán strike. Together, they helped shed light not only on the AIFLD's operations in Mexico but also in other parts of Latin America. For as McKenzie and Dunne rightly recognize, "Organized labor has much soul searching to do regarding this past with the CIA." (x)

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**Jim Silver, *Scoundrels and Shirkers: Capitalism and Poverty in Britain* (Fernwood Publishing, 2023)**

It is readily apparent that Jim Silver wrote this book because he deplores the perpetuation of poverty in societies that have the material means to banish it from existence. Moreover, he is concerned to properly understand its causes and the means by which poverty could be seriously alleviated. In this regard, he has been driven to explore the relationship between capitalism and poverty in Britain, especially England. This is a striking test case, given the early emergence of a capitalist system, followed by a period of hegemonic power and an extended decline relative to rival powers.

The British experience is also of particular interest to Silver because of the systems of social provision that were put in place in that country. Chief among these are the measures taken by the Labour government of Clement Attlee following World War II. The reforms instituted at this time and the failure of subsequent Labour governments to build upon them, shape Silver's case with regard to the prospects for addressing poverty and the potential role of social democratic parties in this regard.

I must acknowledge the great value of this book for those who actively struggle against poverty. In my years as an organizer with the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP), I came to appreciate the need for an understanding of the factors that generate poverty and how they play out at specific stages in the development of particular capitalist societies. With his detailed look at the changing face of poverty in Britain, Silver provides those engaged in anti-poverty struggles with knowledge and insights that are of huge importance.

Silver makes clear at the outset that "the perpetual production of ever-changing

forms of poverty is an inevitable part of the creative destruction that characterizes capitalism." (1) He provides an overview of those forms and social and political responses to them that span the centuries.

The long transition from feudalism to capitalism is considered from the standpoint of the creation of a modern working class and an impoverished surplus population. From the Tudor period on, the poor experienced both state repression and measures of reluctant social provision. As part of this, notions of a deserving poor and a morally tainted and dangerous undeserving poor were constructed. We see how these assumptions have endured right down to the present day. Silver shows how the poor laws evolved along with capitalism and its changing needs. Over time, the Elizabethan systems gave way to the harsher 19th-century New Poor Law, a punitive mechanism to ensure a supply of labour for the brutal workplaces of the industrial revolution. The workhouse system set itself the formidable task of generating even more dreadful conditions than were to be found in the "dark Satanic Mills."

Throughout the book, we see a capitalist society trying to strike the right balance between preserving economic coercion and preventing unmanageable levels of social dislocation. In this regard, forms of organized resistance, including trade union struggles, have been vitally important in forcing the hand of those in power.

Silver shows how the calamity of the Great Depression unleashed both punitive and concessionary methods of state regulation. He traces the efforts of the Unemployment Assistance Board (UAB) to tighten social benefit provision (113) in the face of enormous hardship and an organized challenge by the unemployed. At the same time, he shows how local councils controlled by the Labour Party put increased resources into housing and social protections. (117)

The post-war reforms of the Attlee government are, for Silver, the point at which the possibility of decisively addressing poverty was established. Few would dispute that the measures taken to bolster the social infrastructure, especially in areas of housing and healthcare, had a huge beneficial impact on the lives of poor and working-class people.

Yet, from the evidence that Silver prevents, the conclusion must be drawn that the post-war reforms represented major but not fundamental change. If "victories for working class values within capitalist society" (145) were achieved, they were limited in nature and would prove to be fragile. The question arises of how we account for "the failure to build upon the foundation laid by the 1945-1951 Labour governments." (146)

Silver charts the Labour Party's retreat from the post-war reform agenda. Already, by the mid 1950s, a brand of 'revisionism' emerged, with Anthony Crosland's "The Future of Socialism" pointing to a rejection by Labour of "a robust welfare state." (151) This trend would go over to the full-blown retrenchment of the Blairite Project.

Coming on the heels of Margaret Thatcher's devastating attack on the social infrastructure, Tony Blair's approach represented "Thatcherism in redux." (210) It was a political operation that adapted to neoliberal capitalism, intensified inequality, and took forward the dismantling of the post-war gains. The Blair period is Silver's last major focus and, given his desire to show the responses to poverty by those in power, the very limited attention he pays to the cutting edge Conservative austerity regimes following 2010, seems curious. Moreover, he offers no assessment of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership or his defeat by

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right-wing forces and their champion, Sir Keir Starmer.

In exploring the development of capitalism and poverty in Britain, Silver reaches the conclusion that the Attlee government's reform direction might be resumed. He acknowledges that "capitalism will continue to produce poverty as long as it exists" but asserts that "(p)overty can be minimized, by doing still more of what the 1945-1951 Labour governments began to do." (255)

I would agree with Silver on the link between capitalism and poverty but I question the prospects for a continuation of the work of the Atlee government. The record of social democracy rather suggests that it will, at best, only do as much as capitalism allows and capitalist classes tolerate. Silver correctly points out that the Attlee government proceeded with its reform agenda in the face of very considerable economic difficulties. Still, the period in which it operated was marked internationally by relatively high levels of class compromise that are now long gone. The downhill slope from Attlee to Blair and on to the disgraceful Starmer isn't simply a matter of the degeneration of a political party. It reflects very major changes in capitalism, the proliferation of poverty, and the boundaries within which social policy decisions are made.

In saying this, I anticipate the objection that the eventual attainment of socialism is cold comfort to those facing poverty at the present time. However, in rejecting the possibility of Attlee style reforms at the hands of a rejuvenated social democracy, I'm far from suggesting that we wait for socialist pie in the sky. United working-class movements may win substantial gains in alleviating poverty if they are powerful and determined enough. Such movements may also find their electoral expression and implement very significant improvements. However, in these uncertain and volatile times, with a cost of living crisis underway and a global slump looming over us, I simply can't share Silver's optimism that major progress in challenging poverty is likely to take the form of a strengthened social democratic backbone.

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**Jean-Yves Frétigné, *To Live Is to Resist: The Life of Antonio Gramsci,* translated by Laura Marris (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2021)**

Antonio Gramsci is a figure whose cross-sect popularity on the left is perhaps matched only by that of Luxemburg and Lenin. Yet simplistic hagiography is intellectually useless and of minimal political utility, and Gramsci's stature demands that he be better and more widely understood. In this regard, Jean-Yves Frétigné's *To Live is to Resist: The Life of Antonio Gramsci* is a welcome contribution, illuminating Gramsci through liberal citations from his less well-known early work, his correspondence, and his medical records.

Frétignés compelling new biography of the Italian revolutionary details the material circumstances in which Gramsci lived as well as his maneuvering in Italian and international communism. Nothing had more of an impact on Gramsci than growing up on Sardinia, at the time an under-developed island west of the Italian peninsula—Gramsci's first concrete political act was to sign a 1913 petition against protectionism, which argued that the Italian ruling class was sacrificing the country's south to, as Frétigné puts it, "enrich the bourgeoisie and Italy's northern proletariat." Sardinia was impoverished and "backward" but, the author shows, the notion that Gramsci's parents were poor peasants is a politically serviceable myth traceable