

in roughly the *same world*. The book illuminates important aspects of that world. Second, the book contains a good deal about Michael's *personality* and his views because the correspondence between Karl and Michael is one of the principle sources informing Dale's narrative. Third, the *issues* exciting the brothers are often the same even though their interpretations sometimes are radically different. The book is almost an encyclopedia of how diverse social and political views—backed by their proponents—arise and clash during the first two-thirds of the twentieth century. Gareth Dale's even-handed descriptions backed by thorough scholarship make *Karl Polanyi: A Life on the Left* a signal achievement.

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Polanyi, Karl. *For a New West: Essays, 1919-1958*. Edited by Giorgio Resta and Mariavittoria Catanzariti. Cambridge, UK and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-0-7456-8444-4. \$26.00 pb.

The recent growing scholarly interest in Michael Polanyi's (MP) social and economic ideas needs to be carefully linked to his brother Karl Polanyi's (KP) ideas. This archival collection of KP's writings, which first appeared in Italian, may be helpful for beginning that project.

The earliest essay here is from 1919 (originally written in German) and the latest is the 1958 selection "For a New West," from which the collection takes its title. In the introduction, one of the editors suggests this heterogeneous collection "can improve our understanding of [Karl] Polanyi's thought, offering examples of the breadth of his interests, of his extraordinary ability to deconstruct the many sides of society" (4) while also reflecting the internal coherence of his "intellectual evolution" (3). This seems a balanced judgment about this book which includes not only a twenty-five page introduction by Giorgio Resta but also a twenty-page postface by

Mariavittoria Catanzarita, providing many historical details and some insightful commentary. The brief preface by Kari Polanyi Levitt gives an abbreviated account of Karl's life and social philosophy, and reflects on the rediscovered relevance of *The Great Transformation* at the end of the 20th century in an era of Neoliberal dominance.

Although this material comes from different periods in KP's life, it is thematically rather than chronologically organized under four rubrics: (1) economy, technology, and the problem of freedom; (2) the importance of institutions; (3) the use of the social sciences; and (4) the crisis in modern society and the coming transformation. Each rubric is treated with four to six short selections. This organizational strategy is an effective way to lift up primary themes, although some appear under more than one rubric. Here I can comment briefly on only a few of the selections in these sections.

The short opening essay "For a New West" was a draft of the opening chapter for a book KP was working on in 1958 at the time of his death. His essay's title and never completed book were in fact a call for a new order. The West has exported science, technology, and economic organization, elements "mutually reinforcing one another, unbridled and unrestrained" (31); KP believed that both inside and outside the West there were calls "to discipline its children" (31).

"Economics and the Freedom to Shape Our Social Destiny," originally a conference paper, part of which was published in a 1947 essay, provides a concise statement charting the rise of the market society in the nineteenth century and the emergence of ideas about the commodification of land, labor, capital, and the self-regulation of markets. These are, of course, primary themes in *The Great Transformation* (1944). This essay shows that KP, like MP, was deeply interested in the problem of meaning in late modernity. Although he calls it a "radical fallacy" (34), KP does hold that, once the market economy is established as it was in the

unique case of nineteenth century Britain, there comes into play a kind of economic determinism. But he is quick to point out that a broader understanding of economic matters (a more substantive and less formal understanding) informed by social anthropology and history makes clear that tacit presuppositions many modern economists share about what is universal are misguided: “an institutionalized supply-demand-price mechanism—a market—was never more than a subordinate feature of social life” (34), even in the West. Like his brother, KP points out that earlier utilitarian philosophers identified “two sets of terms, thus endowing the ‘economic’ with the aura of rationality” (36). For KP, the rise of the “market economy” in fact “created a new type of society,” one in which the “productive system was entrusted to a self-acting device” (35). Thus, a seemingly autonomous economic sphere controlled by a mechanism came to be regarded as a domain in which economic motives predominated and were determinative for the “life of the whole social body” (35).

Another selection in this section, “Economic History and the Problem of Freedom” (an unpublished 1949 lecture), discusses freedom and its links to matters of conscience and sounds much like MP. KP also illuminatingly discusses “Marxist inevitability” and “laissez-faire inevitability,” which are “merely two different forms of the same creed of *economic determinism*—a materialistic legacy of the nineteenth century—which *economic history does not bear out*” (40). For KP, what makes a “market economy” is its self-regulating dynamic which reflects the way in which land, labor, and capital have become monetized commodities: “Market economy amounts to the handing over of man and his natural habitat to the working of a blind mechanism running in its own grooves and following its own laws” (41).

Several of the selections in this collection touch on the ways in which KP used the literature of cultural anthropology to undermine ideas about

economic determinism and universal economic motives. They also show how cultural diversity sheds light on economic history and, more generally, the study of ancient societies.

The material in Part II of *For a New West* elaborates how KP focused on institutions (particularly international institutions) and the ways in which an economy is always a “cultural reality” (12). These selections also make clear that KP took a “substantive” approach to economics, although he accepted a “formal” or “scarcity” approach as useful for understanding some aspects of the modern “market society.” Part II’s selections treat KP’s institutional analysis of war and strategies to counter war by creating an international economic commonwealth that avoided moves to re-establish the collapsed nineteenth-century international trading system and the monetary system supporting it. This seems to have been, for KP, a sensible pacifist strategy. “Culture in a Democratic England of the Future” (undated) discusses the fundamentally rural culture of England; British social problems are linked to the absence of an urban culture. “Experiences in Vienna and America,” a short conference presentation written after his travel and brief visits in the U.S., is an interesting reflection on the U.S. and education in the U.S. which KP contrasts with his early experience in Red Vienna after he fled Hungary.

Selections in Part III focus on some of KP’s discussions of the social sciences. KP was concerned about natural science, its bearing on modern life, and the ways in which social sciences could be useful but was also used by fascists. KP does not seem, like MP, to have distinguished between science and scientism and puts more emphasis on method than MP. KP was especially interested in political theory. “Public Opinion and Statesmanship,” a 1951 address, is a particularly interesting discussion of how wise politicians have used public opinion to transform themselves into statesmen. “General Economic History,” a mid-century Columbia University lecture, reflects KP’s effort to broaden

economic history to include “the changing relation of the economic to the noneconomic institutions in society” (133). This selection treats a number of the elements in other selections and summarizes KP’s effort to draw on anthropology to emphasize the “embeddedness of the economic system in social relations” (143).

The fourth section of this collection includes material from different periods in KP’s life, but all selections are concerned with crisis and transformation in society. A 1919 selection makes clear that KP, after World War I, favored a cooperative economy and liberal socialism. “Conflicting Philosophies in Modern Society” is a set of six lectures from 1937-38 on the challenge of fascism and communism to democracy. In one particularly illuminating lecture, KP discusses differences between English democracy centered on liberty and Continental democracy centered around equality. Other lectures treat populism, fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and Russia after the Russian Revolution. Clearly, both MP and KP focused on the problems of social organization in modernity. It is an interesting matter to consider the fit between MP’s account of the scientific revolution and its misinterpretation that bore fruit in modern violence, nihilism, and totalitarianism, and KP’s intricate analysis of the “market system,” different democratic orders, and the breakdown of old orders and the rise of new ones in Russia and Germany.

Some of KP’s clearest writings seem to be materials that he developed for teaching. Particularly lucid is the final selection in this collection (part of a larger set of lectures) titled “The Trend toward an Integrated Society.” Here KP discusses his thesis that politics and economics became separated in nineteenth-century society, a society based on the twin pillars of liberal capitalism and representative democracy. This is a significant departure from all societies in the past in which one set of institutions served both the economic and political needs of the social body. Liberal capitalism

ultimately outmaneuvered the forces of representative democracy. This is the key to understanding the cataclysms of the twentieth century and the rise of fascism. In just a few pages, KP outlines his bold thesis in a way that allows those who know MP’s thought to see both some of the striking similarities and fundamental differences between these brothers’ approaches to social organization and social and political history.

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