

imperatives, the intervention of free market economists, and their influence on policy-makers” (208). Among other reservations about this explanation he thinks it overestimates the influence of ideology in seeing the rise as a utopian project of universal marketization. With David Harvey and others, he views the ideas as “ideological cover for a drive, pioneered in the US and adopted in much of the rest of the world, to restore corporate profit rates at the expense of workers and welfare recipients and to lever open protected markets in industrializing countries” (210).

But the focus of the chapter is less on the explanation of neoliberalism’s resurgence as on what alternatives can be found among counter-movements to replace it. Even a brief survey would exceed the limits on this review, but Dale presents some fascinating thinkers and ideas influenced by Polanyi among current theorists, almost all unfamiliar to me. Many are even more relevant today, ten to twenty years later, than when originally offered.

Dale’s short conclusion displays the balance I found throughout the volume of broad sympathy combined with illuminating criticism. He reviews the debates about “how to characterize his *Weltanschauung*” occasioned by the renaissance of interest in Polanyi around viewing him as “a Cold War liberal, a Marxist, and a Romantic” (237). While Dale remains balanced throughout, he holds no fire when exposing those critics of KP—and some who seek to enlist his support for their causes—when they distort his positions or fail to understand their complexity. Weaknesses can be found in many dimensions of his thought and many details of Polanyi’s work can be criticized, but Dale argues the crises of our time cry out for the kind of engaged social science KP embodied.

Dale’s final section, “Tribute and Critique,” closes with an inspiring appeal around runaway global warming and climate breakdown —sustainability issues on which Polanyi was prescient. “While humankind busily builds a funeral pyre for

tens of thousands of species, including conceivably itself, it would be faintly ridiculous were the social sciences to be preoccupied with a narrow, business-as-usual agenda. The age calls for vision, for the sort of critically engaged social science of which Karl Polanyi is an outstanding representative” (250).

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**Dale, Gareth. *Karl Polanyi: A Life on the Left*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2016. Pp. 381 + ix. ISBN 978-0-231-17608-8. \$40.00 hb. ISBN 978-0-231-17609-5. \$27.00 pb.**

These days if one Googles “Polanyi,” the first Polanyian name that comes up is Karl rather than Michael. Karl’s unusual intellectual output combining economic history, political analysis, and social thought (socialism!) has attracted greatly increased attention in recent years. A fair share of that added attention can be attributed to the writings of Gareth Dale. During the past decade Dale has authored three and edited three books on Karl’s thought. However, the book under review here is his first—and really the only—large scale chronological biography tracing Karl’s life and thought.

*Karl Polanyi: A Life on the Left* skillfully fulfills Dale’s avowed purpose: to focus on “the process of Polanyi’s intellectual formation, as he interacted with the changing social and geopolitical environment” (9) during the twentieth century. Dale has researched widely and thought deeply about the competing interests and passions that drive Karl’s tangled thought. The many “puzzles and paradoxes” that characterize Karl’s writings “proved the initial impetus for the writing of this biography, in part because to understand them requires a thinking through of Polanyi’s life and times, but also because it is the tensions and contradictions in his personal commitments and his oeuvre that give them their engagingly maverick character” (7).

Dale's first chapter details social and intellectual conditions in Hungary during the first two decades of the twentieth century. While his account covers material also found in Lee Congdon's *Exile and Social Thought* and in the Scott-Moleski biography of Michael Polanyi, it does so in a way that indirectly reveals how different was Michael's take on his times in contrast to the views of not only his brother, but also Lukacs, Mannheim, Szabo, and other members of their remarkable cohort. Largely Jewish, they were socially and politically oppressed by both the Magyar nobility and peasantry. "[Y]et endowed with economic and cultural resources, they were able and driven to excel; and without any straight-forward allegiance to 'tradition' or 'the conventional,' they lacked the security and peace of mind" (30-31) of the established and secure. Dissatisfied with the status quo and feeling alienated, most were attracted to revolution or at least to some kind of reformation. Not so Michael. He came to speak nostalgically of the social and cultural freedoms that existed before World War I, and he honored the place of tradition in providing moral grounding for society. Nevertheless, the tacit differences between the views of Karl and his five years younger brother, Michael, were to remain covert for many years (44).

Dale persuasively argues that the tensions and contradictions in Karl's thought can be traced back to his attempt to integrate the Westernized, duty-bound outlook of his father with the romantic, Russian infused leanings of his mother. Karl, elected the first president of the Galileo Circle, was initially influenced by the progressive aspect of Enlightenment thought; he found the positivist worldview of Mach especially attractive (46-47). However, he came to recognize a contradiction in his own thought. "On one hand, it deemed certain socioeconomic trends to be inevitable, on economic grounds; on the other, it called for them to be resisted, on ethical grounds" (48-49). Incidentally, this conflict foreshadows the "double movement"

that powers the narrative structure in his magnum opus, *The Great Transformation*, published in 1944. Capitalist exploitation of land, labor, and money evokes in response governmental and other morally motivated attempts to counter the ensuing social disruption.

Karl became increasingly critical of doctrinaire deterministic Marxist thought and attracted to the gradualism manifest in the liberal socialism of Oscar Jaszi. This move continues to manifest the influence of his father's moral outlook, while his later attraction to the Russian experiment in communism reveals that his maternal sympathies were never entirely banished (16-17). His various traumatic experiences serving in the Great War led to deep internal despair that was gradually relieved by his adoption of a form of Christian belief that emphasizes the power of religion to render life meaningful (60). His appreciation of the pragmatic function of religion is close to Michael's view.

At the end of the war, Karl recovered sufficiently to serve first in Count Karolyi's government and then in Bela Kun's brief communist government. Disheartened by Hungarian chaos and obtaining hospital treatment in Austria, Karl left for Vienna in 1919. Initially bathed in melancholy there, three crucial events unfolded to raise his spirits. First, in 1920 he met the revolutionary communist Ilona Duczynska, and their relationship flourished, leading to the birth of their only child and their marriage in 1923 (75-80). In most ways Karl and Ilona seemed opposites: she a Bolshevik, he rejecting Bolshevism; she an activist, he attracted to withdrawn contemplation. Perhaps here one can see again Karl's need to honor both his paternal and maternal influences by embracing Ilona's Russian revolutionary as well as Jaszi's Western reformist orientation.

Second, Jaszi hired Karl as his private secretary in 1921 and added him to the editorial team of the leading, but cash-strapped, Hungarian newspaper in Vienna in 1922. Third, in 1924, Karl was hired to

write for the more solvent premier economic paper in Vienna. Soon he was appointed foreign affairs editor. He now had remunerated ability to pursue his intellectual interests. Among the contributors to the paper were Drucker, Schumpeter, and Hayek. Additionally, Karl established a seminar focused on guild socialism, and among its participants were Karl Popper, Aurel Kolnai, Hans Zeisel, and Drucker (81). Karl's time in Red Vienna was now established.

During the 1920s and early 1930s, the socialist government of Vienna constructed over 60,000 low-rent apartments for working class individuals. Karl was captivated by such "works that emphasized the natural or religious imperative of social unity" (83). He was impressed by how Ferdinand Tönnies "set out to expose as partisan and myopic all assumptions about the naturalness of possessive individualism and of the institutions erected on it" (84). Karl's later distinction between formal economics, which emphasizes rational choice between insufficient monetized goods, and substantive economics, in which economic satisfactions are embedded in natural personal and social needs, can arguably be seen as arising from his experiences in Vienna. Moreover, he was inspired by G. D. H. Cole's guild socialism and Otto Bauer's brand of social democracy. Stimulated by the vibrant thought world of Vienna, Karl challenged Ludwig von Mises's rejection of centralized economic planning and his implied acceptance of market self-regulation. It was a hard sell. In harmony with Bauer, Karl claimed that "when left-wing governments seek to direct their democratic mandate to economic purposes, they are bound to fail, because capitalist interests will respond to intervention in the market mechanism with a reduction in output, accompanied by a tirade against 'democracy'—accusing it of the sins of inflation, protectionism, and neglect of the currency" (105).

The Depression set in, and in 1933 Austria suffered a fascist coup where socialists were treated

as traitors. Karl opted to move to England, leaving Ilona behind. Although he was lonely and challenged to find any sort of sustainable work during the Depression, Karl found some comfort in connecting with members of the Student Christian Movement. He became close friends with its leading light, John Macmurray, and regularly associated with left-leaning intellectuals such as Cole, Richard Tawney, and Lord Lindsay (Michael's *The Study of Man* is the published version of the first Lindsay Memorial Lectures). In 1934 Karl authored a significant analysis of fascism, and in 1935 he co-edited *Christianity and the Social Crisis*. In addition to his article, this work included contributions by Macmurray, Needham, Auden, and others. He was deeply impressed by the Challenge-and-Response motif in Toynbee's *History of Philosophy*; it found expression in Karl's "double movement" mentioned earlier (135).

Benefitting from the strong support of his British colleagues, Karl secured funds to visit the United States in 1934-35 and then was offered a visiting lectureship at Bennington College in Vermont in 1940. Eventually he was granted a Rockefeller Fellowship that allowed him to remain in America until 1943, giving him the liberty to write and complete *The Great Transformation*. He came to love America for its freedom and perceived egalitarianism, which contrasted with the class consciousness of England, although he never gave up his fondness for Britain (146, 153). Ilona joined Karl in England in 1936 but was again separated from him for more than a year when he went to America. Michael became close to Ilona with Karl away, an intimacy that Michael's wife Magda found hard to bear. During most of his life Karl did not achieve the recognition and financial well-being that Michael enjoyed. Especially after emigrating to England, Karl (and family) needed both fiscal and emotional support, placing some demands of kinship upon Michael and Magda that Magda, and perhaps Michael, apparently resented.

Upon his return to England, Karl became embroiled in political discussions about the governance of post-war Hungary. Perhaps at this time Karl's views clashed most vehemently with Michael's. His continuing support for Stalinist Russia was totally opposed by Michael, coming to a dramatic climax in their differing interpretations about how their niece Eva was treated when falsely accused and jailed in Russia (141-142). Karl supported government planning; Michael opposed it. Karl became enamored with the early writings of Marx; Michael became a committed anti-Communist opposed to any form of Marxism. Karl blamed capitalism and markets for creating the crises of the twentieth century (although ultimately he was willing to accept some modified market practices); Michael supported a regulated form of capitalism and viewed the cataclysms of his century as derived from a misunderstanding of science and its evolution into moral inversion and nihilism.

In 1947 Karl returned to the U.S. and began a career at Columbia University. Having castigated the free market and unregulated foreign trade in *The Great Transformation*, he now turned his attention to seeking out alternative economic systems of exchange. He edited *Trade and Market in the Early Empires: Economies in History and Theory* and other studies enriched by anthropological insight. Karl engaged in heady dialogue with such Columbia luminaries as Robert Merton, Herbert Marcuse, and C. Wright Mills, engaged Talcott Parsons of Harvard, and was wooed by David Riesman to join him at the University of Chicago (205). Alas, the U.S. Immigration Service would not permit Ilona to join him permanently in America (shades of the trouble Michael had in obtaining a U.S. visa), so eventually he and Ilona established residency in Canada, and Karl commuted to Columbia.

A number of graduate students were attracted to Karl's thought and continue to develop his ideas. Perhaps the best-known students influenced by Karl are Immanuel Wallerstein and Marshall Sahlins.

During the Cold War, Karl backed away from support of Stalin and was thrilled by Khrushchev's critique of Stalin's excesses. Consistently one to seek unified integration, in this case, the coexistence of Russia and the West, Karl bitterly opposed the strong anti-Communism of his brother, Koestler, and many of the exiled Hungarians. Consequently, his last significant scholarly activity was devoted to launching the journal *Co-Existence*. Its aim was to "create an arena of political dialogue and intellectual collaboration across the Cold War divide" that would bring peace through coexistence (273).

During the last few years of his life, after treatment for cancer, Karl (and Ilona) returned several times to Europe and Hungary. In 1963, "the climax of the tour was a three-week stay in Hungary... [where] he was once again invited to deliver an address at the University of Budapest" (279). His speech was well received, and "he cannot but have felt a sense of fulfilment and finality" (280). His paternal and maternal instincts were integrated.

In a concluding epilogue, Dale offers a wise assessment of Karl Polanyi's accomplishments and legacy. On the one hand, he avers that in "Polanyi's analysis of contemporary power relations, much is awry, and he gravely underestimated the degree to which social democracy had, however reluctantly in some cases, hitched itself to the capitalist machine" (286). Far from history tilting toward a "great transformation" away from capitalism, capitalism has assumed international hegemony. On the other hand, "It is Polanyi's diagnosis of the corrupting consequences of the marketization of labor power and nature that gives his work a contemporary feel and explains its continuing appeal" (282).

Those whose primary interest is understanding Michael Polanyi's life and thought will find much to savor in Dale's account, and this for several reasons. First, although Michael spent most of the 1920s in Germany while Karl was in Austria, and while Karl spent much more time in America than Michael, for the most part the brothers came from and lived

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 20<sup>th</sup> 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