

Labour

Journal of Canadian Labour Studies

Le Travail

Revue d'Études Ouvrières Canadiennes



Aziz Choudry and Salim Vally, eds., *The University & Social Justice: Struggles Across the Globe* (Toronto: Between the Lines 2020)

Dale M. McCartney

Volume 88, automne 2021

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1085000ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.52975/lt.2021v88.0025>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Canadian Committee on Labour History

ISSN

0700-3862 (imprimé)

1911-4842 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

McCartney, D. (2021). Compte rendu de [Aziz Choudry and Salim Vally, eds., *The University & Social Justice: Struggles Across the Globe* (Toronto: Between the Lines 2020)]. *Labour / Le Travail*, 88, 211–213.
<https://doi.org/10.52975/lt.2021v88.0025>

chapter on the entire history of bail to a chapter on the specifics of contemporary risk assessments used to determine bail amounts and eligibility. The chapters are unified by the authors' attention to the reader through clear explanations and very explicit assessments.

The outcome of this approach rewards the reader with a sense that while complicated, bail is not impenetrable. Indeed, a major contribution of this work is conveying the extent to which modern bail practice depends on predictive instruments operating with largely unvalidated premises. The authors note that proof of bail's harm is more well defined by social scientific evidence.

Because Hayward and Fradella are suggesting that bail should be the target of expansive judicial redefinition and legislative reform, this emphasis on what the evidence actually shows is critical for disentangling bail from both its complexities and from the political myth-making that has stoked fears about crime. Notably, while they conclude that money bail's failure "to achieve either its stated ends" in ensuring court appearances or protecting public safety is cause for its abolition, the authors focus primarily on reforming the criminal justice system as it is. Additional suggestions for reform include overturning Supreme Court cases, civil review for prosecutors, expanded access to legal advice at all stages of the arrest and pretrial process, and improved pretrial services, such as reminders about court dates. In a context where Kalief Browder, jailed in New York City for three years on charges of stealing a backpack, has become a widely recognized symbol of the problems of jail and bail, building on such a familiar reference point does not leave much empathetic space in this text for those accused of violent crimes who usually face the longest periods of pretrial detention. A main priority of

this text is achieving reforms that will improve the circumstances of the largest number of people.

The book is, like similar books from earlier eras, a snapshot of how the bail system operates in this moment. As the historical arguments are more based on secondary sources than new archival work, historians will see a range of possibilities to explore in future research: the role of judges and prosecutors in constraining criminal justice reform, bail policy as a driver of jail overcrowding, and how people accused of violent crimes negotiate the judicial process are among the many possible avenues of study. In showing the linked destinies of courts and jails, the book highlights the need for more historicization of criminal justice institutions working in concert. It should be noted that the book's somewhat narrow focus on the relationship between bail and jailing means that it largely overlooks the extensive pretrial surveillance apparatus that includes electronic monitoring and drug courts. Historians will undoubtedly feel frustrated by the authors' use of data that jumps from 2000 to the 1980s to the present. This tendency emphasizes that historians must urgently contextualize the shifts of the punitive turn from the vantage point of the criminal courts. This book is a useful primer for scholars looking to expand their understanding of recent debates in criminology and pretrial studies more broadly.

MELANIE D. NEWPORT

University of Connecticut, Hartford

Aziz Choudry and Salim Vally, eds., *The University & Social Justice: Struggles Across the Globe* (Toronto: Between the Lines 2020)

EDITORS AZIZ CHOUDRY and Salim Vally have achieved something remarkable

with *The University & Social Justice*, in that they have put together a multi-author collection that is a pleasure to read from cover to cover. The book is made up of short pieces examining the student movement in individual countries, which together offer an overview of the wave of student protest across the globe over the past decade. The book covers an impressive number of countries from five continents, and each piece is readable and accessible, even for audiences that are not familiar with student protest or each specific country. Choudry and Vally asked each chapter's authors a set of guiding questions about history, tactics, and the visions generated by student movements, with the intention of creating a book that would strengthen those movements. While some chapters are more scholarly, and others addressed more specifically to activists, all of them offer compelling insights into the successes and failures of student protests. The result is a book with a tremendous amount to offer many different audiences.

Probably the strongest element of *The University & Social Justice* is its sustained argument for the links between protest by students in postsecondary institutions and broader campaigns for social change. Student protest is often dismissed as an expression of youthful exuberance, and its connection to other social movements and social change more broadly is usually ignored. However, Choudry and Vally's collection demonstrates that student movements "incubate" (12) larger global campaigns against authoritarian neoliberalism. Their introductory chapter, which is less an overview of the collection and more an original contribution, offers a forceful version of this argument. Choudry and Vally situate student protest within the broader corporatization of universities, but also as the starting point for new generations of activism. They draw on examples from many different

countries, showing a deep knowledge of student struggle and of radical organizing across the world. In the process they make a convincing case that student protest is linked to, and helps empower, broader social movements. Each chapter advances a version of this same argument, ensuring that a collection about very disparate contexts is nonetheless linked by compelling threads.

For example, there are several chapters that examine student protest in the context (either historical or ongoing) of violent state repression. Chapters on Chile (by Javier Campos-Martínez and Dayana Olavarría), Mexico (by Alma Maldonado-Maldonado and Vania Bañuelos Astorga), and Turkey (by Gülden Özcan) demonstrate that student protest – even of nominally academic issues such as tuition fees or academic freedom – has attracted state violence because it represents a threat to hegemonic social relations off campus as well. Similarly, chapters examining student movements in Nigeria (by Rhoda Nanre Nafziger and Krystal Strong) and the Philippines (by Sarah Raymundo and Karlo Mikhail I. Mongaya) discuss student movements that were targeted for state repression because of their anti-imperialism. These chapters show that protest is still possible, however, and argue that state repression has often resulted in new and more radical movements.

There are also chapters that critically examine the composition and limitations of student movements, with the intention of strengthening them in the future. One example is Rosalind Hampton's chapter about the Québec student movement, which examines its links to Québécois nationalism and particularly how this contributes to a white, settler-colonial ideology that limits the student movement's potential. This chapter is especially interesting to read in conversation with Lena Meari and Rula Abu Duhou's chapter on Palestine. Meari

and Dohou make a compelling argument that the Palestinian student movement is strengthened by its connection to the broader liberation struggle against Zionist settler colonialism, and that student protest in turn strengthens the liberation movement. Together the two chapters offer a fascinating exploration of the potential for student movements to be meaningfully anti-colonial. In a different vein, but with similar theoretical and strategic sophistication, Prem Kumar Vijayan's chapter discussing the Indian student movement questions the very idea of "student" as a political subject. Vijayan makes the point that the framing of students as a discrete category is a form of "quarantining" (42) that isolates them from larger social movements, limiting the potential impact of student organizing. These chapters stand out for their critical examination of the boundaries of student movements, a welcome addition to a book that is generally more focused on the practical challenges of organizing.

There are also several chapters that address themselves much more directly to activists, most of which are written by organizers from the student movement itself. Jamie Woodcock's chapter about the student movement in the United Kingdom offers an insider's perspective not only of the student movement, but also of its afterlife. Woodcock's chapter is one of the few chapters that discusses the links between the student movement and the labour movement, a topic that perhaps deserved more attention in other chapters. Julie Le Mazier's chapter on the French student movement systematically reviews the tactics employed by students and offers an evaluation of their effectiveness. A standout chapter about South Africa by Asher Gamedze and Leigh-Ann Nadoo offers deep insights not only into the organizing process, but into the value of publishing student writing and art as

part of the process of building a movement. All of these chapters have specific, on-the-ground advice to offer organizers, and will be of special interest to anyone who wants to do any type of organizing within the postsecondary sector.

There are some minor limitations to this volume. Although there are several chapters theorizing student movements, there is limited engagement with the social background of students themselves. A few chapters discuss the class background of students, but only a few, and there are none that examine student mobility despite it being one of the most important developments in global postsecondary education over the past two decades. Indeed, there is really only one chapter that is meaningfully transnational: Rabab Ibrahim Abdulhadi and Saliem Shehadeh's discussion of pro-Palestinian activism on campuses in the USA. There is also very little discussion of gender in student organizing or student protest. This might partly be because student protest is defined fairly narrowly in most of the chapters, with an emphasis on large-scale demonstrations or strikes with specific demands. Student campaigns against sexual assault, for example, are generally not discussed, perhaps because those protests tend to take different and less visibly disruptive forms. Similarly, there is an almost total absence of student labour organizing in this volume; that is, the drive to unionize students (often graduate students) who are also academic workers. Nonetheless, this is an excellent book that represents a vital contribution to the study of student organizing, while also being a practical and inspirational guide for activists.

DALE M. MCCARTNEY

University of the Fraser Valley