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# Sian Lazar, *How We Struggle: A Political Anthropology of Labour* (London: Pluto Press 2023)

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digital realm, an aspirational notion that circulated widely in earlier iterations of the internet, such as in claims that social media platforms would engage the citizenry in new and inspiring democratic ways. As Chanan writes, the digital sphere “offers new means of countering reification through new forms of connection and expression, individual and collective, including new forms of aesthetic creation, which can only announce themselves as utopian and liberating, and for the time being, remain so.” (145) But at a time when social media platforms are shaped and altered by the individual will and interests of enterprising billionaires and when musicians continue to struggle to earn a sustainable living due in part to streaming music’s reduction of the income one generates from recorded music, the positives of the digital sphere can be difficult to ascertain.

The concluding chapter is especially clear and prescient. It continues to foreground the ways that media technologies bring along certain affordances and limitations with respect to how artistic creativity thrives or doesn’t thrive under capitalism. One such example of this tension from earlier in the book is the way magnetic tape was both a tool for participatory media creation but also a format that set the standards for professional commercial music production in the late 1940s, when the “tape recorder was taken up by professional music production from the moment Bing Crosby first used it in 1947 to record his network shows.” (128) In the final chapter, this dichotomy continues with a discussion of how everyday internet users have become unpaid content creators who are “monitored and monetized,” but who are also granted a “freedom of participation with profound social and political implications, for both good and ill.” (180) Ultimately, *From Printing to Streaming* makes a convincing

case for the need to understand the past in order to make sense of the nature of cultural production in the contemporary moment.

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**Sian Lazar, *How We Struggle: A Political Anthropology of Labour* (London: Pluto Press 2023)**

IN *HOW WE STRUGGLE: A Political Anthropology of Labour*, Sian Lazar argues that Fordist assumptions about labour and workers’ agency have confined perceptions of labour movements to particular sites and modes of action such as factory floors, unions, and overt social movements. Lazar suggests that, as a result, there exists an intellectual hegemony in studies of labour and worker agency that fails to meaningfully attend to the significance of everyday forms of political struggle found in the individual and collective action of workers, households, and kinship networks. In *How We Struggle*, Lazar bridges global political economy and Marxist feminist theories of labour to trouble this intellectual hegemony, offering an incisive and engaging meditation on how labour agency might be understood outside of Fordism.

*How We Struggle* is divided into eight substantive chapters that pull off the feat of tracing the interconnected dimensions of worker agency, political economy, local contexts, and labour processes across eight different economic sectors. Each chapter begins with richly detailed descriptions of the political economy for each sector and pays attentive attention to their interpenetrations and significant changes since the mid-20th century. The chapters then proceed by shifting analytical frames from macro-structural processes to micro-interactional behaviours,

deftly employing select ethnographies to tie global transformations to embodied experiences of labour and labour agency.

While the book is not explicitly divided into sections, Lazar's thoughtful arrangement sees the development of a natural segmentation of the text into three parts, progressing from the prototypical Marxist sites of material production to less traditional anthropological subjects of workers' agency. Following this pattern, the first three chapters comprise the first part of the text and explore how transnational changes in the flow of capital and labour since the mid-twentieth century have influenced the lives of workers in steel plants and mines (Chapter 1); how the materiality of labour processes interact with gender and racial ideologies in garment and electronics manufacturing industries to produce complex and, at times, contradictory forms of labour agency (Chapter 2); and the relational significance of land concentration and dispossession, labour migration, and plantation economies to the fabrication of persons and communities and, in turn, possibilities for worker resistance (Chapter 3).

The next three chapters constitute the second part of the text and address how immaterial and affective labour shape workers' responses to exploitation. In Chapter 4, Lazar critically interrogates how intersecting social locations in conjunction with global and local im/mobility influence service workers' capacity to resist labour exploitation. Chapter 5 is concerned with professional and managerial labour and notes the importance of recognizing that a crucial immaterial result of such labour is the production of subjects who see themselves not as workers but as professionals immersed in a network of affective labour. The chapter continues by showing the significant repercussions this fabrication of self and

other has on labour agency. The final chapter in this section examines platform labour and the possibilities of worker agency when bosses are "ephemeral, algorithmic, or hidden" (141) and workers are isolated and dispersed from one another.

The last part of the text and its focus, not so much on material and immaterial production as the reproduction of the social itself, are most provocative. Chapter 7 explores what Lazar calls "patchwork living", that is, the "multiple labour processes" (167) workers undertake to sustain their lives and those of loved ones. Here, Lazar effectively illustrates the importance of maintaining "networks and relations that enable income generation" for those engaging in patchwork living through such activities as "keeping records of credit arrangements ... holding a purchase for a customer to collect later ... having a beer with a particular scrap dealer ... [or in] the form of collective organisation." (176) They avoid the reduction of these networks and relations to archetypal sites of work and professional identities, demonstrating their articulations and embeddedness within kinship networks and other relations of belonging or placemaking activities that themselves enable, sustain, or disrupt income generation. The result is an expertly woven narrative that highlights how labour politics for those living patchwork lives is a dynamic process, "changing according to opportunity, desire, and necessity." (183) The final chapter draws on critical feminist works in the anthropology of care to examine how social reproduction labour articulates with other forms of work discussed in the book. As expected from the topic, Lazar shows readers how the naturalization of particular conceptions of gender and what constitutes labour influences the political agency of those carrying out the labour of social reproduction.

*How We Struggle* does not possess many shortcomings, and Lazar's "methodological and political commitment to radical compassion for what people do in real life" is effective at unearthing the everyday efforts workers employ to better their lives and those they care about. One limitation of the book is that there appears to be an almost complete absence of consideration for sexually and gender non-conforming workers. Such an absence is surprising given the significant linkages between these social locations and the need to engage, for example, in patchwork living or platform labour. However, this limitation, as with all works offering rich contributions, provokes many questions and horizons for subsequent explorations.

Overall, Sian Lazar has produced a meticulous exploration of the global-local relationship between political economy, labour agency, gender, and family. A masterful contribution to the anthropology of labour, *How We Struggle* will be well received in undergraduate and graduate courses and among social activists and policymakers.

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**Carles Viñas, *Football in the Land of the Soviets* (London: Pluto Press 2022)**

IT IS ALWAYS pleasant to read new books on the yet understudied field of sports history, in particular European football history. This recent work is no exception. Dr. Carles Viñas offers up a journalistic account of Moscow and St. Petersburg football that is easy to comprehend and leaves the reader wanting more. Despite its stated claim to be a book on Soviet football, the actual focus of his study is primarily Imperial Russia and its football. The timeline ends roughly in the

1930s, with the 1920s and 1930s being covered briefly.

As for geographical scope, there is little information about important football activity that unfolded outside of Imperial Russia's political centres, Moscow and St. Petersburg. Cities farther afield, such as Odessa, Tbilisi, and Kyiv, among others, also played an integral part in the development of Soviet football. They produced a plethora of distinct playing styles (i.e., Georgia) and star players. For example, the absence of Kyiv in this work is a pity, considering the city's unique football beginnings, innovative football thinkers (i.e., Valeriy Lobanovskiy), three Ballon d'Or winners, and Dinamo Kyiv, the most successful team of the Soviet era. Consequently, the author perpetuates the misconception that the Soviet Union was Russia.

Nevertheless, this work is an excellent introduction to the early days of Moscow and St. Petersburg football for the uninitiated. The story begins with the introduction of football in Russia and how football reflected the modernization and industrialization drive of Tsarist Russia. In addition, the author clearly argues that the Imperial period is essential for understanding the development of Soviet football. The book is then organized into three sections: Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth.

Childhood centres on the individuals who brought football to Moscow and St. Petersburg, followed by an examination of the relatively affluent locals who eventually adopted the game. Dr. Viñas pays special attention to the individual actors who enthusiastically brought football from Britain to Russia, with helpful commentary in the footnotes providing a brief biography of the various actors. For example, there are the amusing difficulties faced by Henry and Clement Charnock, who introduced football to