

and 1914. Unsurprisingly, they were in the business of selling arms, and were none too scrupulous as to whom they sold them to. They frequently sold to both sides in regional power struggles, and were not above driving the price up by threatening to sell to a client state's rival, or even a bit of bribery. Grant covers a wide range of case studies, from the booming arms trade in the Horn of Africa, to the rivalries of Latin American republics, to the Balkans and the Far East. Much interesting detail emerges: for example, that the Ottoman empire was the biggest single customer for American rifles after 1865; or that bullets were used as currency in arms-soaked Ethiopia by 1908; or that Japan sold weapons, captured from the Russians in 1904–5, on the African market via French middlemen. What Grant also usefully demonstrates is the genuine independence of arms dealers from their 'home' governments, and the extent to which arms firms frequently found their interests at odds with government policy. Even if, on occasion, the diplomatic and military establishments of some European great powers did what they could to further sales by their country's arms merchants, this was never consistent; as Grant puts it (p. 235), 'The armaments firms used the diplomats for their private gain far more successfully than the diplomats used the firms for the furtherance of national objectives.' Capitalism was truly international in its allegiances. Useful though all this is, however, Grant's book is also an excellent example of the perils of diplomatic history, in that it is so detailed as to risk intelligibility. This is largely because it is tied almost exclusively to its primary sources for references, with very little in the way of discussion of the relevant secondary literature. (There is no bibliography, which does not help.) It strains credulity that Grant's findings are not linked to previous research by others in this field, and indeed he acknowledges his debt to the works of David Stevenson and David Herrmann in particular. The largely documentary nature of his evidential base, however, while impeccable as doctoral-level scholarship, makes for a needlessly dry and factual narrative, which soon loses all sense of direction. What should be a series of fascinating chapters on the interplay of the arms trade with grand policy in the Balkans, Latin America, Africa and the Far East thus becomes a jumble of nearly impenetrable detail, its overall importance all but lost. The detail is valuable in itself; it is a pity that the larger relevance of the story is not more apparent.

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IAN D. ARMOUR

Anarchism, Revolution and Reaction: Catalan Labour and the Crisis of the Spanish State, 1898–1923. By Angel Smith. Berghahn Books. 2007. xi + 405pp. \$85.95.

There has long been a need for an authoritative English-language scholarly account of the labour and anarchist movement in Barcelona during the period covered by this solid study by Angel Smith, a senior lecturer in Spanish history at the University of Leeds, based on decades of research in archival materials, contemporary newspapers, memoirs and other materials, as well as a comprehensive survey of modern scholarly studies. Although written in a low-key and balanced manner, Smith's volume focuses on a sensational subject: the fact that, quite extraordinarily in Europe, in Barcelona/Catalonia, the centre of Spanish industry (dominated by textiles), anarcho-sindicalist unions dominated the labour movement (ultimately, for the entire period leading up to the outbreak of

the Spanish Civil War in 1936) and labour conflicts were marked by repeated general strikes, massive repression and, on both 'sides', resort to extreme violence, including numerous assassinations by anarchist bombers and gunmen, and torture and executions, both 'legal' and illegal, on the part of the authorities (which latter developments fostered a European-wide revulsion against what was viewed as a Spain returned to medieval-inquisitorial times).

The first part of the book provides a general analytical survey of the circumstances which fostered bitter industrial conflict and the rise of anarcho-syndicalism in Catalonia, marked by horrendous working conditions on the one hand and by a corrupt, closed political system allied with an intransigent employing class on the other. The second and third sections of Smith's work provide a chronological, blow-by-blow account of Catalan labour conflict between 1898 and 1923, almost bookended by anarchist assassinations of two Spanish prime ministers, Antonio Cánovas del Castillo in 1897 and Eduardo Dato in 1921, and marked by a vicious war between so-called 'pistoleros' from both sides who murdered or wounded over 200 people in 1921 alone, fostered repeated periods of martial law and/or suspensions of constitutional liberties in Catalonia, and ultimately paved the way for the imposition of an outright military dictatorship in 1923 (following two years of an effective autonomous dictatorship in Catalonia) and the coming of the Spanish Civil War.

Inevitably, a work on this subject includes much very detailed material, including a considerable focus on internal struggles within the anarcho-syndicalist movement, as well as on its conflicts with competing labour movements (and, of course, on that with employers and the government), and the book very much needs an analytical conclusion, with some overall generalizations, instead of simply coming to a chronological halt with Primo de Rivera's 1923 military coup. However, in sum this is an invaluable work, which no historian of modern Spain, anarchism or European labour can afford to do without (even at this book's rather steep price!).

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ROBERT JUSTIN GOLDSTEIN

***Labour's Lost Leader: The Life and Politics of Will Crooks.* By Paul Tyler. I. B. Tauris. 2007. xi + 284pp. £52.50.**

This book is a major labour of love for it has taken Paul Tyler almost twenty years to turn his interest in Will Crooks from part of an undergraduate dissertation into a PhD thesis and eventually into this book. The end product is an impressive study of one of Labour's early leaders, drawn from a wide variety of primary sources because Crooks left little in the form of personal papers for his would-be biographers. Will Crooks (1852–1921) was just one of a remarkable generation of Labour leaders who emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from a radical and religious (congregationalist in his case) background to assert that it was his duty to serve his fellow man and tackle unemployment and poverty. A trade unionist, a town councillor for Poplar, MP for Woolwich, a Fabian, Crooks was an identifiable, almost typical, figure within the ranks of the early Labour movement. Essentially a local Labour and radical activist, he spent many days taking the message of radicalism and socialism to the dock gates in the 1880s and 1890s. He was active in the campaigns of the 1880s and 1890s, gaining the essential local experience for his later parliamentary voyages.