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### References

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**Gavin Fridell. 2013. *Alternative Trade: Legacies for the Future*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Fernwood Publishing. 169 pages, ISBN 978-1552665879 Paper (\$24.95).**

In the 1990s, neoliberalism flourished. The pursuit of free trade was manifest in the founding of the World Trade Organization; ardent promotion of the Washington Consensus development policies; and promises that a tide of unfettered globalization could rise all boats. Events at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, however, revealed widespread contention and doubt that such an agenda would deliver deeper benefits to a broader global population than the policies that preceded them. The 1999 protests at the WTO ministerial in Seattle highlighted civil society's concern that labor unions, the environment, and economically marginalized groups would bear the brunt of the adjustment costs in the short run, and may not become better off in the long run. Likewise, the 2000 UN Millennium Development Goals and the 2001 WTO Doha Declaration of commitment to development underscored the concern that trade liberalization alone may not improve social wellbeing across the globe.

Two decades later, a burgeoning literature evaluates the successes and failures of the neoliberal project. Yet, surprisingly few authors compare these 'free trade' outcomes to those generated by 'interventionist' or 'protectionist' policies that preceded them. Gavin Fridell makes an invaluable contribution to this conversation. *Alternative Trade: Legacies for the Future* addresses the question: *How do the social outcomes generated by the 1990s neoliberal turn compare to the outcomes generated by the trade interventions that preceded it?* Fridell draws on three case studies—the International Coffee Agreement, the Canadian Wheat Board, and the EU-Caribbean Banana Agreement—to argue that such "alternative" trade interventions were more socially efficient than the free trade agenda that succeeded them. The book is an excellent resource for students and scholars of international trade and development.

The introduction and opening chapter argue that the package of theories, historical narratives, and policies that constitute the widely embraced 'free trade' regime are more fantasy than reality. Contrary to theoretical models, the market cannot be separated from the state. And despite their label, free trade politics are *not* about freely trading but instead about creating new rules and institutions for the governance of trade. Finally, irrespective of the theoretically based narrative that competition generates prosperity, many of the world's dominant economies were built with the aid of protectionist policies. The free trade agenda is not, then, a move away from government intervention. In fact, 'the entire capitalist economy consists of rules and

regulations...imposed and regulated by the state' (4). In the neoliberal era, what is new is that those rules and regulations more clearly promote private profits for corporations and the interests of the Global North. The way forward, Fridell argues, is to return to policies that benefit the world's masses, which largely remain marginalized and vulnerable.

Much of the book focuses on contrasting the intentions and impacts of "free trade" interventions with those of "alternative trade" models. Alternative trade is the use of state power to manage markets for broader social, economic, and developmental ends (4). Several such initiatives, such as price stabilization schemes and international commodity agreements, were developed following WWII, but their legacies expired in recent decades, with the rise of neoliberal thinking. Fridell acknowledges that these alternative schemes, like neoliberalism, promoted capitalist social relations and were often founded on unequal North-South relationships, limiting the ability of participants to challenge historical power inequalities. Yet, they remain distinct from the "free trade fantasy" in that they consciously aimed to improve social wellbeing.

Each of three chapter-long case studies illustrates how pro-poor state interventions in trade can deliver widespread benefits to commodities producers. The first example is the International Coffee Agreement (ICA), which limited exports from coffee-producing countries. From 1962 to 1989, the ICA succeeded in raising and stabilizing the world price for coffee. It collapsed when U.S. priorities shifted away from Cold War-motivated support for developing countries. The second example is the Canadian Wheat Board, which emerged in the 1930s and 1940s to protect Plains farmers from price volatility and to lend support for collective action. Deemed the largest, longest-standing and most successful state trading enterprise, the Wheat Board increased and stabilized world prices by acting as a single desk seller for wheat. In the early 2000s the United States protested Canada's intervention in the wheat market, and in 2003 the WTO investigated it for non-discriminatory treatment. By 2008 the Wheat Board was the only single desk wheat exporter in the world, and in 2012 it lost favor in Parliament and was dissolved. Fridell's final illustration of alternative trade is the EU-Caribbean banana agreement, a multilateral quota system that reserved a portion of European Union banana imports for growers in former colonies. The preferential agreement allowed banana producers in the Windward Islands and Jamaica to gain higher income than their Latin American counterparts, while maintaining sustainable and culturally resonant cultivation practices. In 2009 U.S. banana importers and Latin American growers pressured the EU to lower import duties on Latin American bananas, subjecting Caribbean farmers to crippling competition.

In each case Fridell highlights the devastating collective action problems facing commodities producers, illustrates how state trade policies relieved such problems, and describes how the "free trade fantasy"—a change of tide in ideas about the role of states in markets—led to the collapse of alternative trade regimes. While the market is needed to direct economies, the state must limit capitalism's anti-social outcomes. Today, "the greatest torchbearer for alternative trade" is ALBA (146), the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America. ALBA was launched by Venezuela and Cuba in 2004 and aims to facilitate socially-oriented regional trade that results in wealth redistribution and increases in wellbeing of the citizens of its (now eleven) member states. Alternative trade regimes may have fallen out of favor, but they are not necessarily gone for good.

*Alternative Trade* does several things well. First, its defense of pro-poor interventions is an important and welcome contribution to the literature on economic justice in international trade. By comparing the outcomes of alternative trade and free trade interventions, Fridell makes

a strong argument for a return to pro-poor trade policies. He also clarifies that fair trade certification and other non-state initiatives are unable to match the breadth or reach of alternative trade policies. In coffee, for example, the ICA impacted *all* coffee farmers, whereas fair trade certifications currently reach only around three percent.

Second, *Alternative Trade* connects its argument and cases to broader literatures in international political economy. Fridell describes the tenets of neoclassical economics, neoliberalism, and Keynesianism, connecting his story to the canon of influential economists, such as Ricardo, Friedman, Sachs, Stiglitz, and Keynes. He also describes how alternative trade can be approached through global value chain analysis (Bair, Gereffi, Reynolds), using an agro-food perspective (Bello), or through the lens of critical agrarian political economy (Bernstein). This makes the book an excellent point of *entrée* to several key conversations in the field.

Last but certainly not least, *Alternative Trade* is beautifully written. Every chapter is pithy and engaging, each page is a valuable contribution worth reading. Even in the penultimate paragraph of the book, Fridell delivers new historical examples and fresh analysis, leaving the reader both satisfied and curious to learn more. The tone strikes an appealing middle ground between activist outrage and objective analysis. Fridell frequently reminds readers of the “long and tortuous legacies of colonialism and slavery” in Latin America (36) and how indigenous groups were “violently” stripped of their land in Canada (67). Yet, the overall voice is less activist and more analytical.

Alongside the original contributions and engaging writing were a few distracting shortcomings. Some claims could have been developed more thoroughly, using specific figures and additional calculations to bolster a point. In the introduction, for example, Fridell argues that claims about free trade improving wellbeing are wrong. He shows how changes in the definition of “poverty” and the size of the world population have facilitated the incorrect conclusion that poverty has been dramatically slashed through free trade. While this is a move in the right direction, a discussion of how well the 2008 poverty line adjustment reflects inflation and increased costs of living, or a note about how to consider figures differently in light of a rapidly growing population, would have made the point more compelling. Some case study figures lacked citation. It was disappointing that Fridell glossed over the logic of an interesting counterfactual—that coffee prices would have been half as high had the International Coffee Agreement ceased to exist—as such a claim deserves more justification. Finally, the case study chapters would have benefitted from subheadings or a brief introduction to the principal events. As it currently reads, the details of coffee prices in a single year appear almost as important as the founding of the International Coffee Agreement. Readers lacking background knowledge will struggle to see the main events through the less pivotal details. But these limitations were superficial and do not suggest inadequate research or compromised scholarship.

Fridell wants readers to know that trade policies *can explicitly aim to create* a “more cooperative, socially just world order” (9) and that when they *do* take on this mission they *can* deliver widespread, meaningful benefits to the world’s most vulnerable populations, in particular producers of internationally traded commodities. For scholars and students interested in the relationship between economic justice and international trade, *Alternative Trade: Legacies of the Future* is a well-researched, beautifully written, and original, must-read book.

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**Christian Fuchs. 2014. *Digital Labour and Karl Marx*. New York and London: Routledge. 403 pages, ISBN 978-0415716161 Paper (\$43.95).**

During my seminars in the sociology department at Binghamton University, one of three graduate programs in the United States specializing in world-systems analysis, it was not unusual to hear criticisms of Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, and the wider idea of “cognitive capitalism.” They were dismissed as “Eurocentric” and chastised for ignoring older debates. They were seen as recapitulating the dominant ideology, dismissed as “a marxified version of Tom Friedman.” Case closed. Move on to more rigorous scholarship.

Unfortunately, the Marxist scholarship on the high technology sectors of contemporary capitalism makes a relatively short reading list: George Caffentzis’ (2013) efforts to expand Marx’s theory of machines (139-203) and his related critique of cognitive capitalism (66-81, 95-126); Nick Dyer-Witheford’s (1999) attempt to take autonomist Marxism in a different direction than Hardt and Negri; critical political economy of media and communications (McChesney 2008; Mosco 2009); and, the socialist feminism of Ursula Huws (2014) and studies of the workplace culture of the so-called “creative class” (Ross 2009; Boltanski & Chiapello 2005). While these works each make important contributions, none of them put forward a systemic theorization of contemporary capitalism that is as broad as that offered by Hardt, Negri, and the larger cognitive capitalism school.

Christian Fuchs steps into this void with *Digital Labour and Karl Marx*. In this ambitious text, Fuchs seeks to affirm Marxist tradition, demonstrate the continuing relevancy of the labor theory of value, and renew the struggle for communism. Despite some problems, *Digital Labour and Karl Marx* is compelling reading for anyone interested in contemporary capitalism.

The book is organized in three sections. The first positions the book in existing literature, providing both theoretical background and a critique of theories of information society. Fuchs presents a non-dogmatic Marxism that incorporates elements of Frankfurt School, autonomist Marxism, the feminism of Maria Mies, Claudia Von Werlhof, and Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen. While he does not dismiss either theories of information society or cultural studies, he provides a trenchant critique of both bodies of literature, exposing their implicit celebration of neoliberalism and their often-superficial engagement with Marx. Instead, Fuchs calls for “an institutional revolution that buries prejudices against Karl Marx...[W]e are living in a world with multidimensional global inequalities. Interpreting and changing this world requires us to think about class, crisis, critique and capitalism” (73).

As part of this effort to demonstrate the utility of Marxism to the study of contemporary media, Fuchs puts forward his signature theoretical contribution, what he calls “internet prosumer commodification.” Here, he returns to the idea of the “audience commodity,” which Dallas Smythe (1977) first advanced to expand the study of mass media beyond the ideology critique and apprehend the role of media in processes of capital accumulation. Traditional mass media formats, radio and television, produce and sell air time for advertisements. The unpaid labor of media consumption, objectified as the “audience commodity,” is their primary product.

Fuchs expands the concept to apprehend the nature of contemporary unpaid consumption work on the Internet. He appropriates the notion of the “prosumer,” first coined to celebrate the