choice for specialists in East European Jewry but also a recommended read for a broad and diverse readership.

Robert Weinberg
Swarthmore College

♦ ♦ ♦

A Living Revolution: Anarchism in the Kibbutz Movement, by James Horrox. Oakland and Edinburgh: AK Press, 2009. 168 pp. $17.95.

It would be hard to overstate the importance of James Horrox's slim 2009 volume *A Living Revolution: Anarchism in the Kibbutz Movement*. Given the centrality of Israel's role in the geopolitical landscape, as well as its obvious imbrications within the larger workings of the American military-industrial complex, any text that cogently highlights an alternative narrative at the heart of Israel's national ethos merits our critical attention. The fact that Horrox is able to accomplish this aim so spectacularly and vividly in so brief a treatment is testament not only to his evident mastery of the subject matter, but also to the indomitable spirit of anarchism—and in particular Jewish anarchism—he chronicles.

Largely unknown to both its inhabitants and outsiders alike, the modern state of Israel bears little resemblance to the values held by most of the early pioneers who started Jewish settlements in Palestine in the late nineteenth century. By the time the first coherent settlement communities (*kvutzot*) were developed in the early twentieth century, values of cooperation, voluntarism, agrarianism, and sustainability were already woven into the ideological fabric of these nascent systems (p. 18). Concomitantly, the working version of Zionism embraced by these pre-state pioneers devolved principally upon pacifism, anti-militarism, harmony with the land, and peaceful coexistence with the Arabic communities in the region—with little concern for the development of a nation-state (p. 27).

Up to the creation of the Israeli state in 1948, this early vision crystallized into a federated network of autonomous communities (*kibbutzim*) predicated largely upon anarchist tenets of mutual aid, direct democracy, common property, horizontal power, and a radical egalitarianism that imbued all aspects of communal life from interpersonal relationships to political economy. As Horrox details in a rich historical analysis, "the works of Kropotkin, Proudhon, Gordon, Tolstoy and Landauer were widely read and respected among the kibbutz pioneers," and even more important, "many figures influential in shaping the direction of the movement embraced the ideas of these thinkers and actively promoted the realization of their ideology in Palestine" (p. 61). The net effect was to engender the creation of a web of organic communities

based on trust, reciprocity, innovation, collectivism, and autonomy that effectively built "an entire national infrastructure" while simultaneously modeling perhaps the most ideal exemplar of long-lasting anarchism in practice that the modern world has seen (p. 87).

And herein lies the rub. The kibbutzim were so successful at embodying the proto-state ideal of infrastructural development that they became obvious (and essential) targets for both material and ideological cooptation at the hands of those who would seek to consolidate state power after 1948. In no uncertain terms, Horrox describes how "the dream pursued by the early communards was systematically manipulated and hijacked by the emerging Zionist institutions of the state-to-be" (p. 88), to such a complete extent that the radicalism of the early settlers has been either rewritten or altogether omitted from Israel's history books and educational centers. Moreover, many contemporary Israeli activists (including anarchists) often look upon the kibbutzim with disdain, since in recent decades they have become "so inextricably intertwined with the Israeli state, and, in particular, its militaristic policies towards the Palestinians"—including the fact that many of "the country's fiercest fighters were drawn from the kibbutzim" (p. 116). As Horrox concludes, a creeping institutionalism and authoritarianism has fostered a situation in which "the kibbutz is the establishment" for many Israeli youth (p. 117).

Indeed, this eventuality is not especially surprising. After all, part of the ultimate betrayal of the revolution of the kibbutzim is undoubtedly due to "the underlying reality that Zionism was, from the outset, in the service of colonialism" (p. 90); sadly, the "fact that this had been the case right from the very beginning was a reality to which the early communards were tragically oblivious" (p. 91). Still, does that mean we ought to reject offhand any contributions to the development of positive ideals and visionary practices that the kibbutzim have embodied to varying degrees for over a century? As Israeli activist Uri Gordon inquires in the book's foreword, "Why is the search for anarchism in the early kibbutz movement any more objectionable than, say, pointing to the New England town meeting as a source of anarchist inspiration—as if those meetings did not take place on indigenous peoples' colonized lands?" (p. iv). In a modern analog, shall we likewise invalidate the work of urban activists who are in many instances unwitting precursors to patterns of gentrification and displacement in their communities? Against this backdrop, Horrox observes that "all projects attempting to self-organize have been caught in different types of power networks that have complicated their existence" (p. 9), and it may well be the case that because the kibbutzim soared to such great heights they had all the more distance to fall.

This raises the one minor quibble that I have with the narrative Horrox presents. While the seeds of "revolution betrayed" were inherent in even the pacific Zionism embraced by the early settlers, there were numerous additional clues to the coming cooptation that were part and parcel of life on the kibbutzim. Horrox alludes to some of these harbingers without explicitly connecting them to the martial and domineering values oftentimes associated with Israel today. Included among these are the depictions of the first communards as rugged pioneers seeking a rough-hewn self-sufficiency in harsh environs; the high levels of camaraderie and "esprit de corps" (p. 68) common to nearly every kibbutz; the pervasive impetus among members to "be part of something larger than oneself" (p. 77); and the increasing levels of bureaucratization and regimentation that came with economic diversification. These inherent values lend themselves straightforwardly to a militaristic mindset, especially in a nation where service is mandatory and is perceptually intertwined with both national identity and historical necessity.

Despite these significant challenges and delimitations, Horrox admirably resists the temptation to conclude that the kibbutzim are an abject failure. In fact, he suggests precisely the opposite, indicating that the creative, dynamic, experimental, and prefigurative aspects of the kibbutzim—continuing to this very day in a multitude of settings and with evolutions appropriate to a more industrialized world—may be precisely what is needed to help guide Israel away from the precipice of perpetual warfare, international condemnation, and the ironic apartheid policies to which it often seems wedded. If the axiom holds true that those who fail to learn the harsh lessons of history are doomed to repeat them, then perhaps we can surmise that reclaiming history's positive aspects might enable more beneficent applications. If so, Horrox has given us an indispensible treatise on Israel's forgotten past—implicit tolerance and progressivism—that could serve to ameliorate the brutality of the present, and in the process ensure that there is space to dream of a better future.

Randall Amster
Prescott College

♦ ♦ ♦

Nixon and Israel: Forging a Conservative Partnership, by Noam Kochavi. New York: State University of New York Press, 2009. 146 pp. $55.00.

Noam Kochavi is a lecturer at the Department of International Relations at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He specializes in twentieth-century diplomatic history, with a special focus on the diplomatic history of the United States. This book by Kochavi is in essence a collection of three of his articles, which he published in different journals in recent years.