Helmut and Louise: An Appreciation

Ira Katznelson
Columbia University

Two remarkable people have stepped down as editors of this journal. Their long association with its development, content, and ambitions has proved wise and constitutive. If the study of institutions, in vogue these days, risks understating the importance of leadership, no one affiliated with *ILWCH* could make this mistake.

Helmut Gruber's sixteen years as editor, in collaboration with three coeditors, has impressed his energetic and expansive vision on the whole enterprise for so long that it is virtually impossible to think of the journal without his name immediately leaping to mind. Like David Montgomery, whom he joined as coeditor, Helmut's influence literally can be found on the thousands of pages the journal has published during his tenure, ranging from major articles and symposia to the meetings reports and book reviews that close each issue. No author who has published in *ILWCH* under his watch has escaped the power of his editorial vigor.

Louise Tilly, the last of the group of coeditors working with Helmut, was an influential presence long before her half-decade of formal executive responsibilities. Her willingness to be over committed was taken advantage of by all prior editors. Each of us came to count on her crystalline intelligence, tough-minded generosity, and standard setting. When she took on the editor's title, that merely confirmed formally a role she had been playing for many years. Like Helmut, Louise is emblematic of the journal's openness to change, its capacious international and cross-disciplinary orientation, and its zest for subjects and controversies that matter.

Separately and together, Helmut and Louise have insisted on the highest scholarly ideals and practices; clear, even lucid, prose; a genuine pluralism in ideas, methods, and orientations; democratic decision-making; a welcome to scholars at all career stages and locations; and timely, respectful relations with authors, fellow editors, and readers. They have no patience with pretense. Such strengths as *ILWCH* possesses are the products of these practices and standards. Very few leading journals are as fortunate.

Above all, Helmut and Louise have led and inspired by example. As giant scholars of labor and working-class history, they have produced field-defining work of uncommon character and quality. Helmut's deeply serious scholarship has crossed more than a few boundaries (as has he, an émigré marked by the dark side of life in Central Europe in the fourth and fifth decades of the twentieth century). Among his writings we find a consideration of German expressionist and objectivist literature in the period spanning the start of the First World War to Adolf Hitler's ascension to power; a superb treatment of Léon

International Labor and Working-Class History
No. 58, Fall 2000, pp. 179–180
© 2000 International Labor and Working-Class History, Inc.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0147547900003653 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Blum and the Popular Front; and the landmark *Red Vienna: Experiment in Working Class Culture, 1919–1934* (New York, 1991), an unsurpassed treatment of urban social democracy. Recently, working with Pamela Graves, he convened a luminous international group to consider *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women: Europe Between the Two World Wars* (New York, 1998). This book, the result of an unusually robust collaborative effort, is typically comprehensive and incisive, moving fluidly from culture to politics to ideology to policy.

Louise Tilly's reflections on "Women, Citizenship, and Power" provide a key chapter in this volume, building on the field-changing work she has accomplished, among other subjects, on gender and working-class history. Her *Women, Work, and Family* (New York, 1978), coauthored with Joan Scott, is one of those exceptional books that opens and redefines fields of study. This pioneering work is an aspect of a wider research effort to link home to the labor market, family life to production, and domestic strategies to the macrodynamics of class. Showing, rather than preaching, is Louise's *métier*. We also see this strong suit at work in her efforts to give more prominence to regional and urban studies of working-class formation, as in her outstanding book on *Politics and Class in Milan, 1881–1901* (New York, 1992).

I have been fortunate to work closely with both Helmut and Louise. Helmut invoked all his formidable persuasive powers to convince me to join him in 1989 as one of *ILWCH*'s two editors. We served together for a half-decade. I helped recruit Louise to the New School's Graduate Faculty, where we were colleagues, often coconspirators, for more than a decade. So my appreciation of the human as well as scholarly qualities of these special individuals is deep-rooted in firsthand experience. They would be embarrassed if I said all that I think and know about them, so I will close simply by observing that they are those rare people who make better the networks they activate, the institutions they serve, and the people they affect. This journal, a target of their efforts and affection, has been a lucky beneficiary.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0147547900003653 Published online by Cambridge University Press