

## BOOK REVIEWS

DAMBRUYNE, JOHAN. *Corporatieve middengroepen. Aspiraties, relaties en transformaties in de 16de-eeuwse Gentse ambachtswereld*. Academia Press, Gent 2002. xi, 884 pp. € 35.00; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859003011040

In 1540 the Emperor Charles V had the archives of the Ghent guilds confiscated and most of them are unaccounted for since. This severe loss, however, proved to be a great opportunity for the author of the study under review as he was compelled to employ a “semi-prosopographical method” (p. 340). Using mainly fiscal records, the author compiled a database totalling roughly 30,000 records, which he evaluated and analysed in respect of the historical problems he wished to address. Johan Dambruyne sensibly does not detail the informational or technical aspects of his study and thus avoids adding to an already voluminous text. He promises to make good this omission in a separate study. The sheer scope of this quantitative analysis confers on Dambruyne’s study pioneering status among historical writings on guilds and their members. It is all the more significant in that the author does not choose just any city, but Ghent, the second largest city in the Habsburg empire, with 40,000 inhabitants and a prominent textile centre. The painstaking quantitative approach is reflected in the total of 221 tables, 44 graphics and an annexe containing 39 summaries, all of which are pertinent to the text. Despite this statistical apparatus, Dambruyne manages to argue clearly along various methodical lines. The latter range from the stratification analysis of R. Mousniers to the *habitus*-concept of P. Bourdieu, but nowhere do they seem to superimpose themselves on the empirical findings of Dambruyne, who sees himself in the vicinity of the tradition of the German *Gesellschaftsgeschichte* propounded by H.-U. Wehler and J. Kocka (p. 15).

Each of the five chapters examines the behaviour of the guilds and their members during the four periods of Ghent’s history in the sixteenth century, which was marked by three turning-points: the revolt of 1539/1540, the iconoclasm of 1566, and the short period, (1577–1580), of Calvinist domination. One fault of the author is that he occasionally assumes too much background knowledge about the history of the southern Netherlands. In all sections of the book, however, the focus is not solely on Ghent, as other cities, primarily in western Europe, are drawn into the comparative analysis. Chapter 1 deals with the diversity of guilds, which, according to status accorded by the city constitution, consisted of fifty-three *kleine neringen* and the five cloth trades (*draperieambachten*). In 1540 the Confession Carolina divided them into twenty-one groups. Within the city of Ghent the guild members were not a small minority, but constituted roughly one-fifth of the population, totalling about 4,000 households. The guilds differed from one another in respect of total members, and in terms of wealth – houses, chapels, and other material possessions. For the world of the guilds at that time, Dambruyne chooses the phrase “corporate cadres”, thus stressing their potential influence on city politics. Despite formidable admittance barriers, there was considerable social and professional mobility (chapter 2) that had grown to such an extent by 1540 that Dambruyne speaks “of a process of democratization” (p. 352). Children not from a guild-master background now had more opportunities, albeit and primarily in undercapitalized trades, and there was also evidence of social mobility within one generation. Following the Calvinist intermezzo, this upward

trend even increased. While harbouring scepticism towards one-dimensional models of population sectors, Dambruyne employs fiscal sources for the years 1571–1572 and 1584–1585 for his stratification analysis (chapter 3). The comparison with Antwerp is central. In contrast to the mercantile city on the river Schelde, Ghent contained a more extensive middle class (36 per cent to 21 per cent), which, with the figure of 40 per cent, included almost twice as many taxable householders as in Antwerp. The absolute tip of the ruling elite was also more widely spread. Chapter 4 addresses the question of how power was distributed within the city committees. There we find for the first time, families and not guild representatives. The paradoxical effect of the opening decreed by Charles V was the strengthening of the urban patricians, as fewer families were gaining entry into ruling circles. Dambruyne, though, does emphasize the widespread existence of networks that had an informal influence on city politics and gave the guilds manoeuvrability of action at times when their possibilities were officially circumscribed. Chapter 5 examines the rebellion of 1539–1540, the iconoclasm of 1566, and the Calvinist rule in the years 1577 to 1584 with regard to the stability of society and in respect of the role of the guilds in these events. In 1540 Ghent lost its position of a “state within a state” and became a normal provincial city. Dambruyne sees the Ghent rebellion in a series of similar uprisings in other centres of the Low Countries, cities which in the course of the sixteenth century lost the autonomy they had won in the Middle Ages. He sees a distinct link between the political presence of the guilds and the tendency to revolt, although here social and economic stability seemed to stand in the way of political upheaval. This series of separate studies concludes with a preview of the period after 1584, when the established guild masters left Ghent to move northwards, thus making way for non-hereditary successors who were less ambitious in political affairs.

The findings of Dambruyne, which cannot be reviewed exhaustively here, deserve our respect. He has set a high standard for future studies of pre-industrial trades in urban centres, or those examining the political history of the guilds. However, mild criticism is justified in respect of his use of concepts. It is very much open to doubt whether the considerable influence of the craft guilds on the politics and administration of cities is adequately described by the term “corporatism”. This concept is heavily associated with the eighteenth-century doctrine of corporations, or with the theory of how capitalist societies were organized in the two centuries following. Is it not more profitable to start the argument from the Middle Ages? Not least because the medieval city with its social “groups” conferred on its institutions a desire for self-assertion, an intention which could clash with the policies of emerging national states. Dambruyne is fully entitled to place the word “group” in the title of his volume as he succeeds in demonstrating the differences between the separate guilds. These “groups” do not disappear in an ill-defined “middle class”. Nonetheless, he omits to include a critical appraisal of the concepts of the middle classes to be found in English-language historiography, or indeed to discuss the meanings of the term *petite bourgeoisie* used by G. Crossick and G. Haupt in their eighteenth- and nineteenth-century studies. It is open to question whether such concepts should be applied to the long sixteenth century. Equally questionable is Dambruyne’s flirtation with the so-called *politische Mitte*, the middle ground in politics courted by Blair, Schröder, and other contemporary leaders (pp. 4f.). A final objection to overstressing the concept of *middengroepen*: whoever concentrates on it risks neglecting the remaining 60 per cent of the population in Ghent (4 per cent upper-class, 56 per cent underclass), for the middle classes, as the social history of the nineteenth century has demonstrated, take their

orientation and self-definition from the presence of these extremes and from conflicts with them.

Historical studies of society in the German language (*Gesellschaftsgeschichte*) to date have not produced an examination of urban development which could compare with the oeuvre of Dambruyne. German scholars in his field concentrate on national developments in a later historical era. For example, the study of B. Roeck on Augsburg in the period 1584–1648, while not referring primarily to the parameters set by Wehler and Kocka, proceeds on a path similar to that of Dambruyne. In contrast to the latter, however, Roeck gives cultural factors more room in his analysis. The founding-fathers of *Gesellschaftsgeschichte* were criticised for the lack of such a focus, but social history in Germany has since been enriched by a wider cultural dimension. Despite discussing the effects of Calvinism, Dambruyne fails to accord the religious question sufficient room in his study of Ghent: he writes more macro- than micro-history, and on the strength of that alone qualifies himself for inclusion in the tradition of *Gesellschaftsgeschichte*. This ascription is problematical because of the primary-concept *aspiraties* in the title, that is, individual or collective social goals, interests, and wishes: the analysis of such “aspirations” is based mainly on indirect evidence. These objections, however, should not be seen as an argument against the approach chosen by Dambruyne – examining guilds in a city on a quantitative basis – but rather as a call for deeper theoretical considerations and detailed research cases which should follow on the heels of this outstanding and justifiably lauded study on the *middengroepen* of Ghent.

Wilfried Reininghaus

PRICE, RICHARD. British Society, 1680–1880. Dynamism, Containment and Change. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [etc.] 1999. xii, 349 pp. £40.00; \$59.95. (Paper: £14.95; \$22.95.); DOI: 10.1017/S0020859003021047

The organizing contention of this book is that modern British history can with profit be re-periodized. In particular the book proposes that the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries will both be illuminated in new ways by a periodization that reaches back into the seventeenth century – 1680, give or take – while concluding in 1880, more or less, somewhat earlier than might be expected.

The book announces itself as an interpretative synthesis – emphatically not as a textbook. This is an ambition worth pursuing since, quite apart from the difficulties of their production, textbooks can be lethal in their dissemination and use, often framing a slew of complex fields into a homogenized, sanitized, and digestible narrative. Textbooks, by their nature, are signs of closure, inviting conceptions of historical knowledge as potentially complete and argument as actually finished.

Richard Price’s book accordingly is framed as a non-textbook account of better than 200 years of British history. Much of his selected period is by now embedded in what must surely be one of the strongest, densest, and most detailed historiographies in the world. Price’s self-appointed task therefore is far from an easy one, requiring an immense historiographical knowledge which, in turn, compels a modest ambition of originality – what Price refers to as shifting “the contours of that terrain a bit”. As should become apparent in the course of this review, Price’s expressed ambitions for this text seem to me overly modest. For, as he says, he proposes not simply an argument about periodization,

with all the dangers of conflation and flattening that this invokes, but a reinterpretation of what he claims are the organizing themes and dynamics of this 200-year chunk of the British past.

Briefly, these include issues of economy, empire, gender, power, class, and social relations as well as matters of nation and region and the organizing dynamics of civil society. This is ambition indeed in a single text, one whose totalizing principle is no longer fashionable, to say the least. Price propounds this extraordinary trajectory at a time when former assumptions about the unity of historical narrative are being dissolved in a medium of postmodern uncertainty – at least as some see it. It is not always clear what exactly composes this claim for dissolution, but historical analyses which rest broadly on materialist assumptions have been anathematized in recent years by some proponents of poststructuralism. Price is perfectly aware of this. While he (fashionably) rejects binary polarities, for example, as being appropriate only in mother boards and not in historical analysis, he propounds a historical method grounded in multiple narratives which derive from his understanding of the materialities of social and political life. These, as given above, are the keys to his understanding not simply of the period he seeks to reinterpret but amount also to a statement of procedure formally opposed to the postmodern. Price's book is therefore polemical in purpose, if not in tone. It constitutes a reassertion of methods which existed in historiography – and arguably dominated it – before the “postmodern moment” announced itself. This is a self-conscious and deliberate and pretty well total rejection. So, at the same time as he pursues innovative reinterpretations of the British past, in a field replete with writing and contention, he casts his work as a counterweight to the postmodern turn in recent historical work. Contrary to the author's avowed modesty of intent, *British Society* makes considerable claims in both these ways: a reformulation based on critical engagement with a mass of history writing, and a reassertion of historical methods which held the field before what he sees as postmodern revisionism.

Altogether, then, this is a courageous book. It is a statement of method and conceptual position embedded in an argument about the development of British society sustained over 300 pages. This is a modesty of ambition not given to many. The book is at once a manifesto against poststructuralism and the scholarly expression of a totalizing analytic. So, with what effect are these ambitions discharged in the text? How convincing is Price's periodization and the reinterpretation which rests upon it? How persuasive is his conceptual and methodological taking of position?

Price's sub-title is “dynamism, containment and change”. Through these notions he seeks to track an explanatory position which liberates itself from various Whiggisms, polarities (often false), and the single master narratives which he believes inhabit the field. His introduction introduces the reader to many of these. Two significant examples provided are, firstly, dominant narratives of industrialization through which the nineteenth century is accounted prefigurative of the twentieth. This reasoning, Price believes, amounts to no more than a conceptually under-reflected proposal about the arrival of “modernity”. In turn, and secondly, this has the effect of primitivizing the long eighteenth century as a kind of aristocratic *ancien régime*, or privileging it as the origin of precisely the bourgeois dynamisms and urban cultures which allegedly underlay nineteenth-century continuities. Price's forensic account of the binary tendencies in the historiography of these two centuries alone would make his book worthwhile. He employs it to refuse conventional narratives of continuity and rupture, gradualism and change, class

conflict and class cooperation, signs of modernity and survivals of the primitive, and so on. "I came to the conclusion", he writes, "that making sense of the nineteenth century was as much a matter of reorienting our conception of the period itself as it was of selecting which descriptor [...] best depicted the essential character of the society. I was thus led to dissolve the common conception of the nineteenth century. Instead of seeing it as a prologue to the twentieth century, I see it as linked to the eighteenth century. Instead of seeing the Victorian age until the late nineteenth as the moment of modernity – as the time when the blueprints of the modern world were sketched – I came to see it as the tail end of a longer period that stretched from the late seventeenth century to the late nineteenth century." (p. 11)

Armed with this prospectus, Price provides within its conceptual and chronological framing a series of detailed chapters focused on matters of economy – manufacture, finance, trade, and taxation. These are followed by extensive discussion of issues more directly political and social: shifting distributions of power between national centres and localities; the organization of civil society and the forces shaping the political order; and the dynamics of social relations including those of class, and to a lesser extent those of gender. The last substantive chapter addresses in detail the foundations of elite authority throughout the period and the transformations taking place within it. In every case Price supports his arguments with real clarity and with invaluable reference to the various historiographical tendencies in play. His analysis is at its best exactly when he sights-off from and criticizes existing, and sometimes dominant interpretations. Omissions and, more importantly, under-representations, though they are necessarily present, do not vitiate the totalizing quality of the account: the place of religion as a practice with political and social reach gets pretty short shrift, for example. Yet, overall, Price grounds his proposed new periodization with real flair and success. Most of all, for this reviewer at least, his analysis opened up new ways of categorizing the literature of this extensive period, and of understanding the ways in which commonplace concepts – "modernity" for one – have stealthily organized our ways of seeing the British nineteenth century especially. In these ways the empirical substance of this long book works well; scholars and students alike will refer to it for years to come.

The conceptual side, however, is less clear and less satisfactory. Three elements of this might be mentioned. First of all, Price's reservations about poststructuralism have already been mentioned. These are well-drawn and telling. Price expresses the view that, retreating from the big questions which animate his own work as well as focusing on language and the microcircuits of power (essentially "decentering the social"), postmodernists endorse "revisionist" or, more properly, conservative tendencies in history-writing. "In brief, the main consequence of post-modernist thinking has been to provide theoretical support for revisionist emphasis on continuity as the consistent theme to nineteenth-century history."

Secondly, by way of contrast, Price asserts his own (non-exclusive) Marxian view of the determinant importance of the material sphere in historical analysis, not least that of "experience" of the economic and social worlds, as well as of politics and the state. He claims no exclusive sovereignty for these, but, of course, refuses postmodern criticism. Yet it is exactly around this question of "experience" that the poststructuralist critique has been most telling. Joan Scott's brilliant strictures on Edward Thompson's use of the concept simply cannot be neglected, inaugurating, as they did, a wholesale reconsideration of the Thompson canon.

Price, thirdly, distances himself from Thompson's perspective, but in a quite different

way. He sees the processes of class – formation and action – which lie at the centre of Thompson’s oeuvre as connected more closely with a previous period than as announcing the new; as representing a stage of decisive decay in eighteenth-century models of artisan production rather than prefiguring the class consciousness and class organization of the twentieth century. What is important here is not whether Price has the edge in this argument with Thompson – I happen to think he does – but the fact that, conceptually, he continues to move on Thompson’s terrain. Only the empirical narrative and its organization is therefore able to move the account forward. Conceptually it remains bounded by pre-existing practices. This is pretty clearly Price’s choice – but it should be recognized that a pragmatic appropriation of Marx and a determinedly empirical method together close off alternatives and innovations.

None of the cavilling in the last two or three paragraphs should obscure my view that I think this is a fine book, or that Richard Price has discharged his task with quite extraordinary scholarship. The book deserves to be treated as a scholarly synthesis and its arguments should be engaged by scholars in the field. The book’s ambition not to be a textbook is amply fulfilled. But it is also a goldmine for the tribe of plunderers we commonly call undergraduates.

*Keith Nield*

HÖPPNER, JOACHIM [und] WALTRAUD SEIDEL-HÖPPNER. Etienne Cabet und seine Ikarische Kolonie. Sein Weg vom Linksliberalen zum Kommunisten und seine Kolonie in Darstellung und Dokumentation. [Schriftenreihe der internationalen Forschungsstelle, “Demokratischen Bewegungen in Mitteleuropa 1770–1850”, Band 33.] Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. [etc.] 2002. 840 pp. Ill. € 101.20; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859003031043

Following years of work, Seidel-Höppner and Höppner have produced a comprehensive political biography of the utopian communist, Etienne Cabet, and at the same time the first overall history of the colony he founded, “Icaria”. They thereby elucidate a little-known chapter of German-French-North American social history in the nineteenth century, documented in letters written by German inhabitants of the colony.

We are accustomed to having research into the early history of pre-Marxist socialism and communism occur primarily outside the mainstream of historiography and, moreover, to witnessing its popularity and influence be determined by political factors. This exposes such research to the risk of being instrumentalized for political ends, and imposes upon it long phases of stagnation or disinterest. Both authors belong to the few who have never allowed themselves to become discouraged by these circumstances. Their life’s work is influenced by the research conducted on the image of early socialism in the former GDR. From them we have learned that – contrary to any orthodox classification – early socialists and communists cannot be seen merely as “forerunners” of Marxism, that socialist theory-building was itself well-established in the early workers’ movement, and that it has to be interpreted as an element of emancipative practice. The anthology of French socialism and communism before Marx that they published in 1975 with Reclam in Leipzig entitled *Von Babeuf bis Blanqui*, a work that ran fully contrary to the predominate understanding of socialism at the time, has set standards for international research. Waltraud Seidel-

Höppner has long been considered a leading expert in the writings and political practices of the worker-communist, Wilhelm Weitling.

What can be interesting about a new monograph on Cabet and his *Voyage en Icarie* (the original title of the utopian novel first published in 1840, after which the emigration and colonization projects propagated by Cabet starting in 1847 are named)? Prudhommeaux (1907, reprint 1977), more recently Johnson (1966, 1974) and Tumminelli (1981) have been the greatest influences in the research on Cabet, and Höppner/Seidel-Höppner rely heavily on their findings. They were able to examine and evaluate an important cache of letters written by German members of the communist colony, “Icaria”, in Nauvoo, Illinois, and now located in the Hamburg State and University Library; the publication of these letters, together with an appendix of contemporary documents, make up half of the book. They serve to expand the historic panorama, and help reveal a surprising variety of personal and political connections between the early German, French, and American workers’ movement. The authors are certainly right to emphasize that at least German research has, “with respect to historical study, neglected and theoretically underestimated the specific import of the colonization movements in the transitional process to an industrial society” (p. 6). Still, this reviewer questions whether the very specialized study of the development of the “Icaria” colony – especially the description of its decline in the 1850s – does not become at times all too meticulous and disproportionate in relation to the convincing depiction of the political role that Cabet played in the circumstances surrounding the July monarchy and during the February Revolution of 1848.

First and foremost, Höppner/Seidel-Höppner attempt to counter the “prevailing prejudices” on the utopian and pacifist, Cabet, a man widely believed to be out of touch with reality, yet whom the authors call instead the “classic representative of European reform communism” (p. 8). In doing so, they point out the influence of Chartism on Cabet and “Icarian” communism. His exposure to Chartism, to the political mobilization of the working class that he experienced during his exile in England, represents the key to understanding his “strategy of a democratic path” of social transformation. He pursued this strategy in order to establish the French communist movement of the 1840s firmly within the politic framework of the times and started it on the path toward becoming a mass movement. This strategic concept, argue the authors, has been an enduring influence in steering the development of the European worker’s movement toward “social democracy” (pp. 8, 52, 162). In order to prove the great effect Cabet had, the authors cite in particular the massive spread of “Icarian” communism among French workers as gauged by the high-circulation numbers of Cabet’s publications (starting with the newspaper, *Le Populaire*) and the numerous discussion groups existing throughout France, even though there does not exist a more precise sociological study of the followers of Cabet.

What also becomes clear here are Cabet’s limitations, the internal contradictions of his communist theory and politics. It is not only that Cabet himself is supposed to have seen the failure of an alliance based on the reconciliation of the democratic bourgeoisie and the working class already in the mid-1840s (p. 165), from which his plans to emigrate then evolved. It is, moreover, the obvious authoritarian essence imbuing Cabet’s utopia, that “shadowless idyll of a smoothly functioning social body” (p. 64), as laid out in *Voyage en Icarie*, that “carefully and cleverly thought-out moral code to regulate the social behaviour of the Icarians down to the smallest detail” (p. 72), which could direct us – in the view of this reviewer – to the heart of the problem of utopian communism before 1848. Höppner/

Seidel-Höppner do mention in passing that Cabet's utopia blocked the "understanding for the role of spontaneous struggle", and they quote Flora Tristan's view that Cabet had "caused much discord among workers, who stare spellbound at the appearance of their Icaria" (p. 107). Perhaps the authors should more closely consider the fact that Cabet distanced himself not only from other communist factions, chiefly from social-revolutionary neobabouvism and "ultracommunism", but also from militant forms of underclass resistance, such as illegal workers' coalitions, uprisings, and mass revolts among the rural poor, which became most prevalent in France in the years 1846–1847.

This above-mentioned context throws a different light also on the call for workers to emigrate to Icaria, which was the consequence of Cabet's recognition that his strategy for a democratic transition to communism had failed. However, on the eve of the 1848 Revolution – just as food riots were spreading from the rural to the urban working masses – such a call must have been disorienting to the communist movement. Höppner/Seidel-Höppner refer extensively to the criticism expressed by French and German communists against Cabet's plans to emigrate and other similar projects. Among these were the objections that had already been presented in the discussions held in the German Workers' Educational Society in London in 1845–1846 (pp. 186ff.). Astonishingly, they omit that excellent argument in which Weitling warned against the illusion that communism could be introduced through emigration and colonization: It would be foolish, said Weitling in London, "to abandon the beautiful creations of the bourgeoisie in order to begin to create once again in America what has already been long finished in Europe" (*Der Bund der Kommunisten*, vol. 1 (Berlin, 1970), p. 229).

The depiction of Cabet's rushed and failed "Texas expedition", and the history of the "Icaria" colony in Nauvoo emphasizes the economic problems, such as accounting, labour productivity, and competition, facing a small confined communist community in a market-economy environment, as well as generally the "objective limitations of the utopian aims" (pp. 256f.). In the end, the internal disintegration and decline of the colony in 1855–1856 appears to have been accelerated not least by Cabet's dictatorial ambitions, his patriarchal concepts of morality, the rigid daily regimentation through which he attempted to discipline the members of the colony, his advocatory tactics in recruiting informers, and in the eventual detection of renegades. In the course of this depiction, the reader wonders whether the historic topic presented here is all that is being evaluated, or whether some of the critical statements have not been worded in a way so as to elucidate posthumously the weaknesses of East German socialism. The conclusion drawn by Höppner/Seidel-Höppner is a conflicted one that cannot be disguised by the defiant quotation used to open the book, which must sound rather dubious read out of context. The quotation, taken from the autobiography of a "Child of Icarie" from 1938, begins with the words: "We never thought to seek the blame for our failure in the unfeasibility of our principles, but in the ignorance of the masses and the greed of a minority." "Icaria" can indeed claim a place in the history of failed socialist endeavours, but – conclude the two authors – "in the end, communal colonies remain oases buried by drifting sand" (p. 379).

*Ahlich Meyer*



SHPAYER-MAKOV, HAIA. *The Making of a Policeman. A social history of a labour force in metropolitan London, 1829–1914*. Ashgate, Aldershot [etc.] 2002. ix, 293 pp. Ill. £45.00; DOI: 10.1017/S002085900304104X

Haia Shpayer-Makov aims to show us the “development of policing but also [...] the history of modern employment strategies and their impact on the working classes in Britain”. Additionally, the author hopes to reveal “the role of the state as an employer in a period of radical change in state power and responsibilities”. While its author certainly helps us understand some of the labour dynamics within the Metropolitan Police in the nineteenth century, the book does not always live up to its promise.

The first section, “Creating a Portrait of a Policeman”, shows the process by which leaders of the Metropolitan Police determined whom they wanted as employees. The ideal Victorian “bobby” was a healthy, strong, literate young man from the lower-middle or working classes, who was preferably unmarried and not a native Londoner. After the creation of the initial force in 1829, all those who advanced to supervisory levels came through the ranks. Only at the very highest ranks (such as Commissioner) was this not the case, where socially prominent appointees predominated. Once in the force, a man’s subsequent career was determined by years of service and competitive examinations, hallmarks of the bureaucratization of government service. Shpayer-Makov argues that these characteristics made the Metropolitan Police one of the first embodiments of the idea of government service based on efficiency and expertise rather than patronage.

She argues that, like other service employers such as the Post Office, the police authorities included in their definition of efficiency a low turnover rate. The Metropolitan Police had a stunningly high turnover rate in its early years, with only 862 of the 3,400 men hired in 1829 still on the job four years later, but there was a dramatic turnaround in those numbers by 1900. Those who stuck with the police tended to come from the lower social classes, from low unskilled occupations, were married, and came from rural areas, such as East Anglia. The authorities only got some of the kind of policemen they wanted.

In Part 2, Shpayer-Makov examines the structures and nature of police work. Shpayer-Makov sees the roots of Scotland Yard’s bureaucratic structure in the army, the Irish constabulary, and the “new forms of authoritative work relations” that emerged with industrialization, ignoring the continuity between parochial night watch forces and Scotland Yard. Shpayer-Makov emphasizes the enclosed nature of this workforce. All training, and granted it was not much, was done internally. The organizational structure of the force was “centralised, steep and disciplinarian”. Shpayer-Makov also argues that the uniformed appearance of the police enhanced a sense of common identity among officers, as did the common hazards of walking a beat. The book gives the reader a detailed, if dry, account, of “everyday life on the force”.

In the next chapter, “The Paternalist Contract”, Shpayer-Makov does an excellent analysis of the dynamic relationship between Metropolitan Police policy makers and their employees. She argues: “Thus, the pioneers of the new style of policing, with a view to meeting new social needs, and attentive to the ideas about work and the economy, redefined the concept of paternalism to fit in with the new work context and with their own needs and interests. Paternalism as adopted in the London police force took the shape of strict bureaucratic regulation coupled with a social security safety net [...]. [it] fused, both ideologically and in practice, aristocratic values with individualistic middle-class norms.”

The author persuasively shows how police authorities kept a firm grip on their

workforce with a combination of punishments – demotion and dismissal – and rewards – wages, medical care, pensions, and steady employment. However, much of this safety net was very thin. Benefits were underfunded, or were funded by deductions from officers’ pay; they were awarded at the discretion of the senior officers. This was similar to types of worker control used by other employers, including Cadburys’, the railways, and other government departments.

Shpayer-Makov’s paternalist contract extended beyond the policeman’s beat. Rules about living arrangements and even the activities of policemen’s wives, all came within the purview of work rules. Police authorities thus fostered a world of work that was “far more censorious and interventionist than the paternalists in pre-industrial times”. Leisure activities, sponsored by the Metropolitan Police for their officers, were a prime part of the mix, including book clubs, religious meetings, balls, and dinners. Sports came to be the dominant expression of this type of recreation. Following the trend of schools and universities, the police used sports, such as football, cricket, and rowing, to mould character and enhance subordination. However, police recreation also helped create a sense of solidarity among officers, which would prove significant in limiting just how much control their employers could wield.

Shpayer-Makov enhances this part of her argument by showing how policemen responded to this kind of control and how both bureaucratic control and employee response changed. To get at the latter, she uses publications such as the *Police Service Advertiser*, began in 1866, as well as the scant information there is about why men left the police. By the 1880s, the stabilization of the force was evident, from the lower levels of voluntary resignation as well as fewer expulsions from the force. If more men stayed on the job, the authorities also changed their views, helped along by two strikes in 1872 and 1890. Another key marker of change was the Police Act of 1890, which mandated pensions for all officers who served a sufficient period, instead of discretionary awards by senior officers. Promotion, though, remained a key tool used to discipline the police force. By the turn of the twentieth century, only one out of four veteran policemen rose above the rank of constable. Shpayer-Makov admits: “it is likely that the admittance of token numbers of personnel from the lower classes to ranks near the top only served to consolidate the system”. Shpayer-Makov persuasively presents the interaction of the police and their superiors and how the paternalist contract was remade over the second half of the nineteenth century. By improving the welfare net, police authorities retained more of their experienced officers. In turn, the officers traded conformity with work rules for life-long economic security. She acknowledges that not all discontent was soothed, but that still the kinds of improvements made in benefits and management policies did assist the lower ranks. The concluding chapter traces out the history of the police authorities’ refusal to allow for unionization in the police force, while also exploring the ways in that stance was challenged by police officers. Shpayer-Makov gives us a glimpse of individuals who were in this dynamic relationship between officers and superiors, including John Kempster, who started the Police and Citizens’ Friendly Association and published the *Police Review*. However, Shpayer-Makov unfortunately chooses not to detail the emergence of a police union in 1914 nor the police strike of 1918. She concludes: “The decades preceding the war witnessed the crystallisation of an *esprit de corps* and a sense of common feeling of professional identity that largely replaced class sentiment and provided a sense of continuity and stability.”

One of the disappointments of this book is that Shpayer-Makov does not always define

terms with care. For example, she uses the term “professional” inconsistently. In her last chapter, she notes: “Policemen during the period covered by this study were never recognised as professionals.” She seems to be equating “professional” with doctors or lawyers, who enjoyed middle-class status. But as in the quotation in the previous paragraph, she argues the police had a “professional identity”. If the police themselves saw their work as a “profession”, one wonders who it was that did not. Another disappointment is in the periodization. The title includes the period 1829–1914, but the bulk of Shpayer-Makov’s evidence comes from after 1860. Her most detailed evidence about the men who joined the force and their subsequent careers comes from the only set of surviving service records for 1889–1909. While there is a dearth of evidence for the earlier years, the PRO catalogue shows that there are some files that Shpayer-Makov chose not to consult, including some from the 1830s (MEPO 4/31 and HO 65/26). This calls into question whether the conclusions she draws apply to the earlier period. She refers to the Commissioners and those who made policy for the Metropolitan Police as “management”, “the authorities”, and other similar collective nouns throughout the whole time period. While she does acknowledge the influence of some individuals, one wonders to what extent the strengths and weaknesses of individual Home Secretaries and Police Commissioners made a difference in the development of the Metropolitan Police as a workforce. Shpayer-Makov has done fine work on the later nineteenth-century bobbies and their bosses, but there are some significant gaps in her account.

*Elaine A. Reynolds*

COHEN, DEBORAH. *The War Come Home. Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914–1939*. University of California Press, Berkeley [etc.] 2001. xii, 285 pp. Ill. \$50.00; £35.00; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859003051046

The various stories of the disabled ex-servicemen of the First World War have already been told. For Britain and parts of the Empire, and for Germany, France, and Austria, at least, there exist numerous comprehensive and very substantial scholarly works, most of them published fairly recently. They cover nearly every aspect of the social and medical history, and the fate and legal situation, of the approximately eight million veterans disabled during the Great War, and especially how these veterans fared during the interwar years. Yet little comparative work has so far been done. This is the lacuna that Deborah Cohen’s book *The War Come Home* tries to fill. At the heart of her study is one of the main issues that has occupied historians in this field for so long – the apparent paradox concerning Britain and Germany. After its military defeat, postwar Germany provided its disabled veterans with generous benefits. In comparison with the victors, France and Britain, the Weimar welfare state paid relatively generous war pensions and had a well-developed system of medical rehabilitation and professional retraining. Surprisingly, perhaps, Germany’s disabled veterans came to despise the state that favoured them. Instead of being loyal to a political and social system that spent a great deal of money to ensure their social reintegration after Germany’s military defeat (even in times of inflation), Germany’s disabled veterans kept on claiming special privileges and even higher benefits. Morally and economically discontent, they grudged the public for what they felt was its lack of concern. The result, as many historians have noted, was that Germany’s disabled ex-servicemen proved susceptible to the influence of right-wing associations, and some later became supporters

of the Nazis.<sup>1</sup> In the debate on the political demise of the Weimar democratic experiment, those war veterans have been accused of having helped to weaken and bring down the Republic. By contrast, British and French ex-servicemen remained loyal subjects and bulwarks of the established order, even though they were neglected by the state and received only meagre material compensation and virtually no funds to assist them in their social reintegration.<sup>2</sup>

Cohen argues that none of the previous explanations given for this paradox is satisfying, because they have focused simply on the various failures of German bureaucracy – excluding veterans, for example, from political decision-making. In this book she undertakes the ambitious task of resolving this discussion and offering a lucid and conclusive explanation by comparing the historical situation of disabled veterans in Britain and Germany. As an expert familiar with British and German archives, and fully conversant with the studies referred to above, she reconstructs in detail official government efforts at – and modes of – social reintegration and the difficult living conditions of disabled ex-servicemen after the First World War. In doing so, she is careful to take account of the very different social and political situations in those two belligerent nations after the war. Her main focus is the conditions under which the reintegration of disabled veterans in Britain and Germany succeeded or failed, and how the states and their citizens came to terms with the costs of the First World War.

The book is divided into two parts, both comparative. Part 1 examines the parallel, but different, developments of veterans' policies in both countries. For the British case, Cohen outlines again the failure of the state to fulfil its obligations to the nation's heroes. The British government refused to take responsibility for the social reintegration of those disabled in the hostilities and for providing professional retraining or more favourable employment conditions. The state granted only very modest pensions and provided no economic support for family members. Cohen underlines the fact that, as an important consequence, a voluntarist system of charity emerged to provide care for disabled veterans. The success of those private charities is one of the main explanations she gives as to why, in Britain, the disabled retreated from politics and why, unlike their German counterparts, they did not participate in anti-government demonstrations and protest. Although the state might have failed them, she argues, private charity would show disabled veterans that they had not been forgotten. It was private charities that provided the respect and emotional support necessary to keep the veterans satisfied and ensure social peace.

Cohen stresses the fact that in Weimar Germany, on the other hand, a massive extension of state control was a central feature of the welfare system. Indeed, this system tried to control and suppress all private efforts to organize a more varied system of support. As

1. On this point, see the literature on Germany's disabled: Robert W. Whalen, *Bitter Wounds: German Victims of the Great War, 1914–1939* (Ithaca, NY, 1984); Ewald Frie, "Vorbild oder Spiegelbild? Kriegsbeschädigtenfürsorge in Deutschland 1914–1919", in Wolfgang Michalka (ed.), *Der Erste Weltkrieg. Wirkung, Wahrnehmung, Analyse* (Munich, [etc.], 1994), pp. 563–580; James M. Diehl, "Victors or Victims? Disabled Veterans in the Third Reich", *Journal of Modern History*, 59 (1987), pp. 705–736; Michael Geyer, "Ein Vorbote des Wohlfahrtsstaates. Die Kriegsopferversorgung in Frankreich, Deutschland und Grossbritannien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 9 (1983), pp. 230–277; and Christine Beil, "Zwischen Hoffnung und Verbitterung. Selbstbild und Erfahrungen von Kriegsbeschädigten in den ersten Jahren der Weimarer Republik", *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 46 (1998), pp. 139–157.

2. For the British war disabled see Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London, 1996).

proof that the government was intent on monopolizing and thus forcing the social reintegration of disabled veterans, Cohen cites a government decree issued in 1917 which was also used by the Weimar government to emasculate all forms of private voluntary charity. While the Kaiserreich bureaucracy had justified it during the war as a necessary measure against waste and fraud, the Weimar state used it, Cohen argues, as a means to establish the new welfare state's authority. The disabled veterans should be dependents of the state alone, and the emotional alienation between the German people and its veterans was, Cohen argues, the compelling result.

Part 2 considers how individual veterans fared in the different charitable and welfare systems of Britain and Germany, and how these differences influenced veterans' attitudes towards official government agencies and the public. By narrating the stories of some of these disabled veterans, Cohen tries to show the different results of private charity on the one hand and state efforts at regulation on the other. Cohen seems to prefer the British example, where philanthropists spent considerable sums of money founding and financing homes for the disabled. Nevertheless, charity always seemed to be combined with self-interest. Through these institutions, donors were able to realize their personal ideals of help and enforce their views of what sort of person constituted an ideal recipient of charitable giving. By listing three examples of this specifically British kind of charitable institution, Cohen also demonstrates the ambiguity and the dark side of private charity. Most of these institutions were to some degree oppressive in how they treated the disabled ex-servicemen, who were out of work and thus to some extent existentially dependent on them.

Cohen highlights the irony of this historical situation. Whereas Germany defeated could afford to give its disabled veterans a legal entitlement to a range of benefits, the victorious British ex-servicemen had to live on voluntary handouts from charities, handouts scarcely sufficient to keep them out of penury. And whereas British veterans were eager to demonstrate that they were good citizens and avoid alienating their patrons, willingly acceding to what was expected of them, their German counterparts not only kept up a continual protest against their liberal and democratic benefactors, they even supported the political enemy and helped to surrender the republic to the Nazis. For Cohen, this political disaster was the direct result of the monopolized and state-related system of benefits, which had the effect of emasculating all private efforts to establish charities until 1924. Whereas, in Britain, philanthropic activities provided important opportunities for social reconciliation between the disabled and those for whom they had suffered, Germany's disabled veterans were hugely disappointed at the disrespect, resentment, and passivity of their fellow citizens. What was significant about the attitudes of Germany's veterans, Cohen suggests, and what caused their political radicalization was not their anger towards the state, but their antipathy towards the public. Because of this lack of private engagement, she argues, disabled war veterans felt themselves forgotten and ignored. As a result, they sought out new allies on the political right wing who would support their demands and respect the sacrifices they had made for their country.

Cohen's conclusion seems convincing, at least for the British case. For Germany, her explanation for the right-wing tendency of disabled veterans is less than compelling. It overlooks the fact that the demands of Germany's disabled soldiers for better state welfare were not as unjustified as Cohen implies. Many points in Cohen's arguments, as well as her portrayal of the "excellent" living and working conditions of the disabled, depend on the contemporary literature and archive material. However, these should be interpreted

carefully since they were part of a huge public-relations exercise designed to convince the public that everything possible was being done for the nation's war casualties, and to discredit any further claims. For those men able to remain in the system, it might have been generous, at least in comparison with the British system. But the economic pressures of inflation, the symbolic deprecation from 1916 onwards of the disabled as swindlers, profiteers and "parasites" who should be vanquished, and even more significantly the changing and opaque pension system, based on laws enacted in 1920, excluded most of them from the benefits the German state had formerly proclaimed as a right. It seems as if the German state and the German public were trying to some extent to erase the memory of war so powerfully represented by those disabled fighting in it.

*Sabine Kienitz*

BUSCHAK, WILLY. *Edo Fimmen. Der schöne Traum von Europa und die Globalisierung. Eine Biografie. Mit einem Vorwort von Peter Friedemann.* Klartext, Essen 2002. 333 pp. Ill. € 22.90; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859003061042

With globalization, international organizations have finally also found a place on the agenda of historical trade-union research. In the past decade, in particular, in-depth studies have been published on the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the World Federation of Trade Unions, and on individual international trade secretariats, including a study by Bob Reinalda on the "Edo Fimmen Era" of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF).<sup>1</sup> These works, and Dieter Nelles's numerous studies on the resistance of the ITF seamen, have drawn academic interest to one of the most outstanding and controversial figures of the international union organizations during the interwar period – Edo Fimmen, the Dutch union secretary who was later to become international secretary. Since little is yet known about the international union elites, Willy Buschak's pioneering biography is, in principle, a welcome addition to the literature.

After a very brief overview of Fimmen's family background, his political apprenticeship in Amsterdam, and his path from the Salvation Army to the labour movement, Buschak focuses on Fimmen's international union activity at the IFTU and ITF in the interwar period: his involvement in re-establishing the international organizations in 1918–1919; the boycott of Hungary; boycotts of ammunition consignments in the Russian–Polish war; humanitarian relief operations in Vienna and Russia (1920–1921); efforts to secure cooperation with the Soviet trade unions; his ousting as general secretary of the IFTU in 1923; his thoughts on "globalization"; his "home" in the ITF; support for the antifascist resistance in Germany and the republicans in the Spanish civil war; and finally the illness that led to his death in Mexico in 1942 (pp. 13–274). This is followed by three supplementary chapters on Fimmen's partnerships, "Edo Fimmen the Traveller", and "Fimmen as a Tourist in Moscow" in 1924 (pp. 275–308).

If we were to measure this work against the standards of modern academic biographical research – with its fundamental, systematic consideration of the role of the individual, the interconnection of personal and structural conditions, of individuality and representativeness, of individual socialization and collective generational experiences – it would soon become clear that Buschak's biography does not belong to this genre. Rather, it belongs to

1. Bob Reinalda (ed.), *The International Transportworkers Federation 1914–1945: The Edo Fimmen Era* (Amsterdam, 1997).

the politics of memory. It is a *geschichtspolitische* study of a historical trade-union activist, penned by a contemporary trade unionist who, in his own words, “changed sides” several years ago: “from historiography to praxis, from a historian to a labour movement activist” – in fact, becoming the *Sécrétaire Confédéral* of the ETUC (p. 300). As a fact-filled description of the fascinating life of a union internationalist in the interwar period, drawing directly on a wide range of primary sources, Buschak’s account is thoroughly readable. Seen from this angle, Buschak’s particular perspective on the national and international confederations and their scope for action, his historical and political elevation of the protagonist, his stylization of Fimmen as a theoretician of globalization, advocate of Europe, and intellectual pioneer of the twenty-first century (*sic*), outmoded only in his political style – that of a union autocrat (p. 304) – is understandable. With his analogy to Italo Calvino’s image of *The Baron in the Trees*, Buschak goes so far as to extract Fimmen from his life-world: “Calvino’s novel is like a parable of Fimmen’s life. Like Cosimo [who one day decides to spend his life up a tree, S.K.], Fimmen was a permanent source of provocation to his contemporaries; just as the inhabitants of Ombrosa were unable to understand the young Baron Cosimo, Fimmen’s contemporaries grasped little, particularly when Fimmen stood high above them, gazing far out into the future. In the same way as Cosimo poured scorn on those crawling around on the ground, Fimmen scorned his colleagues, who were keeping a nervous watch to ensure that no international body became endowed with enough power to have a say in its own, quasi-national issues” (p. 132). It is more difficult to see how this interpretation can be reconciled with a life-long union career in elected offices.

It also remains rather difficult to understand how the international union secretary and left-wing socialist Edo Fimmen was influenced and moulded by the specific experiences of political Protestantism in the Netherlands, or the collective experiences of the emerging trade union and socialist movement, the First World War, the Russian Revolution, and the rise of fascism and National Socialism. Or indeed, the particular individual “mix” of the strengths and weaknesses of left-wing socialism that Fimmen represented: political romanticism, authoritarianism, androcentrism, internationalism and missionary zeal, not to mention a certain crossing of the lines between communism and social democracy. The question as to which of these aspects can be considered “modern” and which are in fact relics of an “outmoded” movement that did not survive the interwar period requires further critical reflection.

*Sigrid Koch-Baumgarten*

GRZESINSKI, ALBERT. Im Kampf um die deutsche Republik. Erinnerungen eines Sozialdemokraten. Hrsg. von Eberhard Kolb. [Schriftenreihe der Stiftung Reichspräsident-Friedrich-Ebert-Gedenkstätte, Band 9.] R. Oldenbourg Verlag, München 2001. 384 pp. Ill. € 34.80; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859003071049

Albert Grzesinski, whose last official function was to head the Berlin police department during the Weimar Republic until he was dismissed from office in the wake of the Reich coup executed against Prussia by Chancellor Franz von Papen on 20 July 1932, wrote his memoirs in the last three months of 1933 (the “preface” is dated 31 December 1933). At the time, he was living in exile, having been forced to flee in early March of that year so as to

avoid being persecuted by the National Socialists. The memoirs are based not least on the author's private archive, which had been transported to safety in Switzerland. Until February 1934, he incorporated several changes and additions based on inquiries from other exiled politicians and civil servants. In 1934, both French and Swedish translations appeared – each in a shortened, albeit different, version – with reputable publishers in Paris and Stockholm, respectively. However, the original German-language manuscript did not find a publisher either in exile or in West Germany after 1945. Now, nearly seventy years after the composition of this manuscript, the emeritus professor of early modern and modern history at the Universität zu Köln, Eberhard Kolb, has succeeded in publishing the memoirs of this pugnacious skilled metalworker, who advanced more by chance than by consciously deliberate decision from trade unionist in the revolutionary period of 1918–1919 to an outstanding politician and statesman in Prussia. While conducting research for his dissertation, Kolb discovered the manuscript in the personal papers of Albert Grzesinski which are archived at the Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (IISG) in Amsterdam. (The institute, by the way, was founded in 1935, not 1934 (see p. 33)). In 1963, Kolb first attempted to have the memoirs published, but his efforts proved unsuccessful, even though at the time scholarly research on the social and political history of Germany between the late Imperial era and the end of the first republic was on the upswing.

In cooperation with Walther Mühlhausen, Kolb has created a superb edition. A short biography is provided for each person mentioned in the book and notes help explain circumstances or accounts presented by Grzesinski that are not immediately familiar or understandable or are misleading to the reader. These notes often cite other collections of personal papers and archives, contemporary publications, and published research findings. Crossreferences also facilitate the extraction of insight and findings even by means of a selective reading of specific chapters. Naturally, the book also includes indexes of abbreviations and grammatologues and shortened literature citations, as well as an index of persons. Documents have been included in the “appendix” where they are grouped into five categories. They refer to Grzesinski's “departure from the office of Prussian minister of the interior” in February 1930, his “renewed appointment to the position of Berlin police commissioner” in the autumn of the same year, “diary notes” on the Prussian coup on 20 July 1932, two letters from 1934 to his friend and former Prussian minister-president Otto Braun, and a letter written in October 1946 while in American exile to an earlier comrade, in which Grzesinski chiefly discusses his personal wellbeing and, in a further sense, his political activity during his exile in Switzerland, France, and the United States.

In his introduction, Kolb outlines Grzesinski's “journey through life” from his illegitimate birth on 18 July 1879 in Treptow (eastern Pomerania) to his death on 31 December 1947 in New York, and characterizes him as being at first thoroughly typical of the proletarian milieu. Kolb then focuses on the ambitious rise of this strong-willed man to high government office, without disregarding important private information, and in particular Grzesinski's love for his mother, to whose memory he dedicated his memoirs. Kolb sticks closely to the memoirs and to a political biography also based on these memoirs, but he also includes details from more recent research. Two errors need to be mentioned in this regard. Firstly, his own review of Thomas Albrecht's biography of Grzesinski (*Für eine wehrhafte Demokratie. Albert Grzesinski und die preußische Politik in der Weimarer Republik* (Bonn, 1999)) is found in the 1993 *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* not on pp. 70ff, but on pp. 762ff. Secondly, a widely circulated



inaccuracy found throughout the relevant literature is further perpetuated on p. 23: The Popular Front Proclamation (*Volksfrontaufwurf*) from February 1936 – meaning the announcement of the Conference of German Opposition in Exile at the Hotel Lutetia, Paris on 2 February, which was published that same month in emigré and foreign newspapers – was not signed by anyone, let alone by Grzesinski. The misunderstanding is based on a later statement by Heinrich Mann, the chairman of the Popular Front Committee, in which this document is confused with the signature campaign under the protest of well-known social democrats (not including Grzesinski, however) and communists against the execution of the communist, Rudolf Claus, a document that most likely made the rounds at the Lutetia conference at the time. “Hundreds” are said to have signed it, but the list was never published and, to the best of my knowledge, has not yet been found in any archive.

In his remarks on the “Einrichtung der Edition” (Organization of the Edition), Kolb describes in the second half of the introduction the story behind the memoirs, which starts in spring 1933 with a “series of political articles” that were, however, never published and with the survival of the manuscript. The only three known typed manuscripts that appear to still exist are compared: one in the IISG – in which the often corrected subtitle reads “Lebensweg eines heute Staatenlosen” (The Life of a Present-day Stateless Person); one in the Bundesarchiv Koblenz, and one in the Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek in Stockholm. Kolb decided to publish the Stockholm version because it was the “final draft”, but fortunately he included the passages or corrections that Grzesinski himself edited out of the almost identical Amsterdam and Koblenz versions. These omissions are included in the text between special markings (compare also the typed copies on pp. 38 and 39 and the printed text on p. 257).

Grzesinski was the first prominent German social democrat, if not the first German emigrant following the National Socialist takeover, who attempted to account for himself as a private person but especially as a politician in his various functions after November 1918. In describing the dramatic high points, or better low points, of the Weimar Republic from the Kapp coup in 1920 to the Prussia coup in 1932, and from the perspective of his various positions within the government, bureaucracy, and institutions such as the army, as well as within the Social Democratic Party, he appears sometimes to be a pragmatist, sometimes an energetic reformer, sometimes a “lonesome cowboy” (UL-A), but always a man involved in “the fight for the German republic” against its enemies on both the radical right and the radical left. In chapter 25, he concludes that the greatest danger posed by communism materialized only in 1933, since the SA (*Sturmabteilung*) of the National Socialists was recruiting at the time “up to 50 percent from former communists” and had, in essence, long pursued “Bolshevist objectives” (p. 283). Grzesinski does not go easy on his own party and party comrades, whom he considers to have been too “passive” or “tolerant”. However, he does recognize that the reticence demonstrated by the SPD, such as when the coalition it headed in Prussia was ousted, was necessary for *raisons d'état*, having resulted unavoidably from the complexity of undesirable developments during the Weimar Republic and from a series of poor political decisions made out of party considerations. Grzesinski also reveals many details from behind the scenes of politics, the military, and police. He observes keenly, and his reflections demonstrate an ability for critical analysis, but he also tends to exhibit impatience and dogmatism. His judgments of people are often hard and insulting, and are obviously fuelled by disappointment and

resignation, on the one hand, and by a feeling of freedom from political responsibility and thus from any need for discretion, on the other.

In relating the history of the *Erinnerungen*, Kolb tells in passing how the memoirs were received, thereby throwing a light on the critics themselves. The emigré executive committee of the SPD (*Sopade*) protested against Grzesinski's uncompromising depiction, read personal defamation into it, refused to have it published, and – as this reviewer notes – answered in the form of the conciliatory book entitled *Die vierzehn Jahre der ersten deutschen Republik* by Friedrich Stampfer in 1936. The *Pariser Tageblatt*, a paper committed to leftist bourgeois politics, was the only emigré publication to print a short excerpt that included, of all things, Grzesinski's biting criticism of the last social-democratic Prussian minister of the interior, Carl Severing. In France, the publication was able to strengthen the oppositional socialist (social-democratic) and democratic forces, which had begun after February 1934 to make peace with the communists out of the necessity to launch an offensive defence of republican, democratic liberties against the reaction and the onrush of "fascism". The motivation for publishing the memoirs in Sweden may have been to use the book both as a warning and an inspiration, since in 1934, the ruling Social Democratic Party had found itself confronted with conditions that in a certain way resembled those in Prussia before June 1932.

This thorough and scholarly treatment of Grzesinski's memoirs and their publication in full, at long last, is not only a major accomplishment, it is also an enrichment, both for the politically interested "lay person" and, last but not least, for many aspects of social history research.

Ursula Langkau-Alex

HORA, ROY. *The Landowners of the Argentine Pampas. A Social and Political History 1860–1945*. [Oxford Historical Monographs.] Clarendon Press, Oxford [etc.] 2001. ix, 264 pp. £40.00; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859003081045

Studies of the elite in Latin America have fallen out of fashion in recent years. Social and cultural historians in particular, focusing on the subaltern classes, have emphasized history from the bottom up in lieu of examining the movers and shakers at the top. Roy Hora's intriguing and insightful description and analysis of the landowning elite of Argentina during the height of their power and ascendancy provides a useful contribution to our understanding of one the nation's and the region's most influential groups. Indeed, for the period Hora covers, there was no single group more important to the nation's destiny than the landowners, *estancieros* and *hacendados*, of Argentina's great plains.

This is not a new topic of investigation. As the abundant bibliography in this work shows, much has been written previously about this group, which figures prominently in almost any history of Argentina. Hora's purpose, therefore, is to take a closer look at the landowners, in particular their role in society, the image that others had of them, and their relationship to politics and the state. It is this latter point, Hora argues, that has been most ignored by historians, who have assumed a close unity of interests between landowners and the state and have failed to examine the history of landowners' actual participation in electoral politics.

Hora tells his story in straightforward, chronological fashion. The first chapter deals

with “The Emergence of a Landlord Consciousness” and covers the period 1860–1880. This was a period of continued expansion of agricultural activity on the pampas, with Argentina displaying the usual pattern of concentration of land in a relatively few hands, the system of *latifundio*, the most wealthy landowners preferring to remain in the city of Buenos Aires while others took care of their interests in the countryside. In 1866, some of the wealthiest formed an association, the Sociedad Rural Argentina (SRA), to represent their interests politically and to promote the modernization of agriculture. For most of this period, however, the membership of the SRA remained limited, as did its political influence. Early on, the landowners showed a reluctance to engage in partisan politics, which in the countryside was controlled by “the political elites and the middle strata of rural society” (p. 26).

The next three decades or so, from 1880 to 1912, represented the “golden age” for the *estancieros* and *hacendados*. Political consolidation, combined with agricultural modernization, especially the introduction of new technology and the improvement of livestock, stimulated an economic boom based on agricultural exports of unprecedented proportions. These changes catapulted Argentina into the top rank of all Latin American nations and, judged by some criteria, into one of the wealthiest nations in the world. Much of the credit for these developments, and rightly so, devolved on the landowning elite, which became the driving force behind the Argentine economy and whose progressive image in these years secured its elite status. “To the Argentines of the early twentieth century”, Hora observes, “the landed class represented all that was solid and permanent in the social and economic order” (p. 81). Compared with the United States and other areas of recent settlement, such as Canada and Australia, the elite enjoyed a much higher concentration of land in their own hands, but their recent prosperity and prominence lacked the tradition of their continental peers, the European landowning class, which the Argentines hoped to emulate.

The period beginning in 1912 offered both opportunities and challenges for the landowners. In that year, electoral reform initiated by conservative president, Roque Saénz Peña, opened up suffrage to the middle and working classes. At first, the landowners, according to Hora, saw this as a salutary step that would make politics less corrupt and “distasteful”. Indeed, grasping the opportunity offered, they attempted to form their own political parties, efforts which for various reasons failed. As a result, they were often forced to form an alliance or support well-established conservative parties, especially the Conservative party of the Province of Buenos Aires, located in the nation’s most populous and wealthiest province, and home to the largest and most important of their estates. The alliance was not always a comfortable one as the Conservatives often resorted to populist policies that ran counter to landowner interests and was often dominated by local political bosses, or *caudillos*, whose origins were rarely aristocratic and whose tactics frequently offended landowners’ sensitivities.

The 1912 reforms ultimately brought to power presidents from Argentina’s Radical Party. The Radicals ruled Argentina from 1916 to 1930, increasingly representing the interests of the nation’s emerging middle classes and occasionally those of the working classes as well. While these administrations, recognizing the importance of the agricultural sector to the nation’s overall wellbeing, posed little direct threat to the basic interests of the landowners, the broadening of the electorate and the strengthening of political parties had long-term implications. As Hora puts it, “By giving a more powerful voice to a society

which had become politically more complex and socially less harmonious, democratization weakened the position of the propertied classe.” (p. 163)

Another challenge in these years was the beginnings of industrial development. One of the greatest potential problems in this regard involved protectionist policies aimed to stimulate domestic manufacturing. In a careful analysis of this issue, Hora shows that, while the landowners generally favoured free trade, they were not adverse to “reasonable” tariffs so long as they did not produce retaliatory policies from Argentina’s main trading partners and principal consumers of its products, especially Great Britain. Not insignificant in their tolerance of tariffs was the fact that such duties were a main source of government revenue, lessening the pressure for other kinds of taxation that would work to the landowners’ detriment. On another point, Hora also suggests that for a variety of reasons, the 1920s, usually seen as a prosperous decade for Argentina and for the landowning class, the era of the *vacas gordas* or fat cows, was instead a period of “low profits and collective resentment against the [foreign-owned] *frigoríficos*”, or meat-packing plants, that were using their monopoly position and government protection to exploit prevailing economic conditions to their advantage. It was also in the 1920s that many of the large landowners who heretofore had focused on livestock production began increasingly to shift to a greater attention to the production of grains, leading, as a result, to certain changes in the patterns of tenancy and land ownership on the *pampa*.

The decade and a half following the Great Depression saw important changes in the image and position of the landowning class. While the conservative governments of this period, at least until 1943, generally protected and promoted their interests, popular discontent against them grew substantially, as did pressure for some kind of land distribution to break up the large estates of the wealthiest *estancieros* and *hacendados*. Increasingly, instead of being perceived as the “progressive” elite of the turn of the century, they were seen by many as selfish, backward, and exploitative. More significantly, the depression had underscored for Argentine leaders the need to diversify the economy and to promote more aggressively and actively the nation’s industrial development. As a result, by the end of the 1930s, industry had replaced agriculture as the main driving force of the Argentine economy, and industry and business, not ownership of land, provided the main sources of income for the nation’s wealthiest families. A kind of coup de grace occurred in late 1943 when the military government of the time enacted legislation to protect the rights of tenant farmers and thereby fundamentally changed landowning patterns in the countryside. The result, according to Hora, was that while “There was no explicit agrarian reform in the two decades after the end of World War II, [...] division of large properties went further in Argentina than in several Latin American countries that underwent formal agrarian reform programmes.” (pp. 237–238) Nonetheless, as Hora also observes, landownership and the traditional families associated with it still enjoy a substantial measure of social cachet with Argentina. In his words, “the allure associated with landownership remains a central element in the self-definition of the upper classes, and to an extent, of the country in general” (p. 239).

Hora’s work, in sum, is both a very useful description and analysis and a suggestive and provocative attempt to revise standard and often over-simplified views of Argentina’s landowning elite. Its strengths are numerous. The research is extensive and impressive, the story is placed firmly and clearly within the context of Argentine political and economic history, it is told in an interesting and engaging manner, and there are many stimulating comparative insights as the author shows his good grasp of other American and European

examples. Hora also does a very effective job of showing, in some detail, the complicated and often conflictive relationship between the landowners and the state, successfully undermining the common assumption that there was always a strong correlation between the two and that Argentine governments were simply reflections of elite interests.

While this work will be of particular interest to Argentine specialists, it should also appeal to those who study landowning elites in other countries. For the general reader, it offers a compelling account of a group that has been both glorified and vilified, but which also directed one of the most remarkable economic transformations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and whose legacy and influence still hovers over one of Latin America's most important and perplexing nations. It also shows that studies of Latin American elites can still offer new challenges and opportunities for scholarly investigation.

*Richard J. Walter*

NELSON, BRUCE. *Divided We Stand. American Workers and the Struggle for Black Equality.* [Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America.] Princeton University Press, Princeton [etc.] 2001. xlv, 388 pp. Ill. \$39.50; £24.95; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859003091041

No subject in US labor history has drawn more recent attention than the complex intersection of race and class. And no contributors to this literature have made more of a splash than those who have embraced "whiteness studies". Highlighting "the wages of whiteness", these scholars have argued that white workers used unions to defend their privileged place in the nation's social hierarchy. Bruce Nelson's wide-ranging, imaginative study of US longshoremen and steel workers is arguably the most important empirical study to emerge from the "whiteness" school to date.

Great passion fuels Nelson's effort to transcend the limitations he sees in most US labor history scholarship. The "largely unconscious" tendency of labor historians to "portray the working class as white (and usually male)", and to "minimize the importance of race in writing the history of American workers" distorts our understanding of the past, he insists (p. xxii). By closely studying racial divisions among longshoremen and steelworkers, he seeks to make race central to the narrative of US working-class history and to recognize the extent to which white workers helped construct structures of racial oppression. His findings lead Nelson to conclude that the "self-activity of the longshoremen themselves was vital, and sometimes decisive, in shaping patterns of ethnic and racial inequality on the waterfront" (p. 4); in steel, he emphasizes "the intractability of a [white] shop-floor culture that was hostile to racial equality" (p. 259).

Limning racial subordination in steel and longshoring, Nelson draws upon a wealth of secondary sources, archives, and interviews. He begins with an examination of the nineteenth-century struggle of Irish immigrants to control New York docks, to "redefine the jobs they appropriated as 'white'" (p. 20), and drive blacks from longshoring. He then surveys New York, New Orleans, and other ports during the twentieth-century reign of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), a corrupt union that admitted blacks but did little for them. Nor does the putatively progressive West Coast union, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) come off much better. Studying ILWU Local 13 in San Pedro, California, Nelson argues that the union subordinated the interests of black workers. This became obvious, Nelson argues, when

Local 13 approved the deregistration of hundreds of dockers with the least seniority (disproportionately affecting blacks) during a slack labor market in 1946 only to take back some whites later regardless of seniority.

In the steel mills of Ohio's Mahoning Valley the story was equally depressing. East European steel workers, who "ceased being Hunkies by becoming white" (p. 146), fought to defend their industry's Balkanized system of job ladders at the expense of African Americans who had been consigned to the lowest-paying, most dangerous departments. The contracts won by the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) codified this hierarchy: seniority accumulated in one department was not transferable to another – a fact that disadvantaged black workers. While the USWA claimed to support racial equality, it did little for blacks who protested their under-representation in well-paying jobs. Rather, the union's record combined "self-congratulation, even outright fabrication, with increasingly lackluster performance" (p. 226). Such dissembling scarcely troubled white workers, Nelson contends, for they "must have known all too well that genuine equality for blacks, based upon their ability and seniority, could impose a cost on *them*" (p. 206).

This book strikes a blow against what Nelson calls the "myth of working-class interracialism" (p. 220). But this myth is not as widely held by US labor historians as he implies. By jousting with this chimera, Nelson unfortunately suggests an equally erroneous countermyth: one that exaggerates the unifying power of white workers' racism. The critiques Nelson advances against USWA and ILA lethargy and inaction on civil rights issues in this book are justified. But his dogged effort to foreground white workers' racist agency often leads him to simplify or overstep the available evidence. At least three problems call Nelson's conclusions into question.

First, in his efforts to discover "workers' own agency in building and defending the ramparts of racially based inequality" (p. 293), Nelson adopts an implausibly unencumbered view of workers' agency. Bosses are present in this book up to the point when unions are firmly established. Thereafter, they virtually disappear, leaving the impression that union workers organized their workplaces at will. Tellingly, the postwar strikes that rocked the steel industry, including the 1959 walkout triggered by management's efforts to split the USWA over the crucial Section 2-B of the basic steel contract (the largest strike in US history) are unmentioned. In saving 2-B in 1959, the USWA desperately fought off a management effort to eliminate jobs by reorganizing work processes, a fight full of significance for low-seniority blacks. This fight holds no interest for Nelson. By ignoring that and similar battles, however, he implies that white workers defended their "narrowly defined seniority system" (p. 250) within a context where union negotiators could have favorably altered job ladders without concern that management would exploit the process. In fact, their bosses gave white steel workers many good reasons besides racism to fear tinkering with their seniority system. Neglecting those reasons – which were reconfirmed daily in workers' dealings with management – only beclouds the extent to which racism was at issue in steel.

Second, with little evidence, the book belabors the notion that whites had a psychological stake in defending their labor-market positions. Thus, white steel workers "unable to maintain the appropriate physical distance" from non-whites are said to have been "compelled to redraw that psychological line all the more sharply" (p. 151). Thus nineteenth-century Irish dockers' attempts to "redefine the jobs they appropriated as 'white'" are said to reflect their desire to "avoid the 'taint of blackness' and escape the

heavy psychological burden of ‘slaving like a nigger’” (pp. 20–21). But these scantily-sourced inferences lead Nelson to ignore plausible labor-market-based explanations for workers’ behavior, such as the classic effort by one vulnerable group (like the Irish) to control jobs by excluding more vulnerable competitors. Nelson consistently downplays such explanations in his effort to show that “economism can neither illuminate our history adequately nor point the way toward a better future” (p. 293). However well-intentioned, his single-minded concern with race leads to a view of the worker as “racial man” which is every bit as distorted as the “economic man” posited by the Commons-Perlman school of US labor history.

Third, Nelson’s analysis often minimizes the importance of context. For example, he interprets ILWU Local 13’s seniority-based postwar layoff, which disproportionately affected blacks, as though it were similar to Irish dockers’ attacks on black rivals in the 1840s. White ILWU men, Nelson argues, simply “accepted [...] enforced inequality as natural and necessary”. In their view, like that of their Irish forebears, “whiteness merged with class” (p. 120). But seeing the 1946 action through the lens of whiteness leads Nelson to downplay evidence that puts the ILWU in different light. Thus, when ILWU leaders objected to Local 13’s re-employment of whites ahead of higher-seniority blacks, Nelson says (without quoting sources) that this action was triggered only by the “possibility of a lawsuit” (p. 116). This casual dismissal of the ILWU’s commitment to the seniority principle is unwarranted. Nelson is right to call the ILWU’s leaders to task for failing at times to live up to their own ideals. But the poorly contextualized example of Local 13 wrongly leaves the impression that the ILWU and its seniority system functioned as a ruse to buttress white privilege. This leaves Nelson ill-prepared to make sense of black workers’ fierce loyalty to the ILWU. Yet, as blacks well knew, it was the very attempt to reorganize the dockside labor hierarchy by seniority rather than race that distinguished ILWU piers from those of 1840s New York. Preserving that context is vital if we are to understand why blacks stuck with the union despite their legitimate beefs with it.

In attempting to shed light on “American workers and the struggle for black equality”, Nelson appears unaware of the limitations of his own chosen contexts. There are reasons to be wary of grand conclusions drawn from the distinctive worlds of docks and steel mills. The casual labor market that dominated docks and the segmented internal labor markets that prevailed in steel stood near opposite poles in the spectrum of US employment practices. At either end of that spectrum, the pervasive racialization of US labor markets was compounded: vulnerable white casuals fought more vulnerable blacks to control the shape up; the intricate labor hierarchy in steel made it easier for whites to permanently designate dirty, dangerous jobs as “black”. But more complex patterns obtained in mines, meat-packing, and auto plants, or public employment. Any master-narrative of the US race–class dynamics should bear such differences in mind.

Finally, this book minimizes the macro-economic context within which American class–race relations were forged. Nelson deplores the tendency of progressive union leaders to “understand race in essentially economic and ‘class-essentialist’ terms”, and to believe wishfully that “aggressive government intervention to bring about ‘full employment’ and ‘permanent prosperity’ would create the climate that would make equal opportunity and racial harmony possible” (p. 201). Perhaps union leaders argued for full employment in order to shunt explosive racial issues to the side, as Nelson suggests. Still, those leaders had a larger political-economic vision missing from this book. Notably, Nelson does not analyze the massive national job losses since 1945 in steel or longshoring

– losses that undermined black aspirations more profoundly than the policies of the ILWU or the racially backward USWA. If it is fair to criticize union leaders for their failure to confront racism directly (and it is), it is equally fair to expect critics to either employ a macro-economic analysis as broad as the union leaders' or suggest how we might eliminate racial inequality *without* such macro-economic policies.

Make no mistake: this is an important book. Nelson's narrative amply demonstrates his vast knowledge, big-hearted passion for justice, and admirable willingness to re-examine his own past assumptions. The sheer humanity of Nelson's vision, vividness of his writing, and fervency of his condemnation of racism command attention. But this book's greatest importance may ultimately reside in its revelation of the limited degree to which "whiteness studies" can shed light on US labor history.

*Joseph A. McCartin*

MERCIER, LAURIE. *Anaconda. Labor, Community, and Culture in Montana's Smelter City.* [The Working Class in American History.] University of Illinois Press, Urbana [etc.] 2001. xi, 301 pp. Ill. \$49.95. (Paper: \$24.95); DOI: 10.1017/S0020859003101046

In this beautifully written book, Laurie Mercier brings to life the voices of the men and women who struggled to develop and maintain a community of socially conscious trade unionists in the isolated metal mining town of Anaconda, Montana – for one hundred years the site of the largest opencast copper mine and smelting plant in the world. Here, until they fell victim to deindustrialization and changes in the global price of metal, four generations of ore miners, smelter workers, and laborers – most of them Irish, Slavic, or Scandinavian in origin – toiled in the shadow of the 585-foot high smelter smokestack, which dominated the surrounding landscape.

Mercier passes quickly over Anaconda's pre-World-War-I history, which – like that of its near neighbor, Butte – has already been written up by historians of anarcho-syndicalism and the Western Federation of Miners. She focuses instead on the history of the town from the period of the New Deal, which enabled the Mine, Mill, and Smelters' International Union to challenge the Anaconda Copper Company's domination of their lives, through the high point of copper production in World War II, to the period of slow decline which marked the postwar years. The result is a highly readable study which weaves oral history together with written sources to recreate the daily lives of working people in a sophisticated and intelligent way. Taking the concept of community as her central focus, Mercier explores the multiple identities which Anacondans displayed as men and women, churchgoers, union members, and patriotic Americans during the halcyon years of World War II, when maintaining a high level of copper output became a touchstone of America's war effort. She describes the strikes which enabled Local 117 to force employer concessions over such matters as silicosis and safety issues, and the bitter jurisdictional fights that occurred when the CIO expelled the International Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers' Union for its pro-communist stance in 1950, and turned Local 117 over to the United Steel Workers of America. These conflicts undermined local loyalties, and weakened the ability of Anaconda's copper workers to resist the shutting down of the plant in 1980.

But union detail is not the book's main strength. Instead, it lies in the breadth and



sensitivity of Mercier's delineation of the miners' efforts to develop their own, autonomous way of life. By 1940, Local 117 had played a major role in developing a decent system of local schools and clubs, and in maintaining a strong spirit of independence in the face of the paternalistic Anaconda Copper Company. Mercier is particularly good on the lives of the local women – of whom she is an obvious partisan – both in mobilizing the strong sense of community that knit the city's families together, and in challenging male domination at the workplace. Like "Rosie the Riveters" elsewhere during World War II, Anaconda's wives and daughters took jobs as nail-drivers and smelter-tenders during the course of the conflict, facing down the scepticism of the men. But given the dangers of copper smelting, the male pride it invoked, and the highly masculine culture of the town, the male breadwinner ethic won an easy victory when the men came back from the army in 1945 and the women relinquished their jobs. Indeed, it is in her subtle analysis of the impact of the Cold War, and of the conflicts it spawned between the collectivist traditions of the IMMSW, and the copper company's demands for anticommunism and social conformity, that the main interest of Anaconda lies. Local Catholic priests, backed up by clubs such as the Kiwanis, the American Legion, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, hammered away at the communist connections of the local Mine, Mill, and Smelters' Union. In the end, they forced most of the smelter workers either to abandon the union, or else to switch their loyalties to the "all-American" United Steel Workers. Perhaps the most dramatic result of this switch was the successful plea by the war widows in the town that their husbands be buried, not in the local churchyard, but in a military cemetery next to Anaconda's courthouse. But the victory of the right in the 1950s was neither sudden nor complete. For example, the local Fraternal Order of Eagles, while it agreed to resist "Communism, Fascism, and all other isms except Americanism" (p. 118), maintained its public support for baby clinics, youth clubs, and old-age pensions – an especially important programme for the male victims of silicosis. It is details such as this that make Laurie Mercier's Anaconda a distinguished example of the community study genre.

*John H.M. Laslett*

PANDEY, GYANENDRA. *Remembering Partition. Violence, Nationalism and History in India.* [Contemporary South Asia, vol. 7.] Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [etc.] 2001. xiii, 218 pp. £45.00. (Paper: £15.95.); DOI: 10.1017/S0020859003111042

The Partition remembered in this book is the division of the South-Asian subcontinent and the establishment of India and Pakistan as two independent but separated nation-states in 1947. The singular violence that accompanied these events was not directed against the departing colonial rulers but was part of a civil war, with Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs ranged against one another in a bloody fratricide. Bengal was divided between India and Pakistan (with another partition at the birth of Bangladesh in 1971), and the Punjab, the Sikh homeland, was split down the middle. Because of the incredible acts of rape, torture, and humiliation that took place, some observers have used the term "holocaust" when remembering Partition.

Survivors were unable easily to set aside the memory of this violence and remained mentally hurt for most of their lives. Perhaps the most serious of its consequences was that

Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs were all redefined by the process of Partition, first as butchers and other devious types, but most fundamentally simply as Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs. The events in Garhmukhteshwar in Uttar Pradesh (November 1947), which are analysed by the author as one of two larger case studies, have become a metaphor for an undying enmity and antagonism between two different kinds of people, who for centuries had lived together but now had to discover that they belonged to two different nations. The author therefore feels a need to explore the meaning of Partition in terms of the new social arrangements, new consciousnesses and new subjectivities to which it gave rise.

Over the last few years, Partition has received the attention of a growing number of historians. In part, this new interest has been enabled by the passage of time and an acknowledgement that the number of survivors able to relate their personal experiences is fast declining. In addition, Nehru's vision of a modern, secular welfare state has come to an end, and India is seeing the emergence of exceptionally strong, religious right-wing organizations, which led to large-scale communal riots in 1984 (after the murder of Indira Gandhi), and 1992 (after the demolition of a mosque in Ayodhya), to mention just the most major incidents. Communal violence has become part of life in India, and historians can no longer make an all-too-facile separation between Partition and violence, a distinction that survivors seldom make. The author of this book, Gyanendra Pandey, is not one of those who wish to close their eyes to the larger violence that underlies the history of Partition. He is Professor of anthropology and history at Johns Hopkins University, founder member of the Subaltern Studies group of historians, and author of *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Delhi, 1990). In his concern to recover the history of Partition, he provides a closely detailed account of what the contemporary and later records tell us about what transpired in and around 1947. In this endeavour, he rejects any distinction between the cause and the event of Partition, since such a distinction might suggest that the investigation of the former is the primary task of the historian, remaining overwhelmingly concerned with causes, consigning violence to a realm outside the domain of history.

There were at least three different stages in the making of Partition. The first of these may be discerned in the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan from 1940 onwards, based on Jinnah's claim that "Mussalmans are a nation according to any definition of a nation". The second partition entailed the splitting up of the Muslim-majority provinces of Punjab and Bengal, as finally accepted by the leadership of the Indian National Congress in March 1947. And, thirdly, the official Partition in August 1947, with hundreds of thousands of people on the road all over northern India, because they felt caught on the wrong side of the new border. After an elaborate discussion of the evidence of the historian, distinguishing testimony (a form of remembering) from rumour (a form of making-happen-by-telling), the author offers a detailed description of the mass killings in two different places, the small town of Garhmukhteshwar and the city of Delhi (1947–1948). In the final chapters, he returns to what might be called his favourite topic – the construction of community and nation after Partition, including an interesting discussion of the figure of the "nationalist Muslim" versus the "Hindu nationalist".

One of the author's main concerns is how to write the moment of violent struggle back into history. "I wish to ask how one might write a history of an event involving genocidal violence, following all the rules and procedures of disciplinary, 'objective' history, and yet to convey something of the impossibility of the enterprise." (pp. 4–5) Crucial in this

mission statement are three elements: the use of violence, the rules of the discipline, and the ultimate impossibility of writing a violent struggle back into history.

There is much talk of violence in this book. Pornographies of violence might present danger in the present context by spreading the poison, but the author refuses to surrender this field of history entirely to right-wing historians. Some of his accounts, however, sound disturbingly familiar: many of the 1947–1948 incidents were far from spontaneous, but pre-planned. Not only the police but also the military stood by as passive onlookers, and a special train carrying Hindu pilgrims from the annual fair at Garhmukhteshwar was attacked and looted and the passengers manhandled at a nearby railway station. This latter incident strongly reminds us of the burning of a train at Godhra station in Gujarat (February 2002), which ignited a wave of almost unimaginable malevolence throughout the state.

There is also much discussion about the discipline of history. Pandey has consulted a wide array of sources: department files in New Delhi and London, newspaper reports, notes by British and Indian officials, both civil and military, commentaries by leaders from the Congress and Muslim League, and interviews with eyewitnesses who survived the ordeal, though their number is now rather modest. Following Ranajit Das Gupta, founding father of the Subaltern Studies group, the author distinguishes between three levels of historical discourse, from reports from the front, as it were, to what he describes with some *dédain* as history proper, with the full paraphernalia of footnotes, objective distance, and scientific language. All these sources suffer from inherent limitations, as the author does not stop reminding us. The Information Reports, filed with the police by surviving victims, were primarily intended to identify the attackers and to appeal to the state to perform its duties of protection and punishment, while, at the secondary level, political commentaries are mainly concerned to assign responsibility for disorders to particular communities or political movements. In the tertiary discourse, there is much discussion about the correct number of casualties, but I fully agree with Pandey that it is not clear why it is easier to live with 500,000 than with a larger or smaller figure. His hope is that all the quotations and reports will help to convey something of the enormity of the event. This brings us to what he calls the impossibility of the enterprise, which comes out more convincingly than he may have intended.

The book suffers from some unavoidable limitations, as the author himself points out in his introduction. He does no more than signal new questions; much of the detailed research remains to be done. Also, owing to the strained relations between India and Pakistan and the consequent visa problems, Pandey has had to restrict himself to just present-day India. Within India, he had no difficulty moving around and doing research, but here the limited extent of his own linguistic abilities forced him to draw upon material mainly from the northern and north-western parts of India. This emphasis on the north excludes any reference to the mass violence following the integration of the Muslim state of Hyderabad into India, a delicate but neglected episode.

But most important of all, catching the moment of violence and writing it back into history does indeed become an impossible enterprise if the available sources are systematically deconstructed in a way that assumes they were primarily intended to obtain specific results, be it material compensation or political self-justification. The extensive descriptions of violent scenes are horrible and disgusting, but their effect is considerably mitigated by the author's consequent criticism of all sources, even suggesting that the general discourse on Partition might be a gigantic rumour presented as testimony.

What remains is the feeling that the sources disclose more about the informants, with their hidden agenda and preconceived ideas, than about what happened on the spot. Just one example. The author mentions some killings by strangulation. But when a British lieutenant-general compares these murders with the ritual method of the Thugs (suppressed by the British in the nineteenth century), we hear nothing further about these strangulations and more about the way in which this general's mind is supposed to be working. The description of violence (death by strangulation) and the deconstruction of evidence (reading the mind of a general) do not seem to go comfortably together.

*Dick Kooiman*