

## BOOK REVIEWS

Population and Society in Western European Port-Cities, c. 1650–1939. Ed. By Richard Lawton and Robert Lee. [Liverpool Studies in European Population, vol 2.] Liverpool University Press, Liverpool 2002. xx, 385 pp. Maps. £49.95. (Paper: £18.95.); DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004011538

Urbanization can be considered one of the main components in the demographic change of western Europe in the modern period – the unprecedented population growth of the nineteenth century was directly associated with the rapid urban expansion that took place throughout the region. Whereas in the early seventeenth century – apart from some intriguing exceptions like the Netherlands – only a small proportion of western Europe’s population lived in cities and towns with over 10,000 inhabitants, at the end of the eighteenth century this pattern had been transformed into a significant urban network, characterized by a relatively large and growing population. It was the early nineteenth century, however, that really marked the beginning of a demographic transformation in Europe. The century that followed was to be characterized by unprecedented population growth and urban expansion, in combination with an acceleration in large-city growth – a process in which each individual state followed its own course. However, the overall development of nineteenth-century urbanization led to a process of general convergence: on the eve of the twentieth century, European states were dominated by national capitals, major ports and regional cities in highly industrialized regions.

Richard Lawton and Robert Lee, the volume’s editors, make it clear in their introduction to this book that if one accepts that urban population processes are essential in the analysis of demographic and social change, it is vital to our *understanding* that specific hypotheses are tested empirically at a micro level – i.e. at the level of individual cities. In this volume the editors choose to carry out such an analysis by focusing on a specific type of city: port cities. In earlier work, Lawton and Lee posited the existence of an identifiable typology of cities, each with its own demographic, economic and social characteristics, and useful therefore in analysing urban population development.<sup>1</sup> The editors claim that within this framework of typologies port cities are all the more interesting because of their critical role in urban development in western Europe: within most European states the role of port cities within overall urban development seems evident – for example, in 1801 twenty-one of Britain’s fifty-four largest towns (with populations in excess of 10,000) were seaports.

In the volume’s ten micro-level case studies of port cities (Glasgow: Gibb; Genoa: Felloni; Liverpool: Lawton; Malmö: Fridlizius; Trieste: Cattaruzza; Portsmouth: Stapleton; Bremen: Lee and Marschalck; Hamburg: Wischermann; Nantes: Fahy; and Cork: O’Brien) each contributor focuses on the demographic profile of these port cities in combination with other features, such as the local economy and labour market, social conditions, and the ideology of merchant capital.

The case studies make it clear that despite the fact that distinctions in the development of

1. R. Lawton and R. Lee (eds), *Urban Population Development in Western Europe from the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Century* (Liverpool, 1989).

individual port cities can be made, the overall conclusion must be that the increasing maritime commerce of the nineteenth century was one of the major thriving forces behind the urban expansion of that time. In most cases the population of port cities more than doubled, predominantly as a result of large immigration. Migrants originating from the direct hinterland, as well as large numbers of long-distance migrants from around the world, travelled to port cities in search of work, attracted by a seemingly continuous demand for unskilled labour. The consequences of the combination of rapid population growth, lack of decent housing – resulting in overcrowding – and unhealthy and hazardous working conditions at the docks were unmistakable: each port city was characterized by high mortality rates. Port cities were also disproportionately hit by diseases such as cholera. In Glasgow, for instance, cholera claimed 3,000 victims in the space of less than ten months. The high migration levels and the role of port cities as centres of transport and distribution meant that such cities played a crucial role as transmitters of epidemics as well.

An additional characteristic shared by port cities and considered by the contributors – although to a lesser extent than their demographic features – was the *governing* of port cities. The authors show clearly that many of the port cities were dominated by rather small elite groups of entrepreneurs, in Trieste called the *corpo mercantile*. This specific way of governing a city was of course a feature by no means unique to nineteenth-century port cities; an almost oligarchic governance of port cities can also be seen in the second half of the twentieth century, for instance in Rotterdam.

Although this book offers a good insight into the demographic and institutional development of port cities, it leaves one with a slight sense of dissatisfaction. What is simply unsatisfactory about the book is its periodization. Despite the long and promising period announced in the volume's title (c. 1650–1939), both the editors and the contributors stick to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the main focus of their research – with Barry Stapleton's high-quality contribution on Portsmouth and, to a lesser extent, Felloni's chapter on Genoa the sole exceptions. That demographic historians consider the nineteenth century to be the golden age of research – and perhaps consequently the early modern period as the Dark Ages – is not perhaps very surprising: during the nineteenth century the availability of demographic sources increased almost exponentially – and, of course, it was during this century that many of the most significant demographic changes took place. Nonetheless, the tendency to focus almost exclusively on the industrial period starts to become problematic when you want to show developments over time. In that respect it is nothing less than striking that Stapleton's contribution on Portsmouth offers the best insight as far as the overall and long-time development of port cities is concerned. While all the contributions provide a clear insight into the specific problems concerning nineteenth-century port cities, including the problem noted above that port cities were all highly prone to epidemics and other health risks, and that the economic development of ports influenced the employment structure, it is Stapleton's contribution that presents an insight into the transformation of an early modern port city into a naval centre after the industrial revolution.

This transformation – from early modern port city to a modern metropolis – warrants more attention in this book. Not only because of all the demographic changes that must have occurred during this period of transition, but also because of the probable shifts that will have taken place in the governance of port cities – a transformation that is even more interesting for non-naval port cities than it is for a naval base like Portsmouth. In

particular, in the case of cities such as Hamburg and Bremen – which had long histories as port cities even prior to industrialization – a longer timeframe would have been appropriate. In that respect, it is equally regrettable that one of Europe's main maritime centres in the early modern period – Amsterdam – is omitted from a volume that aspires to cover the development of port cities from c. 1650 to 1939. Its inclusion would also have ensured a more equal geographical distribution of case studies. The Dutch capital underwent some major changes at the end of the eighteenth century, both demographic – for instance in the field of immigration – as well as institutional. It would therefore have provided an interesting counterbalance to the rising stars of the nineteenth century, such as Glasgow.

To sum up, if you are interested in a study of the demographic changes within port cities during the nineteenth century and their role in the large-scale urban expansion of that period, this book can be recommended. It offers high-quality contributions, each providing a great deal of demographic information and comprehensive analyses of the transformation and expansion of nineteenth-century urban western Europe. This volume presents a good insight into the consequences of this large-scale economic expansion for human welfare, social conditions, and the development of labour markets in port cities. Lawton and Lee's typology of towns – in this case port cities – combined with international comparisons has proven its worth, and definitely has added value. If, however, you are expecting a book that contains a long-term analysis of the development of port cities from early modern times to the 1930s – as the title suggests – you will most certainly be disappointed. Such a book has yet to be written. Let us hope we need not wait too long.

Jelle van Lottum

The People in Arms. Military Myth and National Mobilization since the French Revolution. Ed. by Daniel Moran and Arthur Waldron. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [etc.] 2003. xi, 268 pp. Ill. £47.50; \$65.00; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004021534

In 1924, Joachim von Stülpnagel, a young staff officer in the Germany army, reflected on his nation's defeat in 1918. A country on the edge of defeat, he argued, had to consider "new ways" of waging war, ones in which "any distinction between combatants [and non-combatants] disappears, and all persons and all things become means of waging war" (p. 148). We now call this form of armed conflict "total war", and as this volume of essays shows, many different people of varied political outlook considered the *levée en masse* as a last resort of falling regimes, or the only choice for technologically or politically weak movements seeking independence or the overthrow of foreign occupation.

"Total war" here means the rallying of the people to the defence of the homeland, whatever the consequences. Two essays place this phenomenon in the context of the French revolutionary wars; later essays capture the reverberations of these developments. As Michael Geyer shows in his stimulating account of the German discussion of the *levée en masse* at the end of World War I, very conservative people were prepared to consider this idea, but ultimately it was rejected by Max von Baden as a blueprint for the destruction of Germany itself. Geyer here makes an interesting case, though possibly an exaggerated one, for the decoupling of the notion of mass mobilization from the revolutionary left. In

doing so, he provides a clear prologue to Nazi thinking about total war, prefigured by Carl Schmitt among others.

When placed in the context of revolutionary war, the notion of the *levée en masse* takes on a more conventional colouration. The essays in this book tend to see the phenomenon of mass mobilization as more a myth than a measurable military reality. The notion of the people in arms mattered as a mobilizing story, but the evidence of military encounters in revolutionary and Stalinist Russia, or in Vietnam, or in Algeria, does not support the view that the people control “people’s wars”. Armies do, and so do the political authorities which control them. The most intriguing instance of this mythical element in the history of the *levée en masse* is that developed here and elsewhere by John Horne. He shows that the Prussian army’s fear of partisan warfare by *francs tireurs* led directly to their justification of reprisals against civilians carrying on this “barbaric” form of warfare. Even more ominously, this image of the people out of uniform but “treacherously” attacking German troops lay behind the iron fist which they used in Belgium and France in 1914.

In the cases of Algeria, China and Vietnam, examined here, revolutionary movements used a mélange of ideology, popular mobilization, and anti-imperialist sentiment to undermine stronger adversaries. In all these cases, and others not dealt with in this book, for example, Palestine, Sri Lanka, India, and Kenya, the brutality of the occupying or colonial authorities grew out of their assumption that the “people” were harbouring “terrorists” and “criminals” waging war against them. The mirage of a people in revolt was (and is) used time and again to justify collective punishment and reprisal.

The force of this collection, which grew out of a seminar at Princeton University, is to urge us to see mass mobilization as a cultural phenomenon of relatively limited military significance. This overall thesis is persuasive only in part, but the project of mixing cultural and military history is important. It is simply no longer tenable for “hard” military historians to ignore “soft” cultural forms – as if Clausewitz wrote in a vacuum; nor is it the case that cultural historians bypass war as a distasteful subject too brutal for their contemplation. It is painfully apparent that scholars of different interests have to work together, or else the subject of war, so polymorphous, will elude us. And as the emergence of new kinds of transnational violence attests, this is a failure of the imagination we simply cannot afford to tolerate.

Jay Winter

Enfants au travail. Attitudes des élites en Europe occidentale et méditerranéenne aux XIXe et XXe siècles. Ed. by Roland Caty. [Le temps de l’histoire.] Publications de l’Université de Provence, Aix-en-Provence 2002. 278 pp. € 26.00; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004031530

HINDMAN, HUGH D. Child Labor. An American History. [Issues in Work and Human Resources.] M.E. Sharpe, Armonk (NY) [etc.] 2002. xi, 431 pp. Ill. £70.95; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004041537

The problem in the long history of mankind has not been that children were working, it was that the work of individuals was insufficient to maintain others as well and thus to allow specific groups within the lineage to remain idle. It was not until the formation of an industrialized capitalist society was well under way that, for various reasons, work done by

children (and women for certain types of work) came to be seen as a social and economic problem. Trade-union leaders and the social reform movement in the nineteenth century started a long process of mobilizing and conscientization, which included the undoing of the policies of the first reform movement of the eighteenth and much of the nineteenth century. That reform movement had made a serious effort to put poor and orphaned children to work. Employers willing to engage children were seen as benefactors, both in the United States and on the European continent, as both the books being reviewed illustrate. Gradually, a growing moral repugnance set in, and debates intensified and swelled.

For obvious reasons, debates conducted in the English language have tended to miss the rich body of research that has been published in other languages. The book edited by Roland Cay would easily qualify for translation into English so as to make it accessible to a wider audience. It has a dozen contributions on various districts in France, and additional articles on Belgium, Spain, Greece, and Italy. It covers a range of industries and services in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The focus is on the role played by the entrepreneurial class and by the social and political elite in gradually accepting child labour as a problem and in even more gradually devising effective means to eradicate it. That role can be summarized by the headings of the three parts of this book: law-making, the captive labour force, and the formation, disciplining, and socialization of the child.

The two articles on Greece and Italy (Lombardy) in the section on legislation do not deal exactly with the history of child labour legislation, but rather with statistics on the incidence of child labour – statistics that, as the authors suggest, can only be used as broad approximations since they are supported by sources with different categories and sampling methods. This problem in quantifying child labour, which also plagues present-day treatment of the child labour problem, arises partly because of the suggestive data put together by well-meaning anti-child-labour activists. The horrendous exploitation and maltreatment were real enough, but the question that lingers is whether these Dickensian tableaux were representative for all regions and for all industries.

The article on Lombardy (Milan, Bergamo) by Antonia Pasi offers a clear analysis of why child labour was important, particularly in the textile mills, and why it declined (from 38 per cent of the labour force in 1876 to 18 per cent in 1903). Child labour reached its peak in the period of proto-industrialization, and it happened because the abysmally low incomes of rural families under the agricultural sharecropping system compelled them to take on nonagricultural activities. As a rule, this was done by women and children (p. 99): “Industrial employment for a long time remained complementary to work in agriculture, and it seems that the phenomenon of the worker-peasant has endured longer than elsewhere.” Child labour as such marked the transition from precapitalism to capitalism, and faded when technological changes and a general rise in incomes changed the social structure drastically.

How serious a problem was child labour in the history of European and North American industrialization? Very serious, it appears if one goes through the various manifestos and reports written in countries across Europe. Not all reports and enquiries on child labour in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were an approximation of the real state of affairs though. Heading many of these enquiries, particularly if undertaken by advocates of active intervention, were public figures who, in their endeavour to put a case for regulation, focused on the worst-affected regions and industries and used the examples of staggering abuse as representative of all working children. Witnesses were selected and

primed to present the bleakest account of the factory system. Most articles in this book do not feed on the extremes and do not quantify the child-labour problem. They focus on the debates among the charitable and not-so-charitable elites, and thereby provide the reader with interesting material on the working conditions of child labourers and with an account of public intervention, which usually came rather late and rather hesitantly.

The transition from child labour to child education was a protracted one, in England and in the USA as well as in France and its neighbouring countries. Official surveys and reports, parliamentary initiatives and public discussions engaged the various actors with a stake in the field. Although some employers and some Members of Parliament gradually moved to the side of the reform movement, initially child labour was, for various reasons, actually a cause to be defended. One reason undoubtedly was that work ethics were considered to be superior to the disorder of backstreet ethics. In France, the first law on working hours was enacted in 1841, restricting the working day to eight hours for those below the age of twelve and prohibiting the employment of those below the age of nine. Between 1841 and 1874, when the minimum working age was increased to twelve (ten if the child did not work more than six hours), the attitude of employers changed drastically, from privileging work over education to a position that supported elementary (and religious) education as a formative step. The period marked the transition from the Christian discourse of the *économie charitable* to the modern discourse of an *économie sociale*.

The organizations of employers, at least in their public statements, started to see the advantage of keeping children in school, at least up to the age of ten. However, legislation was not necessarily implemented. The labour inspectorate started functioning in the late nineteenth century, but, as a number of articles illustrate, the official machinery did not always see the need for drastic intervention. As long as certain industries had difficulties switching to a new labour regime and as long as poor families needed additional income, the government machinery was lenient and child labour dragged on.

Some of the articles draw an interesting line demarcating the positions within and between the technical professions, for example doctors and engineers, who were sitting on committees of investigation. The detailed analysis of the documents available in the municipal and departmental archives has provided for a good survey of the different views taken by these professionals. The church authorities were less divided, it seems. From a number of contributions we learn that religion was clearly on the side of the employers. The employers patronized the ecclesiastics. As one of them is claimed to have said: for maintaining social order, one priest is equal to a hundred policemen.

In addition to changes in legislation, quite a few interesting experiments were conducted with those children who had fallen to the responsibility of society. The children of the fatherland (*enfants de la patrie*), as the orphans of France were called, were taken care of by charitable organizations, but in return they were sent out to work "to learn a profession". Unfortunately, as a consequence, many of these children were dulled by the work, grew up without any knowledge of God and without any respect for His laws. Agricultural colonies for boys, and housework in respected families for girls, came up as convenient solutions. It was expected that, through their supervised labour, these children would pay for their upkeep and develop into God-fearing and righteous adults. Five articles describe in detail the processes of reintegrating abandoned and marginalized children through work placements.

As the last series of articles in this book illustrate, as the nineteenth century progressed it

was increasingly realized that education rather than work could play a role in controlling and socializing children, and that experiments with Sunday schools and evening schools had failed to instil the socially deprived children with the right spirit. Modern society needed more education: it needed full-time and compulsory education. The introduction of compulsory education (in France in 1882, and in Belgium only in 1914) was a good measure of the sincerity of the industrial elite and the political elite in abolishing child labour. Their original position was that the state should not interfere with such private matters and should stick to its core business of order and security, and that education was of no use to working-class children. They grudgingly veered over first to the position that part-time schooling after a day at work would be good enough for the needs of working people. However, by the turn of the century it was commonly accepted, by the Belgian bourgeoisie for example, on which there is an interesting article by Eliane Gubin, that education was an excellent instrument for streamlining the working class and building national cohesion. The mass of workers, and their children, needed to be integrated into the political and social system if they were to imbibe social values and understand their national duties.

As in Europe, the horrendous misuse of child labour in the United States could not possibly be blocked by the legal system. One of the differences was that child labour dragged on longer, a long way into the twentieth century. It took many decades before a federal law could be successfully enacted. A federal child labour law had been declared unconstitutional in 1916 and a second federal law was declared unconstitutional in 1922. Many debates took place in the decades before and after 1920, until finally, in 1941, the Fair Labor Standards Act was upheld. By that time, the law had become redundant because child labour had receded as a major social problem. Hindman (p. 64) summarizes: "the reform movement lost nearly all the major battles while steadily winning the war".

The debate around child labour legislation is one of the poignant elements in this momentous work by Hindman, but more detailed monographs have been written on this. There are, for example, the studies by Tom Ireland and Walter Trattner in particular.<sup>1</sup> Hindman does not make much use of such secondary literature. Writing the history of child labour in the United States is a reasonably comfortable job. From 1904 onwards the National Child Labor Committee, chaired by Felix Adler and with many prominent philanthropists on its board, conducted numerous studies and brought out many publications, pamphlets, and *The Child Labor Bulletin*, which was launched in 1912. In addition, hundreds of raw investigation reports and the photographs by the board member Lewis Hine (all available on microfilm in the Library of Congress) provide incredibly rich detail of the horrendous conditions across states and across industries. Though one of the earlier federal initiatives, a 1906 bill that aimed to ban the interstate commerce of goods produced by children, failed to attract the support of Theodore Roosevelt (US president from 1901 to 1909), the president nonetheless agreed to the federal backing of research on the extent of the problem. The Bureau of Labor then conducted a massive study and released nineteen volumes by 1913. Present-day sociologists and future historians could only wish that such systematic and rigorous documentation of child labour conditions were undertaken in countries where the problem exists today.

1. Tom Ireland, *Child Labor as a Relic of the Dark Ages* (New York, 1937); and Walter I. Trattner, *Crusade for the Children: A History of the National Child Labor Committee and Child Labor Reform in America* (Chicago, IL, 1970).

Hindman's book has a classic format: he first delineates the problem, and then deals with the legislation to ban child labour, before surveying a number of industries. He does all of this eloquently, constructing a case with sufficient empirical detail without losing sight of the various dilemmas involved. Drawing heavily on contemporary reports, Hindman provides a balanced picture of the magnitude, the horror, and the mechanisms in different trades and industries. Some of them have traditionally received more attention (for example child labour in mines, in the cotton mills, and in light manufacturing, particularly the glass industry). Others have traditionally received less attention. The chapters on tenement homework, the street trades, and the widespread use of child labour in agriculture are rich in empirical evidence, as documented by the National Child Labor Committee, and persuasive as well. Neither legislation nor technological change appear to have been decisive in the gradual disappearance of child labour: the product-specific treatment, for example in agriculture, establishes that different mechanisms were at work and that any explanation for the solution of the child labour problem needs to be a multi-causal one.

In many respects, America's history of child labour is similar to Europe's. As in Europe, legislation was tardy and full of loopholes. As in Europe, trade unions and philanthropists found industrialists and many law-makers ranged against them. As in Europe, legislation was often rendered ineffective through ineffectual expectations and enforcement regimes. As in Europe, the important role of children in many traditional industries was enduring. As in Europe, child labour was seen for a long time as part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

In one sense, North America was different. It has often been claimed that children have always worked. They have worked in tribal society and in feudal society, supporting the struggle to find food and learning skills that they would need as adults. In capitalist society, working children were taken out of the family trade, the home, and the farm and transferred to the factory. With the transition to capitalism, social structures collapsed. That was very much the case in America, where families lacked social moorings to start with. They had all come as immigrants, and the later entrants in particular were sucked into low-paid and gruelling jobs in mills and mines. "Industrialization's impact on the household was wrenching", writes Hindman (p. 33), and he uses statistics to show how, around 1900, more than one-fifth of children were economically active: "America's first industrial workers were predominantly women and children".

The final chapter of Hindman's book should have been dropped, since it presumes to be a study of "global child labor" but actually stops short of providing anything more than generalisms about supply and demand and about schooling as an alternative. On the other hand, its penultimate chapter, "America and Child Labor Today", should have been expanded. Although it is often suggested that the child labour problem has been solved in the US (and in other developed countries), the author suggests that in the street trades, in the re-emergence of sweatshops, and particularly in agriculture, the threat of the exploited child remains. He suggests (p. 294) that "proportionately nearly as many children in America work today as at the turn of the twentieth century". Unfortunately, there is little data and few studies to fall back on. In that sense, historical sources appear to provide more in the way of hard facts than our contemporary so-called information society.

*Kristoffel Lieten*



OWETSCHKIN, DIMITRIJ. *Conrad Schmidt, der Revisionismus und die sozialdemokratische Theorie. Zur theoretischen Entwicklung der Sozialdemokratie vor 1914. Mit einem Vorwort von Helga Grebing [Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für soziale Bewegungen: Schriftenreihe A: Darstellungen, Band 24.] Klartext Verlag, Essen 2002. 239 pp. € 34.00; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004051533*

Born in the eastern Prussian town of Königsberg as the son of a lawyer and freemason, Conrad Schmidt (1863–1932) belonged to the revisionist wing of the German SPD. His milieu had predestined him for an academic or political career. For having been involved in the revolution of 1848, his father had lost his job as a judge. The Schmidt family then came under socialist influence when the Eisenach faction led by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht gained a foothold in Königsberg. For the freethinking intellectual bourgeoisie the SPD symbolized the values and aims of the aborted revolution of 1848. Apparently, the Conrad family did not live in intellectual isolation. Conrad's sister, Käthe, married the socialist intellectual Karl Kollwitz. A close friend of the Schmidts, the university professor and Kant specialist, Emil Arnoldt, became the local SPD president. In 1887 or 1888, after having obtained a Ph.D. in philosophy and economics, Conrad Schmidt joined the SPD. He immediately travelled to London, where he participated in the famous evenings that Friedrich Engels organized for his fellow socialists in exile.

Schmidt's academic breakthrough as a Marxist theoretician came in 1889. After the intervention of Karl Kautsky and Engels, his dissertation "Die Durchschnittsprofitrate auf Grundlage des Marx'schen Werthgesetzes" was published by Dietz in Stuttgart. However, Engels's plan to invite him to assist in editing the Marx papers would fail. Schmidt went back to Berlin, where for a short period he was a member of the oppositionist "Jungen" faction. Soon after, he became a university professor in Zurich, where he stayed until 1895, the year he returned to Berlin. He went on to become a well-known journalist, and editor of *Vorwärts*, the party's official newspaper. As a socialist theoretician, he acquired a solid reputation in leftist circles and among socialist academics. In 1897 he joined the founders of the theoretical and revisionist journal, *Der Sozialistische Akademiker/Sozialistische Monatshefte*. Together with – but also in the shadow of – Eduard Bernstein, Schmidt became a leading revisionist of orthodox Marxism. Unlike his comrade-in-arms Bernstein, Schmidt was to move further to the reformist and chauvinist right. During World War I he was among the majority faction in the SPD, but his bad health prevented him from playing a leading intellectual or professional role after the end of the Great War.

Conrad Schmidt never, in fact, played a key political role in the SPD. According to witnesses, Schmidt was the prototype of a strange-looking, absent-minded, and clumsy German professor, lacking any tactical insight. His influence was restricted to academic and intellectual circles far removed from the debates at party congresses, and he never became a central personality in the polemics opposing orthodox Marxists and revisionists. That role was earmarked for Bernstein, who, more than Schmidt, wanted to bring socialist theory into line with party practices.

Having opted to analyse Schmidt's writings and philosophy, his biographer Dimitrij Owetschkin reveals a Conrad Schmidt who subsequently studied and wrote about the theory of the average profit rate, Böhm-Bawerk's marginal theory, and the works of Michael Tugan-Baranowsky. Though these theoretical exercises on Marx's surplus value theory did not touch the core of social-democratic strategic thinking about the coming of a

socialist society or socialist strategy, they undermined orthodox Marxist thinking about the fatal decline of capitalism. Though Schmidt was a revisionist, he did not contest the validity or rightness of Marx's theory. He worried though about the philosophical and ethical foundations of Marxism. As a neo-Kantian, he rejected Hegel's view and early Marxist views on the history of mankind. He particularly objected to the philosophy of history contained in the Communist Manifesto. Was it a mere coincidence that in those years the Manifesto had been rediscovered by the Marxist left as a key document informing political action?

Many differences caused the neo-Kantian socialists and the orthodox Marxists to be opposed to one another. In general, the Kantian socialists believed socialism to be the logical consequence of the demand that man should be able to realize his own nature. Schmidt himself believed that, while Kant's distinction between the order of will and that of reason must be maintained, his formal imperative was not a sufficient ground for ethics, which must be based on the totality of social needs defined by changing historical conditions. For Schmidt, man could realize himself as a free, rational being. No moral precepts can have absolute value. In his Kantian ethics, moral duty is a duty that must be performed according to social needs.

Schmidt participated in the debates on the relationship between socialism and Kant. Having become very influential in German and Austrian social democracy, the Kantian intellectuals had in 1904 commemorated the centenary of Kant's death with some pomp and circumstance. This was not an innocent event. The orthodox Marxists grouped around Franz Mehring and Kautsky could interpret it as a provocation. As declared enemies of Kant and the moral concepts derived from Kant's philosophy, they pointed to the fact that the progressive faction of the bourgeoisie had only become interested in Kant's ethics as a basis for reforms realized within the framework of a bourgeois democracy. In contrast to bourgeois Kantianism, the socialist movement had its own ethical principles derived from class interests. The historic mission of the proletariat was to realize a better world by overthrowing capitalism and bourgeois rule. The ideals of the proletariat were defined by history, not by Kant's unhistorical imperative and the presumed role of the free will.

Though the SPD never officially banned neo-Kantianism as a heretical philosophy or set of ideas in conflict with the official party ideology, the orthodox Marxist faction grouped around Kautsky and protected by August Bebel could easily dominate the party and control its ideology. This orthodox dominance was due mainly to the fact that the neo-Kantian Marxists could barely be qualified as anti-Marxists. They accepted the role of class struggle and the party's strategy based on it. Creating a socialist society was their declared aim. They simply criticized the fact that the official party ideology lacked an ethical basis. Furthermore, they opposed vulgar materialist determinism and Darwinian, or biological, interpretations of man as a being defined by the sum of his natural needs. For them, socialism was the logical consequence of the demand that man should be able to realize his own nature, not merely the outcome of a concentration of capital.

Schmidt was a Kantian insofar as he believed that the entirety of Kant's distinction between the order of will and that of reason must be maintained. However, Kant's formal imperative was not a sufficient ground for ethics. Therefore, it must be based on the totality of social needs defined by changing historical conditions. In reality, Schmidt's approach was similar to the utilitarianist viewpoint, stressing the moral duty of man, and his subsequent rejection of Hegel made him an ethical socialist trusting in the role of *Sein* and *Sollen* in socialist theory. That philosophical approach certainly

prepared the ground for the 1959 Bad Godesberg Programme, which would break completely with Marxism.

In his book, Owetschkin gives us a good analysis and paints an honest picture of Schmidt's position in pre-1914 German social democracy. He stresses Schmidt's role as an opponent of the orthodox views defended by Kautsky, Mehring, and Rosa Luxemburg in matters of socialist tactics and Marxist analysis. One-third of the book is devoted to the "Bernsteiniade" concerning the so-called problem of "emancipation from theory". As a neo-Kantian "Marxist" Schmidt remained a well-respected party intellectual, who could rely on the sympathy of all reformist party officials – who clearly understood that his theoretical analysis could provide some respectability to their day-to-day activities and reformist practices.

Owetschkin's carefully written analysis owes much to the study by Dieter Groh,<sup>1</sup> who coined the concepts of negative integration and revolutionary attentism. In addition, Owetschkin's biography should be regarded as a useful companion to Bo Gustafsson's *Marxismus und Revisionismus*.<sup>2</sup>

André Mommen

GLICKSTEIN, JONATHAN A. *American Exceptionalism, American Anxiety Wages, Competition, and Degraded Labor in the Antebellum United States*. University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, Va. [etc.] 2002. x, 361 pp. \$39.50; DOI: 10.1017/S002085900406153X

Richard Rorty cracked a whip at the "cultural Left" in a recent and (for Rorty) little known book, *Achieving Our Country* (Cambridge, MA, 1998). He shocked some friends. Rorty had been a prime mover of the rhetorical, the linguistic, the pragmatic, and the relativistic "turns" in the human sciences. After Rorty, after all, it was safe to speak "rhetorically" about truth and nature, history and economy.

*Achieving Our Country* complained about leftist academics whom, Rorty believes, waste considerable time and resources "theorizing" and "problemetizing", naming and articulating "plays of differential subjectivity", "thematic appropriations", "ambiguities" of "identity" and the like (p. 93). To what end, asks Rorty? To find elites – especially elite, white males – producing "stigma". In recent decades the Left was satisfied to expose cultural productions of stigma or sadism, Rorty says, showing elites engaging in prejudicial speech with or about a marginalized people. He begs leftists to return to the ideals and strategies of the long eclipsed "reformist Left". "Ban philosophy", says Rorty. Bring back the public intellectualism of the period 1900 to 1960 – its applied economics, its practical sociology (p. 49). Bring back, he says, the work of historically oriented Progressives, such as the economist Richard T. Ely and the social worker Jane Addams, whose ideas in scholarship were motivated and often realized by their own direct, public action in the name of social and economic betterment for the poor and oppressed.

Rorty is no historian. He omits any mention of Ely's cheerful involvement with the

1. Dieter Groh, *Negative Integration und revolutionärer Attentismus. Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie am Vorabend des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Frankfurt [etc.], 1973).

2. Bo Gustafsson, *Marxismus und Revisionismus. Eduard Bernsteins Kritik des Marxismus und ihre ideengeschichtlichen Voraussetzungen* (Frankfurt, 1972).

charity organization societies. More seriously, he fails to mention Ely's involvement with the eugenics movement, a dreadful though necessary omission one supposes if he is to remake Ely a hero for the next generation. Still, Rorty's question is a good one: what do we contribute to scholarship or the world if our main goal is to show, using a bit of literary criticism, that elites in history *anxiously chose* to produce stigma and sadism in human speech?

Books like Jonathan Glickstein's *American Exceptionalism, American Anxiety* would, one guesses, fall under Rorty's purview. It's the latest of a small stream of books on antebellum America furthering this goal of the cultural Left. (Readers of *American Exceptionalism* will also take an interest in Jeffrey Sklansky's *The Soul's Economy: Market Society and Selfhood in American Thought, 1820–1920* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2002).) Glickstein's purpose is to name the "ambiguities" and "anxieties" in the social and economic thought of elite white males of the antebellum period, who drew from the myth of American exceptionalism, he argues, an unusual competitive pressure "from below". Low-cost, and allegedly socially "inferior", workers served, he argues, as the pressure-cookers: slave labor, convict labor, and pauper labor, both home and abroad.

Glickstein examines in imaginative detail the social and economic thought of common and uncommon elites. He ponders, for example, the social thought of Frederick Law Olmstead, the great planner of American parks and cities, and of Joseph Tuckerman, one of America's leading Unitarian clergymen and, more importantly for Glickstein, a crusader against "public outdoor relief" – against, that is, a public dole for paupers. (Glickstein's decision to study these particular men over other elites is valuable but not transparent.)

*American Exceptionalism* has remarkable interdisciplinary reach, of interest to scholars in many fields. It engages bravely and often coherently the heterogeneous methods and motives of social historians, cultural historians, quantitative economic historians, Marxists, literary theorists, and poststructuralists (any loss of coherence derives from a sustained stylistic preference for lengthy abstraction and its excessive supply of "Gresham's Law-like" analogies).

At bottom, however, the thesis of *American Exceptionalism* is weakly defended. Says Glickstein, "I am particularly impressed with *the power of an exceptionalist mythology* that, whatever the material patterns may have been, stimulated not merely optimism and complacency in elite and other quarters *but also deep-seated economic and cultural anxieties throughout antebellum society*" (p. 9).

The problem with Glickstein's thesis – the myth of American exceptionalism stimulated antebellum cultural anxieties – was first formalized by statisticians in the 1920s. Speaking informally, statisticians showed that any decision to accept a test of a hypothesis involves two types of errors: Type 1, an error of excessive skepticism, and Type 2, an error of excessive gullibility. A goal of science, then, is to design an experiment that will allow the evidence to reveal the "power of the test". Power is the ability to reject a hypothesis (such as "antebellum anxiety was stimulated by the myth of American exceptionalism") when some other hypothesis is true (say, "anxiety is caused by numerous myths and human habits, propensities, and levels of economic performance"). What we, of course, want in science, including human sciences like history, is more power.

*American Exceptionalism* has, by this standard, little power. The problem is in the way the evidence was constructed: if there is anything exceptional to be learned about exceptionalism and anxiety in antebellum American elites it would be found in comparison with elites in other periods of American history, or in comparison with non-elite social

groups in the same period, or with elites from other nations in the same or in different periods.

Take, for example, the poor laws. From paupers to presidents, Americans have been anxious about the contradiction of compassion and self-reliance created by pauper labor ever since the Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601 was first adopted by the colonies. We still are. Look, for example, at the anxious discourse surrounding the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. Consider, moreover, sweated histories of British, or German, or Scottish, or French, or Russian poor laws, Elberfeld to the crèche. Though lacking in explicit comparison, well-known examples from other eras and nations show Glickstein's thesis to have low power against the alternatives. If, on the other hand, antebellum America was a ubiquitous "Age of Anxiety", Glickstein doesn't say.

Rorty is probably too depressed about the cultural Left. Books like *American Exceptionalism* can function for today's Left as Bellamy's *Looking Backward* did for the older, reformist Left: inspiring in others, through his re-imaginings of economic myth and metaphor, a progressive reform direction and spirit. Or anyway, more scholarship in that neighborhood. Some building blocks of reform, in historiography and policy, can be found in Glickstein's new book.

Stephen T. Ziliak

DUNAWAY, WILMA A. *Slavery in the American Mountain South*. [Studies in modern capitalism.] Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [etc.] 2002. 364 pp. £50.00. (Paper: £18.99.); DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004071536

DUNAWAY, WILMA A. *The African-American family in Slavery and Emancipation*. [Studies in modern capitalism.] Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [etc.] 2003. xi, 368 pp. £55.00. (Paper: £20.99.); DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004081532

Wilma A. Dunaway's two books on African-American slavery in the mountain South contribute to longstanding scholarly debates over the nature of North American slavery during the nineteenth century. Both works demonstrate substantial research in quantitative and qualitative sources while at the same time actively engaging the secondary scholarship on slavery in the fields of sociology, history, and related academic disciplines.

Dunaway writes with a passion that stems from her nativity in the mountain South and her strong belief that the region, an area of "215 mountainous and hilly counties in nine states" (*Slavery*, p. 4), played a central rather than a marginal role in the evolution of slavery and the African-American family. She takes issue with scholars who contend that geographical location, soil conditions, and climate differentiated the mountain South from the rest of the slaveholding South. While acknowledging that European-American yeoman farmers – most of whom held few if any slaves – contributed mightily to the economic and cultural life of the region, she affirms the significant presence and impact of African Americans both during and after slavery. Employing the methodological tools and theoretical insights of historical sociology, she contends that the capitalist world economy exerted a profound influence on the region. Far from seeking to escape capitalist development, mountain masters embraced it. And, by virtue of their proximity to significant waterways and overland transportation routes, they took active part in the

interregional trade – including that in slaves – between the upper South and the lower South and between the Atlantic coast and the continental interior. Dunaway takes issue with historical models of slavery wherein large planters holding dozens, if not scores, of enslaved laborers producing staple crops constitute the main historical actors. By definition, such models give short shrift to the mountain South. In redressing the balance, her works aim to achieve a richer understanding of North American slavery and to reestablish the historical dignity of those who were enslaved.

*Slavery in the Mountain South* surveys the political economy and the cultural history of the Appalachian region that cuts across eight southern states. Dunaway rejects the “prevailing scholarly view [...] that slavery was largely absent from the mountain South and that the region’s few slaveholders were more kindly than their lower South peers” (*Slavery*, p. 5). Instead, she finds a significant presence of slaves in virtually every facet of economic life in the region. Although they lived and labored in diverse circumstances, often significantly outnumbered by the free white population, enslaved laborers preserved a distinct cultural identity committed to preserving the values of personhood and freedom against the institutional pressures of slavery. The study also brings a fresh perspective to the relationship of poor whites to the masters and the slaves. Although poor whites were complicit in slavery, their economic marginality often pitted them against the slaveholders. In any case, “Appalachian slaves, hired hands, and tenants” in interracial work groups often worked the fields together “either under the supervision of the owner or of an overseer” (*Slavery*, p. 143).

Dunaway’s careful reading of census data and slave narratives produces other fascinating glimpses into labor arrangements in the region. She finds, for example, that although African-American laborers (slave and free) constituted only about 15 per cent of the population, “they accounted for more than two-fifths of the non-agricultural labor force” (*Slavery*, p. 73). Women and children performed a higher proportion of field labor than did their counterparts on plantations in the non-mountain South; moreover, approximately “one-half of adult Appalachian slave women worked in the fields full time”, and many of them performed additional tasks after hours (*Slavery*, p. 54). Relying largely on the narratives of former slaves, Dunaway describes a culture based on strong kin relationships, purposeful social gatherings, and a resilient “underground religion” (*Slavery*, p. 235). Although other scholars have made a similar case for the significance of such networks, Dunaway argues that the vibrancy and efficacy of the culture did not require the high concentrations of enslaved African Americans that characterized lowland plantations. Similarly, she argues that disintegrating forces – most notably sale – undermined this culture and the networks that sustained it in the mountain South no less than in the plantation South.

*The African-American Family in Slavery and Emancipation* is more straightforwardly polemical in its interpretive sweep and its engagement with the prevailing scholarly consensus around the effects of enslavement on African-American life and culture. Specifically, she attacks the image of “a stable nuclear slave family”, which she dubs “the Gutman-Fogel paradigm”, after Herbert G. Gutman’s *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1700–1925* (1976) and Robert W. Fogel’s *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (1989) (*African-American Family*, pp. 269, 270). She notes the particularly disruptive effects of the interstate slave trade, overwork, and poor nutrition on African-American families throughout the South. But she also identifies the ways by which slave owners structurally interfered with African-American families in general and

the reproductive lives of enslaved women in particular. She discounts the significance of household subsistence production, cash earning, and petty trade, arguing that such practices “did not liberate mountain slaves from the ownership of their masters or from the constraints imposed by the legal system” (*African-American Family*, p. 159).

Like *Slavery in the American Mountain South*, *The African-American Family* illuminates the destructive impact of slavery on African-American family formation and the special burdens that enslaved women bore. Once again, the narratives of former slaves yield rich results. She notes, for instance, that “[o]nly about one-quarter to one-third of all Appalachian slave children experienced life in a family in which both parents were present on a daily basis” (*African-American Family*, p. 78). She also observes that “a majority of Appalachian slave women headed partial families, resided in non-nuclear families, or lived alone” (*African-American Family*, p. 81). Her estimate that over the course of the Civil War 20 per cent of Appalachia’s female slaves had been “impressed into labor by one of the armies” (as compared with 43 per cent of the male slaves) provides a promising window into a little known aspect of slave emancipation during the Civil War (*African-American Family*, p. 187). Her treatment of the postwar years suggests that black families faced different though no less disruptive challenges to their stability as the social relations of compensated labor supplanted those of slavery. The study concludes by calling for “a new paradigm” that among other things recognizes the importance of regional variation in the African-American family during the nineteenth century and the relevance of “contemporary demographic trends in poor countries where high infant mortality rates fuel population growth” (*African-American Family*, pp. 285, 286).

Both individually and collectively, the works have much to recommend, but they also claim an unwarranted level of interpretive originality. Dunaway defines the mountain South much more broadly than most other students of the subject do. Incorporating the “[h]ill-plateaus and valleys adjacent to long ridges” into the analysis gives rise to the curious phenomenon in which “[the] vast majority of the mountain South is not mountainous at all” (*Slavery*, p. 7). Furthermore, by this expanded definition Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States, and the proprietor of a substantial plantation in Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley, is a mountain master. Dunaway’s interpretive disagreements with other scholars often turn on this definitional difference. The sample of slave narratives she compiled for analysis also follows this definition, thereby calling into question her interpretive results, which she often expresses in quantitative measures down to the tenth of a percentage point. The known limitations of the slave narratives – particularly the timing of their collection nearly seventy years after the end of slavery and the disproportionate representation of European Americans among the interviewers – calls into question such ostensibly precise measurements.

The polemical tone of *The African-American Family* gives rise to additional problems. The author’s obsession with debunking what she describes as the “dominant paradigm that a majority of US slaves lived in stable, nuclear families” (*African-American Family*, p. 271), often produces oversimplified descriptions of important scholars’ arguments. She faults George Rawick’s “optimistic conclusion” regarding African-American families under slavery (*African-American Family*, p. 70), for instance, and Carter G. Woodson’s “rosy picture of positive race relations” in the Appalachian South (*African-American Family*, p. 244). Although she properly cautions against exaggerating the extent to which household production enabled slaves to achieve autonomy, she dismisses the interpretive power of understanding slaves’ independent production.

At times she builds her own case on slender reeds. A discussion of the effects of alcohol consumption on undernourished workers takes as its point of departure scattered reports by former slaves that their masters “provided daily morning rations of alcohol, even though they were providing very little breakfast food” (*African-American Family*, p. 106). While plausible as exceptions, such cases were by no means representative of the mountain South, however defined, much less of the plantation South. Similarly, Dunaway’s treatment of infant mortality draws too facile a connection to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), a comparison that scholars first considered, albeit cautiously, some two decades ago. “In seven Blue ridge Virginia counties”, she notes, “physicians reported SIDS three times more often among slave infants than among white babies, and more than half those deaths occurred before the fourth month of the infant’s life” (*African-American Family*, p. 142). Nineteenth-century physicians indeed commented on infant mortality and theorized about its causes, but they did not speak of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, a term of twentieth-century vintage.

In summary, Wilma Dunaway makes significant contributions to understanding slavery and the African-American family in these two works. But the accomplishment falls short of what the author presumes. Herbert Gutman’s landmark work establishing the vitality of family ties under slavery, and the enduring strength of the nuclear family ideal in the aftermath of the Civil War does warrant revision. In making the case for a prevalent nuclear structure and a nearly unanimous nuclear ideal, Gutman did not fully account for the messiness of lived lives under conditions of extreme poverty and racial discrimination. Such shortcomings do not signal his naïveté so much as they reflect the intellectual and political context of debate during the 1970s, which he turned on its head.

Scholars, particularly historians, will discount other findings of Dunaway’s works. Her liberal definition of the mountain South does not comport with the narrower one that historians have used to explore how Appalachian life and culture have both diverged from and conformed to the norms prevailing elsewhere in the South. Far too frequently, she casts her intellectual opponents as punching bags, setting them up to knock them down. Despite the freshness of their insights and the numerous particular points that they clarify, the books do not significantly revise the current scholarly framework for understanding slavery or the African-American family in the nineteenth century.

Joseph P. Reidy

DOWNEY, GREGORY J. *Telegraph Messenger Boys. Labor, Technology, and Geography, 1850–1950*. Routledge, New York [etc.] 2002. xiv, 242 pp. Ill. £16.99; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004091539

Gregory Downey’s *Telegraph Messenger Boys: Labor, Technology, and Geography, 1850–1950* offers a thoughtful and thorough account of the work of “telegraph messengers boys” in the United States – the young men who worked to collect and deliver the messages we now refer to as “telegrams”. Reflecting its origins as a dissertation for a double Ph.D. in history of science, technology, and medicine, and geography and environmental engineering (at Johns Hopkins University), the book makes contributions to several scholarly fields.

There have been a number of prior histories of the telegraph, primarily focused on technological and business developments. Downey’s focus is different. Bringing together



qualitative methods (e.g. archival and newspaper accounts) with quantitative methods (e.g. census records and wage reports), he paints a robust picture of the work of previously unknown actors in the development and success of a key communication system of an earlier era.

Downey's major contribution to social history is to build on the work of technology historians such as Thomas Hughes, who have argued that humans comprise important components of many technological systems. Framing the "technological network of the telegraph" as "more than just a combination of electromechanical systems" (p. 7), Downey's account carefully documents the essential role of human labor in constructing the telegraph system: "Messenger boys served different functions at different moments – sometimes working as technological components themselves, sometimes being sold as commodities along with the telegrams they carried, and sometimes acting as agents of change within the technological network itself", he explains (p. 7).

The story of messenger boys in the telegraph industry began with a technological need. Downey's book begins with the tale of how the messenger boys' labor was chiefly required to make the system "work" in its most straightforward sense. In an era when most homes and many businesses did not have their own telegraphic equipment on site, telegraph messenger boys were needed to speed messages to and from the nearest telegraph transmission point. He reminds us, then, that "messengers' movements through time and space, enabled by their accessories of uniforms and bikes [...] set the speed at which telegrams traveled" (p. 81).

Later, as competing networks of transportation and communications – for example the telephone and air mail – threatened the potential survival of the telegraph industry, telegraph messenger boys took on increasingly important social roles. "Just what was a telegram without a messenger? It was a yellow envelope that came in the mail with every other envelope, costing a few dollars when regular postage only cost a few cents. Or was it a phone call delivered by a WU [Western Union] operator, indistinguishable from a direct business-to-business phone call from an in-house secretary?" (p. 202). Downey, emphasizing the social construction of the telegraph system, argues in the latter half of his book how the importance of this secondary function for the messenger boys was a critical factor in the telegraph system's longevity – as well as its eventual demise. Unfortunately, telegraph company executives in the mid-twentieth century did not have access to Downey's book, and, unable to recognize the critical role of human labor in their technological system's distinct appeal, they decided to largely eliminate the highly stylized messenger service. According to Downey, this decision helped to seal the network's ultimate demise.

One of the most fascinating aspects of Downey's account is the way in which he details the tension between simultaneous efforts to make workers visible to the public and yet invisible inside the telegraph office setting. The telegraph messenger boys wore militaristic uniforms, and were educated to comport themselves in a manner that was "neat, speedy, polite and responsible" (p. 68). Yet within the business setting of the telegraph office, these same boys were relegated to the back rooms, the basements, and other physical settings far from customer view. This invisibility in the office setting, Downey suggests, may explain why, in histories of the telegraph industry focusing on the telegraph's business and technological aspects, the messenger boys remained hidden from history.

Downey's story is a historical one, but it is evident from his training in geography and from his comments throughout the book that he views clear connections to scholarship on

contemporary information systems. Academic geographers have become increasingly interested in understanding the geography of cyberspace, yet to date these studies, in Downey's estimation, have overemphasized the medium's sense of "placelessness". By attending to the geographical dimensions of human labor in constructing an earlier communication system, Downey makes clear how understanding the telegraph can help us to make better sense of other information systems, past and present.

Jennifer Light

DOSSE, FRANÇOIS. Michel de Certeau. *Le marcheur blessé*. Éditions La Découverte, Paris 2002. 655 pp. Ill. € 39.00; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004101533

Despite the massive turnout of Paris society at his funeral, the French historian and psychoanalyst, Michel de Certeau (1925–1986) elicited far less interest among scholars during his lifetime than did famous compatriots and contemporaries such as Michel Foucault or Louis Althusser. From the outset, his writings, at any rate the least erudite ones, were far more popular in the United States than in France. *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated in 1984, became a best seller overnight, selling 30,000 copies. His anthology *Heterologies* (1986) was described in the preface by Wlad Godzich as a prefiguration to the cultural studies programme. This relatively new, little institutionalized, domain was where Certeau's work first gained acclaim and was noted by scholars of communications, such as John Fiske and others dealing with contemporary popular cultures and subcultures. Certeau has also frequently been quoted as a source of inspiration in subaltern studies and postcolonial studies from the 1980s. Only after his death, however, did his ideas penetrate various disciplines (including 'his' historiography), and did he increasingly come to be regarded as one of the most important and most fascinating intellectuals of the twentieth century. The impressive biography by François Dosse, whose works include *L'histoire en miettes. Des "Annales" à la "nouvelle histoire"*, and *L'empire du sens. L'humanisation des sciences humaines*, presents a highly detailed account of the proliferation of Certeau's ideas.

Certeau, a Jesuit, was a historian specializing in the seventeenth century and in the history of religion, spirituality, and mysticism (*La possession de Loudun* (1970); *La fable mystique* (1982)). As such, he encountered the Dutch historian of mentalities, Willem Frijhoff, in the 1970s. Deeply impressed with his work, Frijhoff resolved to present it to Dutch readers. This was rather difficult, as the biography reveals, because of the language barrier and the major resistance to psychoanalysis. It is probably no coincidence that the authors of the first work in Dutch about Michel de Certeau were Flemish (Koen Geldof and Rudi Laermans, *Sluipwegen van het denken. Over Michel de Certeau* (1996)). Certeau wrote lucid accounts about historiography as a fabrication of the past. While he took issue with the boundaries of scholarship and fiction, he did not obliterate them (*L'écriture de l'histoire* (1975); *Histoire et psychanalyse entre science et fiction* (1987)). His academic scope was considerably broader than historiography, however, due to his original combination of history, psychoanalysis, anthropology, and semiotics. His views on power and subordination offered a fine alternative to Michel Foucault's pessimist theory on disciplinary practices. Certeau questioned the *surveiller et punir* perception of power and was more interested in human ingenuity in evading discipline. He examined all aspects

of “consumption” of systems and structures and argued that users devise “a thousand ways” to appropriate and mould the established order. Certeau thus reversed Foucault’s approach and used the study of microphysics to demonstrate how tactical, cushioned, and cunning human creativity transcends the visible subjugation and oppression.

Social historians find Certeau’s writings about everyday life and cultural customs particularly important and inspiring. *The Practice of Everyday Life* mentioned above revolves around the practices of users or consumers generally presumed to be passive and disciplined, who in fact have a measure of subversive freedom: the freedom of the poacher. Certeau’s works depict the dispersed and virtually invisible culture of the ruses, with which users aim to subvert the dominant order, without dismissing or trying to alter it. Users seek to transform the dominant culture as they see fit, as a function of their own interests and rules. While the first volume (translated into English) is highly theoretical, Luce Giard and Pierre Mayol elaborate the insights more specifically in a second volume on living and cooking, based on a case study about the La Croix-Rousse working-class neighbourhood in Lyon.

François Dosse provides a thorough and well-documented introduction to Certeau’s mindset. After all, he has written an intellectual biography based in part on the work of *Le marcheur blessé* and in part on interviews with a range of witnesses. The long list of 200 interviewees includes Arlette Farge, Marc Ferro, Willem Frijhoff, Luce Irigaray, Dominique Julia, Steven Kaplan, Julia Kristeva, Dominick LaCapra, Bruno Latour, Pierre Nora, Michelle Perrot, Antoine Prost, Jacques Revel, Elisabeth Roudinesco, Georges Vigarello, and Olivier Zunz. Dosse reviews Michel de Certeau’s intellectual career in five extensive sections that do justice to his different levels of thought. After a detailed description of Certeau’s funeral ceremony, Dosse describes how the scholar related to religion, covering both his Jesuit vocation and his own religious career while discussing his work as a historian of religion. In the second section we learn how enthralled the religious Certeau was by the modernity issue. This section covers the impact of ’68, Latin America, Certeau’s criticism of the history of mentalities of the 1970s, his contribution to epistemology and the hermeneutics of history, his views on language and semiotics, and finally the influence of Lacanian psychoanalysis on his ideas. In the third section we follow Certeau along the periphery of religious and academic institutions, and see how his aura from those marginal places reached the major hubs of the humanities. The last two sections explore Certeau’s two major projects: the reinvention of everyday life and the anthropology of mysticism. In the concluding chapter, Dosse – somewhat unconvincingly – tries to penetrate Certeau’s personality and psyche through one of his study subjects and “identification figures”: the mystic Jean-Joseph Surin (1600–1665).

François Dosse is perfectly frank about his admiration for Michel de Certeau in this biography. Criticism is equally rare in the many testimonies he quotes. Certeau was indeed a great man, who certainly merits the tribute paid him in this book. In addition to providing in-depth insight into his work and in somewhat lesser measure into his personality, the biography offers a most interesting glimpse of intellectual life in Paris during an intensely fascinating period, with the networks of the Annales school popes likely to be of particular interest to historians.

Gita Deneckere

COHEN, LIZABETH. *A Consumers' Republic. The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York 2003. 567 pp. Ill. \$35.00. (Paper: \$16.95.); DOI: 10.1017/S002085900411153X

Lizabeth Cohen alerts us that there is more to buying than the mere purchasing of goods. This has been a constant theme in her scholarship, beginning with an early 1980 article, "Embellishing a Life of Labor", and including the 1990 prize-winning book, *Making a New Deal*.<sup>1</sup> Now with this sweeping reinterpretation of the affluent society, she engages in nothing less than a reinterpretation of the mid-twentieth century. *A Consumers' Republic* outlines the process by which the identities of consumer and citizen merged into each other, taking as its text the assurance of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1936 that, "If the average citizen is guaranteed equal opportunity in the polling place, he must have equal opportunity in the marketplace" (p. 56). That promise, Cohen shows, proved elusive even as it inspired two generations to quest after a higher standard of living and seek full entrance into the marketplace of goods and services that came to signify the American Dream.

Through meticulous research into northern New Jersey, where her family moved in 1952, Cohen uses her own history to elucidate fables of abundance in the suburbs and shopping malls whose presence in post-World-War-II America shifted significant resources away from inner cities. This new spatial ordering contributed to a resegregation and greater segmentation of society at precisely the same time that white women were challenging its gendered landscape and African Americans were gaining rights to public accommodation, if not the economic means to fully participate in what Cohen aptly names "the consumers' republic". By the 1960s, the promise of the market to deliver the good life as an American right superseded the social-democratic dream of a more equal society, eventually narrowing politics by substituting consumers' personal interests for the public interest. That today we market candidates just as we sell soap illustrates the triumph of what Cohen laments as "the Consumerization of the Republic" (p. 15).

Others have discussed components of this tale – African American "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaigns and the left feminist League of Women Shoppers of the late 1930s and 1940s, the World War II Office of Price Administration (OPA) and the GI Bill, the model suburb Levittown, marketing "hidden persuader" Ernest Dichter, 1960s urban rebellions, the credit card campaign of the National Welfare Rights Organization, Ralph Nader's "Raiders", and Jimmy Carter's malaise speech. Cohen alone brings these phenomena together with skill and verve. Even if northern New Jersey is not the world, Cohen convincingly demonstrates the power of social history to provide a basis for political and cultural analysis. Her placement of the history of white women and African-American men and women (despite referring to women, workers, and African Americans as separate categories, when many occupy at least two of these) at the center of United States history is a long overdue move in a historiography that speaks of the American nation while relegating such subjects to special topics. Attention to class and organized labor especially highlights the significance of these factors in the postwar United States.

Cohen wants to transform how we think about citizenship. She coins a number of

1. Lizabeth A. Cohen, "Embellishing A Life of Labor: An Interpretation of the Material Culture of American Working-Class Homes, 1885–1915", *Journal of American Culture*, 3 (1980), pp. 752–775; *idem*, *Making A New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919–1939* (New York, 1990).

categories of analysis: citizen consumer, purchaser consumer, and the description “consumers’ republic” itself. At its heyday during the New Deal and subsequent war, the first term referred to those who would use the state to enhance the national good. As members of various government agencies, from National Recovery Administration Advisory Boards to the OPA, these citizen consumers, who were predominantly women, guarded against an unregulated market and the excesses of big business. Such advocates, in groups like the National Consumers League (NCL) and trade-union auxiliaries, wielded the politics of consumption to enhance fair labor standards, worker organization, and civil rights.

Through price controls, rationing, and an ideology of sacrifice, World War II “kept the competing conception of the purchaser consumer – one who consumed in pursuit of personal gain – in check” (108). The purchaser consumer contrasted with the laborite notion of purchasing power, in which buying created jobs and spurred economic growth. Cohen notes how the purchaser consumer was no longer the woman shopper but became the male breadwinner whose buying of big ticket durables generated the mass consumption that was transforming the nation through suburbanization. The act of consumption became patriotic; “the good purchaser devoted to ‘more, newer and better’ was the good citizen” (119).

Forget General Motors: in the 1950s, what was good for suburbia was good for the nation. But the substitution of the shopping mall for the town square had major consequences: the class and race segmentation that increasingly shaped consumer markets carried over to this new commercialized space; “the rights of private property owners” trumped “traditional rights of free speech in community forums”; and the feminizing of public space expanded the presence of women while restricting their arena of action to such extensions of the home sphere (p. 259). Women were the part-time employees of shopping centers, as well as their most frequent denizens. “In this era before equal credit protection, feminist revolt, and affirmative action opened other opportunities”, Cohen perceptively notes, “women’s choices were limited not simply through peer pressure and personal priorities [...] but also through the larger economic restructuring taking place in the metropolitan marketplace of the Consumers’ Republic” (p. 286).

Consumption also proved double-edged for African Americans. Since the right to buy offered a road toward liberation, the exclusion of African Americans from equal participation in the marketplace marked their “unequal citizenship” (p. 189). But the struggle for equal participation never meant redistribution of resources. There was no guarantee that African Americans could afford the restaurants and amusements whose integration they put their bodies on the line to obtain. Cohen recognizes how the promise of more goods did not undermine the realities of either race or class inequality. These sections on African Americans are among the strongest in the book – whether she sketches their struggle against discriminatory home ownership, exacerbated by implementation of the GI Bill, or their sit-ins at lunch counters, consumption emerges as complex, even contradictory.

By the late 1950s, mass marketing was fracturing into market segmentation, a targeting of consumers that carried over into politics. As Cohen explains, consumers evaluated government policies “by the personal benefits they, as segmented purchasers as citizens, derived from them” (344). Such reasoning set the stage for the revolt against government in the 1980s and 1990s. Simultaneously, a renewed consumer movement emerged, represented by Public Citizen, a spate of new laws, and watchdog agencies.

At times, Cohen's categories function as heuristic devices, narrative crutches whose evocation not only flatten the very complexities presented but also substitute for a more precise analysis and closer engagement with theory. To be fair, Cohen has written a crossover book at the same time as she wrestles with a number of key debates: the meaning of mass consumption, the nature of civil rights, the relationship between affluence and rebellion, and the character of liberalism itself. By evoking T.H. Marshall's concept of social citizenship on the next to last page of the epilogue, however, she enters the ongoing discussion of what constitutes citizenship and who is a citizen. She challenges the very basis upon which the New-Deal order constructed citizenship: employment or work as an obligation for inclusion in the body politic. Her emphasis on consumption, then, stands apart from earlier labor histories, like David Montgomery's *Citizen Worker*,<sup>2</sup> but also from recent work on race, gender, and the welfare state. Jennifer Klein, for example, has documented the significance of employment for determining one's benefits in the mixed private/public welfare state that evolved with the New Deal.<sup>3</sup> Alice Kessler-Harris has outlined women's quest for economic citizenship throughout the twentieth century as anchored in the right to earn,<sup>4</sup> while Meg Jacobs has located economic citizenship through pocketbook politics – that Keynesian shift in which consumption serves as a motor for production and labor's advancement.<sup>5</sup> In showing how coercion to work distinguished the lesser citizenship of men and women of color, Evelyn Nakano Glenn still has emphasized employment.<sup>6</sup>

For Cohen, however, consumption – the consumers' republic – replaces production as the foundation of citizenship, with “the private consumer economy – not a welfare state charged with the responsibility of fulfilling the nation's economic obligations to its citizens” (p. 409). Whatever its attraction, this analysis is ultimately misleading. The United States still determines social security and health insurance eligibility in terms of an individual's relationship to employment. Trade unions were central to both generations of citizen consumer movements. Moreover, pitting consumption as an alternative to employment misconstrues the mid-century “pocketbook politics” rooted in general questions of inflation, wages, and economic health. It further obscures how workers were/are consumers and consumers are/were workers. These identities could conflict, as when bargain shopping undermines wages. Cohen generally leaves their relationship underdeveloped except for describing the suburban branch store as “a kind of runaway shop that undermined the job security, wages, benefits, and working conditions of unionized downtown workers” (p. 283).

At its most powerful, as the current antisweatshop movement reveals, consumer politics has deployed the power of the purse as a tactic deployed for social justice that connects spending and earning. With this massive history of postwar America, Lizabeth Cohen has

2. David Montgomery, *Citizen Worker: The Experience of Workers in the United States with Democracy and the Free Market During the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1993).

3. Jennifer Klein, *For All These Rights: Business, Labor, and the Shaping of America's Public-Private Welfare State* (Princeton, NJ, 2003).

4. Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century America* (New York, 2001).

5. Meg Jacobs, *Pocketbook Politics: Economic Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ, forthcoming 2004).

6. Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor* (Cambridge, MA, 2002).

provided a cautionary tale for those who attempt to build political alliances out of consumer identities.

*Eileen Boris*

ALEXOPOULOS, GOLFO. *Stalin's Outcasts. Aliens, Citizens, and the Soviet State, 1926–1936*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca [etc.] 2003. xi, 243 pp. \$39.95; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004121536

A study of the 1920s and 1930s is crucial for gaining insight into the nature of the Soviet system, and the close attention paid to these years since the opening of Russian archives is therefore more than understandable. A key problem in the social history of Bolshevik Russia is the formation of a new concept of citizenship in a class-based society, which was accompanied by marking out aliens – outcasts within their own country. By analysing the practice of disenfranchisement and reinstatement, Golfo Alexopoulos sheds much light on how Soviet identity was ascribed. Her research is focused, on the one hand, on the Bolsheviks' social-engineering techniques and, on the other, on how individuals and communities adapted to the constantly changing social rules.

Alexopoulos is one of the first Western historians to have gained access to archival documents relating to Stalin's outcasts – people who were deprived of voting rights and therefore excluded from the mainstream of economic and political life. As a result of the policy of class discrimination, a whole range of people were marginalized: former landowners, clergy, those who had served in the Tsarist police force and the White army, as well as “nonlabouring elements” (people who hired labour for the purpose of profit, those who lived on unearned income, private traders, wealthy peasants, and later, dependants of these people). Stalin's outcasts also included people whose behaviour was considered deviant, inappropriate, or offensive. The process of depriving individuals of their voting rights took place within local communities prior to elections to the soviets. In those years, elections to the soviets at different levels were held every year. At its height, the disenfranchisement campaign deprived more than four million people of their voting rights. The disenfranchised could apply for their rights to be restored by filing petitions. As a result of this dual process of abrogation and reinstatement, the archives contain not only official documents but also hundreds of thousands of narratives written by the outcasts themselves.

Alexopoulos analyses this dual process as a “rite of passage” in the cultural and political contexts of communities in a class-based society. Ascription of Soviet identity took place at the national level through the development of rules of social engineering, as well as within local communities, where the identification of Soviet citizens and aliens was often based on behavioural and sociocultural norms. The author shows that the criteria of exclusion and inclusion changed, depending on the Stalinist regime's economic targets. When delineating outcasts, the regime considered not only ideological issues but also the economic situation, in particular the shortage of resources during centrally planned economic campaigns and industrialization. Alexopoulos emphasizes that “the chronic shortages of the First Five-Year Plan period encouraged party leaders to deny disenfranchised groups access to the state's limited resources”, and as a consequence “the Stalinist regime deprived people of rights during the First Five-Year Plan period in its effort to redirect resources and change individual identities, or the economic behaviour and

dependencies that determined them" (pp. 30–31). As a result, the disenfranchised were deprived not only of voting rights, but also of access to resources such as housing and ration cards for food, and they had very little chance of getting work.

In the chapter "Faces of the Disenfranchised" the author provides a detailed investigation of the identity of the people deemed to be aliens in local communities. In the struggle over scarce resources (primarily over housing in cities), local communities often compiled lists of the disenfranchised in a chaotic fashion, according to their own interests, and often invented rules of their own for particular cases. Local authorities often used disenfranchisement to silence opponents and maintain power. Given the policy's manifold ambiguities, compilation of the lists also became a convenient instrument of revenge against personal enemies. This was often fuelled by aspirations to move in to better apartments, vacated as the result of eviction. To attain this goal, people would accuse their personal enemies, using Bolshevik discourse. Therefore, as Alexopoulos notes, "In party discourse as well as on the ground, the non-citizen represented someone who demonstrated rude, disorderly, or deviant behaviour and who stole from the public either through speculation and trade or by avoiding taxes, embezzling funds, or hoarding resources" (p. 55).

Ethnic minorities were much more vulnerable to the policy of disenfranchisement, because of their traditional involvement in trade and the ways in which they diverged from the Russian cultural and socioeconomic pattern, which was accepted by the Bolsheviks as the official model. The problem of ethnicity in Soviet class-based society and its specific aspects, including forms of economic activity, would be particularly interesting for future research.

Soviet identity excluded forms of behaviour deemed by the Bolshevik leadership and local communities to be unacceptable. As a result, not only were card players, gamblers, sorcerers, fortune-tellers, and prostitutes disenfranchised, but also those unwilling to marry early. This last category was deemed antisocial, in keeping with the pre-revolutionary tradition that unmarried women older than twenty were sent to monasteries. On these grounds, local communities considered unmarried women to be potential nuns. As Alexopoulos notes, "It appears that this particular instrument of coercion was used to manage women's sexual behaviour and relations with men" (p. 62). Local communities often disenfranchised disabled people, who had no pension from the state and who were allowed to ply a trade for a living. In this case the author reveals a strikingly similar pattern to that in pre-revolutionary communities, where productive labour and economic self-sufficiency determined social membership. Abrogation by local authorities of the rights of those who were already marginal and without powerful advocates was a safe path of compliance that avoided causing trouble to influential members of the community.

What were outcasts, deprived of all their rights, to do in Stalinist Russia? Three subsequent chapters consider strategies to rejoin mainstream society by adaptation to Soviet identity. Among the variety of strategies, it is possible to discern three main possibilities: to try to cover one's tracks, or "disappear", by moving from one city to another; to complain of unfair disenfranchisement; or to prove one's loyalty to Soviet power by socially useful labour.

Following Sheila Fitzpatrick, Alexopoulos identifies the first strategy as eagerness "to establish new identity by changing their place of residence, place of work, relationships, and acquaintances" (p. 88). Such cases were numerous, and officials believed that many had escaped detection by moving constantly. The authorities had to track an elusive enemy.



This exacerbated the atmosphere of fear in society, which increased even more under the pressure of industrialization and the mass deportation of peasants to Siberia during forced collectivization (the height of tension and repression was reached in 1929).

Alexopoulos's thorough study of complaints of unfair disenfranchisement, in the chapter "Hardship and Citizenship", is based on narratives of numerous petitions to local and national authorities. The language of these petitions "reflects not only the personal constraints and calculations of outcasts themselves but the preferences of central authorities" (p. 100). Alexopoulos reviews the range of narrative strategies on the basis of a sample of 500 petitions by disenfranchised people. As a result, she shows "how people constructed individual citizen identities in opposition to the standard profile of the bourgeoisie" (p. 104). People posed as "small persons", motivated by ignorance and forced by circumstances to take a trade and to hire labour. They represented themselves as oppressed and exploited. Alexopoulos considers this manner of constructing individual citizen identities as derivative of folk Russian ritual laments. She emphasizes that, "Lamenters were far from the model Stalinist citizen who performed productive labour and actively participated in political life, yet laments proved perfectly consistent with a Marxist theory that identified the proletariat as the oppressed and exploited class" (p. 126). This argument is an important one: the strength of folkloric references in political discourse can be seen quite clearly throughout the Stalinist regime's evolution.

The third strategy for returning to mainstream society was to demonstrate loyalty to Soviet power by socially useful labour. For the reinstatement of rights, the opinions of local officials, co-workers and other "gatekeepers of Soviet policy" were significant: these people could, by providing positive character references, confirm the personal transformation of the petitioner. In these circumstances, local opinion and personal connections within the community were crucial. In trying to emphasize their social relations, some disenfranchised people referred in petitions to family members who had a good Soviet profile. For women, the husband's occupation and social status played a key role. In the absence of socially useful labour, people invoked voluntary work, and in one case even the adoption of orphans, to demonstrate loyalty to Soviet society. People who worked in industry and construction, or were in forced-labour settlements, used another kind of argument, highlighting their achievements and claiming their voting rights as their due. This was how the Stalinist proletariat of the forced labour camps was required to prove its proletarian identity to the proletarian state.

The monograph concludes with an exceptionally interesting chapter about the circumstances surrounding the Stalinist Constitution of 1936. According to this document, the policy of disenfranchisement was officially abolished on the grounds that the enemy classes had been liquidated and socialist society had been built. At the same time, *de facto* class discrimination continued: repressions just took different forms. The majority of peasants deported to Siberia and the far North during collectivization remained without voting rights and without the right to leave their place of settlement until 1954. Having been disenfranchised led to a very high probability of being further repressed, especially during the Great Terror.

Approaching the ascription of Soviet identity through the practice of disenfranchisement and reinstatement is an original and rewarding method of research. Alexopoulos has revealed two intertwined processes: continuous changes in the social-engineering rules by the Stalinist regime in 1926–1936 on the one hand, and citizens' strategies of adaptation to the changing class norms on the other. The book shows in detail how people learned to

comply with the discourse of power and to pose as loyal Soviet citizens. The conclusions are thought-provoking; the reader is left wondering about the correspondence between the creation of Soviet identity and the actual change in economic behavioural patterns. Further research into this issue may be interesting both at the level of individuals as well as at the level of communities, especially ethnic ones. This would help to deepen our understanding of the relationship between actual Soviet social practices and the established class discourse.

Victoria Tyazhel'nikova

HUNTER, JANET. *Women and the Labour Market in Japan's Industrialising Economy. The Textile Industry before the Pacific War*. RoutledgeCurzon, London [etc.] 2003. 326 pp. £65.00; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004131532

The women who staffed Japan's textile factories before World War II have received quite a lot of attention from social historians in both English-language and Japanese-language scholarship.<sup>1</sup> In Japan as in many other industrializing economies, textiles were at the forefront of the transition from home-based production to mechanized factory production. In late nineteenth and early twentieth century Japan, textiles were also a major export industry. Nevertheless, it has been difficult to gain a full picture of the economic importance of the largely female labour force of the textile industries and the gendered dynamics of the labour markets of the time. It has been rare to find economists who are fully conversant with gender theory and social historians who are also literate in discussions of economics and econometrics.

Janet Hunter has completed a comprehensive study of the silk reeling, cotton spinning, and weaving industries from the 1880s to the 1930s, in a study which brings together the skills of economics, economic history, business history, gender studies, and social history. Her aims are to "analyse the nature of the agriculture–industry connection as mediated through textile workers [...] to expose the complexity of the operations of the labour market itself [...] [and to consider shifts] in the character of labour management and industrial relations during the pre-Second World War years" (pp. 3–4). As she explains, she has completed this study "in the belief that an understanding of economic considerations must be combined with analysis of institutional and cultural factors [...]. Rhetoric, attitudes and perceptions exist side by side with economic considerations, and influence, and are influenced by them". (p. 3)

What Hunter has achieved is an economic and social history of this vital industry in the years from the 1870s to the 1930s. She has synthesized and analysed information from official statistics, the reports of bureaucrats, journalists and labour activists, the reports of industry associations and employer associations, and the oral histories of the workers themselves. She has had to come to terms with the different sectors of the industry – silk reeling, cotton spinning, and weaving – and the huge differences which depended on region and type and scale of enterprise. The actors in this story include legislators, bureaucrats, factory owners and managers, recruiters, labour organizers, the workers themselves, and their families. It is also necessary to place the economics of textile

1. In English, see, for example, E. Patricia Tsurumi, *Factory Girls: Women in the Thread Mills of Meiji Japan* (Princeton, NJ, 1990).

production in the context of the Japanese economy and the international economy of the period.

What this study also does is to provide a case study in the gendering of the labour market in an industrializing economy over a period of over half a century. The book thus makes a contribution to the fields of Japanese economic and social history, but also has implications for the comparative understanding of the gendered workings of labour markets.

In the specific case of Japan, economists have engaged in lengthy debates about the proper understanding of the development of Japanese capitalism. Not only have there been debates between Marxist and non-Marxist understandings of the economy, but there have also been extended debates between different Marxist factions. Early twentieth-century debates focused on the proper understanding of the changes consequent on the opening of the country to international trade in the 1850s; whether the political changes accompanying the Meiji restoration of 1868 could properly be characterized as a bourgeois revolution; and on the understanding of the relationship between village economies based on tenant farming and the creation of an urban industrial proletariat. Despite the importance of textiles to Japan's early industrialization, and despite the fact that women formed the majority of factory labour for much of the Imperial period, analysts have been slow to integrate gender into an understanding of the economy in pre-World-War-II Japan. In the Japanese capitalism debates, explains Hunter, it was thought that "[w]hat was really at issue was the relations of production in the economy as a whole, and the liberation of women was contingent on the advance towards socialism. Locating women workers in the broader picture of class and productive relations took precedence over consideration of workers as women *per se*". (p. 27)

Having identified these blind spots of the early twentieth-century "Japanese capitalism debates",<sup>2</sup> Hunter sets out to demonstrate the necessity of employing gender as a category of analysis in understanding the economy and labour market of industrializing Japan. Hunter concludes that, despite differences between the sectors of the textile industry, textile workers were "united by their gender" (p. 300). Attitudes to women workers naturalized their lower wage levels and justified their being sequestered in company dormitories; as women were legally unable to enter into contracts on their own behalf they were subject to the control of fathers, brothers or husbands; and for much of the Imperial period there were legal restrictions on women's political activity in addition to the restrictions on the activities of labour unions. In most cases, the women's wages were understood as part of a village-based family economy rather than as the wages of a free and independent worker.

Although it was generally thought that the Japanese textile industry was characterized by low labour costs, Hunter demonstrates that the picture was in fact much more complex. While the remuneration which ended up in the pockets of the women (or their families) was certainly low by international standards, this was offset by the costs the companies incurred in providing dormitories, board, commission payments to recruiters, and travel costs. When these costs are taken into account, the economics of the industry start to look rather different. It also seems that many employers persisted in extremely exploitative labour practices even after it might have become apparent that better treatment of workers could result in improved productivity. Despite the attempts of the state to intervene in the

2. See Germaine Hoston, *Marxism and the Crisis of Development in Prewar Japan* (Princeton, NJ, 1986), for a comprehensive discussion of the Japanese capitalism debates.

regulation of working conditions, and despite the attempts to build a labour movement, “the balance of power between workers and employers was decisively in favour of the employer” (p. 299). Prewar employers assumed that women’s work was for a short period of their life cycle and this shaped their attitudes, hiring practices, management practices, and patterns of remuneration. A suggestion that deserves more systematic investigation is that these attitudes have carried over into the operations of the postwar labour market (p. 301).<sup>3</sup>

Hunter’s conclusions on the gendering of the labour market in Imperial Japan are backed up by the authority of a sustained investigation of this topic. Her first articles on this topic appeared in the early 1980s, suggesting that she has spent at least two decades working through all of the relevant English- and Japanese-language materials, and developing methods of analysis to fill the gaps in the existing discussion of twentieth-century economic and labour history. Historians of modern Japan will be hugely indebted to this work, and I expect that this book will be used as a reference work, a textbook, and a stimulus for further debates for some years to come. This is an important step in developing a gendered economic history of modern Japan.

Vera Mackie

SIKAINGA, AHMAD ALAWAD. “City of steel and fire”. A social history of Atbara, Sudan’s railway town, 1906–1984. [Social history of Africa.] Heinemann, Portsmouth (NH); James Currey, London 2002. xii, 220 pp. \$64.95; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004141539

Atbara, a town on the White Nile River in the northern Sudan, was the birthplace of the Sudanese working-class. It was there that the country’s labour movement was born in the post-World-War-I years, matured through the 1940s and 1950s, and would be defeated in the early 1980s. This study opens appropriately with a praise poem to the town by an Atbarawi labour leader and poet, al-Hajj Abd al-Rahman, who wrote: “I am Atbara/The mother of working youth/I am Atbara/Pregnant. Waiting for the moment of labour”. It is unclear, however, whether this kind of, undated, encomium was performed at union meetings or published in worker pamphlets. Whatever the case, it is clear that the Atbara of the past has a significant place in the memory of its workers and activists, many of whom have left it, if not the country itself.

The introduction of the railways in the Sudan by the British in 1870 would later give Atbara its significance for its headquarters would be there throughout the twentieth century. While the British colonial administration was keen to expand the railways throughout the country, they were equally zealous in keeping the growing body of railway workers firmly under control. This tension would make Atbara the site of ongoing social struggles between the railways’ colonial authorities and the emerging urban populace who were mostly employed by the railways. Worker activism and emerging nationalist political protest made Atbara a centre of radicalism from the 1920s onward. By the late 1940s that

3. On women’s work in the period of high economic growth from the 1960s, see Mary C. Brinton, *Women and the Economic Miracle: Gender and Work in Postwar Japan* (Berkeley, CA, 1993).

radicalism would be channelled into radical trades unions and a fast-growing Communist Party.

Conflict between workers' organizations and the state was a defining characteristic of the post-independent period. Finally, from the late 1970s onward, the state poured more resources into building a road infrastructure while reducing and neglecting the railway network. No doubt, the railway activists based in Atbara were a major headache to the Khartoum politicians and soldiers, prompting their repression of Atbara. By the early 1980s we learn, "the world the railway workers of Atbara made had begun to crumble. Their social and political institutions collapsed, and their community and family life were ravaged". (p. 173)

The town therefore has been assured a place in the many histories of the country. This admirably composed introduction to Atbara by a well-known historian of the Sudan also shows deftly how the labour movement and leftist and nationalist politics intertwined and related very unevenly and often very tensely to each other. From about halfway through the study we begin to encounter the major players in Atbara in the form of the Sudan Railway Workers' Union, established in 1950 and growing out of the earlier Workers' Affairs Association formed in 1946; and the Sudan Workers' Trades Union Federation, also established in 1950, after forty-eight unions met, bringing their more than 100,000 members together. The Sudanese Communist Party, which played an important role in Sudanese politics, had lots of influence in the latter. With such a powerful left alliance as a potential threat, the post-independence state was bent on fostering, and ensuring, rifts and divisions between them.

Although the internal conflicts and larger national debates that occurred inside these formations, especially around and after independence, have a notable presence in the book, it is not a narrowly focused history of labour organizations and their intrigues. The author was motivated to write an urban social history, as is reflected in his frequent invocation of the comparative literature on African social history in particular, and therefore includes a fair amount of detail about the family, leisure, and cultural lives of the workers and other ordinary citizens of Atbara. Chapter 3 is a particularly interesting treatment of such matters, including a short but illuminating discussion of football. This kind of detailed discussion of social life is unfortunately not repeated for the more recent period. The author makes judicious choices to maintain a balance between explicating the local while holding the national context on the horizon. The larger national setting is ever-present, so that this is not an overly detailed or micro-history of a town. The author has used a range of sources for this study and was especially fortunate to have a number of former activists still available for interviews. There are some good bits of oral testimony, and even poetry, but one would have liked to have heard more of these testimonies.

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