

monographs or even with primary sources, since De Swaan comments on how little is actually known historically about petty bourgeoisies (though there is more than he seems aware of). However, it is even odder in the context of this argument that he says so little about the fact that the middle classes have been such extensive beneficiaries of state welfare in Europe since World War Two; and that recent cuts have come at the point at which many more of them than before believe that they can make independent provision for their needs.

De Swaan's interesting, but not firmly grounded or clearly or rigorously thought-out speculations about the role of the petty bourgeoisie are characteristic of the book as a whole. That it contains a lot of historical inaccuracies is unavoidable, probably, in a book with so wide a sweep. There is no point in commenting upon these in detail (though his belief that the post-1906 Liberal governments planned to finance welfare with tariffs will surprise British historians), but it is not simply the banal fact-retaining obsessions of the historian that induces worry about generalizations grounded so often in insecure empirical foundations. Another problem with his method is that he so often generalizes to all of his countries from one or two instances in one or two of them, with no comment upon the problems of such generalization or of comparison among different states and societies. The grand sweep of long-run historical sociology is desirable but if it is ever to ride above the level of not quite convincing speculation and constitute something more significant than sociologists seeking to impress one another, such sociologists are going to have to read historical work, and even historical sources when the secondary work fails them, as it often will, more widely, deeply and critically than they often do.

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SONENSCHER, MICHAEL. *Work and Wages. Natural Law, Politics and the Eighteenth-Century French Trades*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, New Rochelle 1989. xi, 427 pp. Maps. £ 37.50.

This book is destined to be the standard against which future studies of artisans and their organizations under the Old Regime will be measured. Using largely untapped judicial records along with the usual array of sources concerning the *corporations*, Sonenscher has produced a sweeping reinterpretation of the economic and political world of handicraft manufacturing before the permanent abolition of the guilds. Although he tends, like William Sewell and many other writers, to assume (quite erroneously) that he has accounted for the vast majority of industrial workers in the eighteenth century by examining those crafts subject to corporative law, Sonenscher has nevertheless succeeded in creating a picture of the life of the trades before and during the Revolution that should prove enduring. Whether he has adequately explained the causes of the shape that this life took by the later eighteenth century is another matter.

The key to the book's insights is the author's brilliant analysis of conflict in the trades between masters and journeymen as well as among those on the same side of the wage bargain, conflict that was played out largely in courts of law all the way up

to the *Parlements*. Here many realities of daily life in the trades can be discerned. When such often surprising information is correlated with equally perplexing quantitative data that Sonenscher has laboriously gathered, these realities seem rather distant from our received wisdom. It becomes obvious that the guilds were not at all closed to access from outside masters' families (though sons and prospective sons-in-law did have the inside track to masterships) or indeed from beyond a city's walls. Edward Shepherd proved this for Dijon, and now Sonenscher is able to generalize the point. Although accurate statistical analysis is impossible, it appears that large numbers of non-native journeymen, having made their *tour de France*, took their place as masters beside *citoyens de souche* in urban centers throughout France. But the path was anything but stable. Journeymen "bobbed like corks" from one job to another, one town to the next. Flux was the essence of journeymen's existence, and while hiring halls and rooming houses provided more-or-less regular conduits for particular masters and the shadowy institutions of the *compagnonnage* gave many journeymen some degree of control, labor markets were rather chaotic with hiring practices and contractual arrangements shifting according to the principles of what Sonenscher calls (following Geertz) "the economy of the bazaar". Neither may we any longer accept the image of the workshop of the master, one or two journeymen, and an apprentice as the "typical" unit of production of eighteenth-century France. Average master/journeyman ratios are virtually meaningless because close scrutiny reveals enormous variations in the size of shops in nearly all trades, including those purported to be the most "artisanal", such as tailoring and shoemaking. The larger businesses dominated the trade. Moreover, such firms subcontracted work to outside craftsmen, with or without their own shops, owners or not of certificates of mastership. *Marchandage*, the bane of the 1840s, began to trouble the artisan world a good century before. Most trades in the later eighteenth century, especially in the larger cities, were thus already divided between a "core" of larger, more stable operations and a "periphery" of subcontractors and small masters who hired in a volatile labor market of nonresident journeymen. Finally, apprenticeship was increasingly winked at as the very definition of "journeyman" became more amorphous. Journeymen and many masters fought these trends, employing the institutional mechanism of the courts of law and the language of Natural Law in their defense. Sonenscher is perhaps at his best in showing how what other historians might call "traditions", such as the corporative legal framework and solidarities manifested in confraternities and the *compagnonnage*, intertwined with what would come to be labelled "modern" (natural rights, Wilkesian populist rhetoric, collective work stoppages) to produce a unique artisan politics. The latter served as the basis for the emergent ideology of the Revolutionary sansculottes, an outlook given concrete form by the revolutionary dynamic but hardly created by it – any more than by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In this, Sonenscher thus situates himself outside the historiographical orientations of both Furet and Soboul. For Soboul, the sansculotte world view reflected a pre-capitalist existence of direct producers where workshop harmony gave rise to concepts of fraternity. For Sonenscher, this was an *invented* tradition, a kind of wishful thinking at considerable variance with reality. The only shortcoming in his superb discussion of this issue (chapter 10) is his failure to acknowledge the significance of Daniel Roche's contribution to our understanding

of popular values and attitudes that grew outside the workshop in the arenas of consumption and neighborhood sociability (*Le peuple de Paris*, Paris, 1981).

The new image rendered in Sonenscher's account is therefore one we have tended to associate with artisan industry in the first half of the nineteenth century, when capitalism supposedly first reared its ugly head in the trades. Sonenscher, I believe, clearly demonstrates that their transformation was underway well before the guilds were abolished, before the Revolution swept away the legal restraints ostensibly impeding capitalist development. This is a very important discovery and adds a whole new dimension to our understanding of the political economy of eighteenth-century France. Not only did large-scale manufacturing in both its concentrated and dispersed variants proliferate (a fact solidly established by a number of recent studies), but "traditional" artisan industry seemed to be submitting to the logic of the profit motive and entrepreneurship as well.

But is this how Michael Sonenscher describes it? Not quite. His conclusion at first seems to point in that direction: "Modernity, at least in France, is very much less easy to identify than appearances suggest. Arguably, much of what was modern [. . .] was already there, many generations before Marx wrote the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. Much of what has been associated with the dissolution of craft communities – generalized sub-contracting, *marchandage*, the elimination of customary practices, the dilution of skill – were either the subject of intermittant conflict between employers and workers throughout the eighteenth century, or, like skill, wage-systems, or customary practices, existed in conditions that were so radically different from those usually associated with artisans that it is impossible to assimilate them into the linear process of material change that, putatively, led from craft production to factory production." What Sonenscher appears to be saying is that these practices did not necessarily arise in the eighteenth century, that indeed such an "economy of the bazaar" could well have been around for a very long time, though he adduces no evidence to that effect. It is therefore not capitalism (or rather people acting in capitalist ways), either then or in the nineteenth century, that is responsible for these conditions; they appear endemic to this form of production. Such a perspective thus allows Sonenscher to conclude that "What changed between 1748 and 1848 was not so much the relationship between workers and employers, or the immediate circumstances in which production was carried out, as the identity of the public to which actors in conflicts appealed and the manner in which those appeals were couched. Instead of lawyers and magistrates, nineteenth-century workers and their employers addressed other workers and employers and, increasingly, their own political intermediaries or representatives." What changed, then, were politics and institutions consequent of the French Revolution, not the mode and relations of production.

In making the case so starkly, Sonenscher ignores three factors: the scope of change in the trades, the previous character of relations in the trades, and, above all perhaps, the dramatic changes in the product market from the 1740s to the 1840s. It is obvious that those features marking the "modernization" of the trades – sub-contracting, out-sourcing, the use of unapprenticed labor (especially low-wage-earning women), and especially the abandonment of made-to-order work to manufacture standardized, "ready-made" products – were dramatically more prominent in 1848 than they were in 1748 or indeed in 1818. Sonenscher does not address this

question at all. Nor does he attempt to evaluate change from 1500 or 1600 to the eighteenth century. How much *was* new by 1748? Clearly a massive change in demand occurs in the eighteenth century, as more and more consumer goods for ordinary people come onto the bare beginnings of a mass market. As Roche and his students have shown, what were luxuries in 1700 (mirrors, porcelain, tableware, a new suit of clothes, shoes rather than clogs, etc.) were increasingly regarded as necessities.

Sonenscher's failure to examine the general character of the market economy within which the trades' internal economy operated and by which it was unquestionably conditioned is a serious shortcoming. He simply does not address the potential counter-thesis to his argument, namely that what he is looking at is the rapid development of merchant capitalism in the trades, a systemic force that profoundly altered the lifeworlds (to use Habermasian terminology) that he so brilliantly reconstructs.

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DAVIS, CHARLES L. *Working-Class Mobilization and Political Control. Venezuela and Mexico.* The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington 1989. xii, 211 pp. \$ 22.00.

Students of Latin American societies have long speculated about the relatively passive role of the working class in the region. Most Latin American governments pursue development strategies based on capital accumulation for industrial development, which result in relatively low employment levels in the modern industrial sector and wide disparities of income. Despite these conditions, which grew worse during the 1980s, the Latin American working class has not followed the model in most European countries of turning to left-wing political movements.

The most common explanation for labour's acceptance of such economic policies is the prevalence of corporatist systems of interest group mediation. Authoritarian corporatist regimes maintain their control by excluding the working classes from political participation, while inclusionary systems such as Venezuela and Mexico rely on labour's support for the hegemonic parties.

While the theoretical bases of corporatism were developed in the 1970s, empirical tests of the model applied to labour have been limited to case studies and analyses of labour policy. This book tests several propositions that emerge from the theory of corporatism by using survey research. In addition, there has been little empirical work on a comparative basis. Venezuela and Mexico are examples of different degrees of competition within inclusionary corporatist polities. Venezuelan politics features the alternation in power of two rather conservative parties, while Mexico was essentially a one-party state when this research was done.

The author's fundamental question is how the dominant political parties in Venezuela and Mexico have maintained working-class electoral support, despite generally regressive economic policies. Corporatist theory holds that pro-government parties secure labour's allegiance through bargains negotiated with unions