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BOOK REVIEWS

TRUDEL, MARCEL. Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec. Suivi du: Dictionnaire des esclaves et de leurs propriétaires au Canada française sur CD-ROM. Avec la collaboration de Micheline D'Allaire. [Cahiers du Québec.] Éditions Hurtubise HMH ltée, Montréal 2004. 405 pp. [1 CD-ROM encl.] C$44.95; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859005011971

This timely book about two centuries of slavery in Quebec is a detailed chronicle of an obscure aspect of Canadian history that occurred during the Nouvelle-France era and the British colonial period, that is before the Canadian Confederation of 1867. The first edition of this rich work was originally written by Canadian historian Marcel Trudel in 1960, under the title *Histoire de l'esclavage au Canada français* (published by the Presses de l'Université Laval). It was out of print in Canada for more than three decades and was never translated into another language. Author of some thirty-five books on Canadian history, Marcel Trudel began his career as a professor at Université Laval in Quebec City about half a century ago; he is now Emeritus Professor at the University of Ottawa.

This welcome reprint with a new title (*Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec*) is a revised and updated version of Trudel's previous book on slavery in French Canada, with the help of historian Micheline D'Allaire. The book is now multimedia: its new edition comes with a useful CD-Rom that contains all the secondary sources used for the compilation: we find inside an exhaustive, alphabetical list of all slaves and their owners in Canada during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This hefty electronic supplement first appeared in another book by Marcel Trudel, entitled *Dictionnaire des esclaves et de leurs propriétaires au Canada français*, also published by HMH in 1990.

The presence of slaves in Canada has always surprised most people, even Canadians, who associate slavery with the United States, seeing the Canadian border as a safe refuge for escaped US slaves who wanted to be free. This is not false. As Marcel Trudel explains, slaves were not common in Canada, at least not like the millions of African slaves living in the United States over three centuries. In all, there were around 4,200 slaves who lived in Canada over two centuries (p. 335). The book's twelve chapters are devoted to the circuits and networks for importing slaves into Canada, with an analysis of their specific ways of living and their rights, their religious beliefs and conversion to Catholicism, the mixed relationships between slaves and their Canadian owners, and the ways in which slaves could obtain freedom under the British colonial regime.

There are a great variety of sources compiled and used here. Registers (from churches, schools, general stores), censuses, or sometimes personal archives give us some information about the circumstances leading to the presence of slaves in Canada. Some slaves were brought by English occupants after the 1763 *Traité de Paris*; others were stolen by French soldiers from English warships (p. 88). In a few cases slaves were bought in public markets, for instance in Montreal.

One surprising thing to note is that most slaves in Canada were aboriginal; only a small portion came directly from Africa (for instance Guinea) or, to a lesser degree, from Barbados (p. 89). In fact, aboriginals themselves also used slaves, who were often prisoners of war captured from other aboriginal nations. In a few cases, some important aboriginals

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even owned a black slave (p. 37). The eighteenth century was the period when most slaves were brought into Nouvelle-France. The author has identified in the official registers from Nouvelle-France some 2,683 aboriginal slaves (p. 76), who came from as far away as the Mississippi Valley, and at least 1,443 black slaves (pp. 84, 368). There are also 59 uncertain cases that do not specify whether the slave was of aboriginal or black origin (p. 368).

The first evidence of slaves in Canada is reported from 1687; these aboriginals were then labeled as "Panis" and came mostly from Missouri and even Nebraska (the Mississippi Valley was then part of Nouvelle-France). The French term "Panis" that was commonly used to identify aboriginal slaves in French Canada was in fact the old name of a first nation (in English: "Pawnies" or "Pawnees") living in the Missouri region (pp. 23, 77). From 1701, aboriginal slaves in Nouvelle-France were always taken from enemy nations that were not allied with France, such as the Patocas, Arkansas, Sioux, and Illinois (p. 55).

As in the United States, slaves in Canada were first counted as material "goods" on a property, like mere animals or furniture. Using church registers to trace those who were baptized, and also death certificates that were issued, as well as personal correspondence and other private archives from their owners, Marcel Trudel has identified the names of many of the slaves who lived and died in Nouvelle-France. According to the records he quotes, there were at least 1,205 women who were slaves in pre-Canadian history. From that number, 213 gave birth to children; 17 per cent of those births were illegitimate or from an unknown father, probably caused by an interracial union between a white father and a female slave (p. 257). There were also some 79 official weddings between a white owner and his female slave, from 1705 onwards (p. 335). Slave couples (and families) also existed in Nouvelle-France.

According to registers, the last time a slave was publicly sold in Canada was in 1797 (p. 319). Since the British Act of 1833 forbade slavery in all British colonies, Trudel considers this date as the end of slavery in Canada, although the practice stopped earlier, almost by itself, because of moral guilt felt by the Canadians toward slaves. Among those black slaves, a woman named Mary Young died at the Hôpital-Général de Montréal in 1813, at the respectable age of 106! (pp. 171, 334).

Although it relates to a sensitive topic, *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec* is a fine and rigorous research project about an overlooked aspect of Canadian history. The author's conclusion even states which Canadian historians have or have not mentioned the existence of this dimension in their writings. Most importantly, scholars studying the history of African-American slaves will have to consider this contribution by Marcel Trudel, since the political borders between Canada and United States have changed a great deal, and Nouvelle-France in the eighteenth century included about a quarter of what is now US territory. This courageous and seminal work, backed by strong archival research, will be useful to scholars, archivists, and historians who read French, and highly relevant to the work of students of ethnicity, comparative sociology, Atlantic studies, and American and Canadian studies.

Yves Laberge

Harvey, David. Paris: Capital of Modernity. Routledge, New York, [etc.] 2003. xi, 372 pp. Ill. Maps. € 19.99; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859005021978

Recent historians have followed Walter Benjamin's classic *Paris: Capital of the Nineteenth Century*, not only in arguing the city's leading role in history, but also in making the claim

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dramatically in the title. Taking a literary perspective, Priscilla Ferguson spotlighted "Paris as revolution" in her book of that title (1994). Taking a broader, multi-faceted view, Patrice Higonnet made the case for Paris as "capital of the world" in the title of his book (2002). Now David Harvey's new book presents Paris as "city of capital" and modernity (p. 24) – or more precisely, the capital of *capitalist modernity*, above all in the period of the Second Empire.

Harvey's methodology is "historical-geographical materialism" (p. 19), as readers of his 1985 book, *Consciousness and the Urban Experience* know (a revised section of that book reappears in the volume under review). His approach owes much to Marx, of course, although Balzac (whose writing Marx much admired) is cited most often in the first section. Harvey's book is primarily a social and economic history, but he does bring in related developments in politics, literature (Balzac, Baudelaire, Flaubert, and Zola), and art, citing cultural works mainly as illustrations of social interactions and attitudes. He makes excellent use of the cartoons of Daumier and Gavarni, among others, but especially Daumier, whose sardonic views of the grasping bourgeoisie and their self-involved behaviors are in perfect harmony with Harvey's text. There are also great photographs by Charles Marville and a wealth of instructive maps and charts.

The first section is devoted to "representations", by which Harvey means "myths of modernity" and utopian ideas of the first half of the nineteenth century. One of the "myths" that Harvey labors to undo is the notion that modernity began as a decisive break with the past – say, around 1848 or with the advent of the Second Empire. Here Harvey draws on the recent work of numerous historians (the late Nicholas Papayanis, for one) who have cast light on the plethora of pre-1848 ideas for renovating Paris, many of which anticipated the works carried out by Napoleon III's prefect, Georges-Eugène Haussmann. The other main thrust of this part of the book is to explicate Balzac's stories, highlighting all that they demystified about Paris, setting off the writer's love of "the monster" and his utopian dreams against the blighting of hopes by the forces of "commodification" and "exchange values" (p. 47).

The heart of the book is the long section devoted to "materializations" and the period 1848–1870. The fifteen chapters of this part trace the interplay of economic forces and spatial changes from the 1848 Revolution through the years of massive urban renewal under the Second Empire. In this account, the key agents of modernization were not the authoritarian ruler and his strongman prefect, but rather the forces of capital and the bourgeois men (patriarchal they were) who controlled the financial power. As landlords, financiers, speculators, and developers, those bourgeois successfully advanced their economic interests and reshaped Paris into a city for themselves, increasing the circulation of goods and people while also ridding it, as much as possible, of threatening workers and industrial nuisances. The breakdown of local communities was well under way before the urban renewal of the Second Empire, but in the 1850s the state and capitalists, working together, increased the scale and pace of the changes. On balance, rising rents and the move of industrial jobs to the periphery did more to increase the social segregation of Paris than the prefect's slum clearances. Capital, not simply Haussmann, revamped the spatial arrangements and the socio-economic structures of the city.

Harvey fills out that big story with detailed examinations of finance capital, property ownership, the state, labor, and the experience of women. In tracking the transforming processes, Harvey's exposition shifts between two positions: on the one hand, general characterizations of class as clearly defined social units, especially the bourgeoisie, and on

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the other hand, close-grained delineations of complex, ill-defined subgroups. So the bourgeoisie often figures in the narrative as a unitary class, but the detailed account presents an elaborate taxonomy of economic categories within that class along with factions (liberal and "radical") and internecine struggles. The "landlord class" (p. 151) was divided between old-fashioned property owners and new speculators; an *haute bourgeoisie* dealing in real estate pushed out the lower middle class and *petite bourgeoisie* (p. 127); old financiers (the Rothschilds, notably) clashed with new-style bankers (the Pereires); industrialists were at odds with commercial capitalists. And in many small industrial firms, it was "difficult [...] to distinguish between owners and workers" (p. 155). Further complicating matters was the existence of a dissident wing of the bourgeoisie, the denizens of "la bohème" – impecunious students, artists, writers, journalists, and painters, given to mocking bourgeois culture. In the "lower class" (p. 228) too, divisions and "porous" borders were rife: there were the skilled and unskilled, casual workers and domestic workers, street vendors, and the hard-to-pin-down miscellany known as the *Lumpenproletariat*.

Though the effort to sketch a neat and simple delineation of class structure does not go well, the complicated story of socio-economic conflicts comes across clearly. The restructuring of the city was notoriously hard on workers – on craftsmen facing deskilling or subcontracting to large firms, unskilled workers fresh from the provinces, and working women, who were often paid only enough to supplement a man's income. During the construction boom, some workers benefited, but overall, working people did not fare well, especially in the 1860s, despite Louis Napoleon's Saint-Simonian interest in "the extinction of pauperism" (a tract he wrote in 1844). When Haussmann cleared away some center-city slums, landlords and conservatives opposed state and bourgeois reformers' efforts to provide replacement housing, and the destruction only spurred the growth of other slums – shanty towns on the edge of the city and courtyard-cramming rookeries in the center.

So Haussmann imposed "a distinctive class project" (p. 51) on Paris, and the Second Empire ushered in a "distinctively capitalist form of modernity" (p. 89). But capitalism, as Marx pointed out, was racked by contradictions, which Louis Napoleon's modernized state had to try to manage – through job-creating urban renewal projects and debt financing, for example. But in important ways the forces of capital worked fatally against the imperial state, Harvey shows well. For example, Paris industries became more subject to the vagaries of foreign markets, and the economic downturn of the 1860s contributed greatly to the growth of the political opposition. Commercial spectacles – in department stores, on the boulevards, and in entertainment venues – increasingly overshadowed the festivities for the glory of the Empire.

Faced with closer police surveillance, workers and republicans massed at the funerals of opponents of the Empire to express their discontents. The "class alliance" (p. 260) that Louis Napoleon put together was fragile from the beginning. The Second Empire suffered from its own contradictions – its embrace of capitalist liberty and authoritarianism, its projects of geometrically ordered urban modernity and the traditional pastoralism that led to new parks and green spaces. The Second Empire led Paris out of the economic and social crisis of 1848–1850, but ironically the changes it accelerated led to its downfall and another great crisis, the uprising of the Commune of 1871. In putting down that rising and retaking the city, the "forces of reaction" killed not only some 30,000 Parisians, but also the "alternative modernity" (p. 308) that was the social republic.

Harvey's book ends with a coda on the history of the basilica of Sacré-Coeur, weaving in

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glimpses of the *Communards* and their militant successors. In the *Communard* uprising, old loyalties to neighborhood, city, and class came together, Harvey argues, as the Parisian rebels attempted to forge a new community to replace the modern, money-driven city of the previous regime. Harvey's focus on that church, a monument to a diehard extreme of Catholicism and royalism, may seem a questionable way to end his history of the capital, given that the stated purpose of this book was to show the "complex modes of transformation" that altered the visage of Paris in ineluctable ways" (p. 308). If the most important transformations were to a larger-scale capitalism and a more socially segregated city dominated by the bourgeoisie, one can think of other monumental structures that would serve well here as the subject of a concluding essay – the Bourse de Commerce, the Hôtel de Ville (as rebuilt after the Commune), or the Eiffel Tower – to take only examples from the construction period of Sacré-Coeur. The choice of the basilica and the "wall of the Fédérés", however, does make clear the political polarization that accompanied the social hatreds festering in the city all through the nineteenth century. In the rest of the book, Harvey treats political history as a lesser strand in the story – to good effect. By focusing so clearly on economic and social history above all, he has given us an excellent account of the processes that dramatically altered the material and social order of Paris from 1830 to 1871.

Charles Rearick

KUPFER, TORSTEN. Geheime Zirkel und Parteivereine. Die Organisation der deutschen Sozialdemokratie zwischen Sozialistengesetz und Jahrhundertwende. [Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für soziale Bewegung: Schriftenreihe B, Quellen und Dokumente, Band 5] Klartext, Essen 2003. 278 pp. € 39.90; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859005031974

Torsten Kupfer investigates the rather slow restoration of German social democracy into full legality. In the first part of his book, he maintains that in most German *Länder*, because of various legal provisions, many old illegal institutions of the party from the anti-socialist-laws-era remained in use for quite a long time. The main obstacle to full legality was usually the *Verbindungsverbot*, according to which organizational ties between local political clubs were illegal. It remained in power until 1898/1899, but only the *Reichsvereinsgesetz* of 1908 guaranteed the free development of the Party in all *Länder*. It is no coincidence that the constitution of thirty-eight social-democratic clubs in both Mecklenburgs dates only from 15 May 1908.

Thus, while after the party conference at Halle (1890) the beginnings of a legal party organization were set up, the real organizational structure of the party remained the old secret one from previous years. It consisted of *corpora* (ad-hoc meetings of ordinary members incorporated through cooptation), district organizations, and a local committee above them. The most important person in this framework was the *Vertrauensmann*. He was instrumental in the dealings between the secret "internal organization" and the public institutions of the party, and also between local organizations and the party leadership. He was usually not only a secretary but also the person who controlled the finances. Generally, the lines of decision-making in the party went top-down and from the secret "internal organization" to the public organizations (usually only meetings of adherents).

The consequences of this half-legal constellation for the Party were considerable. First,

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inner-party democracy was severely harmed by the hegemony of the secret organization. Second, leading functionaries in the secret "internal organization" could develop a formidable opposition to the party leadership and especially the social-democratic fraction in the *Reichstag*. The opposition of the *Jungen* in 1892–1893 was, for instance, based on their power position within the "internal organization". On the negative side, ordinary social democrats could be frustrated by the secret dealings within the "internal organization" they were not party to.

Kupfer's detailed account does not fundamentally change what we already knew about the secret party organization from other publications, e.g. Dieter Fricke's *Handbuch zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*.[1] However, he makes us much more aware of the regional and sometimes local variations in the advance of the SPD from illegality to legality.

In the second part of his book Kupfer investigates the growth of the SPD. He shows that the take-off of the party had already started in 1889, made possible by the authorities' greater moderation. As long as much of the party organization remained secret, it is difficult to decide who should be counted as a social democrat. In various places the SPD did not have any local organization, but here social democrats could be organized in any sort of club, be it singing, bicycling, or bowling clubs, or local trade unions. Such circumstances impede a precise calculation of the party's growth. In general, Kupfer argues that his minimum calculations show the membership of the SPD to have been larger than contemporaries and later historians have thought.

He also shows that it did not increase in the same linear way as the number of social democratic votes. A quick revival after 1890 was followed by a slow-down after 1892 and even a short collapse during 1895–1896. These were years of a development crisis, Kupfer argues, the severity of which showed itself in weak organizations and large membership turnover. After 1896 the party grew steadily, with spurts after 1903 and 1905. The party was predominantly a male affair, but this was supported by the fact that in most parts of Germany until 1908 the participation of women in political organizations was forbidden.

The third part of the book is devoted to the social structure of the party. In previous pages Kupfer, when analysing the causes of the big debates during the 1890s (e.g. the debate around the *Jungen*), alluded to a changeover in party membership from craftsmen to industrial workers. He seems to have borrowed this idea from Rudolf Boch's interesting study of Solingen.[2] Now, however, he firmly states that craftsmen (often construction workers) remained the backbone of the party throughout the whole period. Locally, the party often found it hard to recruit industrial workers, and sometimes (Solingen) it even came to bitter conflict between craftsmen and industrial workers about the leadership of the party. A strained relationship between party and trade unions locally could be the result, but how the changeover from craftsmen to industrial workers should be seen exactly remains unresolved. In part 4 Kupfer shows that in many places where the social democrats were weak, anti-socialist organizations succeeded much better in recruiting industrial workers.

In the last part the author analyses the various forms of repression the social democrats were subjected to. He contends that, generally within the party, this repression promoted

1. Dieter Fricke, *Handbuch zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, 2 vols (Berlin, 1987), vol. 1, pp. 220–267.
2. Rudolf Boch, *Handwerker-Sozialisten gegen Fabrikgesellschaft. Lokale Fachvereine, Massengewerkschaft und industrielle Rationalisierung in Solingen 1870–1914* (Göttingen, 1985).

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reformism. It differed according to place and to time, but mostly according to the *Landrat* who was supervising the policies. Sheer arbitrariness was the result. Usually we think of Prussia as the *Land* with the worst record for the repression of socialists, but Kupfer shows that the situation in Saxony was worse, not to speak of both Mecklenburgs, Alsace-Lorraine, and two small principalities in Thuringia. In the end he gives a short analytic account of anti-socialist worker organizations and expresses the importance of their following.

Kupfer's book covers much ground. To a large extent it is based upon a searching enquiry into police archives. From them the author is able shed new light on the organizational aspects of the development of the SPD after 1890. His work on party membership (especially in the documentary appendix) is impressive, though in the end not wholly conclusive. He rightly stresses that also in Germany much of the nineteenth-century history of the labour movement is local history. Local history, however, can be a pitfall, and the stress on the exceptional which it entails may prevent historians from seeing general trends. Attention to the local may also make it difficult to link back to general debates.

It is here that Kupfer's account leaves the reader with questions. The quality of this book is to be found in its factual representation, less on the conceptual level. Opportunities to link up with the existing literature on the SPD are often not taken. As a result, the reader himself has to construct the true meaning of Kupfer's findings. Awareness of a more general sociological literature concerning social movements and organizations (e.g. the work of Zald c.s. or of Tilly) seems absent too. Not surprisingly, the only sociologist to get some attention and factual criticism is Robert Michels.

Bert Altena

Bandyopadhyay, Sekhor. Caste, Culture and Hegemony. Social Domination in Colonial Bengal. Sage Publications, New Dehli [etc.] 2004. 253 pp. Rs. 550.00; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859005041970

The author's basic point is that the establishment of modernity in south Asia was a multifaceted process, and was neither unidirectional, nor teleological in nature. If modernity is taken to imply a societal arrangement in which a sense of democracy prevails, enabling all and discounting hierarchy at least formally, and with that an opening up of the economy in which access to wealth is relatively open, then this modernity had but a staggered journey in colonial south Asia. Bandyopadhyay establishes this with reference to the practice of caste in colonial Bengal.

Colonial observers, and for some time social scientists of various hues who came after them, had long held that the single most important component in Indian society was a notion of caste-based hierarchy, inherited and unchanging. In recent times this notion has undergone changes and the emerging consensus seems to be that the specific position of a caste in the societal hierarchy depended on the kind of political leverage it could exercise by virtue of the temporal achievements of its elite members. This is the raja-pundit nexus that Nicholas Dirks had talked about. Political power acting in tandem with pliant Brahmin priests could elevate the caste status of particular communities, thereby providing recognition to secular changes in the format of the society. Bandyopadhyay's present study

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admirably argues that this was the process through which traditional Hindu society absorbed the body blows of the changes ushered in through colonial rule.

Had Hindu practice of caste been as rigid as it was taken to be, caste-based hierarchy would have long since collapsed under the pressure of upwardly mobile lower castes who benefited through colonial dispensation. For colonial dispensation did provide greater opportunities to access wealth for certain members of the Hindu lower castes, who thereafter could and did think of improving their caste status. There were two ways of doing this, one being to question the very idea of caste-based hierarchy, and to proclaim the equality of all men, and the other – to accept the notion of hierarchy and to claim a higher status. Bandyopadhyay's conclusion is, not surprisingly, that it was the latter mode that ultimately proved to be more successful.

Bandyopadhyay explores his theme in terms of several key questions that figured in the course of the late nineteenth century in Bengal. One element, which he discusses with great care, was the manner in which the notion of caste-based hierarchy came to be accepted by those who were themselves ostensibly victims of it. As Bandyopadhyay sees it, both coercion by the upper castes, and a desire on the part of those who belonged to the lesser castes to emulate the ways of the high and mighty, i.e. a process of 'sanskritization', figured.

The author situates his discussion in the larger context of understanding popular culture. After a thorough review of the existing literature, Bandyopadhyay concludes that popular culture should not be considered to be in permanent disjunction with the culture of the elite. Elements of popular religion are drawn from the established religion, and are sometimes adapted in such a manner that a certain note of subversion is developed. Popular religion thus may reflect the protest of the lower depths. Yet, as the author shows with reference to the popular religions of Bengal, too often this subversion could not proceed beyond a certain point. Too often the protesting castes changed tack and remained satisfied with a nominal recognition of a higher status from the larger society.

This futility of radical protest or attempt at change was perhaps most poignantly exposed in the failure of one of Bengal's finest reformers, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, to get the larger society to accept socially widow remarriage. The Act of 1856 legalized such marriages, in the sense that children born of such marriages could legally inherit ancestral property. But getting society to accept such marriages was a different proposition. Indeed, Bandyopadhyay notices how, as a consequence of upward social mobility, lower castes who had previously practised widow remarriage, began to discard it in order to justify their claim to a higher status.

Colonial legal and administrative practices also abetted the process. The discourse on indigenous society came to be formed through inputs gathered from upper-caste informants who possessed textual knowledge. The colonial justice system adopted the *dharmasastra* as the sole means of adjudication on matters pertaining to Hindu marriages, adoption, and inheritance. This effectively meant that the lower and middling castes now had to follow rules on these matters as prescribed by Brahman and other high-caste lawgivers. As some of them attained a relatively greater access to wealth, they felt compelled to abandon their previous more ambiguous modes of family structure. The relatively liberal status of women, often common among such castes, now gave way to a stricter and more conservative approach.

This inability of the lower-caste movement to come to its own was again revealed when on the eve of the country's independence and partition into two unions of India and

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Pakistan, the lower castes in Bengal were successfully wooed by the Hindu Mahasabha to accept caste Hindu leadership and to join up with the Hindus in the pre-partition communal convulsion. Clearly, as Bandyopadhyay concluded, the political aspirations or self-consciousness of the lower castes did not seriously threaten Hindu political hegemony.

A strong point of this book is that in exploring the past the author never loses touch with the present. His questions almost emanate from the prevailing political situation in India in the last leg of the twentieth century. The rise of the Hindutva brand of politics, alongside the growing importance of those political parties whose principal agenda appear to be concerned with the political and social demands of the lower castes, including that of the *dalits*, has brought to the fore the question of caste hegemony and the nature of protest against it. Bandyopadhyay's answer is that the caste-based hierarchy was always flexible enough to accommodate changes in the society. And therefore, in present times it has been possible for the champions of Hindutva to enter into political understandings with the representatives of the lower castes, solely for the purpose of forming a government. The unfortunate fact remains that such understandings are fundamentally opportunistic in nature, and that they do not signify any real change in the notion of hierarchy in the broader society.

Parimal Ghosh

BASU, SUBHO. Does Class Matter? Colonial Capital and Workers' Resistance in Bengal (1890–1937). [SOAS Studies on South Asia.] Oxford University Press, Oxford [etc.] 2004. ix, 316 pp. £21.99; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859005051977

Does class matter? "Yes", writes Subho Basu, "we can recover it as a defused [or, maybe, diffused] form of social and political entity that can be made and remade depending on the contingency of immediate social and political circumstance" (p. 283). He grounds this assertion in an empirical examination of workers' movements in the Bengal jute industry from its inception to the general strike of 1937. Jute workers' politics is read, however, in relation to major political events of Bengal: the Swadeshi movement (1905); the non-cooperation and Khilafat movements (1918); the rise of the socialist movement (1920s); provincial autonomy and the communalization of Bengal politics (1930s).

The last four chapters of this book – the bulk of it, that is – draws together the various strands of Bengal politics and chronologically examines the relationship between workers' movements with these wider political currents. The author examines the multiple links and dynamic relationship among workers' micro-politics, institutionalization, state structures, and "high politics". He argues a strong case for a political reading of labour history: "This study asserts that the social history of labour cannot be separated from the political history of institutions of governance, political parties, and trade unions" (p. 277). One of the more innovative aspects of the book is the depiction of the dominance of jute capital in municipal institutions of jute towns. The alliance between European capital and colonial state, the combination of race and class dominance, the author argues, created a politically volatile environment within which workers had to devise their strategies of survival as well as their collective struggles.

In arguing for a "political" understanding of class, Basu affirms R.S. Chandavarkar's

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thesis, "that [...] social categories were not given in the first place but politically constructed, and that the process of the social formation of the working class was shaped by an essentially political dimension at its core".[1] Basu places his arguments between two opposing approaches in Indian labour historiography: the notion of "class as a monolithic construct that manifested itself through socialist parties and trade unions", and the emphasis on "other forms of monolithic constructs, such as communities based on primordial loyalties" in order to "fill the absence of class" (p. 283). The former refers to the orthodox Marxist view, which dominated Indian labour history until the 1980s, writing the history of labour in terms of progressive organization and collective activities like strikes and trade unionism. The latter refers to Dipesh Chakrabarty's provocative book on jute workers, *Rethinking Working-Class History* (1989), arguing the difficulty of conceptualizing a "working class" in the Indian context and the continued significance of "pre-capitalist" identities such as (religious) community among factory workers.[2]

Chakrabarty's thesis is not one of imperfect class formation. He rejects the possibility of subordinating community to "needs of capital", instead posing community as an alternative category for understanding factory workers, their relationships with the employers, the state, and with each other. The implicit substitution of one master identity, "community", anchored to pre-capitalist culture, for another, "working class", shaped by the exigencies of colonial capital, has provoked a younger generation of scholars in India to explore other competing categories in the context of labour. It has been followed by Janaki Nair's examination of caste and gender in a comparative study of Kolar gold mine workers and Bangalore textile workers,[3] my own work, and Leela Pernandes's work on the importance of gender in the construction of a jute working class.[4] Other scholars have examined the construction of tribal identities, and the complexities of the colonial state's rhetoric on "free" labour.[5]

Basu does not engage directly with these competing categories and their implication for applying any monolithic identity, class, or community in understanding factory workers. He does, however, accept that class cannot be accorded primacy any more than it can be regarded as a "master identity"; rather, "class" is an element in a "complex pattern of identity formation in interaction with diverse forms of political processes" (p. 283). So does class matter? Only to the extent that without a notion of class "we are left with the danger of viewing workers as prisoners of diverse forms of primordial loyalties and as guided by predetermined destinies" (p. 283), or as "trapped within the pre-capitalist loyalties of caste, religion, and region" (p. 13). The question does, however, remain: If class matters, how and

1. R.S. Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India: Business Strategies and the Working Classes in Bombay, 1900–1940* (Cambridge [etc.], 1994), p. 431.
2. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Rethinking Working-Class History: Bengal 1890–1940* (Princeton, NJ, 1989).
3. Janaki Nair, *Miners and Millhands: Work, Culture and Politics in Princely Mysore* (New Delhi, 1998).
4. Samita Sen, *Women and Labour in Late Colonial India: The Bengal Jute Industry*, (Cambridge: [etc.], 1999); Leela Fernandes, *Producing Workers: The Politics of Gender, Class and Culture in the Calcutta Jute Mills* (Philadelphia, PA, 1997)
5. There are a number of full-length studies and research papers. For a fuller discussion of these trends, see Arjan de Haan and Samita Sen, *A Case for Labour History* (Calcutta, 1999), and Arjan de Haan, "Towards a 'Total History' of Bengal Labour", in Sekhar Bandyopadhyay (ed.) *Bengal: Rethinking History* (New Delhi, 2001).

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to what extent? Since gender, caste, and tribal identities are, of course, neither "pre-capitalist" nor "primordial loyalties" but also capitalist and necessarily politically constructed, how do we square the notion of class with these competing identities? How do we approach a notion of class that is not grounded in production relations? These questions were debated in a variety of fora in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly among English labour historians. Does the history of the jute workers contribute any new insight to this debate?

Basu's book is part not only of the "new" labour history of India in the last three decades, but also of a recent crop of writings on the jute industry and its workers. The book draws, often explicitly, on this rich corpus: Ranajit Dasgupta, experimenting within the framework of Marxist scholarship to write a "social history" of jute workers; Parimal Ghosh examining rural and communitarian political influences; Nirban Basu exploring the relationship between nationalist movements, party politics, and trade unions; Amal Das writing on the political history of jute workers in one particular region, Howrah; and Tanima Ghosh researching the economics of the industry and wage determination, to name a few.[6]

In common with a number of the above-mentioned authors, Basu re-examines a persistent shibboleth of Indian labour history: the "rural connection" of factory workers. He concludes that return migration to villages was a manifestation of rural loyalties but also a survival strategy in the urban labour market. Here he is in disagreement with Arjan de Haan's recent work on the migration of jute workers, arguing for a more dynamic relationship between village and city,[7] and Chandavarkar, who argues that urban jobs were as often a strategy for survival in the village as the other way round.[8]

Basu also examines the relationship between Bengal's urban elite and the jute workers in a variety of contexts: the workplace in which middle-class Bengalis worked in clerical capacities; in the towns, where the *bhadralok* sought the physical and political marginalization of workers; and in the political arena, where workers were drawn, contained, and mobilized for a variety of agenda. He argues, however, for recognizing the workers' agency in their relationship with the political leadership, and the ways in which their participation shaped and influenced party strategy. His discussions raise, but do not quite consider, two questions of contemporary concern. How do we consider the question of workers' agency within the context of party-affiliated competitive trade unionism? What is the implication of progressive organization for the fluid and intertwined network of the urban poor and their experience of elite-employer-state nexus? These questions may help us understand the threats to the organized working class in recent years and the nature of their response to it, as well as the political role (or lack thereof) of the so-called "informal" sector workers who constitute more than 90 per cent of the country's workers.

Samita Sen

6. For representative samples of these authors' work as well as an extensive bibliography, see Haan and Sen, *A Case for Labour History*.
7. Arjan de Haan focuses on the ritual, social, and emotional contents of urban–rural relationships; *Unsettled Settlers: Migrant Workers and Industrial Capitalism in Calcutta* (Calcutta, 1996).
8. Chandavarkar, *Origins of Industrial Capitalism*.

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DÍEZ TORRE, ALEJANDRO R. Orígenes del cambio regional y turno del pueblo Aragón, 1900–1938. Volumen I: Confederados. Orígenes del cambio regional de Aragón, 1900–1936. Volumen II: Solidarios. Un turno de pueblo Aragón, 1936–1938. Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Madrid; Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, Zaragoza; Librería UNED, Madrid 2003. 457 pp; 595 pp. Ill. € 54.00; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859005061973

The Spain of the 1930s has generated an abundance of publications. Even today new subjects for study arise and questions that already have a widespread bibliography are analysed from other angles. The latter include the revolutionary process that triggered the uprising of July 1936 and, in general, the role of anarchism during the period. The Spanish revolution is one of the subjects that has been studied the least. Some historians need to conceal the social-war nature of the rebellion, while others aim to reduce the conflict to the "democracy" or "fascism" dilemma. In any case, they all consider the popular action as something similar to an overflowing torrent, that sweeps away and destroys everything that it finds in its path.

Anarchism has suffered from the same treatment, despite the fact that a large part of current Spanish historiography arose from the study of social movements. The situation of the 1970s and 1980s, with the establishment of the current monarchy, is very important here. To support its social and political structures, the historian had to establish historical memory and legitimize, or discredit, the elements upholding the nascent system. The new conceptual apparatus that replaced the Francoist historiography was thus elaborated, a methodology based on the British "Marxist history" and that of the *Annales*. This should be borne in mind in order to understand the historiographic destiny reserved for Spanish libertarian ideas, organizations, and militants.

Researchers devoted themselves to unravelling the ups and downs of proletarian organizations, to scrutinizing the ins and outs of the Republican regime between 1931 and 1936, and to analysing the military conflict until 1939. This is when what are now their "historical truths" were established: the role of the Republican regime as the driving force of the country's modernization, and the consideration of the Civil War as a conflict in defence of bourgeois democratic values. The Second Republic could not apply its reforms because of the opposition of both right- and left-wing extremists. Consequently, a fratricidal conflict, which stained the country with blood and carried Spanish society into the long Francoist tunnel, was inevitable.

This was a very attractive design for the political and social circumstances of the time. The *baddies of the film* were clearly illustrated: the right-wing supporters of the coup and anarcho-syndicalism which, manipulating ignorant peasants, launched revolutions without any prospect of success. The responsible roles of the PSOE and of the Communist Party both in the 1930s and in the 1970s and 1980s were also important. The "reformist" policy led to an "amnesia pact" which decreed an amnesty for the Francoist tyrants and sealed the second defeat of the survivors of those already defeated in 1939. As a backdrop, the dramatic memory of the vicissitudes of the military conflict was a vaccination against any disagreement.

In short, a history, in the service of the needs of the Spanish *transition*, which prevented social movements from being coherently investigated, ignoring the libertarian world, which was scorned and ridiculed. At best, the movements' "analytical incapacity", "irrationality", utopiahism, and terrorist practices were stressed. They were irresponsible,

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uncontrolled. Urban anarcho-syndicalism carried out archaic actions far from the ways of economic and social development. Their unions representing peasant farmers were anchored in a *primitivism* linked to ways of life and systems of work which were about to disappear. The claim was that those who dared to disagree were elaborating an "anarchist historiography". The idea was to accuse them of not being objective and scientific.

Anything could be used in order to keep the revolutionary process buried under several thousand pages – as many as the layers of earth that still cover the bones of just as many thousands of people who dreamed of a better world. Even now, when Spanish society is demanding its right to justice and to "historical memory", the libertarian world continues to be an unwanted protagonist. It is easier to play in a field with two adversaries: the blues and the reds. The democrats charge them with the excesses of the republican zone. The fascists make them disappear to convert them into communists who massacred honest capitalists and holy priests and monks.

Historians have rarely asked how it was possible that they had to overcome the obstacle of the anarchist presence or, in an exercise of greater intellectual rigour, they have confronted the issue without prejudice, seeking the answer to how a reactionary coup d'état caused a revolution which was not only capable of stopping it but which, moreover, began to construct a new society. What were their key ideas? How had they taken shape? Who were their protagonists? How did they act? These, and many more questions could have been answered, although it would have been from a conservative or liberal perspective. But it was like this despite the fact that historians were faced with the last attempt at social change that has existed in Europe since the French and Russian revolutions of 1789 and 1917.

Alejandro Díez Torre's book tries to answer these questions. Two volumes concentrate on one region, Aragón, fundamental both for the Spanish labour movement in general, and for the 1936 revolution. This importance had already attracted the attention of researchers such as Graham Kelsey and Hanneke Willemse. The research reaches the hands of readers almost seven years after its academic presentation as a doctoral thesis. This circumstance does not prevent readers from being able to draw valuable conclusions on the Spain of the 1930s and to understand some extremely topical problems better, such as the autonomous structure of the state or the controversial National Hydraulic Plan.

In a quick summary we could say that the book suggests that in Aragón, a region that developed in an unequal manner during the first third of the nineteenth century, a society was formed that was split in two: a modernizing part and a conservative part that refused to accept the cost of social change. This led to a movement that found the elements that provided it with autonomy and consistency in social, organizational, cultural, and educational approaches. It even integrated sectors of other reformist groups – a bloc that confronted a Second Republic more determined to reissue outdated centralist and monarchist public-order solutions than to fulfil the role of social and economic transformation that was expected of it.

Some of the most conflictive episodes of these years, such as the revolt of December 1933, can be considered as anticipating the revolutionary society of 1936. The July uprising caused the territorial division of Aragón and the social transformation of the zone in which it failed. Other factors intervened in this situation, such as the presence of the Catalan militia and the collapse of the *cacique* system. It was at this time that a new society was germinated, as hostile to the insurrectionists as it was to the return of the previous situation. This construction channelled a regional organization, the Council of Aragón, a

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"second power" of libertarian, *costista*, federalist, and regionalist orientations. This body defended Aragonese aspirations both in the face of the Catalan *generalitat* and the republican state. It was the "turn of the people" who fought against the state institutions, the needs of the battlefront, and their own shortages.

This process was cut short first by the compulsory introduction, in the summer of 1937, of the central order, and then by the defeat of 1938. The dissolution of the Council lessened the possibilities of the republican state surviving. The military occupation was not able either to limit the supposed social exclusions, or to resolve the economic hardship. On the other hand it provoked the reappearance of signs of the old order, such as caciquism. Even the dissolved collectivism continued to show its strength, while attempts to organize a society linked to the republican central government on agricultural bureaucratization, union control, and military subordination were not well received. This situation of collapse preceded the fall of the republic in the spring of 1938.

These theses are explained in almost 1,000 pages. It is not, therefore, an easy book, and not just because of its length. It is also because of the erudition that the author deploys in the notes (some of which are very extensive), the graphic contributions, his own reflections, and his baroque grammatical structure. I do not believe that we should regret this. We are living in the dictatorship of didacticism and minimum effort. Universal schooling has not brought with it a greater critical attitude as a result of better knowledge. On the contrary, in a world with the greatest possibility of access to information that has ever existed, the disinformation and ignorance of the population is inversely proportional. Readers are warned: this book requires effort, willpower, and a desire to learn. But they will not be disappointed.

Díez Torre's suggestive proposals include the position that he gives to regionalism in the origin and articulation of the Aragonese revolution. This movement was very different from the current Spanish autonomies, partisan reserves with a rancid *cacique* flavour or germs of reactionary nationalist longings. On the contrary, it was a group with a different ideological and classist composition, with hardly any national links, which was structured in atypical organizations, such as anarcho-syndicalism, whose principles were present in the thought of the autonomists and who promoted the Council of Aragón, until its dissolution, *manu militari*. The fact that external forces had to abort it provides us with the key to the subsequent fall of the Aragonese front like a house of cards.

If we add other issues to this, such as the dissection of the revolutionary process and its difficult relationship with the national bodies of the anarcho-syndicalist trade union, the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (CNT), the complexity of Spanish anarchism is revealed – a theoretical body of organizations and members whose importance in Spanish cultural, social, and political life was demonstrated in its capacity to transform the opposition to the military uprising into a revolution. Díez Torre shows how this social alternative did not appear suddenly, in a "spontaneous" manner. Groups of republicans, followers of Costa, anarcho-syndicalists, and anarchists formed part of it. They all maintained anti-centralist, anti-political and anti-capitalist traditions to which were added regionalist expectations.

This model, in addition to the decisiveness of its application in Aragón, provides expectations for its application in other areas of the peninsula. To what extent in Spanish autonomy should federal and solidarity principles be emphasized over state ideas? Even today, politics in the Spanish state is determined by the "traumatic process" of its articulation as a nation-state – an entity incapable of supporting a common identity,

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integrating its different territories and embracing regional aspirations. From this perspective, these volumes will be a point of reference for studies which, from here on, are carried out on the first third of the twentieth century in Spain. It will now be difficult to talk about Iberian anarchism as something exotic or particular with a black, violent prominence in a civil conflict.

This line has not been exhausted. There are aspects missing from the book, such as the scarce attention paid to the intervention of women in these processes. This is strange if we bear in mind the visible presence of figures like Teresa Claramunt or Antonia Maymón. Secondly, we know that the two volumes do not include all the research of Díez Torre. Many pages on the collectivist process and the occupation of the troops of the Republican Popular Army under communist leadership have remained outside the edition. Their publication would finally close the circle opened with this first contribution. Historiography on the 1930s in Spain will thus have made gigantic progress in knowledge of events that, in any civilized society, despite these gloomy times, would have been incorporated into its heritage.

José Luis Gutiérrez Molina

KLEIN, JENNIFER. For All These Rights. Business, Labor, and the Shaping of America's Public-Private Welfare State. [Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America.] Princeton University Press, Princeton [etc.] 2003. xi, 354 pp. £22.95; DOI: 10.1017/S002085900507197 10(X)

If Jennifer Klein's analysis is correct, the future of the American welfare state is extremely bleak. It rests on shaky ground because of deep-rooted political, economic, ideological, and institutional factors. Klein convincingly demonstrates that the public welfare state of government benefits and the private welfare state of job-based ones rise and fall together. She masterfully shows how, whenever the state has receded in the area of social welfare provision, business has not stepped in to fill the gap. Instead, business has responded by exploiting the new political and ideological space to reduce its commitment to social provisions like employment-linked pensions and health-care benefits. Without the threat of an expanding public welfare state and pressure from organized groups and social movements, like labor unions and the fiery Townsend movement that pushed for old-age pensions in the 1930s, business's commitment to employment-based benefits evaporates.

Klein focuses on the development of old-age and health benefits from the 1910s to the 1960s. While a number of scholars have highlighted the role of institutions in the establishment of the public-private US welfare state during this period, Klein makes several fresh contributions. She argues that institutions cannot be understood in isolation from the development of ideas about, and class struggles over, the US political economy. In her view, the New Deal social programs need to be understood as a set of policies and institutions, some of them quite conservative, as well as a set of ideas about security, some of them quite radical. The New Deal put the idea of security at the very center of American political and social life. That notion of security was grounded not just in "the liberal notion of rights but also in the communitarian norms of solidarity and shared social responsibility" premised on a broad vision that challenged fundamental inequalities in the political economy (p. 6).

In the tradition of business historians like John Howell Harris and Robert M. Collins,

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she singles out the 1940s and 1950s as a pivotal period for US corporations, as they sought to regain the moral and ideological stature they lost with the onset of the Depression and the New Deal. In her view, welfare capitalism did not die out during the Depression, as a number of scholars claim, but was reinvented with the help of the powerful, politically shrewd, and technically sophisticated life insurance industry. Klein focuses in particular on Equitable and Metropolitan Life, who were closely attuned to the broad class challenge embodied in the rhetoric of security that encased the New Deal.

Cognizant of developments in Europe in the 1910s and 1920s, Equitable and Metropolitan sought early on to develop private programs as an alternative to state-sponsored ones. As the president of Equitable explained in 1909, "Insurance by the state is neither desirable nor necessary in this land of the greatest life insurance corporations the world has ever known" (p. 21). In the decades prior to the New Deal, insurers promoted the idea of a social-welfare partnership between insurance companies and employers. After the Depression struck, they harnessed the New Deal's emphasis on security to further their economic and political goals. As one actuary at Aetna proclaimed in 1935, the Social Security Act (SSA) "in itself is a gigantic advertisement for the pension" (p. 91). Commercial insurers correctly predicted that the emphasis on old-age pensions could fuel wider public interest in all kinds of other security, such as health benefits and accident and disability insurance. They promoted the SSA behind the scenes, believing it would help legitimize the idea of social protection and thus further the expansion of the life insurance industry into new areas of commercial insurance. But they also aggressively promoted the view that the state should only provide a very basic floor of protection, which would be supplemented by employers purchasing new group policies from the commercial insurers.

Insurance companies used the language of security popularized in the New Deal, but shifted its meaning away from the state and political arena to private, individual economic relationships controlled by employers. They worked closely with employers to develop private-sector benefits without much input from the state, workers, or the broader public. Insurers put themselves on the front lines of containing and then suffocating the public welfare state. As the editor of an insurance industry trade journal warned in 1942, unless private enterprise provided the average worker with "some assurance to his future [...] he will demand a state agency to affect his objective" (p. 212).

Klein's most important contribution is her detailed account of how life insurance companies served as the saviors of welfare capitalism after the Depression and were critical architects of the private welfare state. But her masterful study upends other pieces of the standard narrative about the development of the US welfare state. Klein demonstrates that passage of the SSA, far from settling the question of old-age security, stimulated a mass mobilization of a whole range of groups, including labor unions, consumer cooperatives, hospitals, and non-profit agencies. This was a period of vast and creative experimentation in non-market health-care alternatives, like union-based health centers, community health cooperatives, and service-based health plans based on the original Blue Cross model, that would bring medical care within the reach of more people. Commercial cash-indemnity health and disability plans eventually won out, in part because of the crucial role insurers played in shifting the balance of power back to employers after a decade or so of intense popular mobilization around these issues.

The establishment of social security on the basis of job-based benefits tied to one's status as a worker had a profoundly conservative influence on, not just the future development of old-age pensions, but also on a panoply of other social-welfare programs, notably health

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care. Administrators of the Social Security Bureau played a critical role. Over time, they came to embrace the language of commercial insurers to legitimize public benefits and promote private supplemental ones. In doing so, they began to deny the redistributive goals of public programs and to adopt the language of the insurance industry, with its emphasis on premiums, contributions, and the principle of individual equity. Thus, public officials helped transform "health security from a broadly conceived social concept into a more narrow category: contributory social insurance for workers" (p. 140).

Many scholars fault labor for retreating during this period, bought off by the lure of gold-plated Cadillac benefits achieved through collective bargaining. Klein's account portrays organized labor in a more sympathetic light. She shows how segments of labor were deeply involved in the battle from the mid-1930s onward to extend the public welfare state and defeat the job-based, cash indemnity model. Labor did not retreat but was resoundingly defeated, in her view. The much heralded 1950 "Treaty of Detroit" between auto companies and the United Autoworkers marks, not the high point of labor power, but the beginning of the end of the egalitarian, encompassing vision of security that infused the New Deal. The 1950 agreement and subsequent collective bargaining over benefits "did not even the balance of power; it reflected the imbalance of power" (p. 254). With the help of insurers, GM and other companies decisively defeated the idea of union-run social-welfare programs. Instead, they were able to "tailor" job-based benefits to specific firms and worksites. Since the employer was the only legal party to the group insurance contract, firms could maintain a veil of secrecy about benefits and their costs. This made it extremely difficulty for employees to know what they were getting for their money, to participate in the design and administration of benefits, to control costs, and, most importantly, to promote the New Deal's broad concept of security.

The Cadillac standard labor achieved turned out to be more like a beat-up jalopy, woefully inadequate long before the crisis in health care became a central national issue beginning in the 1980s. In 1960, the United Steel Workers of America conducted a sweeping review of the health insurance benefits the union had negotiated over the previous decade. It found that the average steelworker plan covered less than 41 per cent of total family medical costs; that these costs were skyrocketing; and that health-care dollars were not being used efficiently.

For scholars of the welfare state, this book provides a fresh and compelling interpretation of some of the critical junctures in the development of old-age pensions and health insurance. This carefully argued and documented book is also invaluable for anyone wrestling with the question of "what next?" for social security and health-care reform in the United States. Klein concludes that "[p]ublic and private security are unraveling together" today in the United States, now that the state is in full retreat from social welfare provision and organized labor is a pale shadow of its former self (p. 274). Furthermore, the welfare state, once promoted and defended as a necessary bulwark again economic and social insecurity caused by the vagaries of the economy and everyday life, is now widely characterized as a drain on individual resources that could be more profitably maximized as personal investment accounts.

Klein's careful historical account demonstrates that, contrary to what some proponents of social-welfare privatization contend, business does not step in to fill the gap when the state retreats in the area of social provision. Furthermore, the private welfare state was founded on job-based benefits that were "political, inefficient, inflationary and unreliable", and that perpetuated vast and deep gender, racial, and other inequities (p. 14). Simply put,

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the "very logic of organizing benefits around employment" was a "flawed concept" from the start that has contributed to the very sorry state of the American welfare state today (p. 14).

Marie Gottschalk

LEVY, FRANK AND RICHARD J. MURNANE. The New Division of Labor. How Computers Are Creating the Next Job Market. Russell Sage Foundation, New York; Princeton University Press, Princeton [etc.] 2004. ix, 174 pp. Ill. $24.95; £15.95; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859005081976

Economists Frank Levy and Richard Murnane have written an engaging and accessible introduction to the political economy of a very specific but very important type of "information labor": that subset of work which is amenable to "computerization," which in some cases means outright substitution of computer algorithms for human labor (a classic "deskilling" argument), and in other cases means careful augmentation of human labor through interactive software (a classic "upskilling" argument). The main point that the authors make is that these two simultaneous paths to what might be called the "digitalization of labor" are quite distinct, in both the kinds of tasks they encompass and the kinds of workers they affect. As computers colonize more and more industries and occupations, Levy and Murnane present a detailed analysis of what these electronic tools can and can't do to predict that certain workers will continue to benefit while others will increasingly suffer in a "hollowing-out of the occupational structure" (p. 4) – a nuanced "digital-divide" scenario which can only be addressed, the authors conclude, through state intervention and educational reform.

Levy and Murnane begin by noting that, although "all human work involves the cognitive processing of information" (p. 5) there are many different kinds of information processing, only some of which are easily and affordably coded as computer algorithms. For example, the pattern-recognition (and consequent tactile dexterity) performed by even the most low-wage service workers remains uncomputable – don't expect to see robot janitors any time soon. Similarly, complex communication tasks, such as those used by middle-income salespersons and educators, remain out of the computer's reach. And finally, tasks that require novel and open-ended problem-solving, often called "symbolic analysis," are restricted to human creativity (though computers are often used as productive tools by such high-wage workers). But any task which may be broken down into a discrete and finite set of steps and "rules" is potentially computable, and thus jobs which consist in whole or in part of such tasks will be increasingly endangered as the capital cost of computing power continues to fall. And crucially, "A task, once computerized, is potentially easy to replicate and so invites intense competition" (p. 54) with such information technology penetrating quickly through whole industries and occupations.

Levy and Murnane then move from a consideration of what kind of *tasks* favor computer substitution vs computer complementarity to what kind of *workers* will see their jobs eliminated by computers vs enhanced by computers. Not surprisingly, education is the key intervening variable. "Rapid job change raises the value of verbal and quantitative literacy" (p. 101), the authors argue, because reading and mathematics skills are "enabling skills": skills that are "necessary but not sufficient for economic success" (p. 103), especially in an increasingly information-based economy. Thus labor-market entrants who

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have had the opportunity to hone these enabling skills (e.g. college graduates) should fare much better than labor-market entrants without such skills (secondary-school dropouts or, sadly, even many secondary-school graduates, according to the authors).

Levy and Murnane back up these claims using historical labor market data from the United States. "In 1979, the average thirty-year-old man with a bachelor's degree earned just 17 per cent more than a thirty-year-old man with a high school diploma. Today, the equivalent college–high-school wage gap exceeds 50 per cent, and the gap for women is larger" (p. 6). Similarly, they point out, while only 24 per cent of US workers used a computer on the job in 1984, now over 50 per cent of US workers do so (p. 105). These parallels represent a causal link, argue the authors – though they leave many of the details out of this book, instead referring readers to a 2003 paper in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics,* written with David Autor, which details the quantitative data and formulae that ground these assertions.

Given this increasing divide in "enabling skills," wages, and occupational choices, what is to be done? Limiting their prescriptions to the US context, Levy and Murnane do not shy away from the obvious policy questions here, but instead assert that "the nation cannot rely on for-profit firms as the primary institutions responsible for teaching the enabling skills needed to excel at complex communications and expert thinking tasks". Instead, "America's schools will continue to be the critical institutions responsible for teaching American children the enabling skills" (p. 130). While Levy and Murnane in general recommend a social policy where "the better-off pay compensation through taxes or charity" ("[c]ompensation will not come through the market since the market is creating the winners and losers in the first place" (p. 155)), their most specific proposal revolves around a vision of "standards-based education" – setting clear goals for student progress, standardizing instruction to meet these goals, and measuring student progress toward these goals "frequently" enough to make sure they are attained (pp. 134–135).

Unfortunately, these so-called "common-sense ideas" on curriculum and testing are presented in an all too brief and overly anecdotal penultimate chapter. For example, the authors write that "Between 1970 and 1990, average real per student expenditures in American public schools rose by 73 per cent. Student–teacher ratios fell, and new instructional programs proliferated. Yet test scores did not rise much, and state legislators were losing patience with spending more money and hoping for the best" (p. 134). But this picture of "averages" ignores the fact that "[e]ducational standards vary widely across states and implementation of a state's standards varies widely among school districts" (p. 133).

Shouldn't "real per student expenditures" be considered, not in nationwide average, but in relation to the affluence of the homeowners, the cost of living, and/or the special needs of the students in those districts? Even taking into account this uneven geography, "standards-based education" is neither consistent in conception nor proven in practice. As Levy and Murnane point out, "No state has much more than a decade's experience with educational standards – the majority of states have far less" (p. 146). The recent escalation of these debates to the federal level in the US with the Bush administration's controversial "No Child Left Behind" legislation has brought needed scrutiny to these projects, but has not yet resulted in consensus on the effectiveness of this agenda.

The debate over the proper place and shape of standards-based education – or any educational reform designed to prepare children for a "new economy" as seen from a particular historical moment – has a long history which anyone interested in Levy and

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Murnane's proposals ought to consider; a good starting point might be Michael W. Apple's classic *Teachers & Texts: A Political Economy of Class & Gender Relations in Education* (1988). However, even though they were unable to give this educational policy debate the space it deserves in their book, to their credit, Levy and Murnane specifically do *not* point to computers in the schools as a panacea for educational success or even as an organizing principle for education reform: "Computers can help with some of these factors – the analysis of test scores, the dissemination of new curriculum, software to reinforce some student skills. But most items on the list require sustained human effort" (p. 144). Digital technology alone cannot ameliorate this digital divide.

Regardless of the policy one might advocate to address the negative consequences of workplace computerization, Levy and Murnane have written a very readable introduction to some of the key issues facing US workers in an increasingly informational economy. Readers familiar with this terrain might be disappointed that the authors restrict their analysis to the obvious question of "Will computers replace workers?", without exploring the ways that computers might instead affect particular aspects of the labor process or the labor market, such as: the gender and age mix of the labor force or of particular jobs; the time and space constraints on job retraining and job relocation; the mix between paid and unpaid labor in the economy; the temporal and spatial extent of jobs into previous "leisure" times and spaces; and the externalization of benefits, previously provided by firms, to either the state or the individual. Similarly, readers looking for a more global focus on the computerization of work outside of the US will be disappointed (other nations appear only as sites of "outsourcing" non-computable complex communication, and problem-solving work). But readers exploring these ideas for the first time will find this an engaging and provocative introduction to an important set of political-economic processes that continue to bring information technology and human labor together, for better and for worse.

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