

de us with a solid review of working class formation in Germany between 1800 and 1875. To the self-imposed question: “Did a working class exist in Germany in the 1870’s?” (p. 349). Kocka answers with a non-committal “yes and no”. Part of the problem, to my mind, is an over-reliance on concepts such as tradition and modernization, which beg more questions than they answer. Mary Nolan, for her part examines the period between 1870 and the turn of the century, to answer why Germany produced the largest and best-organized workers’ movements of the period. Against a “heroic” reading Nolan stresses how the same economic and political factors which accounted for the success of social democracy “also limited it as a social movement, a political practice, and a theory of revolutionary transformation” (p. 390).

It is left to Katznelson’s co-editor, Aristide Zolberg to provide a conclusion to this volume entitled “How Many Exceptionalisms?” his argument being that there are too many. He asks why: “If capitalism is of a piece, why is the working class it called into life so disparate?” Again we find no consideration of imperialism or colonialism – which do not even merit an entry in the index. Zolberg does, quite rightly in my mind, reject an approach to working class formation which posits one particular national pattern (usually Britain) as the norm with other cases being seen as “deviant”. Yet there is an insidious “ideal type” running through these essays which treats the advanced capitalist countries as the norm with those areas conquered by colonialism and dominated by imperialism not only deviant but unworthy of attention. The assumption would be presumably that they simply followed the pattern of the dominant power, an attitude shared by the implicitly colonialist Marx and Engels and the liberal establishment. Zolberg ends his contribution by stressing that a research strategy to study working class formation must be both comparative and historical. If that is to be the case, there must also be a move beyond the Europeanist optic (with the U.S. as honorary guest) which is only one step away from previous emphasis on Britain as the master key.

*Ronaldo Munck*

CAHN, SUSAN. *Industry and Devotion. The Transformation of Women’s Work in England, 1500-1660*. Columbia University Press, New York 1987. xi, 252 pp. \$ 27.50.

The central theme of this book is the proposition that the social position of English women, as measured both by their status and their possibilities, underwent a relative and absolute decline compared to that of men. The author describes how, around 1500, most women were part of households which were self-supporting. Beside the obvious responsibility for all the affairs of the family, a woman was expected to make products such as bread, beer, wool and candles herself and to exchange some of these on the local market. In the next part of the book the reader is shown the increasing importance of the “homeliness ideology”. As the market economy grew women’s work, according to

Cahn, started to disappear. Women lost their production function and their place on the market was taken up by male specialists. To an ever-increasing extent, they were expected to stay indoors. Instead of their earlier activities women had to take care of their family; a family in which motherhood was made more important. This switch from being a husband's "helper" to a less-valued position as "housewife" was accompanied, according to Cahn, by a considerable loss of status. The increased economic dependence was, furthermore, supposed to have led to a change in the emotional content of the marriage. In this unequal position women were forced to seek the permanent love of their men. Susan Cahn refers in this connection to the coming of the "affective marriage".

These major arguments are worked out further by the author in an easily readable style, illustrated by many colourful quotes. After reading the book one must, however, come to the disappointing conclusion that there are some rather weak points in it. For a start, the central proposition in the introduction that there is a relationship between socio-economic change and ideological change, is hardly worked out. The socio-economic side is insufficiently treated and brushed aside with such commonplaces as "the coming of the market economy" (often and confusingly equated to the growth of capitalism) and increasing social mobility. If, however, one examines the method used, the reason for this becomes clearer. Cahn has concentrated on the study of literature sources from this period. She uses novels and stageplays, published sermons by clergymen, books of etiquette and autobiographical documents. The problems which arise if one uses these sources are well-known. Naturally to the author as well, who devotes a separate chapter to this problem at the end of the book. There she has to admit that such study of prescribing and moralising works only allows one to make statements on the changes in the norms pertaining to the behaviour of men and women. Nor do the autobiographical works, all written by women from the upper classes, lend themselves to making general statements on lower-class women.

Since Cahn nevertheless wants to write a book on the changing position of women in general, she assumes in the introduction that the values pattern of the upper and middle classes slowly penetrated the lower classes; a process which had still not been completed at the end of the period examined. The method used also explains the narrowing of the concept of women's labour to the division of tasks inside the family. The necessary paid or non-paid labour of women from the lower classes is only mentioned sporadically. The writer needs a second chapter in the rear of her book (entitled "Much remains to be done") to indicate how, at some time in the future, the picture will be completed. This is precisely my most important objection: the great discrepancy between the promising introduction with its ambitious plan and the many pages ultimately needed to clarify to the reader the fact that only a limited subject is being covered. For in fact this book consists largely of the description of the changing image of the ideal woman amongst the upper and middle classes in sixteenth and seventeenth century England. It is, of itself, worthwhile to be introduced to this subject, and the conclusions in the limited sense described above form a

valuable addition to the debate taking place in women's history on the subject of the ideology of homeliness.

Whoever wants to find out more about the birth of the ideology of homeliness in the better-off layers of early-modern English society, should read this book, my earlier comments notwithstanding.

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WORGER, WILLIAM H. *South Africa's City of Diamonds. Mine Workers and Monopoly Capitalism in Kimberley, 1867-1895.* Yale University Press, New Haven, London 1987. xvi, 330 pp. Ill. Maps. \$ 35.00.

In 1867 the possible presence of diamondiferous soils north of South Africa's Cape Colony was first recognised. From 1869, following the discovery of a stone weighing a dramatic 83.5 carats, the diamond rush began. The significance of the discovery of diamonds and the subsequent development of a massively profitable extractive industry in South Africa has been properly credited with great explanatory force within the ranks of the most influential historians of southern Africa. It has been argued that the diamonds and later the even more significant discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand are, taken together, the beginnings of the processes which have made modern South Africa so distinctive a state on the African continent.

Mineral wealth was undoubtedly the motor of an industrial revolution, the scale and nature of which is unique in Africa. From 1870 or so it became clear, with hindsight, that South Africa was not likely to become another settler colony like Kenya or Zimbabwe. South Africa became a magnet for white immigration on a scale unparalleled in Africa. It also became an attractive prospect for international finance capital. Towns grew where none had existed before. A complex and necessary infrastructure extended and expanded to serve the needs of heavy industry and its employees. Ore extraction, moreover, created industrial processes with a hunger for plentiful, free and above all cheap labour. Mobilising such labour, in an environment in which African self-sufficiency based upon the continued availability of farming land meant that all but the highest wages were unattractive, proved highly problematic. Recruitment ultimately demanded the intervention of the state if such labour was to become readily available. The state, increasingly dominated by mining capital and white, capitalist farming enacted a sequence of legislative measures designed to progressively induce adult, male Africans to sell their labour and to sell it cheaply. The most significant of these comprised the double-headed coercion of taxation and reduction of access to land. Much of the essence of modern *apartheid* – labour reserves, influx controls, fixed labour contracts, urban segregation – has its roots in the traumatic period in which a set of predominantly agricultural economies were transformed into a very particular form of economy dominated by an industrial core. By these processes above all South Africa very rapidly ceased to be just another settler colony.