

None of this seriously undermines the main arguments and propositions presented by Scully who, with this work, seems well set to join that select band of US political scientists who have made such valuable contributions to the study of Chilean history over the last twenty years or so.

Andrew Barnard
University of London

Michael Seidman — *Workers Against Work. Labor in Paris and Barcelona During the Popular Fronts*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991. Pp. xiv, 399.

Historians have not elaborated on E.P. Thompson's twenty-year-old classic article on workers' resistance to labor, "Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism" (*Past and Present*, 1967, No. 38, pp. 56-97). That is why Michael Seidman's new book is so welcome. Moving beyond the essay format and the local history approach that so many students of indiscipline have taken, this comparative history offers us a broad-based study of two major cities at a crucial moment in twentieth-century European labor relations: the Popular Front era of 1936-1938. Although both Paris and Barcelona were industrial cities, Seidman shows that they were at stages of markedly different development. Paris had a much more "modern" political, economic, and social infrastructure than did Barcelona. This disparity between the two cities provides him with one of his most important points, and one of the most persuasive reasons to do comparative labor history: that workers in both "developing" and "advanced" industrial societies reject the work ethic.

Unlike many social historians, Seidman never loses sight of the larger political and economic picture in either urban venue. His argument that differences in the level of capitalist development decisively shaped each city's working class is compelling. First, he shows that the Barcelonian bourgeoisie, like the Spanish one in general, had never experienced the Reformation or the ideological and economic revolutions of the eighteenth century and had failed also to modernize the state and the economy after 1870. The Barcelonian bourgeoisie used the state more for repressing the working class than expanding the economy. When the civil war broke out in the 1930s, Barcelonian capitalists essentially deserted the city and left the factories to the proletariat. In the face of such long-standing bourgeois impotence, Barcelonian workers were revolutionary and attracted either to anarcho-syndicalism, with its call for workers' control of the means of production, or to Marxism-Leninism, with its call for nationalization. Once the anarchist CNT (*Confederación nacional de trabajo*) and the Marxist UGT (*Unión general de trabajadores*) took over, Seidman persuasively argues, they attempted to build a modern industrial plant, something the bourgeoisie had failed to do. They also used the same methods of labor discipline as advanced capitalist classes — i.e., reestablishing piece work, the use of strict regulation of the shop floor, pushing of the Soviet doctrine of overwork (Stakhanovism) and the use of socialist realist art as propaganda to promote greater worker production in newly collectivized factories.

Paris provides an excellent contrast to the author's analysis of Barcelona. He emphasizes the "strength of the French bourgeoisie". Here, a capitalist elite, more dynamic than its Spanish counterpart, had been able to implement revolutions that had overturned the power of the monarchy and the church and had established a modern industrial and social infrastructure. Seidman's deft use of statistics shows the huge gap between Spain and France in industrial development. For example, during the 1920s, French industrial productivity grew nearly 100 percent while Spanish productivity went up by only 20 percent. As a result, the French working-class movement, by the 1920s, had lost most of its revolutionary fervor. With the electrical, chemical, auto, and aviation industries firmly in place and employing the newest modes of labor discipline (Taylorism and Fordism), French anarcho-syndicalism, with its goal of workers controlling the means of production, had receded substantially from its prewar heights. Thus the French Popular Front, which produced the first significantly leftist government in French history, did not attempt, as did its Spanish counterpart, to revolutionize a backward society, but instead, strived to improve the workers' standard of living by increasing production of consumer goods and services. The Blum government enacted a significant amount of social legislation and created a Ministry of Leisure to achieve this goal. For example, the advent of paid vacations marked the start of working-class tourism. Despite the fact that some laborers worked harder to enjoy the expanded opportunities during free time, Seidman shows that the French Popular Front was no more successful in getting workers to labor than its Spanish counterparts. This was as true in the rationalized and modernized industries (autos and aviation) as in more traditional sectors (construction). In contrast to union militants in Barcelona, however, those in Paris much more often acquiesced in or even supported the absenteeism, lateness, sabotage, and indiscipline of the rank and file.

Despite the dramatic differences between the two countries, cities, and proletariats, Seidman convincingly demonstrates that authorities, whether bourgeois, Communist, or anarchist, vociferously and repeatedly complained about and documented workers' low efficiency at work. His evidence echoes the complaints of the Bolsheviks about Russian workers that, among others, Mikhail Heller and Aleksandr M. Nekrich record in *Utopia in Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986). In short, neither the level of "modernization" nor the degree of ideological commitment to a "worker's state" affected the laborer's fundamental repugnance to steady, uninterrupted wage labor.

Often, social historians have been criticized for failing to provide the larger economic and, especially, political context for their topics. This certainly cannot be said of Seidman's work. Its primary limitation is a lack of abundant and specific details on workers resisting labor. This is particularly true in the Barcelona chapters. Thema Kaplan's recent book — published after this one — *Red City, Blue Period: Social Movements in Picasso's Barcelona* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) does a good job of tracing the interconnection between recreational and religious rituals, strikes, and the civil war. However, her book lacks the contextual richness of Seidman's book on political and economic matters and labor conditions. The two books can be read together with great profit. Even in the section on Paris, where the questions of leisure, recreation, and resistance are documented in greater detail, we do not hear many of the actual voices of protest or see them in their specific venues of the shop floor, the café, or the street. In short, he does not succeed well in his attempt to "examine the lived (his emphasis) experience of workers in both Paris and Barcelona" (6).

This excellent book would also be further strengthened if it examined the interconnections between worker resistance to work and intellectual and artistic challenges to the work ethic. For example, did Paul Lafargue's classic pamphlet on the right to be lazy (*Le Droit à la paresse*, published in 1880) inspire any of these discontents? Did the contemporary theorists of the avant-garde who also advocated idleness, such as Tristan Tzara, André Breton, and other Dadists and Surrealists, have any influence on Parisian workers?

As we see, even a discussion of the limitations of Seidman's work reveals its importance and richness. Historians should follow up on the suggestive comparisons he draws between the worker revolts of 1936 and 1968. Seidman's claim that a history of resistance to work can contribute to a new vision of the working class is both provocative and pertinent to our era. It can not only reveal fundamental facets of working-class behavior hitherto ignored by historians, but also provide a new direction for labor history, away from both the Marxist-Leninist teleology of some final revolution and the bourgeois fairy tale of some happily-ever-after proletarian integration in a "modern society". The rapid transformations of the world economy and in the nature of work today insure the continued importance of work and resistances to it. This book provides vital historical background on these issues.

W. Scott Haine
The American University

Mary Spaulding and Penny Welch — *Nurturing Yesterday's Child. A Portrayal of the Drake Collection of Paediatric History*. Philadelphia: B.C. Decker, Inc., 1991. Pp. xi, 337, 408 illustrations.

Artifacts are the pictures in our book of History. They supply dimension, colour, and texture to our historical knowledge. They are worth thousands of words. And nowhere are they more valuable than in those areas of social history that were in their own day too mundane, too much taken for granted, to warrant the attention of the chroniclers — such as, for example, child care.

The raising of children and the nursing of the sick were subjects of interest within a limited circle, composed almost entirely of medical men on the one hand, and mothers and nurses on the other. The doctors have left their mark on the printed page. As soon as the printing press made it possible, treatises began to appear, discussing current practices and prescribing — for better or for worse — their own improvements. The women who inhabited the world of the nursery and the sickroom were virtual strangers through many centuries to the written word, and speak to us through the objects they used, through the practices which they followed and which others have recorded, and through the representation of themselves and their charges in the iconography of their day.

North Americans are fortunate in having many fine museum collections. One of the best of them is the Drake Collection, now housed in the Toronto Hospital (Toronto General Hospital Division). Dr T.G.H. Drake, himself a paediatrician, spent some thirty years searching out objects, prints and rare books that related to medical and child care. The result is a magnificent array of artifacts, ranging from ancient