

prestigious university sector, the faculties of letters. Between 1865 and 1919, the size of university professional staff went up by more than 380 percent, but student enrolment rose by 420 percent and the amount spent per student actually declined by 50 percent between 1896 and 1913 (pp. 13, 316, 319). With public funds limited, administrators such as Liard, the education ministry's director of higher education after 1884 and a leading reformer, encouraged faculties to seek funding from local interests who could be persuaded that specialized technical training provided by universities would benefit them economically. The discussion of private educational philanthropy helps modify — but is not intended to nullify — familiar stereotypes about the central government's predominance in all levels of public education. This theme also helps explain why Weisz, building on the work of historians of science like Harry Paul, rates the technical institutes developed by science faculties as the most successful innovation of the reform period.

Combining the methodologies of the historian and sociologist, Weisz has described, analyzed, and quantified many important facets of his subject. Some readers may be disappointed by the lack of extensive discussion of leading personalities or of student life. Weisz's explanations of how professional, political, social, and economic interests combined to promote change are sensible, but these structural explanations could have been amplified by more coverage of the role of individuals other than Liard in the complicated process of reform. Finally, while Weisz touches on all areas of university curricula — including the introduction of sociology and the growth of political economy — he spends more time discussing the achievements of scientists than of historians, philosophers, or specialists in language and literature. This emphasis is probably due not only to an attempt to document reformers' efforts to match Germany's scientific achievements but also to the existence of substantial recent monographic material produced by French, British, and American historians and sociologists of science. Omissions or minimal detail on some topics notwithstanding, the verdict remains that Weisz's synthesis is important, useful, rich, and readable and is not likely to be surpassed in the near future.

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SEAN WILENTZ — *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1984. Pp. xiv, 446.

Imaginatively using an 1815 panorama and an 1865 photograph as framing, and epigraphs from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* as shoring, Sean Wilentz has skillfully crafted a fine history of the rise of New York City's working class in the period when that city developed to become first, by 1825, the pre-eminent mercantile centre of the United States and then, by mid-century, the nation's leading manufacturing city and metropolis. While the book's focus is on workers, their leaders, their opponents, and the development of what E.P. Thompson has called "class ways", its contexture includes the broader political, social, economic, intellectual, and religious history of the city and, to a certain extent, of the nation. Based on painstaking research in original and secondary sources and presented in a clear, sometimes dramatic, narrative style, the work has a structural soundness not seriously impaired by some inevitable imperfections. Wilentz tells his story of New York's workers with empathy, but he neither idealizes nor pities them: rather he shows them with their strengths and weaknesses in a society with its own strengths and weaknesses. Much of the ground he covers has been covered before (and he freely acknowledges his debts to those who have influenced his own work whatever the degree of his acceptance of their conclusions), but probably no other historian has dealt with his subject matter with such comprehensive analytical perception.

The artisan republicanism of the immediate post-Revolution era was not without “contradictions between the rhetoric of collective equality and the actual conditions of the trades, between the street cries of party democracy and the realities of who, in fact, held political power” (p. 76). Yet, despite workplace differences, masters and journeymen presented a united political stance against aristocracy and privilege, at least for a while. In the second quarter of the century, the extension of market capitalism and the increasing division and subcontracting of labour overturned many of the old relationships. More and more crafts became bastardized to the point that they “could barely be called crafts at all” (p. 113). The rise of the Working Men, “the first modern American radical political movement” (p. 213) in 1829, was a sure sign that old definitions of republicanism could no longer prevail. Labour radicalism and other forms of dissent flowed and ebbed, differences between classes were accentuated, and “new forms of class relations and social consciousness arose” (p. 17), so that by 1850 New York was, in Whitman’s words, “the most radical city in America” (p. 389).

The above *aperçu* cannot do justice to the rich detail of Wilentz’s account of the personalities, the groups, the organizations, and the “isms” that gave the period life. *Chants Democratic* gives the reader the opportunity to make or renew acquaintance with the likes of feminist freethinker Frances Wright, the evangelical artisan advocate of temperance Joseph Brewster, the fiery, flamboyant, and alcoholic opponent of capitalist greed and wage slavery Mike Walsh, the brilliant self-taught machinist-turned-political-theorist Thomas Skidmore, the perfectionist-millennarian Cornelius Blatchy, the printer proponent of co-operative production Langton Byllesby, the German radical-in-exile Wilhelm Weitling, the leader of a new kind of workers’ organization (the Ladies’ Industrial Association) Elizabeth Gray, and many more. One meets as well the Bowery B’hoys, the Chichester Gang, the Loco Focos, the General Trades Union, the Laborers’ Union Benevolent Association, the National Reform Association, the Association for the Moral Improvement of Young Mechanics, and the Industrial Congress; and one encounters abolitionism, agrarianism, anti-Catholicism, communitarianism, egalitarianism, evangelicalism, feminism, nativism, paternalism, racism, reformism, Washingtonianism, and their friends and enemies along the way. But the reader is not overwhelmed, for ever present are the ongoing critique of capitalism as it was developing in the United States and the consequences of that development on republican values.

That employers and workers alike sought for and found legitimacy for their oft-times opposing beliefs and acts in the legacy of the Republic indicates the diminution of a sense of mutuality as well as the development of class consciousness. That 1850 marked “the final establishment of the New York working-class presence” (p. 19) is adequately proven; that the process of class formation was completed in the same year, as Wilentz implies (p. 388), is not.

Despite the general excellence of *Chants Democratic* there are deficiencies. Wilentz’s argument that New York was America’s most radical city could have been strengthened by more comparative references to other industrial cities. His explanation of the land reform movement would have been enhanced by showing what was happening in upstate New York in the heyday of anti-rentism. (Thomas Devyr did not formulate his ideas on land reform entirely out of his Irish experience.) While Wilentz has as good profiles of immigrant thinkers and activists as he does of the American-born, immigrants collectively tend to get short shrift. Of the two major groups the German fare rather better, both in allotted space and accuracy, than do the Irish.

Is it possible that John Burke could have arrived in New York in 1847 “disgusted with post-famine conditions and with Ireland’s inability to break British rule” (p. 125), when the famine was not yet over and the Rising of 1848 yet to begin? Wilentz is right that there was more to Irish life in New York than “novenas and barroom punch-ups” (p. 352), but why mention the fact? The Irish in New York at the time were emigrants from an Ireland where a “practicing Catholic” was more apt to associate with O’Connellite politics than with the kind of devotionism which developed later under Paul Cardinal Cullen. D’Arcy McGee’s use of the term “perverted peasantry” (p. 352) was not intended to apply exclusively to the Irish poor in New York or even the United States. Furthermore, when McGee wrote these words in 1866, he was one of Her Majesty’s most loyal Canadian conservatives having returned to the bosom of the British Empire in 1857.

Fortunately, *Chants Democratic* has been manufactured to withstand much reading and re-reading. The bibliographical essay and the illustrations are excellent, the maps good, and with one exception, the tables and figures informative. (Either the references on p. 364 are in error or A and B of Table 21 on p. 413 have been reversed; furthermore, the Irish-born alone constituted a majority of the immigrants while an Irish-British combination made a greater majority than the noted Irish-German one.) The index, however, is poor: Dixon Ryan Fox rates an entry, David Montgomery does not; the Liberty Boys are there but neither Jeffersonians nor Jacksonians are; London yes, Rochester, N. Y. no; the Chatham Street Chapel is noted but the Episcopalian Church of the Epiphany is not. Despite these flaws the work should be read and reread by all interested in American working-class history.

Whitman once stated, "In writing, it is occasionally requisite to have *ideas*" (New York *Aurora*, 19 April 1842). Elsewhere, in "Chants Democratic," X, (not quoted by Wilentz), he compared historians who "celebrate bygones" by telling "the usual facts, proved by records and documents", with the poet who illuminates "feelings, faults, yearnings [and] hopes." Wilentz's work comes from a veritable storehouse of ideas and he has given us the usual facts proven by records and documents; in addition, he has dealt with feelings, faults, yearnings, and hopes.

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JEAN BARMAN — *Growing Up British in British Columbia: Boys in Private School*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984. Pp. vii, 259.

Like most good books, *Growing Up British in British Columbia* can be read for several purposes. For "old boys" it provides nostalgia; for historians of British Columbia it offers insight into the provincial character; for social historians generally, it raises questions about class and the persistence of ethnic identity. Drawing on the fairly complete records of two boys' private schools and scattered records of others, on the recollections of over 150 informants, and a diverse assortment of contemporary publications and secondary materials, Jean Barman has written a scholarly analysis of fifty or so boys' private schools which collectively enrolled more than 7500 students in the first half of this century.

Barman is at her best in describing these schools, life within them, and their milieu. Old boys are likely to identify easily with poignant stories of homesickness, of rules and regulations, of the sometimes harsh daily routine, of boyish pranks, of kindly matrons and, of course, the masters whose emphasis on character building often seemed to suggest that games could be more important than academic studies in shaping boys into British gentlemen. Baseball, for example, was deemed not only to ruin the eye for cricket (p. 52) but to be an "indecent" (p. 92) "fit only for public school brats" (p. 75).

In the course of showing that "the effect of growing up British in British Columbia appears to have differed significantly" for city and country boys (p. 161), Barman raises tantalizing points about the differences between regions within the province, and especially between the two major cities, Vancouver and Victoria. Her main focus, however, is the British image of British Columbia. Interspersing anecdotal material and census data, she shows how colonial British Columbia became somewhat Canadianized in the late nineteenth century but had its Britishness restored by massive immigration before World War I. Indeed, her final conclusion is that although climate, isolation and a semi-autonomous economy helped create the distinctiveness of British Columbia within Canada, British immigrants, British headmasters and "generations of boys who grew up British in British Columbia" also contributed to the province's "peculiarly British orientation," a part of its "separate