that the degree of its response caused it to extend administrative authority a goodly way down the path toward authoritarian government. In the end, the problem subsided with the effectiveness of statute — both the Elizabethan Poor Laws and the Restoration Settlement Laws — and also of course with the diminution of those economic and social factors which had brought it into being to begin with.

Though there is little which is sufficiently objectionable here to prevent one from assigning Beier's work even to the most innocent of undergraduates, one leaves it with a lingering sense of disappointment. While there is also little here which could not be found with slightly different emphasis in other modern authorities (John Pound, Paul Slack, Margaret Spufford and even some of Beier's earlier work) there is much which should be nailed down definitively and is not. The Medieval background for an issue described as new since the fourteenth century is largely omitted or found wanting despite the extensive literature on problems of tenure and mobility of the Raftis Group and its critics. The philosophical underpinnings of Tudor policy should surely warrant more than the treatment relegated to pp. 149-52, and again a large literature both contemporary and modern remains to be evaluated. The relation of vagrancy patterns to the agrarian or urban environment is certainly broached, but never resolved by the sort of detailed studies of particular communities which Paul Slack has so effectively employed in his study of the analogous scourge of plague. And even the attempt to investigate quasi-occupational sub-groups covered under the statutory rubric of "vagrancy" lacks the intellectual rigor resolution of, for example, Margaret Spufford's recent work on the petty chapmen in virtually the same period.

Overall the work at hand provides fine tuning and affirmation for much of the latest scholarship on the subject, but does little to take us much further. Let us hope the blandness of this serving will not diminish the appetite of others for what remains to be done.

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Edward Berenson — *Populist Religion and Left-Wing Politics in France 1830-1852*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984. Pp. xxiii, 308.

Although you cannot tell from the title, Edward Berenson's book focuses sharply on dramatic political change during the Second Republic. Throughout, he argues an answer to a good question: how did urban-based *démocrates-socialistes* win over many rural artisans and peasants, particularly in the Center and the South, in the period between the June Days 1848 and Louis Napoleon's coup d'état in December 1851?

Berenson's central argument is that democratic-socialist ideology not only offered rural working people an answer to their economic difficulties, but also appealed to their religiosity. The book opens with a clear and succinct survey of those economic problems through the period of the July Monarchy. Hard-pressed peasants and artisans, it is suggested, would readily respond to a democratic-socialist program calling for cheap credit and producers' cooperatives. Furthermore, Berenson contends, people in the countryside were more prepared for the new ideology than has generally been thought. In some important ways, their "populist religion" corresponded to the political and religious ideas of urban critics of the July Monarchy. Rejecting the official Church's "Christianity of fear," country people focused on Jesus as a humble worker and favored festivals and magical practices believed to alleviate hardship. The people's Christianity was centred on the practical and the moral. Their concern for material well-being and fervor for justice and fraternity were shared by the *démocrates-socialistes*.

The heart of the book is an illuminating discussion of the propagandist activities of the Montagnards at the local level. To politicize peasants and artisans, the Left skillfully used songs,

lithographs, and pamphlets; left-wing doctors, notaries, and shopkeepers politically advised their clients in the course of daily business. Colportage, village cafés, social clubs, the postal service and the provincial Leftist press served as "channels" of political communication and persuasion in the countryside. In the wake of greater repression in 1850, secret societies played a greater role. In discussing these matters, Berenson follows paths opened up by Maurice Agulhon and Ted Margadant but provides considerable archival detail of his own.

Often the causal argument stressing religion seems strained. On the one hand, the concept religiosity is used to cover such popular traditions as carnival and entraide as well as a basic sense of justice. Yet Protestantism is not included. On the other hand, none of the people's readiness for the Montagnard message is traced to secular or earlier political influences. Agulhon begins his "1848 ou l'Apprentissage de la République" with a discussion of the "image and memory of the Revolution." Berenson's own account has people of the mid-nineteenth century singing the Marseillaise and talking of rights, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. As William Sewell has made clear, such ideals as fraternal association went back not just to the 1789 Revolution, but to older corporate traditions. Undoubtedly, as John Merriman has observed, religion exerted an important influence in some parts of the Midi, such as the Lot-et-Garonne. The book under review insists on religiosity as the key.

The final part of the argument is that propaganda transformed religiosity into "commitment to democratic-socialist doctrine" that in most places has lasted into our own time. In the May 1849 elections, more than 35% of rural voters in Berenson's selected departments voted for the democratic-socialists. In the same period left-wing symbols and ideas showed up in *fêtes patronales* and Mardi gras celebrations. Yet questions remain about whether such events demonstrate mass "political commitment" and, in particular, peasant commitment. Most of the evidence concerns artisans, not peasants. Doubts raised by Eugen Weber (in "French Historical Studies", 1980) are not put to rest.

The rural insurrection against Louis Napoleon's coup d'état was for many an expression of republican allegiance, and for some it expressed allegiance to democratic-socialist ideas. Some of the rebels expressed themselves in religious terms. But is it warranted to conclude that the rising took the form of popular religious observance (p. 215)? Again, the author did not have to work the religious thesis so hard. His detailed accounts of local actions and mentalities, including religiosity, are quite instructive. The clear presentation of economic malaise, religious and folkloric traditions, popular literature, and Montagnard activities would have been enough to make this book a worthwhile contribution.

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Geneviève Billeter — *Le pouvoir patronal. Les patrons des grandes entreprises suisses des métaux et des machines (1919-1939)*. Genève, Librairie Droz, 1985. 268 p.

Cet ouvrage porte sur un objet très bien délimité: le patronat suisse des secteurs des métaux et des machines dans la période 1919-1939. L'auteure a recensé pour ce faire un total de 384 administrateurs à l'œuvre dans les 21 plus grandes entreprises de ces deux secteurs, et elle a examiné leur activité sous les angles les plus divers, dans leurs entreprises et sur la scène publique, à l'aide des publications patronales, des rapports d'entreprises, des journaux syndicaux et de la grande presse, sans oublier quelques entrevues. Objet d'étude fort spécialisé à première vue, mais à travers lequel l'auteure en vient à traiter de l'évolution des rapports entre les classes au sein de la société suisse au cours de cette période, et plus particulièrement de l'intégration graduelle du mouvement ouvrier à la société bourgeoise dans ce pays. Et c'est là que l'ouvrage acquiert une portée plus générale dont l'intérêt dépasse de loin le champ très spécialisé des études helvétiques.