

the author's inability to confront this point. If, as he sometimes seems to suggest, the tramps were mostly single men and only rarely were they married, then this would mean that marriage was not only a personal *rite de passage* but also a social one. In addition, this marital-status specific difference might also prove to be a causal factor of some significance in explaining why highly mobile journeymen in the skilled trades married later than did the rather more sedentary proto-industrial workers. Another point on which he is surprisingly reticent has to do with the bifurcation in the labour force — rough and respectable; artisan and labourer — which had profound implications for all aspects of life and work. Moreover this point is particularly important because many of the groups seen as exemplars of the tramping system, such as the framework knitters, were highly variegated during the course of the Industrial Revolution, both between town and country as well as between those who worked in small "shops" and those who were domestic outworkers. So, there were framework knitters and there were framework knitters — Leeson is never very specific in telling us which groups he is talking about. Finally, I must say something about the execrable system of footnoting that is employed. Not only are the notes at the end of the text (as usual, alas!) but the lack of any coherent apparatus merely obfuscates when the provision of notes is meant to enlighten the reader.

I do not want to end on a caustic note since this book can be recommended as being a very useful text for undergraduates in survey courses on British history. For its scope and its sensitivity to the nuances of working-class life I know of nothing else quite like it.

David LEVINE,
The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

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RICHARD PRICE. — *Masters, Unions and Men: Work control in building and the rise of labour, 1830-1914*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1980. Pp. xi, 355.

PATRICK JOYCE. — *Work, Society & Politics: The Culture of the Factory in Later Victorian England*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1980. Pp. xxv, 356.

These two studies must rank among the most significant works on British labour produced in the last few years. Addressing questions of international concern, they should be read closely by those who profess an interest in working-class and social history. Moreover, these seemingly disparate examinations of specific slices of labour's experience are complementary: both confront the interpretive problem of the stabilization of class relations in the years after the Chartist upheaval of the 1840s.

Price's *Masters, Unions and Men* examines the struggle for worker control in the building trades over the *longue durée* (1830-1914), and lays stress upon the structural transformations that conditioned a negotiated compromise between labour and the dominant social elements. By the 1890s unions had assumed their role as disciplinary agents in a fully fledged industrial relations system, assuring that the syndicalism of the pre-war years would be at one and the same time a

continuation of the traditional struggle for control and an assault upon "the very institutions and procedures that represented the Labour Movement's achievements" (p. 241). For Price, then, the transition from an informal to a formal collective bargaining system, and the incorporation of the trade union into this basic structure, lies at the centre of an uneasy reformism and precarious stabilization that the rank and file would rise to challenge again and again.

Joyce studies Lancashire and Yorkshire textile communities, presenting an at times brilliant analysis of the sources of stability: it is a book that details richly the factory master's organic connection with the landed élite and his role in the educational, religious, and community life of the factory town. Reinforcing the dynastic paternalism that developed in this epoch of the family firm were the rituals and symbols of work and the factory experience, cultivated in "company cultures" and celebratory dinners and teas. Family and neighbourhood lent further force to these bonds. Stabilization, for Joyce, extended well beyond the institutional context of trade unions and collective bargaining structures to embrace a trilogy of deference, dependence and community. These provided the foundations of an old order that succumbed to the anonymity and rationality of the twentieth century, as the rise of the limited company eroded the power of industrial families. In this changed context, the patriarchal hold over political and economic life broke down, religious and community ties loosened, and labour embraced an oppositional stance sustained by the socialist economic critique and political and industrial forms of organization centred in the Labour Party.

Such brief summaries of complex arguments hardly do justice to these works, and every chapter makes a rethinking of a whole series of questions possible. Joyce flays away, with considerable success, at those historians who have claimed that the existence of a labour aristocracy blunted class consciousness, noting that such a preoccupation focuses on "a problem that exists rather less in nineteenth-century history than in twentieth-century historiography" (p. xv). Since Joyce is familiar with Oldham, a town central to John Foster's innovative and materialistic discussion of the labour aristocracy in *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution*, his book is a spirited critique of an historiographical landmark. Price does not address the question of the labour aristocracy as explicitly as Joyce, but his detailed discussion of the persistence of class conflict among the most aristocratic of tradesmen casts some doubt upon the legitimacy of this analytic categorization. *Masters, Unions and Men* makes its most significant contribution, however, in providing a fresh perspective on workers' control. Insistent that the battle for control provided a connecting point between a limited labour consciousness and a wider revolutionary perspective, Price is also convincing in his effort to demonstrate just how the penchant for control was channelled, through labour's institutions and the social reaction to them, from custom to economism, "translating the grievances of class conflict into those of an economic fine tuning" (p. 163). Such an orientation marks Price's study off from an American literature, which has all too often ignored this aspect of the history of the confrontation over control.

These emphases represent gains in knowledge and advances in perspective. They are not, however, without their problems. Both books skim over delicate questions of historical context and economic change, and both studies suffer from prose that is, at times, almost antiseptic. Language has been sociologized and argument poised on the thin edge separating jargon and awkwardness. Joyce is given to phrases like "men and events can only be rendered" (p. 4), while Price can write, without a hint of hesitancy, of "hegemonical fragility" (p. 15). The problem is not so much that studies written in this vein have a way of distancing themselves from elegance, but that they also tend to keep their evidence at arm's length. This is most glaring in *Work, Society & Politics* where one is left, time and

again, waiting for the rich substance of the data to speak, only to be disappointed by silence. "The Respondents' Briefs in the trial of the Blackburn election petition of 1868-1869 offer fascinating evidence, in the operatives' own words, for the communitarian spontaneity of political feelings", writes Joyce (p. 220), but he hastens on to the next sentence, the reader left behind, gasping for the fascination and flavour that has once more eluded him.

There is also an unwillingness to address frontally the distinction between class conflict, which is endemic in industrial-capitalist societies and represents the economic antagonism of workers and employers, and class struggle, which builds upon conflict but erupts in particular moments of direct challenge to authority. Labour history has often confused the two, and Joyce himself seems to be reacting to this indiscriminate lumping, denying, quite rightly, that class struggle characterized social relations in later Victorian England. But in doing so he bends over backwards to downplay class conflicts that played a considerable role in forcing paternalism into a corner from which it could only emerge in a weakened state. He notes, for instance, that between 1883 and 1893 there were 3,000 industrial disputes in Oldham alone, and at another point speaks of epic battles in other communities that transformed workers' consciousness throughout the 1880s and 1890s. But these conflicts are never probed with sufficient care, and Joyce is too quick to sidestep small confrontations as "a groundswell of local disputation" or "ceremonial" stoppages directed at violations of "a recognized code" (pp. 67, 337). This is to stop analysis at precisely the point where it should commence. What he misses is what Price understands well: class conflicts, however mundane, could provide, over time, a bridge to a more sustained class struggle that addressed wider, explicitly political, concerns. But Price, despite his superior insight, is also on problematic ground, for his own discussion of the struggle for control stops short of its escalation to revolutionary demands for control of entire industrial sectors. While *Masters, Unions and Men* provides a wealth of information on control struggles, and documents the syndicalist upsurge in building in the immediate pre-war years that brought the industrial relations system to a halt, it provides a tantalizing but analytically inadequate bridge into the period of World War I labour upsurge, when industrial militancy and the rejection of the parliamentary road to socialism coalesced. That this development occurred well outside the building trades, among metal workers and miners, and that it developed in opposition to a state effort to assist employers in rationalizing, diluting and disciplining their work force could not be predicted from the concluding pages of *Masters, Unions and Men*. Which is to say that while Price is right in the direction of his argument, he fails to explain just how class conflict is translated into class struggle, a failure not unrelated to the limitations imposed upon this study. For if Price recognizes the importance of conditions external to spontaneity and workplace struggles (the surrounding culture, the political context and the place of labour legislation), his exploration of these factors is necessarily restricted. The role of what James Hinton has called "the servile state" is central to this problem, for it was a presence extending well beyond the system of industrial relations. So, too, of course is the politicization of labour, a difficult realm for Price to explore given his rather rigid dichotomization of the interests and aims of trade-union leaders and the rank and file. Such distinctions may leap out of the chapters of national union histories, but they descend to obscure footnotes on the pages of local and regional studies, and it was on just such pages that revolutionary shop stewards' movements emerged and miners took their first steps.

There are other problems here as well, most noticeably the place and significance of segmentation and sectionalism. This is rather too easily skirted in Price's discussion of the building trades (pp. 51, 263), and while Joyce's examination of

the mill towns does take the hierarchy of jobs into account there is an odd omission: women were an absolute *majority* of the entire workforce studied in *Work, Society & Politics*, yet they are discussed only in the context of familial relations. It seems reasonable to suggest that sexual subordination in the community and at the workplace may well have fed directly into labour's incorporation.

These are large questions, and in some ways substantial deficiencies, upon which critical commentary is necessary. But given the nature of these exciting works and the limitations of all historical studies, it would be highly inappropriate to end without an expression of appreciation. *Work, Society & Politics*, a Tory social history pitted consciously against contemporary Marxist analysis of the Victorian period, and *Masters, Unions and Men*, a book described as "an industrial sociology of workplace relations", are both rewarding studies destined to place their mark on future work in the field. Before picking up these volumes I would not have guessed that I would be so attracted to packages like these, however subtle and sophisticated the wrapping. My prejudices have been confirmed too often. But in reading these books I was reminded that prejudices, like history itself, must always be re-examined.

Bryan D. PALMER,
Simon Fraser University.

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MICHAEL IGNATIEFF. — *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1978. Pp. xiii, 257.

Michael Ignatieff describes "the new philosophy of punishment in England between 1775 and 1840" (p. xiii) according to which criminals, previously labelled incorrigible, were reformable if both mind and body were disciplined. Reformation was to be carried out by the "state". The state disliked sharing control of public punishment with the community and so resorted to private hanging and to building penitentiaries. The state also sought to gain jurisdiction over workers punished privately by employers for work-related offences, over the largely independent keepers of prisons, and over inmate subculture.

The state was not alone in seeking to punish criminals by imprisonment. Advocates of prison reform — Nonconformists, Benthamites, industrialists, philanthropists — pointed to changing class relationships: masters and servants were becoming employers and employees, leading to a breakdown of discipline among the lower classes. Penitentiaries were built to inculcate discipline by separating criminals from each other and from outside influences so that offenders would reflect upon their condition, feel guilty, accept whatever punishment was meted out, and return to society determined to avoid crime. To limit contact, prisoners were forced to wear masks, be silent, sit in separate stalls in chapel, exercise alone, and could receive visitors and write and receive one letter only once every six months.

Discipline could be best inculcated if activities within prisons were predictable. Prison rules were tightened, prisoners were marched in time and forced to