

were hostile to revolutionary suggestions that might alter the existing social structure and the markets for their wares. It is not clear, however, why this argument does not apply to many other English towns and other skilled trades. In the end the author is forced back into a circular argument in support of his conclusion that,

...both as regards the agencies through which it was formed and as regards the immediate political experience which it assimilated, the development of popular articulacy ... took place in a context which tempered its radical potential with a highly adaptable admixture of practical conservatism. (pp. 282-3)

Birmingham was a conservative town in the 1790s because its local traditions were more conservative than those of other towns. Here we encounter the major deficiency of this study. It lacks a rigorous comparative analysis which would test the author's conclusions. Indeed the comparative approach of John Foster's study of Oldham in the industrial revolution might have been usefully employed in this book.³ Professor Money's study leaves the reader with an unanswered question: Do the different responses of English towns to the political crises of the late eighteenth century reflect very real differences in their socio-economic structures?

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JOHN M. MERRIMAN. — *The Agony of the Republic: The Repression of the Left in Revolutionary France, 1848-1851*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978. Pp. xxxvi, 298.

Within the last decade the historiography of the French Revolution of 1848 and the Second French Republic has been enriched by the appearance of social analyses such as those by Maurice Agulhon, Roger Price, and Peter Amann. John Merriman's book is a welcome addition to this collection of social histories of mid-nineteenth century France. Basing his work upon an impressive examination of the major Parisian and provincial archives, Merriman has provided historians with the first detailed study of the process of repression which uprooted and destroyed republican — especially leftist republican — political organizations throughout France after the Revolution of 1848 and thus enabled Louis Napoleon to seize power in 1851.

A history of the suppression of radical republican organizational apparatus from 1848 to 1851 could have been written from an administrative point of view, focusing upon events in Paris and the implementation of directives regulating the repression. Merriman has avoided this institutional approach and has concentrated instead on describing how suppression on the local level actually affected the lives of common people. The result is an often touching account of how innumerable republicans throughout France attempted to establish a radical infrastructure, only to face reverses and eventual repression from a more powerful, and better organized, government intent upon destroying any manifestations of an alternative economic-political system.

The author begins his book with a description of the unsuccessful efforts by radical organizers to dominate the working class strongholds of Limoges and

³ John FOSTER, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution: Early Industrial Capitalism in Three English Towns* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974).

Rouen, goes on to analyze the manner in which the forces of order stymied leftist endeavours in these cities and throughout France as a whole, and ends up by delineating the repressive process in specific regions of France (the industrial Nord, and predominantly agrarian Creuse, Ariège, Finistère and Yonne). From Merriman's study a distinct pattern of the "mechanics of repression" emerges. Already in the summer of 1848, but especially as of 1849, the government struck out at the radical press, closed "subversive" clubs, suppressed voluntary worker associations, arrested purveyors of leftist publications, dismissed radical mayors and schoolteachers, disciplined contaminated regiments, dissolved suspected municipal councils, closely scrutinized meetings, and effaced even symbols of radicalism and republicanism: the Phrygian cap, revolutionary songs, and the red painted weathervane on top of a church. The campaign of repression was so successful that radical organizations were destroyed in most of France, or emasculated and forced underground as in the Yonne. Merriman follows the Agulhon thesis and insists that in the process "politics had descended to the masses", that for the first time ordinary people throughout France became imbued with republican ideals; but he admits that the repression quashed any attempt by republicans to set up organizational foundations in France. Although some depressed economic areas such as the Yonne temporarily preserved their republican apparatus underground and were able to offer some resistance to Louis Napoleon on December 2, 1851, republican structure had been effectively stifled even before the coup eliminated all effective republican opposition to the government.

Earlier works by Agulhon (emphasis upon the democratization process) and Charles Tilly (stress upon collective action and political mobilization by republicans) have greatly influenced Merriman's methods and terminology. Using this combined Agulhon-Tillian methodological approach, Merriman has produced a persuasive and thorough monograph. Ironically, the author's excessive thoroughness is one of the few criticisms that could be made of this work; at times Merriman's exhaustively detailed footnotes, unnecessarily long introduction, and redundant argumentation smack somewhat of the unpruned doctoral dissertation. One might also question the author's choice of departments for analysis, or wish that he had discussed the administration of the repression along with the mechanics of the repressive process. However, these minor defects detract little from the author's overall accomplishment. In fact, Merriman's contribution is a major one, and it will become required reading for anyone interested in the undermining of republicanism after 1848 and the eventual demise of the Second French Republic.

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SHULAMIT VOLKOV. — *The Rise of Popular Antimodernism in Germany: The Urban Master Artisans, 1873-1896.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978. Pp. 399.

Since the publication of Hans Rosenberg's *Grosse Depression und Bismarckzeit* in 1967 the significance of the period from 1873 to 1895/6 has been discussed by many German historians. Rosenberg's brilliant book has provoked a lively debate and opened up many new areas of research in the course of which the problems and the complexity of the "Great Depression" have become so evident that some historians are tempted to discard the concept altogether as being an oversimplification that obscures as much as it illuminates. Part of the problem is the