

industrious poor were in no sense homogeneous in the manner of the nineteenth century factory proletariat" (p. 17): a huge piece of question-begging about the subsequent nature of English society made even more startling by the fact that it occurs in the middle of a discussion of social terminology which otherwise commands complete assent. Another difficulty is raised by the examination of the rioters themselves. Dr. Shelton's picture of the provincial mobs as comprised of war veterans, militiamen with scores to settle, unemployed manufacturers, seasonal workers drawn from the more unstable elements in the London out-parishes, delinquent servants, Irish harvest workers and, to be sure, an admixture of "authentic" farm labourers, raises a whole series of fascinating and important questions about the ways in which popular understanding of "moral economy" was articulated and communicated, but it is a bit hard to square with references to rural "self-help" (p. 161). Also, it is hard to see what essential purpose is served by the suggestion (p. 112) that the danger of general insurrection was greater in 1766 than at any other time before or after, Jacobitism at one extreme, Luddism and Chartism at the other included. In terms of Dr. Shelton's own analysis, this may seem true, but by the same token the prize should surely go to the situation in 1756-7, even though this is to be regarded only "potentially" as "much more dangerous" (p. 99). All this may reflect the fact, which is also suggested by some of its footnote references, that this book was written under the shadow of more recent events. Its subject is an arresting one, especially in the days of Watts, Cleveland and the Falls Road, but it is a pity that drama should at times have been allowed to intrude on judgement in a work which otherwise points out so effectively the considerable agenda which confronts the social historian in mid-eighteenth century England.

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PHILIP N. BACKSTROM. — *Christian Socialism and Co-operation in Victorian England*. London: Croom Helm, 1974.

The British co-operative movement has not attracted much attention recently from historians. Most of the standard references for the movement are now decades old and associated with the Webbs, Tawney, or G.D.H. Cole. Only a handful of British academics — notably Sidney Pollard, R.G. Garnett, J.F.C. Harrison, S.R. Marshall, and Thomas Carberry — retain the interest that was once commonplace in British universities. One reason for this decline in interest — and it is of course a vicious circle — is that many of the old interpretations are now trite and many of the old debates apparently unfathomable. In the midst of this mostly barren landscape, Philip Backstrom's efforts are refreshingly welcome.

Backstrom has explored with empathy and perception Edward Vansittart Neale, a major figure in the British movement during its halcyon days of the late nineteenth century. He has not produced a biography so much as he has written a study of Neale's struggles on behalf of Christian socialism. In the process, Backstrom's greatest accomplishment has been to dissect Neale's "libertarian socialism", a body of thought badly treated by the state socialists who dominated the historiography of the movement. Specifically, Backstrom has demonstrated the superficiality and distortions of Beatrice Webb's work, an accomplishment that should stimulate co-operative studies by helping to reopen many of the debates that enriched the co-operative gatherings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Neale is portrayed by Backstrom as a devoted ideologue of rare dedication, a man who, more than any other, stimulated the fruitful combination of co-operative organizations in late Victorian Britain. Not only did Neale devote much of his inherited wealth to the

cause, he also contributed his considerable legal capacities and his remarkable gifts as a propagandist. Neale's view of co-operation was broad, extending beyond co-operative stores to banking, manufacturing, marketing and community-building. Indeed, because he believed deeply in all aspects of the co-operative movement, Neale constantly advocated that the union of all co-operative efforts would produce a powerful reform movement capable of transforming contemporary life. Inevitably, these ideas invited attack from two powerful groups within the British movement of his day. The most persistent and ultimately important critics were the pragmatic leaders, like T.W. Mitchell, of the British consumer movement; for them, Neale, by endorsing agricultural co-operatives and workers' co-partnerships, was denying the supremacy of consumer co-operation or, in other words, the right of consumers to control the means of production. The other band of critics was made up of state socialists who scorned his faith in voluntarism and never apparently understood his fear of bureaucracies. Caught between these two groups, Neale was constantly involved in controversies throughout his life and especially towards its end when he was fighting a series of losing battles.

Aside from his understanding of Neale's brand of socialism, Backstrom has explored the question of growing bureaucracy within the British co-operative movement during the 1870s, eighties and nineties. Bureaucratization was a consequence of the remarkably rapid growth of the consumer movement and of the emergence of leaders more given to imitation than replacement of the capitalist economy. By exploring the attitudes and activities of the most prominent men — if not so much the social and economic circumstances within which they functioned — Backstrom has successfully described how a widely-based, "grass roots", economic movement became dominated by its managers. The same development, of course, can be seen in most co-operative movements, but it is particularly significant and cogent in the case of Britain, the original centre for so much co-operative activity.

As with all strong books that press precise arguments, this study invites a number of questions. Backstrom places great emphasis, and rightly so, upon the importance of the rejection of producer co-operation and labour co-partnerships by the British movement. There can be no doubt that the mixture of various kinds of strong co-operatives has produced creative tensions in the movements of other lands; but the experience of the twentieth century has seldom borne out Neale's belief in them as major agents for the development of the "fully co-operative society". Rather, producer co-operation has been subjected to the same types of limited vision and bureaucratic conservatism that earlier beset the consumer co-operatives. One wonders, therefore, if an important part of the explanation for the over-institutionalization of a once-vibrant reform movement should not be looked for in the over-powering methods of expansion unfolding in private business practice during the late nineteenth century. It would be unrealistic to expect co-operators not to imitate, as much as their system permitted, the more successful practices of centralization and monopolization employed by their competitors.

Similarly, one can wonder about Backstrom's persistent attack on the leaders of the consumer movement. One could wish for a little more toleration of their often shortsighted but understandable positions. Their devotion to consumer co-operation was based upon the remarkable success of the store movement, and their reluctance to experiment with other forms must be related to the complexities they faced in operating increasingly more difficult businesses. And, as for their devotion to the dividend, one can certainly see it as an aspect of their general *petit bourgeois* outlook; but it is also defensible for the benefits it extended to the poorest customer who patronized the stores. It may be that a better society could ultimately have been created by a different method of organization, but one doubts that the alternatives could have benefited as many so much in the context of the late nineteenth century.

In fact, as one reviews Neale's thought and Backstrom's interpretation of it, one

wonders if the essential point is not the importance of gradualness. Neale died disappointed if undaunted; Backstrom looks with discouragement on the movement as it enters the twentieth century. Both may have been unnecessarily harsh. Neale's thought, often unacknowledged, did spread elsewhere with important results; many new types of co-operative activity have appeared and flourished; and there has been remarkable growth nearly everywhere but in Great Britain. One can even argue a case for the emergence during the twentieth century of a significant international movement with a considerable impact. In short, it was highly unrealistic for Neale to expect that his ideas on united diversity could bear fruit while he lived; but that does not mean that some of them would not be realized with the passage of time.

Such questions, though, should not detract from the stimulating analysis Backstrom has made, an analysis that hopefully will encourage examinations of both old and new questions about the history of the British co-operative movement.

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DAVID BLEAKLEY. — *Faulkner: Conflict and Consent in Irish Politics*. London & Oxford: Mowbrays, 1974.

When Brian Faulkner became prime minister of Northern Ireland in March 1971, he acquired a place in history which entitled him to a political biography. This has been supplied by David Bleakley, a member of the Northern Irish Labour party, who joined his coalition government and consequently was qualified by experience to provide a critical but sympathetic treatment of Faulkner and his administration. More important, Bleakley's sense of history enables him to supply a useful comment on the forces at work in Northern Ireland in the 1970's.

Faulkner, like his predecessor, Captain Terence O'Neill, was a conventional political leader at an unconventional point in history. O'Neill had responded imaginatively, grasping for a compromise and, in doing so, lost the confidence of the Protestant Unionists on which his power was based. Faulkner faced the same problem that had defeated O'Neill, that of reconciling the "Catholic" and "Orange" communities of Ulster. In Bleakley's opinion, O'Neill's effectiveness was blunted by his aristocratic background and English accent. Faulkner had less obvious establishment connections. Coming from a wealthy Presbyterian family, he was educated at St. Columba's College, Rathfarnham, a famous public school outside Dublin where he became a friend of the son of William Butler Yeats, now speaker of the Irish Senate. After a year at Queen's University as a law student, Faulkner entered the family business in 1940 and remained a successful businessman until 1960. His love of horses, common to most Irishmen, and his enthusiasm for the Hunt, undoubtedly helped balance the political disadvantages of not having served during the war.

Faulkner made his way with difficulty in the Unionist Party, building his strength by close connections with the Orange Order, and convincing the average Orangeman that he felt and thought as they did. His intention was to use the confidence which he had built up over the years to create a system in which the Orange and Catholic communities could be equal partners in Northern Ireland. Like O'Neill, his approach was imaginative, inviting labour participation that included David Bleakley into his government. In the spring of 1971, it appeared that he would succeed.

The difficulty was the intensification of terrorism in the summer of 1971. Bleakley believes that Faulkner's decision to accept the advice of the security forces to intern