

ideology was “fraternal” in nature, and this could have damaging consequences. In Rouen, for instance, an increasingly feminized textile work force became alienated from a socialist republican movement whose platform dictated universal male suffrage. The author does not make this problem a central theme in his argument, however. One is also left wondering how his model of nonreductionist class analysis would apply to other political movements mentioned in the book, such as Legitimism. Still, Aminzade’s arguments are clearly expressed and convincing; his book is a significant contribution to our understanding of the nature of nineteenth-century French Republicanism.

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Geoffrey Tyack — *Sir James Pennethorne and the Making of Victorian London*.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. Pp. xviii, 336.

James Pennethorne, who combined the obscurely titled post of Architect and Surveyor for Metropolitan Improvements to the Commissioners of Woods and Forests with that of Surveyor to the Crown estate, was in effect mid-Victorian London’s government architect. Through these posts he could influence a wide range of urban and architectural developments: he planned parks, of which Victorian Park in northeast London is the most striking, constructed to provide space for leisure and fresh air for east London’s growing working-class population; he planned new central roads, most notably New Oxford Street and Cranbourn Street; he designed public buildings, including the elegant Geological Museum which backed onto Piccadilly, the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane, additions to Somerset House and Buckingham Palace; and he was an active if largely disappointed participant in the long efforts to concentrate government buildings in a development on the grand scale in Whitehall. Yet Pennethorne has remained a little-known figure, with no major study of his work until Geoffrey Tyack’s informative, well-researched, and beautifully illustrated book.

Tyack’s story takes us from Pennethorne’s early training with Nash, and for a briefer time Pugin, in the late 1820s and early 1830s through to his retirement in 1870. We learn little of his life or personality, for no diaries and few letters have survived to flesh out the man who appears only through formal and official papers, though one suspects that a historian with a greater interest in biography than architecture might have made more of the Pennethorne who emerges from these sources. Instead, we are presented with the distinct spheres of responsibility of a Victorian public servant as each dimension of his career is examined in thematic rather than chronological chapters, organized around such subjects as Metropolitan improvements, parks, public offices, museums, buildings for the Royal Family, and the rebuilding of Whitehall.

If the book makes an informative but somewhat unchallenging read, it is as much the fault of the limited urban ambitions of mid-Victorian government and the

dogged nature of Pennethorne's own approach to his work as it is of Tyack's effort, but one does wish that Tyack had allowed himself to reflect more broadly on some of the questions that arise from his text. The most interesting, at least for this reviewer, all derive from asking just how important Pennethorne actually was. The author is a strong advocate for his subject — biographers usually become so, even against their initial instincts — and in most situations where Pennethorne's proposals were overlooked we are assured that the decisions were unfortunate. Any assessment of the man's significance must concede that he did attempt, from his ambiguous official position, to achieve two important developments in mid-Victorian London: the first improving its road layout (including a largely new road from Piccadilly to the Royal Exchange in the City) and the second imposing a cohesive architectural shape to state buildings, above all with a new grand set of government buildings in Whitehall. Both projects were abortive, and the improvements he was able to achieve were far less important than those which failed. Pennethorne was responsible for some good — if rarely memorable — buildings which combined an appropriate substance, presented in his preferred classical tradition, with an adaptability and appropriateness of organization for internal space which many of that tradition's detractors thought could rarely be achieved. However, despite all Tyack's pleading, one is forced to conclude that Pennethorne's impact on mid-Victorian London was limited.

The limits to that achievement were only partly the architect's fault. It is hard to imagine any official architect being able to impose himself on Victorian central London, not because of the intractability of the problems but because of the lack of will to devise bold programmes for change. Urban historians are accustomed to contrasting the hesitant redevelopment of Victorian London with the visionary reshaping of central Paris by Haussmann, and reading this book makes one ever more conscious of the comparison. It is interesting to see that urban historians are not alone, for contemporary opinion was equally struck by the difference, as Prince Albert and others called on the government to do more to beautify London. In 1856 the architect William Tite, sympathizing with Pennethorne, called for the adoption by the government of "a distinct and well-chosen plan, as in Paris" (p. 136). Tyack sees a pluralism and individualism amongst the ruling class as the reason for the timidity, though ruling classes are rarely culturally united in the way such an explanation expects; I would rate the ability of a strong centralized (and for a period authoritarian) state in France to ignore such pluralism as a more significant explanation, coupled with the benefits accruing to private capital and public order which Haussmann's plans offered. Yet James Pennethorne was not an ambitious architect whose vision was thwarted. His plans for new roads were concerned more with traffic movement and slum clearance than with any reconstruction of central space in the service of grander urban or imperial visions. Nevertheless, no one asked for vision from the government architect, who was expected by few to conceive of London as a whole, rather than the detailed parts of which his knowledge was excellent. He was not the Prefect of the Seine, but there was no equivalent in London to impose central planning and architectural ideas on the capital, neither on behalf of central government nor at the municipal level.

The book hints at some of these contrasts, but more because Pennethorne's contemporaries were conscious of them than because the author considers them analytically challenging questions. Nevertheless, there insistently emerges from this study a realization of the way the national state, urban government, the patronage system, a recurrent anxiety to control public spending, and, it must be conceded, party conflict in a system of representative government all combined to frustrate planning for London. Pennethorne's own position lacked precision of purpose, and his appointment under the patronage system and his dependence on the favours of politicians meant that he was never secure in spite of his high income. More importantly, the contrasts between London and Paris help explain the lack of a vision for London's development, the lack of boldness of imagination in both planning and architecture which has lasted to the present day, and a reluctance, also enduring, to envisage for state buildings architectural statements which went beyond the appropriate and the conservative and sought instead to excite. Those who have criticized the Venturi extension of 1991 to the National Gallery — for its timidity on the one hand or for its failure to match a much-loved monument on the other — would do well to read the depressing tale of the original building in chapter 6: the constraints of the site; the struggle of the architect, William Wilkins, to overcome them; and above all the criticisms heaped on his building for its internal inadequacies and its external incoherence and muddle. The much-loved face was not always so.

This is an attractive book, beautifully produced and illustrated. The text is informative and well organized, though the author is more concerned to tell the story than to reflect on why London's architectural and planning development in this period was so stuttering and limited, for it is the story which dominates. The story is of a hard-working public servant committed to improvements in urban design and amenities, to sound buildings within a flexible classical tradition that did not preclude an occasional excursion into the Gothic when required, and to the re-organization of the capital's centre in a fashion that was in advance of what was expected of him — but not extravagantly so. Pennethorne was an appropriate official architect for mid-Victorian London.

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B. D. Graham — *Choice and Democratic Order: The French Socialist Party, 1937–1950*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. Pp. xvi, 430.

Choice and Democratic Order is an excellent, extremely detailed guide through the convoluted internal politics of the French Socialist Party (the SFIO) during a crucial period in the party's history, from 1937 to 1950. During this time the party had two active dissident groups within its ranks, the *Gauche Révolutionnaire* and the *Bataille Socialiste*, each of which disagreed with the party leadership on issues of ideology and strategy. By the mid-1930s the Socialists had joined the Popular Front, a move