

**Gould, Roger V. *Insurgent Identities: Class, Community, and Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. Pp. viii, 253. & black and white plates, statistical and methodological appendices, bibliography, index**

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The biographical side is equally rich, particularly in its characterization of Haussmann. He was not a very likeable man. Arrogant in life, vain, insensitive, obsessed by power, largely friendless, he left an autobiography which unintentionally recorded his shortcomings — the egotism, the ruthlessness, the exaggerations. But he also left the substantial debts of one who had never lined his own pockets, as well as an unbroken loyalty to a regime which he had served with energy and single-mindedness.

Most intriguing of all, however, is Jordan's suggestion of a psychological link between the man and his sometimes devastating assaults on Paris. There seems to have been some sort of inner compulsion, particularly with respect to Haussmann's manhandling of the Ile de la Cit, the city's medieval quarter. As a boy, he had been forced to use the dark, fetid, jumbled lanes of this quarter en route to school on the Left Bank. As a boy, too, he had been sickly and frail, a condition which he subsequently attributed to the poor air, the poor water, and the confined spaces of central Paris. Hence, the connection between an apprehensive child and an adult determined to let in the light and the air: the wide boulevards lined by chestnut trees, the urban green spaces, the urban lakes and fountains.

And who should care about all this, about Haussmann, or Paris? Jordan has the answer. Haussmann's decade of violent urban renewal is still the most intensive in the history of the city. It made Paris a "public city" (295), a spacious capital of light, luxury, political and financial power, a city quick to capitalize on the burgeoning tourist industry. It was a showpiece. And the poor were eyesores. Haussmann contemptuously called them "nomads", indifferent to the fact that his street-widening, his demolitions, even his green spaces, had displaced the poor and sent them scurrying. Partly because of the antagonism so generated, and the mounting deficits associated with his rebuilding, and his own imperious nature, he became a "lightning rod" (178) for the Second Empire. On him were focussed the disparate criticisms of the Empire — liberal, socialist, monarchist, republican. And so they fell, first the prefect, then his sovereign.

Haussman died in 1891, unlamented and unrecognized by the government of the Third Republic. He was taken to the cemetery of Père Lachaise, to a modest tomb overlooking the city which he had so changed. At last, David Jordan has given him a worthy monument.

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Gould, Roger V. *Insurgent Identities: Class, Community, and Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. Pp. viii, 253. & black and white plates, statistical and methodological appendices, bibliography, index.

Craft traditions, class consciousness, or neighbourhood ties — which of these factors fashioned the social identity and political outlook of Parisian workers in the middle of the nineteenth century? This is the big question Roger Gould tackles in his stimulating reinterpretation of the social impact of political conflict, economic change and urban reconstruction, from the Revolution of 1848 to the Paris Commune of 1871. In other words, what shaped the social consciousness of the men and women who participated in these famous episodes of urban violence?

The author challenges the linear view of the "class-formation narrative" which dominates historical writing on this period. He agrees that 1848 saw the breakthrough of class consciousness as a shaper of workers' identity. But he argues (convincingly in my opinion) that this was the outcome of specific political and economic circumstances, and that the class solidarity momentarily attained in 1848 did not replace alternative markers of workers' consciousness. Indeed, it was craft identity, not class consciousness, that formed the basis for revived labour militancy in Paris in the 1860s — specifically in skilled trades that remained concentrated in the city centre, not in industries that were dispersed across different wards. Here the influence of urban space played a much greater role than formal labour associations, for labour militancy was strongest in trades where the relations of the workshop were reinforced by daily patterns of sociability in the same neighbourhood's cafés and wineshops.

The aspect of the book that will most interest readers of this journal is Gould's rejection of the standard interpretation of the effects of *Haussmannisation* — the celebrated rebuilding of the city centre in the 1850s and 1860s. Historians wedded to the "class-formation narrative" hold that urban reconstruction set off a sharp jump in property values and rents that drove working-class families out of the right-bank neighbourhoods of central Paris and into the cheaper suburbs, especially those in the northeastern quadrant (La Villette, Belleville and Charonne — today's 19th and 20th wards). There they found themselves isolated in overwhelmingly working-class neighbourhoods quite different from the socially mixed central wards they had left behind. This spatial segregation of working people in the 1860s heightened class consciousness and kindled a bitter political discourse that attacked both urban capitalism and its servant, the imperial regime of Napoleon III. Consequently, a defining aspect the great uprising of 1871 was the violent repossession of the city centre by dispossessed, insurgent workers.

Gould contests this interpretation by denying that working people experienced increased social segregation in Second Empire Paris. He agrees that many Parisian workers (as well as provincial newcomers) moved from the centre to the periphery of the city. But, he argues, the suburban neighbourhoods they entered were not socially monolithic but rather "akin to an urban

village" where social relations included everyday contact between middle- and working-class people. For Parisian workers the outcome of urban reconstruction was not social isolation but rather a new spatial identity based on new ties of residence.

To support his bold thesis, Gould compares marriage records in two central wards with two wards in the northeastern periphery for the year 1869. When a bridal party with the required four male witnesses came to the town hall for the civil ceremony, they had to identify themselves by name, age, address and occupation. Gould uses a sample of this information to show that many bridal parties were socially mixed, with men from middle-class occupations serving as witnesses for working-class couples. Although four out of five people in the suburban wards were workers, three-quarters of working-class marriages there included at least one witness with a middle-class occupation (and a third involved two middle-class witnesses). This result is the opposite of what the class-isolation interpretation would predict, and Gould uses it to argue that the supposedly homogeneous suburban wards actually constituted a new urban space where social contacts arising from common residence cut across class lines. From that perspective, Gould holds that the great Parisian insurrection of 1871 was grounded not in class antagonism but rather in the collective action and resentment of specific neighbourhoods — "the salient collective identity" of the time — against the centralizing state.

The author shows imagination and resourcefulness in deploying marriage records to support his challenge to the standard interpretation of *Hausmannisation*. But can the weight of his new view be supported on such a slender evidentiary base? Quite apart from the size of the sample or the taxonomic problems of classifying certain occupations as "middle-class", a much broader issue is at stake here. Marriage is a rite of passage in which the couple publicly seeks social approval and legitimacy for their union. On such occasions we might well expect couples from the lower rungs of the social ladder to try to enhance their status by enlisting the presence of an acknowledged social superior at the ceremony. But does that act necessarily imply that these people shared a genuine social relationship? One can readily envision a groom asking his boss (or a civil servant, teacher or shop-keeper) to "do him the honour" of standing up for him on the big day. And one can just as easily see middle-class witnesses agreeing because, given their social position, that would be "the right thing to do". Deference and noblesse oblige are also forms of social interaction; so the real question is whether Gould's sample indicates the presence of real relationships cutting across class boundaries, as opposed to transitory crossings of social paths appropriate only to this ceremonial occasion.

This said, Gould's book nevertheless remains a stimulating analysis of the social and political consequences of the French capital's most famous episode of urban renewal, one that is likely to provoke an engaging debate among social historians. But *Insurgent Identities* also supplies a good introduction to the

literature on nineteenth-century French labour history and so will be suited to classroom use as well. A book that is both stimulating for specialists and useful for undergraduates does not come along all that often, and the author deserves to be congratulated for producing one.

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Jean Wardle Bradley, *A Home Across the Water* (Portland, Or. and North York, Ont.: Braeward Publishing, 1996), 210 pp., photos. \$10.95 ISBN 0-9652061-0-6. [Copies may be purchased at the Gibson House, 5172 Yonge Street, North York, or ordered from Braeward Publishing, 14 Ashdean Ave., Scarborough, Ont. M1P 1E3.]

In recent years more urban historians have come to appreciate that personal documents can provide vivid glimpses of how life was lived. *A Home Across the Water*, a self-published memoir of growing up in the community of Newtonbrook in North York during the Depression, is a fine example which illuminates a distinctive era of suburban settlement in Canada. The author Jean Bradley, a retired journalist and published writer of short stories, knows what she is about. Skilfully, she frames her recollections as a flashback. In the prologue she puts us in the window seat of the plane that brought her back to Toronto from her present home in Oregon, on the day that her childhood home was being demolished. As the bulldozers go to work, the memories surface ...

In its bare outlines the story she tells is that of thousands of British immigrants to Canada in the first quarter of this century. With little saved, and eager to better their situation, they did everything they could to acquire homes, often by building their own at the suburban fringe. Bradley's parents had met in New castle-upon-Tyne after World War I. Her father, Archer Wardle, was a miner's son just discharged from the army. Her mother, Eleanor (Nell) Aitkin, had lost her job in a munitions factory. They married in 1919. Archer left for Canada in 1920, soon followed by Nell and a newborn child. After lodging in Toronto's east end, in 1922 they bought a 25-foot lot in Newtonbrook, four miles beyond Toronto's city limits. There, during the summer and fall Archer built a small house. Conditions were primitive. Archer had to dig a well and privy pit. Other services were minimal or entirely absent. When Nell was expecting her fourth child, in 1925, she went to stay with friends closer to Toronto so as to be closer to a midwife and doctor. In her absence, a fire started and, without piped water, the blaze destroyed the house. Archer rebuilt immediately, and Jean herself was the first to be born in the new house, in 1928. Tragically, the effort of re-building triggered Archer's rheumatoid arthritis and soon he was bedridden. The family struggled on, and it is Bradley's recollections of her Depression childhood that make up the