

Schultz, Ronald. *The Republic of Labor: Philadelphia Artisans and the Politics of Class, 1720–1830*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pp. xi, 298. Illustrations. \$63.00

Sean T. Cadigan

Volume 23, numéro 2, march 1995

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1016650ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1016650ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (imprimé)

1918-5138 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Cadigan, S. T. (1995). Compte rendu de [Schultz, Ronald. *The Republic of Labor: Philadelphia Artisans and the Politics of Class, 1720–1830*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pp. xi, 298. Illustrations. \$63.00]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 23(2), 68–69. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1016650ar>

Fujito, Kuniko, and Richard Hill, eds.
Japanese Cities in the World Economy.
(Conflicts in Urban and Regional
Development, John R. Logan and Todd
Swanstrom, Editors) Philadelphia:
Temple University Press, 1993. Pp. 310.
Tables, maps, index. \$44.95 (US) (cloth).

This is an ambitious book and like many edited collections does not quite fulfill the promise of its introduction which raises a series of six questions concerning Japanese urban development. While it is perhaps unfair to the editors to try to collapse these questions they can be encapsulated by the following. How have the Japanese state and private sector as they are engaged in the urban experience responded to global and domestic developments in the period since 1945? This reflects a dominant theme in Japanese studies, at least outside Japan which has sought to explain the "Japanese economic miracle" in terms of a systematic governmental effort to cooperate with the private sector in encouraging economic growth. Equally so, it may be argued that this cooperation has greatly aided the rapid progress of urbanization in Japan.

In order to tackle this question, the book is divided into five parts. In the first part, Nakamura presents a brief overview of urban growth in pre-war Japan arguing that Japan inherited a well-developed system of cities and that as industrialization developed from the Tokugawa era onwards and new port cities were created, such as Yokohama, Kobe and Nagoya, this situation aided the development of industry. Part Two called World City Formation deals with the effect of Japan's increasing involvement in the global economy on the urban system and internal change within the local cities. After a period in the mid 1970's where it seems the growth of the large mega-urban regions such as Tokyo and Osaka began to slow down, many were

predicting that Japan's national plans for regional decentralization would be successful. However, in the nineteen eighties the reverse trend has occurred with growing concentration occurring in the Tokkaido urban belt focussing on the corridor from Osaka to Tokyo. Miyamoto's essay comparing the experience of Osaka and Tokyo in this process emphasizes the persistence of manufacturing as an important component of this continuing process. Douglass's previously widely circulated chapter entitled "The New Tokyo Story" focuses upon the human consequences of these changes where increasing land prices, and speculation have led to a hollowing out of the inner parts of the city creating what is referred as the doughnut phenomenon. Douglass carefully analyzes this process including the techniques developed to force local populations out using well known techniques of the "blockbusters" in the Western experience. This process has invoked some resistance as people struggle to maintain homes and community but it has led to very rapid change in inner city Tokyo.

A section on global-local links develops themes introduced elsewhere with case studies of Toyota City, Nagoya, and industrial restructuring in other cities in Japan. Finally, Rimmer offers a carefully researched analysis of the export of Japanese planning ideas to the East Asia and Southeast Asia which includes a strong focus on transportation planning and the concept of Technopolis.

As is generally the case in edited volumes it is not easy to seize upon common elements that indicate strengths and weaknesses in the volume. To the urban historian the rather sketchy treatment of the pre-war growth of urban areas may be disappointing particularly as it ignores the important contributions of Hall and Taueber. Secondly, the book focuses primarily upon the process of in-

dustrial restructuring and the symbiotic relationship with the state as it effects the urbanization process. Apart from Douglass's article there is very little discussion of the social impacts of urbanization. While the essays recognize that the emergence of the urban conditions of Japan, which Douglass suggests has many bleak aspects is a fact, there is only limited discussion of this aspect.

Despite these reservations, *Japanese Cities in the World Economy* is a valuable addition to the studies of urban Japan. The authors do take up the challenge of how the internationalization of Japan has affected the urban economy and how the state is attempting to guide this process. We will have to wait for more focused studies of the social impact of these processes.

T.G. McGee
Department of Geography
University of British Columbia

Schultz, Ronald. *The Republic of Labor: Philadelphia Artisans and the Politics of Class, 1720-1830.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pp. xi, 298. Illustrations. \$63.00.

Schultz suggests that the "rights of man" fought for by Philadelphia artisans in the formation and early definition of the American republic had little to do with the development of liberalism in the Anglo-American world of the eighteenth century. More important was a small-producer creed grounded in the world of the independent craftsman. Artisan culture, which emphasized the social utility of labour, the right of all to a competency, the equality of skill with property, and a commitment to community founded on the cooperative nature of production, contained within itself the seeds of demands for a popular democracy defined by economic equality and political lib-

erty. Schultz makes good use of evidence presented in previous historiography as well as in the Philadelphia press, popular tracts, and assembly proceedings to show convincingly that artisans had carried a Leveller tradition of fighting for the rights of the poor against the power of the rich to the New World and made it an important part of budding republicanism. Philadelphia artisans at first fought against the domination of their colony by big import-export merchants.

Through the revolutionary and early republican era such struggles become more than of the poor against the wealthy. Mercantile war profiteering, vacillation on issues like nonimportation, and commitment to the political program of the Republicans, and later Federalists, all made artisans distinguish between those who laboured for a livelihood, and were thus useful to society, and their exploiters, generally parasitic merchants who held power because they controlled property and wealth.

Readers may balk at the periodization here. Schultz argues that "the American working class made itself, not in 1827, but in the course of a century of economic and political struggle that saw independent colonial artisans transformed into skilled but dependent workingmen." (xii) But the author does not believe that a proletariat had developed in the 1720s. *The Republic of Labor* instead rejects viewing the Philadelphia working class as simply appearing in correspondence with the rise of industrial capitalism in the first decades of the nineteenth century. While the subordination of independent artisan production to the wage was a drawn-out one, skilled workers' organizations such as the Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations (1827) and the Workingmen's Party (1828) owed their existence to a long tradition of radical courtship of producing-classes support. First Constitutionalists, then Democratic-Republicans, and later Old

School Democrats, all advocated versions of producers' rights which culminated in nothing less than a labour theory of value. Thus when the material conditions of industrial capitalism eroded the independence of mechanics in the nineteenth century, they responded by drawing on a political heritage which was really of their own making, although articulated by a radical bourgeois intelligentsia.

Urban development became a forum for the artisan response to capitalism. In the 1790s municipal bans against wooden housing and the development of an ostentatious new architecture for the buildings of local rich merchants did much to politicize the producing classes against what they saw as an increasing marginalization in their own city. Many of the struggles between 1796 and 1810, when artisans transformed "their small producer heritage into a culture that was becoming recognizably working-class," were over the regulations of the city corporation. (141-43) Indeed, Schultz suggests that local municipal politics were of far more importance to the day-to-day lives of Philadelphia artisans than issues at the state or national level.

The Republic of Labor could benefit from a more critical assessment of the small-producer legacy in working-class formation. Artisan ideology here is largely that of skilled, white males. While the penetration of the wage may have eroded artisan independence, it probably was not all that bad a thing for the indentured servants and slaves whom Schultz estimates made up about 40 percent of the mechanic labour force in the mid-eighteenth century. Besides an occasional assertion that artisans spoke for the labouring class few but the skilled are mentioned. Schultz refers to black workers only once, and his evidence appears to indicate that white workers felt that they should not share equally in the re-

public of labor. Schultz also points out that the development of industrial capitalism brought unprecedented numbers of women and children into the wage-labour market, but does not explore the gender dimensions of independent-producer ideology (although the influence of the family on it is supposed to be crucial). Readers will learn little about how well the working-class culture of the 1820s reflected the needs of women or the unskilled.

Although these are critical lacunae, *The Republic of Labor* places artisan ideology and culture in the vanguard of American republican ideals about liberty and equality, at least as important as the liberalism of the time. In doing so, the book highlights the importance of artisan political consciousness and struggle in addition to structural economic change in working-class formation usually perceived as a phenomenon beginning in the mid-nineteenth century.

Sean T. Cadigan
Department of History
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Frances, Raelene. *The Politics of Work: Gender and Labour in Victoria, 1880-1939*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Pp. xii, 267. Tables, charts, illustrations, index. \$59.95 (US)

With the general shift in feminist historiography from the study of women to the exploration of gender, new interpretive doors have opened. More than the reconstruction of women's experiences, still a necessary and invaluable exercise, current research has been oriented towards the importance of gender relations to the study of power relations in general. In *The Politics of Work*, Raelene Frances sets out to examine the ever-increasing body of literature surrounding the work of