

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)

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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.

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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

Harry Braverman on the labour process by focusing on the clothing, boot and printing trades in Victoria, Australia from 1880 to 1939.

Braverman's thesis has fallen on hard times as of late, with good reason, and Frances provides an excellent discussion of the recent literature, both Marxist and feminist, on this topic. In doing so, she indicates the numerous problems with Braverman's thesis about women as a reserve army of labour used by gender-blind employers to replace men and their higher wages. Her approach widens the field within which changes to the organization of work is viewed, suggesting that "it is not possible to accord theoretical primacy to any single factor; the precise weighting of each contribution can only be established empirically." (2) Frances also carefully details the ambiguities of the effectiveness and extent of Taylorism and other strands of scientific management.

As well, her immersion in the numerous debates concerning 'Bravermania' is coupled with a view of feminist debates about the social construction of skill and the position of women within the labour market. For Frances, the nature of work processes under capitalism in these trades "arose out of the interplay between product and labour markets, capital supply, technology, racial and gender orders and the activities of the state." (11) Frances provides a narrative of the dynamic of control and exploitation in each trade through her attention to the uneven but discernable processes of the deskilling, fragmentation and feminisation of work.

For example, at the end of the nineteenth century, men in the clothing trades were able to monopolize higher paying jobs in the factory while women remained primarily confined to outwork at much lower rates of pay. While the gendered division of labour in this trade remained con-

stant during this period, the reorganization of work in the boot industry through mechanization was successful. In this case, working men rationalized the use of machines through the use of the male breadwinner ideal, stressing the importance of their earnings to the maintenance of the working-class family. This resulted in the displacement of female and child labour, a process even more intense in the printing trades, where machines such as the linotype were masculinized, entering the workplace as the sole domain of men. Thus, it is clear that there was no simple link between the presence of women in wage labour and the organization of work.

What should also be clear from the above examples is that women's particular demands were customarily not supported by male trade union hierarchies. While women in the printing and textile trades won their struggle for the establishment of a female organizer after World War One, women in the boot industry remained dependent on male officials. Generally, all women encountered difficulties in getting effective representation of their needs on both a daily basis and in times of negotiations. This resulted in women's increased vulnerability when work was reorganized, as men often settled for limiting the effects of scientific management on their work at the expense of changes to women's work.

In *The Politics of Work*, we are presented with a portrayal in which the cycles of the colonial economy and the increase in the involvement of the state are seen very effectively alongside ideas about the male breadwinner, female domesticity, and child labour. Unfortunately, it is the complexity of the thesis that undermines her presentation. With a monograph of this size, Frances has approximately sixty pages to cover sixty years of history in each trade. As a result, we are given few glimpses about how workers themselves

actually experienced the transformation of the labour processes in question. Instead, the focus is primarily upon union officials and their struggles with employers, managers and the state. As well, little space is devoted to detailing the prevailing gender order outside of the workplace. Despite these criticisms, this book should prove to be a very good example of the theoretical and methodological potential of a feminist-informed study of the transformation of labour processes.

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Petrow, Stefan. *Policing Morals: The Metropolitan Police and the Home Office, 1870-1914*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994. Pp. xiii, 343. \$78.95.

This addition to studies on the history of English policing is a revised thesis; it had been supervised by V.A.C. Gatrell and examined by Oliver MacDonagh and David Phillips. Such a provenance implies a well-crafted, thoroughly researched, and provocative book. That is what we get. The acknowledgements likewise indicate that *Policing Morals* is situated in an intellectual tradition, for the thesis supervisor and the two examiners are revisionists. Their writings on the growth of state power in the nineteenth century criticized "the engines of moral repression"; moreover, they doubted the effectiveness of state agencies in achieving the improvements claimed for them.

Appropriately, the book opens with John Stuart Mill's case against the use of criminal law to enforce moral order. (7) It closes with a tribute to the civil libertarians who "never acquiesced in the state regulation of individual morality." (301) Stefan Petrow, then, does more than chronicle events. He has taken a libertarian position—more common among histo-