

EDITOR'S REMARKS

Two theoretical questions which emerge explicitly or implicitly from recent historical writings are the historical interrelations of gender and class and the links between the daily lives of twentieth-century workers and national political movements that have spoken in the workers' name. The first of these problems is provocatively addressed by Harold Benenson in this issue's Scholarly Controversy. Benenson argues that utopian social criticism was more keenly attuned to both the needs of working women and the importance of gender as a determinant of social struggles and historical agency than Marxism turned out to be. Basic theoretical categories proposed by Marx and adopted by socialist movements and historians alike, he argues, simply incorporated Victorian notions of sexual spheres, rather than subjecting them to such criticism as certain Owenites and Fourerites had formulated. The responses by David Montgomery and Ellen Ross contain very different evaluations of Benenson's argument. Readers comments of not more than three double-spaced pages, which are received before September 1, 1984, will be welcomed and printed in the next issue of ILWCH.

The second question informs at least part of the argument in all three of the review essays. Examining several recent studies of twentieth-century immigrant experience in the United States, John Bukowczyk finds an emphasis on individual -or family-oriented motivations so overwhelming that it virtually crowds movements, or even collective action, off the historical stage. Organized movements seem virtually irrelevant to the working-class culture described in this work. Bukowczyk raises some penetrating questions about the design of these community studies, and especially about possible limitations of oral history. Do survivor's memories suppress frustrated aspirations of yesteryear?

James Cronin raises similar questions by contrasting historians' rich analyses of British workers before and during the Chartist period with their largely "lackluster" writings on the twentieth century, when the British working class assumed its modern character. The difficulty with studies of this century, he argues, is that few of them have connected the local roots of working class organization and culture, which are often studied well, with the national arena in which both unions and workers' parties have functioned.

Nelson Lichtenstein starts his discussion of the Communist Party of the United States from the national level, but ends up with the same issue. He finds some authors treating the American working class as a conservative, static "given," against which the maneuvers of the party are reflected. While admiring the research and good intentions of recent authors, Lichtenstein is highly sceptical of their interpretations.

These writings, and the projected contents of ILWCH no. 26, which appear on the back cover, reflect ILWCH's increasing commitment to theoretical and conceptual questions that are basic to the investigation of working-class history, as

well as its continuing concern for both global scope and the mutual enrichment of scholarship and workers' movements. As the journal expands, so does its editorial board. Helmut Gruber has assumed the role of co-editor, with special responsibility for Scholarly Controversies in addition to his general contribution to the shaping of this and future issues. The Editorial Board members have undertaken to solicit articles, review essays, reviews, and news from their fields of expertise, as well as reviewing manuscripts for possible publication. We are happy to announce that James Cronin, Emilia Viotti da Costa, Vernon Lidtke, Anson Rabinbach, Nick Salvatore, Louise Tilly, and Sean Wilentz have joined the board. Other new members will be announced in ILWCH no. 26.

D.M.