

Five sessions were held over three days. The first, "The Market and the State," was chaired by Eckart Schremmer (Heidelberg) and attracted papers by Sidney Pollard (Bielefeld), James Thomson (Sussex), and Edward Countryman (University of Warwick). The second session was "Merchants, Middlemen, and Market Structures." The chair was Louis Bergeron (Paris), and papers were given by Brenda Collins (Belfast), Stanley Chapman (Nottingham), Toshio Kusamitsu (Tokyo), and Jaime Torras (Barcelona). Franklin Mendels (Geneva) chaired the third session, "Manufacture and the City." Among those presenting papers were Paul Hohenberg (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute), Maxine Berg (University of Warwick), Michael Sonenscher (Middlesex Polytechnic), and Martha Howell (Rutgers University). The fourth session, "Agrarian Custom and Common Rights," included papers by Franco Ramella (Turin), Jeanette Neeson (Queen's University, Ontario), and Pat Hudson (Liverpool) and was chaired by Christopher Smout (St. Andrews). Gywynne Lewis (University of Warwick) chaired the last session, "Artisans and Market Culture," with papers by William Reddy (Duke University), Lars Magnusson (Uppsala), and Gay Gullickson (University of Maryland).

As the presence of Mendels, Hohenberg, and Schremmer suggests, a good deal of the discussion concentrated on the problem of protoindustrialization as an organizing concept. The conference ranged widely, however, both in geographical terms and in mode of approach. The papers by Pollard, Hohenberg, and Reddy were broadly interpretive, but most of the others focused tightly on specific communities (Neeson on common rights in Northamptonshire; Collins on sewing outwork in Ulster; Thomson and Torras on eighteenth-century Spain) and problems (Magnusson on drinking and custom in nineteenth-century Ekilstuna, Sweden; Gullickson and Howells on women; Kusamitsu on fashion and novelty in the organization of British industry).

A volume is planned by the conference organizers, John Davis (University of Warwick) and Maxine Berg (University of Warwick).

Fifteenth Annual Conference of the Western Society for French History

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Food and song were the principal subjects of the fifteenth annual conference of the Western Society for French History, held at Las Cruces, October 28–November 1, 1987, in conjunction with the centennial of New Mexico State University. The main banquet, an elegant dinner prepared by Jacques Pépin called "French Cooking through the Eighties—the 1680s, the 1780s, the 1880s, and the 1980s," featured one

course from each of four centuries: potage à la reine (from La Varenne's *Le Cuisinier François*), cabiliot en Maigre (from Menon, *La Cuisinière Bourgeoise*), poulets sautés à la castillane (from Carême, *L' Art du Cuisinier*), petits pois au lard (from Alexandre Dumas, *Le Grand Dictionnaire de Cuisine*), and four sherbets, *granites*, *marquises*, *punchs*, and *spoons* (from Paul Bocuse, *La Cuisine du Marché*). None of these dishes was related to international labor or working-class history, but they were all delicious. Recipes are included in the *Proceedings*.

More relevant to working-class history was the superb session on French corporatism in the Revolutionary era. Were the guilds and corporations "anachronistic and moribund" in 1789, ready to be swept away by the free-enterprise "modernization" of the bourgeois-capitalist Revolution? Gail Bossenga (University of Kansas) said they were not. According to Bossenga, the guilds of Lille were viable institutions whose regulatory powers enjoyed widespread support. Thanks to the guilds, the wool manufacturers of Lille could control the quality and quantity of goods produced. The pre-Revolutionary regulations required that cloth be sold only by its manufacturer, thereby keeping profits in the hands of the weavers and out of the hands of wholesale merchant-brokers such as those who dominated the silk industry of Lyon. When the guilds were suppressed in 1791, the merchant-weavers of Lille, organized in the local chamber of commerce, allied with the town council to maintain the manufacturers' monopoly of hauling cloth, thereby preventing brokers from distributing it. Commercial guilds continued to exist and fought vigorously to shut down independent brokers. Support for the guilds and for their regulatory powers was not diminished by the Revolution.

Liana Vardi (McGill University) took the opposite point of view, contending that by the time of the French Revolution guilds had become "anachronistic and moribund." High entry fees kept able craftsmen out of the regulated trades, and high production costs drove textile manufacturing out of the guild-dominated cities into the unorganized countryside. The guilds, with their limited production quotas, simply could not supply the growing markets of the eighteenth century. They were out of date, and consequently they were easily swept away in 1791. The old spirit remained: guildsmen still complained to the government that workers who disregarded guild regulations should be prosecuted and asked the government to stop men who had no master's certificate from working. In one case in 1791, a group of tailors asked their local mayor to shut down all the old-clothes dealers in the area. The mayor refused, saying that to act against freedom of trade would be "contrary to the spirit of the times."

Michael Sibalís's (Brock University) paper helped to resolve the apparent conflict between the other two. Sibalís began with the tragi-hilarious example of a certain P. D., one of life's losers who could never get anything right and who could not, despite his father's patient tutelage, earn entry into the cabinetmakers' guild under the Old Regime. Then came the Revolution, which abolished the guilds and made even the incompetent P. D. free to set himself up as a cabinetmaker. But others, who were better workmen than P. D. and willing to work for less, forced him out of business. He had

some success as a wineshop owner, thanks to “an intelligent assistant” who “taught me the useful art of making wine out of water and chemicals,” but soon he had to abandon this trade for others until he ended up as a fisherman, an occupation whose demands suited P. D.’s skills.

When France became a monarchy again in 1804, Sibalis notes, many people favored re-establishing some corporate controls in order to end class conflict and to restore economic stability and product quality. The Paris Chamber of Commerce, dominated by new large-scale industrialists, opposed this, but small-scale businessmen wanted to re-establish some corporate restrictions. They knew, Sibalis points out, what revisionist historians do not know: that capitalism is possible without industrialism. They saw that the Revolution had implanted in France a new individualistic society “in which possession of money—to the exclusion of other qualifications—gave capitalists (a term they used) increasing control of production and exchange.” Sympathetic Napoleonic officials cooperated in setting up *syndicats*, or trade groups, which limited access to the trade, set standards for product quality, and set the pay for piece work. These *syndicats* continued to prosper and to grow (or to struggle and survive, depending on the regime) until they were made legal in 1884.

In her comment, Cissie Fairchilds (Syracuse University) noted that economic change occurs in stages and that “atavistic” institutions like guilds remained useful long after the Revolution “modernized” France. As Vardi says, the guilds were moribund, but, as Bossenga says, they were also essential. And, as Sibalis says, some people favored corporate institutions and others opposed them. Whether the corporations were moribund or necessary depended on where you were, on whom you were asking, on what business they were in, and on what stage of development that business had reached in France.

While not all people favored the guilds and corporations, they all liked to sing, and every member of the large crowd who attended Chantal Brunschwig’s lecture-demonstration on song and society in France since the Middle Ages agreed that it was the high point of the conference. Singing, playing the piano, and displaying a large number of drawings and cartoons, Brunschwig traced three branches of song in France. Disputing the claim of Michele Zinc (Université de Toulouse) that songs of popular protest had their roots in traditional peasant culture, Brunschwig insisted that the traditional branch was always conservative and superstitious and that it came to a dead end in traditional peasant chansons. Working-class protest songs, literate and politically conscious, go back to the educated urban, middle-class tradition of the *contestataire* theater, which was realistic and comical, and which passed from the theater into bourgeois salons and from there into the nineteenth-century working-class *goguettes* and then to the music halls and finally to the songs of Guilbert and Brassens. The third branch of songs, the courtly love ballads, began as the medieval love songs, then developed into the Rousseauesque tradition of comic operas and sentimental songs sung by wealthy families around their pianos, and finally became the ballads of Edith Piaf and, more recently, Mireille Mathieu.

The greatest transformation of song, according to Brunschwig, occurred around

1890, when there was no significant political, economic, or social change in progress. The agent of change was the gas light, which made possible the proliferation of stage shows such as music halls and café concerts. Song, once meant to be sung, was now meant to be listened to, and the invention of mass means of communication and reproduction merely reinforced this trend.

Women were a major theme of the meeting, with papers by Cynthia Truant (San Diego State University) on the guildswomen of Paris, Tracey Rizzo (University of Oregon) on sexual violence, which said that women were treated worse during the Enlightenment than before it, Kathleen Dahl (University of Minnesota) and Susan Conner (Central Michigan University) on women during the Revolution, and Roderick Phillips (Brock University) on family policy. Laura Frader (Northeastern University) spoke on women, family, church, and state in the years between the two world wars, and James McMillan on the *Ligue patriotique des françaises* of the twentieth century. In all there were 115 people on the program. In addition, there was a French Film Festival, and one of the four films shown, *Coeurs croisés*, was presented by its director, Stéphanie de Mareuil. This film, a slice of working-class life, would be of interest to students of the working class. Add to this a lecture-demonstration of Mexican mariachi music and folk dance by Michael Fody, III (New Mexico State University) and the Ballet Folklorico de New Mexico State University and you get five busy days. The *Proceedings* can be ordered by sending a \$25 check made out to "WSFH" to Prof. William Roosen, Dept. of History, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ 86001.