

INTRODUCTION

TRADITIONAL HISTORY AND THE NEW SOCIAL HISTORY OF LABOUR IN SPAIN

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The social history of labour and labourers is currently in the paradoxical position of having defined the subject of study in all its rich complexity as never before – a fact born out by some excellent works – yet fewer and fewer social historians are working on the subject.

In general terms, it has become a branch of history which is increasingly based on the examination of documentary sources, with up-to-date methodology and with the ability to resolve questions by means of analysing and recounting basic problems of the past of many social groups which are truly relevant in all pre-industrial and industrialised societies and whose prominence in protest, associative and political movements has been a significant factor of social life since the beginning of the nineteenth century. However, this has not prevented some authors from using the social history of labour as an outlet for their ideological beliefs. Nonetheless, over the last two decades, in Spanish academic circles, prejudice against militant history has grown to such an extent that it is hardly taken seriously since it is not seen to fulfil the strictest scientific requirements of the field. Paradoxically, this attitude does not apply to the numerous political studies on the political history of the Restoration (1874–1923) or the history of conservatism. Neither does it seem to apply to critical reviews of the left-wing parties of the Second Republic (1931–1939). In these studies the ideologised viewpoints of authors are not much better than the most politicised accounts of working-class history yet no response is considered necessary, a fact which illustrates the prejudices of the academic establishment and its political leanings.

Ways of Making Social History

The increasing lack of interest in working-class history is not something which is new to the last decade, nor is it peculiar to the Spanish case. Marcel van der Linden recently characterised the decline – which he described as ‘regional’ – of the historiography of workers in countries which form the nucleus of traditional capitalism in similar terms. Likewise, van der Linden highlighted the growing interest in labour history, protest and working-class involvement in the changes taking place in the economic systems of countries undergoing industrialisation. In these latter countries, studies multiply at the same rate as the number of salaried workers, while at the same time highly active trade union and political organisations are being formed.¹ In this respect, we can conclude that working-class history is no different to any other branch of history. It searches the past for answers to questions which deserve the attention of present-day society, and it deals with the past either as a cause of the present, including the process of class formation, or as the reconstruction of historical backgrounds which show how class was increasingly discernible in defence of their interests or in political conflicts.

It is appropriate to add a second observation, this time regarding the relevance of the topics and the upsurge or decline of subspecialities. Interest in the history of labourers appears to be greater in periods of disputes which are the result of industrial processes in progress, in situations where there are prospects for change and at times when industrial working-class movements are on the increase. For one reason or another, so-called working-class history reached a crisis point at the end of the 1970s, at the same time or a short while after the economic crisis which affected advanced capitalist countries from 1973 onwards. This resulted in major changes in the organisation of production processes, in the characteristics of the labour market, in the impact of new technologies on employment and the economy in general, in a drop in the number of active workers employed in the primary sector and in a fall in levels of union membership, above all in the industrial sector. The process included the institutional regulation of labour conflicts and the normalised handling of negotiations with the labour movement in almost all western European countries. In Spain, this was carried out by means of the Moncloa Pacts (1977), the creation of mediation and arbitration organisations (1979) and the Workers’ Statute (1980).² All of this resulted in a substantial modification of what had been the Left’s history of resistance and struggle to modify the relations between capital and work; not to mention to influence the orientation of society and obtaining certain social and political rights. Logically, a reduction in the number of disputes and the fact that these conflicts are being effectively managed affects the type of historical studies carried out, which change the point of observation of social conflicts according to life experiences and to the negotiating strategies of actors of the past.

It is symptomatic that at the same time as there has been a decrease in interest in subjects related to the social history of labour and labourers, books on this subject have often been replaced by an avalanche of ‘self-help’ labour

literature, in which the collective aspect is replaced by an exclusively individual perspective on sociolabour relations.

The sense of dissatisfaction with the results of mainly descriptive and to a certain extent heroic working-class history soon gave way to readjustments which involved maintaining the same line of study while making it 'more social', that is to say effectively integrating the issues in the framework of the historical society and in a varied and in most cases inconclusive set of movements and protests (the revolution, the liberation of the fourth state, the destruction of capitalism ...).

The evolution of the social history of labour in Spain has not differed very much from the route taken in other countries although the point of inflection in the way social history is dealt with took place slightly later. In addition, when the 'crisis' of traditional social history occurred, the amount of 'traditional' knowledge based on the collection and description of social facts and events was in Spain greatly inferior to that of other countries in which this line of studies had not been interrupted and which had no direct experience of the so-called 'working-class movement'. It should not be forgotten that in the European context, Spain is a unique example for two reasons. First, it experienced a dramatic Civil War (1936–1939), in which working-class political and trade union organisations played a very important role. Secondly, the country lived under a long, very strict dictatorship (1939–1977), which during its first twenty-five years continuously and systematically repressed working-class organisations and left-wing organisations in general. During the war and during the immediate postwar period, the dictatorship physically eliminated numerous members of parties and trade unions, sent others to jail and dissolved their organisations, confiscated or destroyed their files and books and persecuted their traditions and their intellectuals. For almost four decades, the Franco regime rewrote history and ignored issues related to working-class history. In such political conditions, academic historians directed their attention to fields of study which required less commitment.

In Spain, it was not until 1959 that professionals started making references to working-class history. The first publication was written by Casimir Martí, a Catholic priest who had just earned his doctorate in Sociology from the Gregorian University of Rome with a study on Catalan anarchism.³ There was a tradition of militant history prior to 1939 and also among historians in exile. There were also two previous examples which can be considered 'academic' labour history. One was from 1916 and the second from 1925, the latter being intended for the students of a School of Business Studies.⁴ In 1950, José María Jover made a call – not exempt from prejudice – for the need to deal with the issue.⁵ In the 1960s, modest studies were published which were similar to the previous ones and which contributed to breaking the taboo. The year 1972 saw the publication of two important and, to a large extent concomitant works: one by Josep Termes on the First International and the other about anarchism and revolution in the nineteenth century by Clara E. Lida – an Argentinean historian who was a follower of the exiled Spanish historian Vicente Llorens in Princeton. Publication of the latter had been delayed for two years due to censorship regulations. At the same time,

Manuel Tuñón de Lara published the first, albeit rather basic textbook on the Spanish working-class movement from 1832 to 1936. One year later, Miquel Izard published an extended version in Spanish of a previous work written in Catalan about the most important manufacturing workers' association during the nineteenth century, namely that of the cotton textile sector.⁶ To a large extent, these four works mark the birth of the social historiography of work in Spain.⁷

The cultural traditions of the authors were different, however. Whereas Martí, Termes and Izard came from seminars which were promoted in the late 1950s at the University of Barcelona by Jaume Vicens Vives and later by Carlos Seco, Tuñón de Lara was exiled in Paris in 1946 and from 1965 onwards was a lecturer at the University of Pau in the south of France. From 1971 onwards, Tuñón organised yearly symposiums on Spanish history which brought together historians from inside and outside the country in Pau. The one organised in 1974 was dedicated to the working-class movement. The period, at the end of General Franco's dictatorship, was one in which there was a marked resurgence in trade union and political opposition and this allowed left-wing circles to maintain the hope of a regime change in which the working class would be able to play a prominent role. Likewise, publishing houses had greater freedom as to what they were allowed to publish and there was a large demand among university students and professionals for books about the working class and Marxist theory, works which had been banned for decades.

By the end of the dictatorship the conditions were such that attention once again turned to studies about social movements. The political implications which this type of studies involved – because of the subject and because of the militancy of the authors – helped them to gain support and become increasingly widespread. During the years that followed, there was a veritable explosion of social history dealing with the labour history, revolutionary ideas and social movements. Following the French model, in Spain the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is referred to as the contemporary period, and this attracted the attention of the majority of university History students, who from 1973 onwards studied a specific university degree course which was separate from Philosophy and Arts. And within the contemporary period, studies about working-class history undoubtedly occupy first place, followed by equally incipient studies on the transition from feudalism to capitalism and the history of agrarian disempowerment. Today, a large proportion of lecturers in the speciality who were educated in the 1970s prepared their doctoral theses on one of these subjects, many on the first one. At times, the studies were undertaken at national level and on many other occasions at local or regional level, a sign of new approaches to the past, but also of the growing autonomist feeling (against the centralised state) among the opposition to the dictatorship. Together with the anti-Franco beliefs of the young authors, there was also their emotional identification with the exploited classes, who in the Spanish case were also defeated in 1939, and the fact that they were part of an international historiographical trend.⁸

Just after this phenomenon had started, when it was practically still in its infancy and with Franco still alive, in 1975 two books were published which were very similar to each other and very different from those we have mentioned so far. In both cases, the authors had been educated in Oxford with Raymond Carr. Their history was traditional in style with considerable empirical content, and they had a political outlook on history and adopted a liberal tone from which they denounced history made from theoretical abstractions (to refer to the categories 'working class', 'bourgeoisie' and 'class struggle'). They also denounced historians who, guided by their ideology, had been quicker to adopt the role of advocate than that of researcher. We refer here to the works of Juan Pablo Fusi and Joaquín Romero Maura on Basque socialism and the working-class movement in Barcelona, respectively.⁹ These traced the two main trends of the social history of labour in its modern-day origins in Spain.

The dispersion of subjects, plus the excess of positivist and militant history were perceived early on. Fusi's denunciation, nevertheless, was equivalent to applying a bandage even before the wound had appeared, no doubt due more to the desire to be different which tends to accompany an author's first works than to reasons of political intent.

The Light at the End of the Tunnel

At the end of the 1970s, a critical reflection of a different kind began to emerge which was more closely related to the problem of developing the historiography in relation to the historical moment. It had been several years since the legalisation of political parties and trade unions, the constitution had been endorsed, but two parliamentary elections (1977 and 1979) had also shown the strength of the moderate Left, represented by socialists, and the hegemony of the Centre-right. At the same time, the two main trade unions, which had low membership levels, were attempting to reach agreements with employers and the Public Administration, a far cry from the old tactics of confrontation which perhaps existed more in the books of historians than in the past itself.

The 'First Conference of historians of Spanish working-class and peasant movements', held in Barx (Valencia) in December 1979, helped to establish the need for a change in direction. For the first time, fifteen historians, brought together by Javier Paniagua, assessed the recent development of Spanish historiography on the subject and distinguished two lines which were worth emphasising. Both confirmed the obsolescence of history committed to the working classes, the reductionism of summarising the history of the class as the description of organised workers and the non analytical means of approaching phenomena related to the world of work. The first line considered that there was indeed an area of study, which can be summarised as being close to that of Eric Hobsbawm and along the lines of the interrelationships between material conditions, social experience and class action outlined by E.P. Thompson. The second line dissolved the working

class into popular movements and its protests into the response to established power, with explicit references to the suggestions of Foucault.¹⁰ In a well-known article published in 1982, two of the historians present in Barx, José Álvarez Junco and Manuel Pérez Ledesma, reiterated the critical approaches of the conference and formulated the second of the aforementioned analyses.¹¹ In 1982, another meeting of historians was held in Valencia and their critical and self-critical comments were published in the journal *Debats*.¹² The third and last of this series of seminars took place in 1987. On this occasion, a project was presented which began to take shape in 1988, namely the journal *Historia Social*, founded and edited by Javier Paniagua and José A. Piqueras, who had been working together for a decade to arrange and organise the above-mentioned conferences. *Historia Social* managed to establish itself as the most important means of publishing articles on labour history in Spain, but also as one of the main publications dealing with the history of society.¹³

All this revision, which began in 1979 and 1982, was similar to what had been taking place in other historiographies for a decade, but in Spain the persistence of more traditional history (committed and institutional) could be explained by internal reasons, firstly due to Franco's dictatorship and then due to the task of rediscovering the history of those defeated in 1939.¹⁴

Once the transition to democracy had finished with the Socialist Party's electoral victory in 1982, it would appear that a cycle interrupted by the Civil War and Franco's dictatorship had come to an end. However, what should have been a great leap forward after the change did not take place. It caught the latest and most numerous generation of historians of working-class movements writing or finishing their doctoral theses or other research projects using arguments considered to be 'old history' – whatever the meaning of 'old' may be here – instead of using the new approaches. While there was talk of renovation, the 1980s seemed to indicate that what had aged was not the means of tackling the history of workers, but rather labour history itself as a research subject. And in this respect, the evolution of Spanish historiography is part of a general trend, but here the revisionist trend is more accentuated. Apart from the decline of Marxism, which had nominally inspired a large number of the studies, this is perhaps linked to the exceptional political and social moment of the 1980s. There was then an authentic rebuilding of the academic world as a result of new legislation which removed academics from the position of permanent discontent they had found themselves in for the last decade. This was done by promoting the majority of non resident lecturers to better-paid, life long posts and by creating academic careers along the same lines.

When reviewing the labour history and social history written and published between 1972 and 1988 – when the past of the working-class movement attracted numerous historians and a considerable amount of research was carried out – we find how heavy the presence of traditional history was, and how often concepts borrowed from traditional political history were used.¹⁵ This sub-subject gave a leading historical role to social groups which had until then been ignored or neglected by academic history

which, as we know ends up being the main route to the construction of official history.

Without claiming to be exhaustive, it can be said that important works were carried out on the working-class movement around 1850,¹⁶ the formation and evolution of the First International (mentioned previously), ‘utopian’ thought,¹⁷ anarchist ideas¹⁸ and anarcho syndicalism,¹⁹ violence,²⁰ the evolution of the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) and its associated trade union, the Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT),²¹ the relationship between the working-class movement and populism,²² the institutionalisation of reformism,²³ trade union organisation in the service sector,²⁴ official communism and its heterodoxies,²⁵ gender and the working-class movement,²⁶ education,²⁷ the collectivist revolution of 1936–1939,²⁸ Catholic trade unionism,²⁹ the day labourer movement and peasant disputes,³⁰ approaches regarding the conditions of industrial work,³¹ the life of workers,³² etc.

The history of the working class was often limited to the study of its political and trade union organisations, or to the study of ideas. Also particular attention was paid to outbreaks which only sporadically affected the normal course of lives which were becoming dispensable insofar as they did not show any signs of achieving their emancipation. History had a lot to do with the construction of a revolutionary subject, the *conscious worker*, even when this was not done explicitly and did not comply with the requirements of the subject. Despite this, such history provides useful information and can be examined in a different way in order to provide a fairly complete description of the social condition.

A Change in the Perspective of Study

Although it has experienced a decline, the study of social and labour history has not ceased and it has been enriched by new perspectives.³³ The year 1988 saw the creation of the Association of Social History, which has periodically organised conferences and has become the main forum of discussion for senior historians and historians starting out in the profession. The published results have always reflected the full range of approaches which existed among the researchers.³⁴ In addition to the aforementioned *Historia Social*, other publications also deal with this speciality, such as *Sociología del Trabajo*, *Historia Contemporánea* (University of the Basque Country) and, to a lesser extent, *Arenal. Revista de Historia de las Mujeres*. However, until very recently the quarterly journal of the Association of Contemporary History, *Ayer*, had included practically no articles on the subject since its launch fourteen years ago. Previously, between 1977 and 1991, the Ministerio de Trabajo published the journal *Estudios de Historia Social*, which dealt mainly with working-class history. With a large format and intermittent publication, around sixty issues were published, many of them double issues, and they were the main indicator of the kind of research being carried out, at least until the appearance from 1988 onwards of other more dynamic academic publications with more plural and more independent selection procedures.

In the 1990s there was a significant change in the direction of studies concerning social and labour history. Although there was still a certain amount of description of the history of organisations, of workers in specific geographical areas and of certain situations, there was the beginning of a reversal in the selection of the subjects, guided by specific problems and processes involving the formation or evolution of class. The decline of the social history of labour referred to here has been more pronounced in research into the nineteenth century than in research into the twentieth century. This uneven interest has been caused by the existence of a greater number of industrial workers and an increase in conflicts and disputes during the first third of the twentieth century, the situation during the Republic and the Civil War (1931–1939) and the reclamation of experiences suppressed by Franco's regime.

There was still a lot more to learn when interest in the subject fell and the fragmentation of its study took place. This has left certain issues unaddressed, for instance the framework of professional societies and local federations which followed the dissolution of the epigone of the International (1888) and covers the period which links the foundation of the anarcho syndicalist trade union (CNT) in 1911, the fate of independent trade unionism, anarchist groups' going underground, and the causes of the disparate introduction of the working-class movement. We are referring here to the best known period of the Restoration and some classic subjects which have not been formally dealt with. On the other hand, our knowledge of the relationship between republicanism and the working-class movement has been enriched. Previously, history considered this relationship to have been abruptly interrupted with the introduction of a Bakuninist or socialist working-class movement. We know more about anarchist violence and to a lesser extent about violence instigated by the state against workers.

With regard to the earlier part of the nineteenth century, almost nothing is known. The transition from corporative work to industrial freedom, which has more numerous and sounder studies, is almost exclusively dealt with in local or professional monographs. The fate of salaried workers of the *Ancien Régime* when the privileges which protected the royal factories were lost is not exactly a mystery, but the issue has not been fully dealt with.³⁵ We have spent two decades listening to the virtues of the methodology followed by E.P. Thompson regarding the historical formation of the working class as the basis of history from below, which paid attention to the subject and the link between productive relations, experience and action, only to obtain such meagre results. One wonders whether Thompson's name has not been taken in vain in order to deal with a certain branch of history, either because of its sociostructural or mechanistic content or purely because of the events, or perhaps for reasons of another kind which ignore the sense of commitment of that author's works.

More precise information has been provided about the International, broadening and correcting previous views.³⁶ We are starting to have a greater awareness of the nature of associate workers and their forms of protest, although there is no specific analysis of, for example, the Manufacturing

Union, which was the main professional federation of the time and which was only partially connected to the International. There is no study that brings together, analyses and typifies the labour conflicts which took place in Spain from 1868 to 1874 and which occurred more often and more intensely than ever before. With all its advances in macroeconomics, economic history has for the time being proved incapable of offering a rough guide to production and its characteristics, including the labour factor. The result is that we still often use estimates and testimonies. It is therefore difficult to establish a correlation between the nature of the productive processes, the characteristics of the labour force (with regard to skills, subordination to capital and education), membership of a radical culture and social mobilisation at any level.

If we are to characterise the social and labour history carried out in this decade by means of the main contributions made, we must start with issues related to the changes in the craftwork, manufacturing and industrial productive structures throughout the nineteenth century, which have been the object of attention of economic and social history. Authors have taken an interest in the effects that these changes had on the workers, either from the perspective of the differences between master craftsmen belonging to the same guild, or stressing how this process created bonds of dependence, in a process of proletarianisation of master craftsmen and journeymen in ever more extreme conditions of poverty.³⁷ The training of the working class, bearing in mind the organisation of the productive processes, the creation of new working relations and the role played by professional workers, has been the subject of some outstanding monographs. These refer to regions as different in terms of their importance in heavy industry and the manufacturing industry as the Basque Country and Catalonia.³⁸ We also have collective works – which we have edited – aimed at provoking reflections on these aspects.³⁹ For the period dealt with in these studies, it is interesting to explore the links created by professional benefit societies, as an initial and one of the workers' most enduring responses to the hostile environment in which they found themselves.⁴⁰

There are some studies which combine the analysis of salary levels, migratory movements and family strategies in the nineteenth century, relating them with the configuration of the labour market during the period of expansion of the factory system.⁴¹ The market and the organisation of labour was the subject of a symposium organised by faculties of Social Studies.⁴²

The classic subject of health and illness among these sectors of the population has been worthy of attention from the field of the history of science and medicine.⁴³ The living conditions of miners and factory workers in Vizcaya have been the subject of two outstanding works by Pedro M. Pérez Castroviejo and Pilar Pérez Fuentes.⁴⁴ The conclusions, however, are a subject of considerable controversy, as has usually been the case in almost all the countries where similar research has been carried out. The economic historians Emiliano Fernández de Pinedo and Antonio Escudero have put forward contrasting figures and arguments which are worth taking into consideration. A book by Joan Serrallonga and Josep Lluís Martín Ramos⁴⁵

provides a broader perspective and examines the effects that living conditions may have had on social disputes.

It can be seen that these two regions, Catalonia and the Basque Country, have been the subject of the most research on labour history and there are study groups which have been working on the subject since the 1950s in the first case and since the 1980s in the second. In the case of the Basque Country, this must include the work undertaken by Luis Castells, which consists of his own work and also theses supervised by him,⁴⁶ and the line of research developed by Ricardo Miralles on the history of socialism.

The study of workers has not often been considered in relation to employers. However, one monograph stands out which has brought a breath of fresh air to a subject which often appeared destined to engulf itself. We refer here to the book by José Sierra, *El obrero soñado*, which reflects on the function of industrial paternalism in Asturias between 1860 and 1917.⁴⁷ In the book, precise reference is made to the mechanisms used to 'domesticate' workers and their families which sought to make workers depend exclusively on the wages paid to them and to dispense with the mechanisms of self-consumption. With a different approach set in a developed urban framework, Soledad Bengoechea carried out research into social disputes and the response of employers' organisations in Catalonia at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁴⁸

With regard to research on the world of women in the workplace, considerable research can be found which, like the rest, is limited to certain sectors and regions. In addition to Mary Nash's extraordinary efforts to promote such studies, the work of three authors stands out here: the work of Carmen Sarasúa, the author of an important study on the world of domestic service and the dominance of female workers in the nineteenth century; the book by Cristina Bordería on female employees of the telephone company and the work of Paloma Candela on the tobacco industry in Madrid.⁴⁹

At times, the subjects dealt with go beyond the boundaries of working-class history and give rise to studies on the 'popular classes', which interweave conflicts related to class, specifically political disputes, and other disputes related to protests about the cost of living or demands for civil rights (protests against wars or military recruitment).⁵⁰ In a similar way, although with a different methodological perspective, in recent years research into peasant disputes has gone from analysing large-scale protests and day-labourer revolts to studying resistance against attempts to integrate the rural world into society and capitalist relations, often following the framework set down by James Scott.⁵¹

The classic subject of the Spanish working-class movement, especially for foreign specialists, is anarchism and its peak period, the Republic and the Civil War. One particularly famous study is by Julián Casanova.⁵² During Franco's regime, mass meetings were banned and persecuted, and demanding workers' rights was regarded as a political activity in itself. On this subject, it is worth highlighting the studies carried out by Carme Molinero, Pere Ysàs and José Babiano.⁵³

In addition to this, progress has been made in determining the cultural history of social issues, the greatest exponent being Manuel Pérez Ledesma.

He has introduced and disseminated successive methodological proposals in Spain, ranging from work on collective action from Charles Tilly to culturalist approaches referred to here. And there is indeed a social history of culture, one of the main promoters being Jorge Uría.⁵⁴ In Spain, however, little has been done to develop the line of study on working-class sociability, Maurice Agulhon-style, despite frequent bilateral meetings promoted by French Hispanists. The most important representative of this school is Manuel Morales Muñoz.⁵⁵

This Collection

For this book, we have chosen fourteen texts which we feel are representative of social and labour history in Spain. This is at least the case for twelve of them, and we took the liberty to complete the anthology with two articles of our own. In addition to considering them representative of the best methods of dealing with the subject, we have followed a series of criteria which it is worth explaining: (1) all the texts were published after 1990; (2) they were all intended to be independent articles or chapters in collective works; (3) they deal with various periods of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries; (4) they deal with various geographical areas which have a tradition of social movements in addition to a tradition of studying such movements; (5) they use complementary analysis perspectives: from the point of view of culture, class formation, gender or politics; (6) in certain cases, the articles deal with conceptual issues, others look at social behaviour, analyse situations or long periods in the development of a particular trade; and (7) they also consider classic subjects such as the living standards of industrial workers or the means of controlling and subordinating workers.

In eight cases the texts were first published in the journal *Historia Social*, in two instances the texts come from a collective book published by Biblioteca de Historia Social. The text of one of the writers was published recently by Biblioteca Nueva. In two cases, the articles come from other academic journals, *Arenal* and *Sociología del Trabajo*. Finally, another text comes from a collective book which the author also co-edited.

As mentioned above, among the chapters which make up this selection there are two texts whose content deals with methodological and conceptual issues. These are the first chapters of the book with reflections on the formation of the working class (Manuel Pérez Ledesma) and on the role of women in the world of work (Pilar Pérez Fuentes). These subjects are also dealt with, either directly or indirectly, by the rest of the studies in this book in terms of specific geographical and temporal situations. These texts have been arranged in diachronic order. Despite the fact that all the texts share a common link which makes them part of this book, the wide range of subjects at hand means that it is preferable to arrange them in chronological order.

The text by Manuel Pérez Ledesma offers a conceptual rethinking of the working class by introducing a culturalist perspective to the analysis of its formative period. The ritualisation of working-class practices, the language of

class and the terms in which its discourse and its ideological corpus was composed became essential components in the organisation of a new collective identity. This article aims to open new channels of historical analysis on working-class reality and the formation of the working class in contemporary Spain.

In the following chapter, Pilar Pérez Fuentes reflects on the historical formation of a specific social and working gender role. Men and women were affected in different ways by changes in the nature and significance of work introduced during industrialisation. These transformations implied the division of work according to sex and the separation of what was public and what was private, which led to the configuration of a new gender identity in industrial society.

Carmen Sarasúa's contribution on the work of laundresses incorporates this gender element in a novel way into the most commonly used historiographical parameters. The article outlines the key elements which make up the technological transformation of this profession and the changes in the social condition of these workers. Over and above the mechanisation of the work and its impact on the organisation of the steps involved in the washing process, it was precisely the loss of professional status which resulted in the breakdown of the laundresses' social worth.

The chapter written by Francesc A. Martínez Gallego analyses the new disciplinary habits introduced in the mid-nineteenth century by the division of work in factories and workshops. Adaptation to the new ways of organising the productive process resulted in a complex conflictive process – both in urban and rural areas – which surreptitiously coordinated the resistance of craftsmen, an associative organisation with mutualist and cooperative overtones, and an employers' strategy aimed at subordinating workers to the new rules of production.

For his part, José A. Piqueras offers an analysis of the social condition of Spanish members of the First International. Their link with the professional world is examined, a world in which, even though it maintained practices and customs related to its corporative past, the links with the means of production imposed by capitalism transformed the practice of the profession and situated it in a sphere of subordination in social and labour terms. These are issues which help to form a specific political culture rooted in democratic radicalism of working-class origin.

The text by Vicent Sanz Rozalén refers to the way in which various factors concurred to affect workers' ability to put up resistance in an urban profession whose survival was in a precarious condition. The main point put forward in this text lies in understanding the extent to which the characteristics of the labour force itself, with a fragile but indispensable component of specialised labour, and the bonds of solidarity among workers through workers' associations were conducive to maintaining resistance in workers' confrontation with manufacturers and employers.

Jorge Uría examines the disciplinary practices of the labour force in Asturias. The survival of traditional peasant culture among factory workers and miners diluted their total proletarianisation, which meant that their

adaptation to the rhythm of work and the demands placed on them by the new means of organising production met with a great deal of resistance. This all resulted in subversive practices arising from an ideological world which was hardly compatible with the system of values which capitalism intended to introduce.

The text by José Sierra is a good example of the Thompsonian approach to the social practices of miners at the end of the nineteenth century. The chapter sets out to relocate the uses of alcohol and violence in the context of confrontations and conflicts, in particular as part of ‘life experiences’, and endow them with a specific sociohistorical element.

Carmen Frías puts forward new ideas on disputes and protests in rural areas at the turn of the century. She examines the circumstances and factors which gave rise to such disputes following the ideas put forward by James Scott on everyday means of resistance. Her analysis is based on the effects of the marketing and privatisation of natural resources, which eroded the traditional forms of collective use of the land. These changes brought about protests which, because of their intensity and frequency, challenged the means of obtaining and organising work, property and production.

Antonio Escudero examines one of the classic debates of social and economic historiography concerning the configuration and determining factors in the formation of the working class by focusing on the issue of living standards. Basing his research on the analysis of the prices of basic goods, the level of real wages and nominal salaries among Basque miners, the author observes their evolution in order to put forward, beyond the dichotomy between pessimism and optimism – yet without shying away from or forgetting these approaches – a reflection on the configuration of class identity.

The chapter written by Javier Paniagua deals with the complex issue of the meaning of the term ‘revolution’ and its specific use among republican, socialist and anarchist groups. The different meanings given to the term by the various groups implied the articulation of different and at times divergent theoretical approaches and strategies.

For his part, Julián Casanova reflects on the character of class brought about by the Spanish Civil War based on its integration in the context of the social, political and economic crisis of the 1930s. The author takes up a theoretically inspired debate which goes beyond the empiricism, doctrinism and localism which dominates studies on the war and situates the phenomenon within the political, social, economic and cultural parameters of the time.

The text by Joan Serrallonga examines the mechanisms put in place by the fascist authorities during the early stages of the post-war period (1939–1945) which were aimed at taming a population that had traditionally been extremely conflictive. The control of supplies and systematic repression were combined in order to undermine traditional levels of resistance.

The book ends with a study by José Babiano of trade unionism during Franco’s dictatorship which reassesses the role that has traditionally been attributed to vertical trade unions as a means of controlling and organising

workers. The author details the failure of the Spanish Trade Union Organisation (Organización Sindical Española – OSE) to do just that and introduces new factors to be taken into consideration in order to understand the regulation and discipline of workers during the dictatorship.

These last three works go beyond workers' collective action and delve into the realm of politics, and particularly into the context of politics under Francoism (1939–1975). The Spanish Civil War was both a national and international phenomenon of ideological and political confrontation in which workers – or rather their unions and parties – were the front line of resistance against the fascist-military movement while, at the same time, they carried out revolutionary experiments in industry, services and the collectivisation of agriculture.

The triumph of the Nationalist cause – which was a combination of traditional military dictatorship, fascism and conservative Catholic thinking – meant the imposition of strict rules on workers' activities. Independent workers' unions were suppressed, and their leaders were either shot or sent to prison or to exile. In stark contrast with other authoritarian or fascist dictatorships, the New State did nothing to incorporate the old union cadres into the system. Workers were just forced to join the new official unions, which were conceived in 'organic' and corporative terms. In the process even words such as 'workers' and 'working class' were replaced by expression such as 'producers' and 'social section'. Workers learned how to use the new structures for their own advantage, creating in the process alternative structures that developed into an independent labour movement. Eventually, those structures were unofficially recognised by employers as a valid negotiators, especially by big companies. The context was unusual for post-war Europe: a long, fascist-style dictatorship at first, an authoritarian one later, in the middle of a liberal-democratic continent, which still preserved many of its fascist traits.

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97–118. The text by Antonio Escudero was published in *Historia Social*, 27 (1997), 87–106. The text by Javier Paniagua appeared as a chapter in the collective work edited by Paniagua, Piqueras and Sanz, *Cultura social y política en el mundo del trabajo*, 243–69. The text by Julián Casanova was published in *Historia Social*, 20 (1994), 135–50. The text by Joan Serrallonga appeared in *Historia Social*, 34 (1999), 45–66. And finally, the text by José Babiano was published in *Historia Social*, 30 (1998), 23–38.

Notes

1. M. van der Linden, 'El fin del eurocentrismo y el futuro de la historia del trabajo: o por qué debemos y podemos reconceptualizar la clase obrera', in J. Paniagua, J. A. Piqueras and V. Sanz (eds), *Cultura social y política en el mundo del trabajo*, Valencia, 2000, 301–22; and J.D. French, 'El auge de los estudios sobre el trabajo en Latinoamérica', *Historia Social*, 39 (2001), 129–50.
2. The 'Moncloa Pacts' were agreements made between the government, political parties and unions. They were intended to create the conditions necessary for the consolidation of democracy at the start of the process and entailed a social pact. As a development of the Constitution, 1979 saw the creation of the Economic and Social Council, a consultative body for economic and sociolabour issues which was made up of employer organisations and trade unions. In 1980, the centrist government passed a law regulating workers' rights (the Workers' Statute), the consecutive modifications of which were precisely the reason for the country's main union-organised protests.
3. C. Martí, *Orígenes del anarquismo en Barcelona*, Barcelona, 1959.
4. M. Núñez de Arenas, 'Notas sobre el movimiento obrero español', Madrid, 1916; and M. Reventós, *Els moviments socials a Barcelona en el segle XIX*, Barcelona, 1925.
5. J.M. Jover, *Conciencia burguesa y conciencia obrera en la España contemporánea*, Madrid 1952 [republished by J. Izquierdo and P. Sánchez León (eds), *Clásicos de historia social de España. Una selección crítica*, Valencia, 2000, 219–57].
6. J. Termes, *Anarquismo y sindicalismo en España. La Primera Internacional (1864–1881)*, Barcelona, 1972; C.E. Lida, *Anarquismo y revolución en la España del siglo XIX*, Madrid, 1972; M. Tuñón de Lara, *El movimiento obrero en la historia de España*, Madrid, 1972; and M. Izard, *Industrialización y obrerismo. Las Tres Clases de Vapor (1869–1913)*, Barcelona, 1973 [first, shorter edition published in 1970 in Catalan].
7. Other pioneering works from the same period or earlier periods can also be cited, but their impact was considerably less important: A. Balcells, *El sindicalisme a Barcelona (1916–1923)*, Barcelona, 1965; D. Ruiz, *El movimiento obrero en Asturias: de la industrialización a la Segunda República*, Oviedo, 1968 (very limited circulation until its reissue a decade later); and P. Gabriel, *El moviment obrer a Mallorca*, Barcelona, 1973.
8. This is according to one of the pioneers, M. Izard, 'Orígenes del movimiento obrero en España', in S. Castillo *et al.* (coords), *Estudios sobre Historia de España (homenaje a Tuñón de Lara)*, Madrid, 1981, 295–314.
9. J.P. Fusi, *Política obrera en el País Vasco (1880–1923)*, Madrid, 1975; and J. Romero Maura, 'La Rosa de Fuego'. *El obrerismo barcelonés de 1899 a 1909*, Barcelona, 1975.
10. The minutes of the meeting may be consulted in '20 años del encuentro de Barx', *Historia Social*, 34 (2000), 157–60.
11. J. Álvarez Junco and M. Pérez Ledesma, 'Historia del movimiento obrero. ¿Una segunda ruptura?', *Revista de Occidente*, 12 (1982), 19–41 [republished by Izquierdo and Sánchez León, *Clásicos de historia social*, 259–80].
12. 'Los movimientos sociales', *Debats*, 2–3 (1982), 90–135.
13. An analysis of what had been published until 2000 can be found in J.A. Piqueras, 'La práctica editorial de *Historia Social*', *Op.Cit. Revista del Centro de Investigaciones Históricas*, 12–13 (2001), 93–108 [University of Puerto Rico].

14. The self-critical concurrence and chronological imbalance was highlighted by, among others, C. Forcadell, 'Sobre desiertos y secanos: los movimientos sociales en la historiografía española', *Historia Contemporánea*, 7 (1992), 101–116.
15. P. Gabriel, 'A vueltas y revueltas con la historia social obrera en España. Historia obrera, historia popular e historia contemporánea', *Historia Social*, 22 (1995), 45–51. Gabriel reacts against what he calls the cliché established by criticism and self-criticism of the historiography, which he does not consider to be in line with the best bibliography of the time.
16. J. Benet and C. Martí, *Barcelona mitjan segle XIX. El moviment obrer durant el Bienni Progresista (1854–1856)*, Barcelona, 1976.
17. J. Maluquer, *El socialismo en España (1833–1868)*, Barcelona, 1977.
18. J. Álvarez Junco, *La ideología política del anarquismo español (1868–1910)*, Madrid, 1976; and J. Paniagua, *La sociedad libertaria. Agrarismo e industrialización en el anarquismo español (1930–1939)*, Barcelona, 1982.
19. X. Cuadrat, *Socialismo y anarquismo en Cataluña (1899–1911). Los orígenes de la CNT*, Madrid, 1976; A. Barr, *La CNT en los años rojos. Del sindicalismo revolucionario al anarcosindicalismo (1910–1926)*, Madrid, 1982; and T. Abelló, *Les relacions internacionals de l'anarquisme català (1881–1914)*, Barcelona, 1987. Among regional studies, the following can be highlighted: J. Casanova, *Anarquismo y revolución en la sociedad rural aragonesa (1936–1938)*, Madrid, 1985; and A. Barrio, *Anarquismo y anarcosindicalismo en Asturias (1890–1936)*, Madrid, 1988.
20. R. Núñez, *El terrorismo anarquista (1888–1909)*, Madrid, 1983.
21. See various regional studies and the fragmentary work of Santiago Castillo, in addition to the series of three books coordinated by S. Juliá: *El socialismo en España. Desde la fundación hasta 1975*, *El socialismo en las nacionalidades y regiones* and *Socialismo y guerra civil*, Madrid, 1986–1987. Also the collective synthesis directed by M. Tuñón de Lara, *Historia del socialismo español*, Barcelona, 1989, 5 vols. It is worth highlighting the monographs of A. Elorza and M. Ralle, *La formación del PSOE*, Barcelona, 1989; C. Forcadell, *Parlamentarismo y bolchevización. El movimiento obrero español (1914–1918)*, Barcelona, 1978; P. Biglino, *El socialismo español y la cuestión agraria (1890–1936)*, Madrid, 1986; and M. Pérez Ledesma, *El obrero consciente. Dirigentes, partidos y sindicatos en la II Internacional*, Madrid, 1988.
22. R. Reig, *Obrers i ciutadans. Blasquisme i moviment obrer. València (1898–1906)*, Valencia, 1982.
23. S. Castillo, 'Estudio introductorio a Reformas Sociales', *Información oral y escrita publicada de 1889 a 1893*, Madrid, 1985, 27–164; and J.I. Palacio, *La institucionalización de la reforma social en España (1883–1924). La Comisión y el Instituto de Reformas Sociales*, Madrid, 1988.
24. S. Castillo and L.E. Alonso, *Proletarios de cuello blanco. La Federación Española de Trabajadores del Crédito y las Finanzas (1930–1936)*, Madrid, 1994.
25. F. Bonamusa, *Andreu Nin y el movimiento comunista en España (1930–1937)*, Barcelona, 1977; and R. Cruz, *El Partido Comunista de España en la Segunda República*, Madrid, 1987. Of a different, unacademic nature, yet still the best present presentation of the PCE during Franco's regime, is G. Morán, *Miseria y grandeza del Partido Comunista de España*, Barcelona, 1985.
26. From M. Nash, *Mujer y movimiento obrero en España (1931–1939)*, Barcelona, 1981. Professor Nash, of Irish origin, is based in Spain.
27. P. Solà, *Els ateneus obrers i la cultura popular a Catalunya (1900–1939). L'Ateneu Enciclopèdic Popular*, Barcelona, 1978; A. Tiana, *Educación libertaria y revolución social (España, 1936–1939)*, Madrid, 1987; J.A. Piqueras, *El taller y la escuela*, Madrid, 1988; and J.L. Guereña and A. Tiana (eds), *Clases populares, cultura y educación*, Madrid, 1990.
28. We refer here to the summary by J. Casanova (comp.), *El sueño igualitario: campesinado y colectivizaciones en la España republicana (1936–1939)*, Saragossa, 1988.
29. J.J. Castillo, *El sindicalismo amarillo en España. Aportación al estudio del catolicismo social español (1912–1923)*, Madrid, 1977.

30. In this popular subject, it is worth highlighting the books of M. Pérez Yruela, *La conflictividad campesina en la provincia de Córdoba (1931–1936)*, Madrid, 1979; E. Sevilla and K. Heisel (eds), *Anarquismo y movimiento jornalero*, Córdoba, 1988; and L. Garrido, *Riqueza y tragedia social. Historia de la clase obrera en la provincia de Jaén (1820–1930)*, Jaén, 1990.
31. A. Soto, *El trabajo industrial en la España contemporánea (1874–1936)*, Barcelona, 1989.
32. C. Molinero and P. Ysàs, *Patria, justicia y pan. Nivell de vida i condicions de treball a Catalunya (1939–1959)*, Barcelona, 1985.
33. Evaluations of the labour history can be found in: R. Miralles, ‘Historiografía del movimiento obrero en el País Vasco (1880–1936)’, *Historia Contemporánea*, 7 (1992), 237–55; P. Gabriel and J.L. Martín, ‘Clase obrera, sectores populares y clases medias’, in F. Bonamusa and J. Serrallonga (eds), *La sociedad urbana*, Barcelona, 1994, 133–53; Gabriel, ‘A vueltas y revueltas’; J. Uría, ‘Sociología e Historia. Una década de historia social en *Sociología del Trabajo*’, *Sociología del Trabajo*, 31 (1997), 149–77, and J. Uría ‘La historia social y el contemporaneísmo español. Las deudas del pasado’, *Revista de Historia Jerónimo Zurita*, 71 (1995), 95–141. Two appraisals from the same author with almost a decade between them are: A. Barrio, ‘A propósito de la historia social, del movimiento obrero y los sindicatos’, in G. Rueda *et al.*, *Doce estudios de historiografía contemporánea*, Santander, 1991, 41–68; and A. Barrio, ‘Historia obrera en los noventa: tradición y modernidad’, *Historia Social*, 37 (2000), 143–60.
34. The results were published: S. Castillo (coord), *La Historia Social en España. Actualidad y perspectivas*, Madrid, 1991; S. Castillo (ed), *El trabajo a través de la historia*, Madrid, 1996; S. Castillo and J.M. Ortiz (coords), *Estado, protesta y movimientos sociales*, Bilbao, 1998; and S. Castillo and R. Fernández (coords), *Historia social y ciencias sociales*, Lleida, 2001.
35. Some initial points with reference to the rural context are found in A. Peiró, *Jornaleros y mancebos. Identidad, organización y conflicto en los trabajadores del Antiguo Régimen*, Barcelona, 2002.
36. J.A. Piqueras, *La revolución democrática (1868–1874). Cuestión social, colonialismo y grupos de presión*, Madrid, 1992.
37. F. Díez, *Viles y mecánicos. Trabajo y sociedad en la Valencia preindustrial*, Valencia, 1990; and V. Sanz Rozalén, *D’artesans a proletaris*, Castellón, 1995.
38. R. Ruzafa, *Antes de la clase. Los trabajadores en Bilbao y la margen izquierda del Nervión (1841–1891)*, Bilbao, 1998; G. Barnosell, *Orígens del sindicalisme català*, Vic, 1999; and recently, J. Romero, *La construcción de la cultura del oficio durante la industrialización (Barcelona, 1814–1860)*, Barcelona, 2005.
39. Paniagua, Piqueras and Sanz, *Cultura social y política en el mundo del trabajo*; and V. Sanz and J.A. Piqueras (eds), *En el nombre del oficio. Corporativismo, protesta y adaptación del trabajador especializado*, Madrid, 2005. In both cases there is a comparative perspective with other international areas.
40. S. Castillo (ed.), *Solidaridad desde abajo. Trabajadores y Socorros Mutuos en la España contemporánea*, Madrid, 1994.
41. E. Camps, *La formación del mercado de trabajo industrial en la Cataluña del siglo XIX*, Madrid, 1995.
42. C. Arenas, A. Florencio and J.I. Martínez (eds), *Mercado y organización del trabajo en España (siglos XIX y XX)*, Seville, 1998.
43. R. Huertas and R. Campos (coords), *Medicina social y clase obrera en España (ss. XIX y XX)*, Madrid, 1992. Also L. Prats, *La Catalunya rànica. Les condicions de vida materials de les classes populars a la Catalunya de la Restauració segons les topografies mèdiques*, Barcelona, 1996.
44. P.M. Pérez Castroviejo, *Clase obrera y niveles de vida en las primeras fases de la industrialización vizcaína*, Madrid, 1992; and P. Pérez Fuentes, *Vivir y morir en las minas. Estrategias familiares y relaciones de género en la primera industrialización vizcaína (1877–1913)*, Bilbao, 1993.
45. J. Serrallonga and J.L. Martín, *Condicions materials i resposta obrera a la Catalunya contemporània*, Barcelona, 1992.
46. L. Castells, *Los trabajadores del País Vasco*, Madrid, 1993.

47. J. Sierra, *El obrero soñado. Ensayo sobre el paternalismo industrial (Asturias, 1860–1917)*, Madrid, 1990.
48. S. Bengoechea, *Organització patronal i conflictivitat social a Catalunya*, Barcelona, 1994.
49. C. Sarasúa, *Criados, nodrizas y amos. El servicio doméstico en la formación del mercado de trabajo madrileño (1758–1868)*, Madrid, 1994; C. Borderías, *Entre líneas: trabajo e identidad femenina en la España contemporánea. La Compañía Telefónica (1924–1980)*, Barcelona, 1993; and P. Candela, *Cigarreras madrileñas: trabajo y vida (1888–1927)*, Madrid, 1997. Also C. Borderías, A. Calvo and P. López, *Empleo, cualificación y género en la formación del mercado de trabajo barcelonés (1840–1930). Estado de la cuestión, análisis de fuentes y metodología para su estudio*, Madrid, 1999; and more recently P. Pérez-Fuentes, *Ganadores de pan y amas de casa: otra mirada sobre la industrialización vasca*, Bilbao, 2004.
50. C. Gil, *Echarse a la calle. Amotinados, huelguistas y revolucionarios (La Rioja, 1890–1936)*, Saragossa, 2000.
51. See the references in note 30. Also A. Sabio, *Tierra, comunal y capitalismo agrario en Aragón (1830–1935)*, Saragossa, 2002.
52. J. Casanova, *De la calle al frente. El anarcosindicalismo en España (1931–1939)*, Barcelona, 1997.
53. C. Molinero and P. Ysàs, *Productores disciplinados y minorías subversivas: clase obrera y conflictividad laboral en la España franquista*, Madrid, 1998; and J. Babiano, *Paternalismo industrial y disciplina fabril en España (1938–1958)*, Madrid, 1998.
54. J. Uría, *Una historia social del ocio: Asturias (1898–1914)*, Madrid, 1996, dealing mainly, but not exclusively, with working-class or popular leisure.
55. M. Morales, *Cultura e ideología en el anarquismo español (1870–1910)*, Málaga, 2002.