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Jeremy D. Popkin, *Press, Revolution, and Social Identities in France, 1830-1835*. University Park, Penn.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002. vii + 329 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, and index. \$22.50 U.S. (pb). ISBN 0-271-02153-50.

Review by Christopher H. Johnson, Wayne State University.

Jeremy Popkin's new book revisits a well-trodden site--Lyon during the tumultuous and agonizing years following the Revolution of 1830--and casts a flood of fresh light not only on the history of France's second city, but also on the dynamics of change in nineteenth-century western Europe. Three main themes dominate the study. The first is specifically historiographical: that the Revolution(s) of 1830 must be seen as a major turning point in modern history not because of what happened in France during *les trois glorieuses*, but because of the enormous effervescence the Parisian events uncapped throughout France and the continent during the five years that followed. This argument has already been made, of course, and has even found its way into textbooks, notably in that of John Merriman, who pioneered the notion of the Revolution of 1830-1835 in a set of essays that he assembled and edited back in 1975 entitled *1830 in France* (New York: Franklin Watts, New Viewpoints in History Series). One might argue that Popkin gives insufficient credit (especially to Robert Bezucha, whose article in this collection and 1974 book focuses on the politicization of Lyon silkworkers as seen through the local press) to previous historiography on the question, but he adds dimensions to the argument not broached in previous work, dimensions that emerge as fully original contributions.

Thus his second general theme asserts that the Revolution of 1830 engendered a press revolution that went far beyond sheer volume. For most historians of the press, the July Monarchy revolution concerned the emergence of the commercial press with nation-wide mass distribution and Emile de Girardin as the hero of the story. They view the smaller-run political periodicals as a rather hopeless hodgepodge of competing ideologies that nobody cares much about today. For Popkin, this is precisely why they were important and their explosion on the world after 1830 was central to this Revolution's historical meaning. Combining Bourdieu and Habermas, he sees the press of this era (as viewed from Lyon, though the pattern in Paris was similar) as the key element in creating a new cultural field of interacting perspectives on society and politics in which the actors (newspaper writers and their readers) staked out positions in a highly variegated public sphere opposed to a new establishment that increasingly seemed only marginally different from the Restoration. The official revolution was thus a ho-hum affair, but the political culture it spawned amounted to a new and revolutionary mix that essentially charted the competing political discourses of modern western society.

Not to say, however, that it was simply a pot-pourri. Popkin's third fundamental theme is that it was only in this context and in this era that the social identities of bourgeois and proletarian (a term used more often than working class) became established, as people (mainly, but not entirely, men) read themselves into the roles scripted by the press because the press clarified their interests. Newspapers (along with brochures written by journalists), more than books or plays or operas, served to establish ways of perceiving reality in terms of one's social position; because of their lack of fixity they could respond to challenges almost instantly, creating an outlook that evolved with time and circumstance, the result, as Habermas would put it, of rational-critical debate in the public sphere. This is one of Popkin's most convincing arguments and makes it impossible to exclude the press, at least in the nineteenth century, from the forces comprising civil society.

For those of us who have long viewed the 1830s and 1840s as the crucible of political modernity, particularly in its class dimensions, Popkin is all the more credible because he has made a career as a historian of the eighteenth century and its Revolution. He thus has a clearer view of what change looks like, much like David Garrioch, whose sociological analysis of the bourgeoisie puts its emergence as a conscious entity at about the same time. Both, of course, run counter to the more virulent of the anti-Marxists who seek to reject notions of social class altogether, whenever they might rear their ugly heads. Clearly, we have moved beyond the vision ascribed to Marx and Engels of a triumphant bourgeoisie making its revolution after 1789 and consolidating victory via its industrialist leading edge in the nineteenth century versus a factory-worker proletariat destined to triumph under the inexorable laws of capitalist development. But to try to think about history (especially the violence of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) without class is surely to impoverish the historian's role in society. We are in Popkin's debt for providing a new approach to the problem.

Lyon's vibrant world of journalism played a central role in the city's political evolution from the beginning. *Le Précurseur* was the voice of liberals during the late Restoration; its editor, staff, and readership then formed the core of local support for the Revolution, but quickly became disillusioned and under the leadership of Parisian transplant Anselme Petetin, came to represent mainstream middle-class republicanism, a kind of political mix between Armand Carrel's *Le National* and Etienne Cabet's *Le Populaire*. Jean-Baptiste Montfalcon's *Courrier de Lyon* was created with ministerial support to represent the line of the government and served admirably as the official public against which the oppositional public sphere amplified its presence. Rapidly, the press field of Lyon came to represent a microcosm of expanding opinion, with each journal occupying a specific niche. As *Le Précurseur* moved left, the rather colorless *Journal de commerce* held the line on behalf of (what had been) Orleanist liberalism, while new alternative papers, claiming to eschew politics and thus avoid the heavy caution money extracted by the government for authorization, popped up. Key among them were *La Glaneuse*, which modelled itself on Philippon's *La Caricature* and rapidly fell afoul of the government, in fact becoming Lyon's most left-leaning republican sheet; *Le Conseiller des femmes*, edited by the remarkable Eugénie Niboyet, which reservedly proclaimed female legal and political equality, taking care to avoid Saint-Simonian excesses; and, most significantly, *L'Echo de la fabrique* and its more social-democratic spin-off, *L'Echo des travailleurs*, both edited by Marius Chastaing, the first successful newspapers in France claiming to speak on behalf of the working class. Also in the mix were a series of legitimist papers, noisy, but unstable. This cultural field thus mirrored and served to create the range of opinion, with the exception of an articulated socialist option, arising in France in the wake of the Revolution of 1830.

The most important question is, of course, what exactly was represented in the press? Popkin is careful to keep his analysis on the level of competing discourses. Any attempt to quantify followers of various political ideologies would be impossible. Instead he examines the contexts of newspaper reading, reading rooms where the papers were available, and, especially, cafes where bourgeois as well as workers (not together) gathered. Although he mentions masonic lodges, he does not go far enough in the exploration of Lyon's voluntary associations and their relationship to the publishing world.

In a particularly strong chapter, Popkin presents a great deal of evidence showing the importance of large banquets organized by the various newspapers (the worker press was less successful) to toast their opinions, and, perhaps above all, the vast publicity given to their ideas by the incessant trials, usually ending in acquittal, that the hapless regime visited on the press. Moreover, their role in reporting, analyzing, and advancing their solutions to the causes of the great insurrections of 1831 and 1834 must certainly be seen as a mechanism of public opinion formation in view of the total preoccupation of the Lyonnais population with these events. Here, Popkin makes his argument on behalf of the press's unique place in the public sphere given its interactive and evolving take on events as they happen. Books, such as Montfalcon's massive and pro-regime history of the insurrections, bring closure, particularly if there is no effective response. Popkin's chapter on the latter also includes an analysis of an anonymous novel *La révolte de Lyon, ou La fille du prolétaire*, which does offer some alternative, but largely focuses on the

sexual exploitation of working-class women by bourgeois men. Here, however, we begin to feel a growing concern about the question posed above. The fact was that this novel sold few copies and was never reprinted, while Montfalcon's book was a best-seller. Perhaps *La révolte* was just lousy literature—but Montfalcon's effort was hardly a page-turner. Montfalcon was a boy from the silk industry (his father was an atypically prosperous *chef d'atelier*) made good and was recognized for it by the regime of *enrichissez-vous*. Tagged by the power and crowned by praise in the national press that survived the press laws of 1835, his work became the standard of the time and for later historians. Popkin says all this, but perhaps misses the point.

For all the hub-bub around the oppositional press and its proliferation in Lyon in 1830-35, subscription numbers, save for the *Courrier*, were quite tiny, mostly less than one thousand. We must ask how did they compare with Parisian opposition newspaper subscriptions in Lyon? *Le Populaire de 1833*, which a number of Lyonnais workers said was their first introduction to a republicanism sympathetic to the plight of the working class, reached a circulation of 12,000 in Paris alone and claimed thousands of provincial subscribers. And Cabet paid for this notoriety in a way no Lyonnais editor did—with five years of exile (in lieu of prison and civil death). I would not argue that Popkin is dealing with a tempest in a teapot, but he really should have put the Lyon experience of these years in perspective. The press field of Lyon was truly minuscule in comparison to Paris and its national access. Moreover, although Lyon's press revolution of the early 1830s was an important beginning, it pales in comparison with the enormous oppositional public sphere created by the ideological press (again led by Paris) in the 1840s. In assessing the significance of his study, Popkin jumps to the boom in the popular press in the Revolution of 1848, without so much as mentioning the panoply of competing newspapers in the press field during the last years of the July Monarchy. There is no question, however, that this is very much a book worth reading, reminding us of the immense importance of the press in the making of modern society.

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