

Britain's "Two Nations" Reconciliation, Reform, or Revolution

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Volume 19, 1987

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/llt19re02>

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Publisher(s)

Canadian Committee on Labour History

ISSN

0700-3862 (print)

1911-4842 (digital)

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Cite this review

Andrew, D. T. (1987). Review of [Britain's "Two Nations": Reconciliation, Reform, or Revolution]. *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 19, 153–162.

Britain's "Two Nations:"

Reconciliation, Reform, or Revolution

D.T. Andrew

THE FOLLOWING ESSAY reviews two reprint series issued by Garland Press of interest to historians of the working class. The first series, "The English Working Class," is composed of 30 titles edited for reprint by Standish Meacham of the University of Texas. The second series, "The World of Labour: English Workers, 1850-1890," contains 29 additional titles; this series was edited by F.M. Levantlhal of Boston University. For simplicity's sake the titles in the series are arranged here in alphabetical order, with the original place and date of publication indicated after the title.

Joseph Arch, *The Story of his Life. Told by Himself* (London 1898).

Walter Besant, *East London* (London 1901).

W.H. Beveridge, *Unemployment, A Problem of Industry* (London 1912).

Clementina Black, ed., *Married Women's Work. Being the Report of an Enquiry Undertaken by the Women's Industrial Council* (London 1915).

Robert Blatchford, *Dismal England* (London 1899).

Charles Booth, *The Aged Poor in England and Wales* (London 1894).

Charles B.P. Bosanquet, *London: Some Account of its Growth, Charitable Agencies, and Wants* (London 1868).

Helen Bosanquet, *The Strength of the People. A Study in Social Economics* (London 1903).

A.L. Bowley and A.R. Burnett-Hurst, *Livelihood and Poverty. A Study in the Economic Conditions of Working-Class Households in Northampton, Warrington, Stanley and Reading* (London 1916).

Reginald Bray, *Boy Life and Apprenticeship* (London 1911).

Henry Broadhurst, *The Story of his Life from a Stonemason's Bench to the Treasury Bench, told by Himself* (London 1911).

Thomas Burt, *Thomas Burt, M.P., D.L.C. Pitman and Privy Councillor: An Autobiography*, with supplementary chapters by Aaron Wiseman (London 1924).

D.T. Andrew, "Britain's "Two Nations:" Reconciliation, Reform, or Revolution," *Labour/Le Travail*, 19 (Spring 1987), 153-162.

C.V. Butler, *Domestic Service* (London 1916).

Edward Cadbury, Cecile M. Matheson, and George Shann, *Women's Work and Wages* (London 1909).

W.J. Davis, *The British Trades Union Congress: History and Recollections* (London 1910).

Henry Fawcett, *The Economic Position of the British Labourer* (Cambridge and London 1865).

Arnold Freeman, *Boy Life and Labour: The Manufacture of Inefficiency* (London 1914).

James Greenwood, *The Seven Curses of London* (London 1869).

George Jacob Holyoake, *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life* (London 1892).

Edward G. Howarth and Mona Wilson, *West Ham: A Study in Social and Industrial Problems* (London 1907).

George Howell, *The Conflicts of Capital and Labour, Historically and Economically Considered* (London 1890).

A.W. Humphrey, *A History of Labour Representation* (London 1912).

A.W. Humphrey, *Robert Applegarth: Trade Unionist, Educationist, Reformer* (Manchester 1913).

B.L. Hutchins, *Women in Modern Industry* (London 1915).

H.M. Hyndman, *The Historical Basis of Socialism in England* (London 1883).

H.M. Hyndman, *The Records of an Adventurous Life* (London 1911).

T.E. Kebbel, *The Agricultural Labourer: A Short Summary of his Position* (London 1893).

M. Loane, *From Their Point of View* (London 1908).

William Lovett, *Life and Struggles of William Lovett in his Pursuit of Bread, Knowledge and Freedom* (London 1876).

William Lovett, *Social and Political Morality* (London 1853).

J.M. Ludlow and Lloyd Jones, *Progress of the Working Class 1832-1867* (London 1867).

J. Ramsay Macdonald, ed., *Women in the Printing Trades. A Sociological Study* (London 1914).

T. Mackay, *The English Poor: A Sketch of Their Social and Economic History* (London 1889).

C.F.G. Masterman, *From the Abyss. Of its Inhabitants by One of Them* (London 1903).

John Duguid Milne, *Industrial Employment of Women in the Middle and Lower Ranks* (London 1870).

L.C. Chiozza Money, *Riches and Poverty* (London 1906).

William Morris and E. Belfort Bax, *Socialism, its Growth and Outcome* (London 1893).

Richard Mudie-Smith, ed., *Handbook of the "Daily News" Sweated Industries Exhibition* (London 1906).

Edward Abbott Parry, *The Low and the Poor* (London 1914).

Alexander Paterson, *Across the Bridges. Or Life by the South London Riverside* (London).

M.S. Pember-Reeves, *Round About a Pound a Week* (London 1913).

R.W. Postgate, *The Builders' History* (London 1923).

Theodore Rothstein [Fedor Aronovich], *From Chartism to Labourism: Historical Sketches of the English Working-Class Movement* (London 1929).

B. Seebohm Rowntree, *Poverty. A Study of Town Life* (London 1910).

B. Seebohm Rowntree and Bruno Lasker, *Unemployment. A Social Study* (London 1911).

B. Seebohm Rowntree and A.C. Pigou, *Lectures on Housing* (Manchester 1914).

C.E.B. Russell, *Social Problems of the North* (London and Oxford 1913).

George R. Sims, *How the Poor Live and Horrible London* (London 1889).

Samuel Smiles, *Workmen's Earnings, Strikes and Savings* (London 1861).

H. Llewellyn Smith and Vaughan Nash, *The Story of the Dockers' Strike told by Two East Londoners* (London 1890).

Henry Solly, *Working Men's Social Clubs and Educational Institutes* (London 1904).

Francis William Soutter, *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer* (London 1923).

E.J. Urwick, ed., *Studies of Boy Life in our Cities* (London 1904).

Alfred Williams, *Life in a Railway Factory* (London 1915).

[Women's Co-operative Guild], *Maternity. Letters from Working-women collected by the Women's Co-operative Guild* (London 1915).

Women's Co-operative Guild, *Working Women and Divorce. An Account of Evidence Given on Behalf of the Women's Co-operative Guild before the Royal Commission on Divorce* (London 1911); bound with Anna Martin, *The Married Working Woman. A Study* (London 1911).

Thomas Wright, *Our New Masters* (London 1873).

THESE GARLAND PRESS REPRINTS of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century books exploring the nature of class relations in England are both very useful and very timely. Originally published between 1850 and 1920, these 57 volumes show us both how much has changed, and what curious notions and attitudes have survived, virtually untouched by the passage of time.

The earlier works seem to speak with more unease about industrial peace, about trade unions, and about the urgent need to come up with some sort of solution to the difficult problem of social unrest. There is a greater emphasis in the later period on the question of industrial and national efficiency, on the role

and rights of women (with the exception of a very curious book, J. D. Milne's *The Industrial Employment of Women*, 1870, advocating women's industrial involvement, the other eight books dealing with women's lives were all published after 1900), on the central role of the state in ameliorating social inequality, and on a scientific understanding of social problems. The rise of empirical treatments of poverty and the poor stand in marked contrast to the earlier "travelogue" approach, "through the mean streets of darkest London," exemplified by Robert Blatchford's *Dismal England*, George R. Sims' *How the Poor Live and Horrible London*, or most hyperbolically, C. F. G. Masterman's *From the Abyss*. A good barometer of the extent of this change is a comparison of attitudes towards working-class drinking habits. While earlier writers like Samuel Smiles (*Workingmen's Earnings, Strikes and Savings*, 1861) and Henry Solly (*Working Men's Social Clubs and Educational Institutes*; Solly's own section of this volume was written in the 1860s) decry the amount drunk both by working-class men and women, and see in this habit the cause of much working-class poverty, a change in attitude has occurred even before 1900. In Robert Blatchford's *Dismal England*, for example, the drinking habits of chainmakers are portrayed as quite reasonable responses to intolerable conditions of work. After 1900 this seems to be the accepted view of working-class drinking. Writing in 1915, Alfred Williams considered it perfectly natural for hardworking people to crave and imbibe a few beer without becoming drunkards. Similarly the investigators of working-class life who collaborated on *Murried Women's Work* (C. Black, ed., 1915) thought habitual drunkenness relatively rare among the working classes and not worth discussing. Even the Working Men's Clubs, the bastions of teetotalism, allowed beer to be sold on their premises by 1904.

In some ways the continuity of prob-

lems and approaches is more striking than the changes which occurred. From 1850 through the 1920s many of the writers here reprinted believed that the problems of the poor were of their own making, and thus only solvable through their own efforts. Many felt that the improvidence, intemperance, and general fecklessness of the working class must be overcome before genuine long-term solutions could be achieved. Insofar as England's problems had other causes, these, they believed, arose from lack of knowledge and therefore of sympathy between the classes. It was their purpose, by bringing the classes together through their writings, to bridge this terrible abyss. Solving England's domestic problems became an exercise in class reconciliation without concomitant substantive changes in the economic and social structures of the nation. This desire to heal social rifts through the potent agency of sympathy did meet with its critics. These, the Fabians, the socialists, and the working class itself, explained that more than good feelings were necessary. In clear voices, justice, not charity, was demanded, though it was often not obtained.

The range of subjects covered by these volumes is wide. They deal with the nature of, and changes to the law, with the extension of suffrage, both male and female, with the rise and role of trade unions, with cooperation and competition, self-help and social service. They include several working-class autobiographies (all unfortunately of men), a few histories and pseudo-histories, a brilliant account of factory life and work processes (Alfred Williams, *Life in a Railway Factory*, 1915) and even an analysis of England's history and condition by a Russian communist journalist, Theodore Rothstein, who had lived and worked in Britain for many years. They spoke to working-class people, either to chide them for their moral failures, to encourage them to organize and unionize, or to demonstrate their concern for the plight of the poor.

They spoke to England's ruling classes, either to calm fears about working-class movements, to remind legislators of what remained to be done, or to encourage some specific scheme for social regeneration.

That the poor are always with us is a universally recognized and lamented fact. To English men and women in the second half of the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth centuries this fact posed a serious quandary. How could it be true, they asked, that England as a whole was growing in riches and power while so many of her people seemed to be stuck in the slough of poverty and despair? Three basic answers emerged in the books under consideration. The first, which may be called the "charity organization society" (COS) analysis, is best, and most clearly exemplified in Helen Bosanquet's *The Strength of the People*. Though first published in 1906, this book, like M. Loane's *From Their Point of View* (1908) strangely echoes and in fact quotes at length early nineteenth-century responses to the continuing existence of poverty. It is, in many ways, an updated version of T. Mackay's *The English Poor*, which had been published almost 40 years before. The poor, Bosanquet held, are poor because they lack the moral character to be anything better. Poverty is not a question of the wages one gets, of the rents one must pay, or of the conditions of work one labours under. Poverty is a result of moral failings, of drink, of fecklessness, of sensuality. Since the failure is individual and moral, the solution must also be individual and moral. If wages were raised, for example, before such moral regeneration occurred, these higher wages would only go to feed idleness and debauchery, and not to mitigate the woes of the poor. Despite Booth's demonstration more than a decade before of the inability of the poor to provide for their old age through savings, and the crying need for assistance to the old (in *The Aged Poor in England and Wales*, 1894),

Bosanquet attacked old age pensions on the grounds that they would serve as unearned supplements to wages, thereby relieving the worker of the necessity of saving for old age, and thus allowing greater expenditures in the here and now on drink and sin. What could the well-off do to help the poor, since it would be wrong to give them alms? They could, according to Bosanquet, succor the poor, teach them frugality and foresight, show them sympathy in their afflictions while admonishing them for the sins that brought them their troubles. This could best be done, Solly suggested, in the foundation and management of men's social and recreational clubs, where not only could the classes meet together on neutral ground and get to know each other "man to man," but also where a sense of brotherhood would be created, a sense of social belongingness that the poor sorely need. For a great deal of the misery of poverty, many writers claimed, came from the lack of a sense of community and a feeling of social belonging. There seems to be a curious though widespread opinion found in many of these volumes that the poor were isolated, one from the other, thinking only about self, inarticulately attempting to go from one day to the next as best as possible, without sparing thought for needy fellows or for the future. Both the Liberal, C.F.G. Masterman and the Socialist, Robert Blatchford, agreed that the working class lacked social cohesiveness and was composed of truly anomic beings. And yet, as we can see most clearly perhaps in the work of George Sims, it is not that the working class was without neighbourliness and generosity. Sims, in *How the Poor Live and Horrible London*, while noting that the difficult life of the poor hardens them to the misfortunes of their fellows, tells most movingly of small acts of care and self-sacrifice that these same "hardened" beings often show to each other. Those who did recognize the enormous social networks of aid and assistance that the

poor rendered to each other condemned them as leading only to improvidence and idleness. Like Smiles in the 1860s, Paterson (in *Across the Bridges*, 1911) noted the spontaneous generosity of the poor to their stricken neighbours, but dismissed these actions as both unsystematic and corrupting in influence.

However, this extreme position is rarely found in its pure form in many of the books we are examining. More often we have an intermediate position, one that while admitting the low moral quality of the poor, while agreeing that much self-improvement is needed, still maintained that much was structurally wrong with England's systems of production and distribution, and that poverty was, at least in part, the result of circumstance. In this category are several of the "friends of the working classes," like Henry Fawcett, or even members of the class itself, for example, Thomas Wright, the journeyman engineer. In Fawcett's lectures at Cambridge, published as *The Economic Position of the British Labourer*, he presented his version of a socialist political economy, which, while recognizing the natural laws of supply and demand, called for legal and economic changes to ameliorate the position of the poor. For Fawcett, the greatest of these efforts would be the abolition of primogeniture, which would enable a class of free peasant proprietors to emerge from the masses of downtrodden and disaffected labourers and unemployed. Wright's solution in *Our New Masters* is rather different, calling for stricter government control over sanitation and adulteration of food, increased housing programmes, and above all, better education for working-class children. Neither entirely blamed the poor for their condition but both looked to legislation to improve the inequities caused by the industrial system. None of these intermediary voices were as confident that all the poor needed was an increase of sympathy and fellow-feeling; in contrast they thought changes were

necessary in the entire system. Yet they by no means derogated the importance of bringing the classes closer together, of finding ways to create shared interests and understandings. Fawcett hoped that through cooperation, through the transformation of labourers into capitalists, albeit self-employed ones, such a growth of shared viewpoints would emerge.

At the other end of the spectrum are those who believed poverty was the result of an exploitative and unjust economic and political system. Interestingly, most of the authors writing about married working-class women were in this group. Whether one looks at Clementina Black's fine *Married Woman's Work* (1915), Pember Reeves' *Round About a Pound a Week*, or Anna Martin's *The Married Working Woman*, one is struck by the unanimity of opinion. In each of these works, working-class mothers and wives, whether workers themselves or not, were seen as heroic, self-sacrificing centres of family life, and prime agents of family survival. Each of these books took pointed exception to the contemporary stereotype of the shiftless, improvident, negligent, and weak spirited working-class wife. And although, like the friends of the working class, these writers also sought changes in legislation to improve the condition of women and their families, the types of changes they desired were both much more sweeping and much more practical — a truly egalitarian divorce law, the transformation of sweated labour, a minimum wage for all labour, unemployment insurance, and equal pay for work of equal value. In response to Chiozza Money's call in *Riches and Poverty* (1910) for the abolition of married women's labour on the grounds of the degeneration of the species, Black called for state support for domestic labour and for a socialization of child care and housework to free women for more productive and satisfying work. Black pointed out that those working-class families in which mothers worked had a higher standard of

living, and in general, a better standard of family life than those in which mothers did not. Also impressive, though much dryer and less impassioned, are the many works of Fabians and social statisticians, all advocating massive structural changes. From Beveridge's incisive *Unemployment* (1908), Cadbury's *Women's Work and Wages* (1906), Howarth's *West Ham* (1907), Mudie-Smith's *Handbook of the "Daily News" Sweated Industries' Exhibition* (1906), Money's *Riches and Poverty* (1910), and Bowley's *Livelihood and Poverty* (1915), we see a group of dedicated social scientists at work, gathering "hard data," providing solid and unassailable evidence for the inapplicability of moral fault as the cause of unemployment and poverty. Curiously, however, there are two areas in which the views of many Fabians and many COSers coincided. These were the deep-seated fear of "race suicide" and loss of international leadership through a diminution of "national efficiency." It is the combination of these two fears that led to so many tracts on the dangers and difficulties of boys' lives, like Paterson's, like Urwick's (*Studies of Boy Life in Our Cities*) of 1904, or Freeman's (*Boy Life and Labour*) of 1914. Furthermore, both right and left agreed that state intervention was necessary in one area at least. Both thought the state must intervene to protect the nation from the promiscuous breeding of inferior people such as epileptics, drunkards, and the insane.

Of course, the Fabians wished the state to go much further. In some sense we can trace a line of development backwards from the Fabians to earlier advocates of working-class suffrage like Ludlow and Jones. In their book, *The Progress of the Working Class 1832-67*, they held that the state, through the agency of legislation, was the best exponent of social progress. The Fabians agreed, hoping that state intervention would lead to major improvements in working-class living conditions. This confidence in the powers of the law is one we must look at in greater detail.

The function and limits of legislation is an interesting question which caused much debate over the whole of this period. Many queried the existing operation and biases of the law. Coming from three different directions, Thomas Wright, noting working-class anger at two legal codes, one for the rich, another for the poor, the Women's Co-operative Guild (in *Working Women and Divorce*, 1911) complaining of this double standard for men and for women, and E.A. Parry, a judge and legal expert, (in *The Law and the Poor*, 1911) all condemned the unequal treatment that the law afforded citizens of different classes and sexes. Yet most commentators thought much could be accomplished through legal change. Though few were as enthusiastic in their belief in the efficacy of legislation as Ludlow and Jones, many writers had pet projects that they hoped would be considered by the law. Fawcett, for example, thought it vital that legislation should compel railway companies to offer cheap commuting rates to the working class. Black's study recommended state regulation of casual labour and provision of supplementary labour for those unemployed. There were those, however, who did not accept the common assumption that legal changes were the proper method by which to bring about social improvement. Alexander Paterson, in *Across the Bridges* (1911), a study of South London working-class life, believed that legislative interference would make it impossible for a truly concerned voluntary industrial ethic to evolve. Rather than compel, Paterson hoped to persuade. Rothstein, in *From Chartistism to Labourism* (1929), objected to legislative action from the other end of the political spectrum. Unlike Paterson he did not think legislation a deterrent to charity or Christian concern; on the contrary he saw legislation as a self-conscious method employed by England's ruling classes to defuse and blur class antagonism. Anna Martin, in *The Married Working Woman* (1911) took a very

different approach to the question of legal change. She pointed out that whatever may have been the beneficent intentions of protective legislation such as that which curbed boy labour, provided free school lunches, and made it illegal for children to enter pubs, working-class mothers nevertheless felt the unintended consequences of these changes and were not pleased. Rather than improving the quality of working-class life, these changes only served to make small incomes go still further, removed power from working-class mothers, and made family leisure less possible. The clear implication in Martin's discussion is that in order for the law to usefully serve the working class, it must be consulted about its operations. Both Ludlow and Jones, writing in 1867, and Martin, writing 50 years later, held that the extension of suffrage was the best, indeed, the only way to insure that such consultation occurred and was taken seriously.

What other proposals did these writers offer as solutions to the problems of the poor? Leaving aside moral uplift of the lower classes and legislation, both of which we have examined, the other main suggestions were the implementation of cooperation, both productive and distributive, the value of emigration, the organization of strong trade unions, and even revolution. Let us look at these one at a time.

There were many who thought the poor needed to be taught how to care for one another while exercising prudence and industry. Both Henry Fawcett and Ludlow and Jones, writing in the 1860s, thought this could best be done through the growth of industrial co-partnerships and the emergence of consumer and producer cooperatives. Such cooperatives, they urged, would improve the health and morals of the working class, educate it in business techniques, lead to a decline in over-productivity, and a decrease in the frequency of strikes. Fawcett went so far as to eschew state aid to founding

cooperatives on the grounds that such assistance would curtail the very educative process they were intended to begin. Cooperatives, then, were seen as agents of class reconciliation, capable of transforming the working class into mini-capitalists and so ending exploitation. The notion of cooperation seems not to have appeared in these volumes after the 1860s; it was mentioned by Wright in the 1870s, but dismissed as impossible before massive education of the working class had taken place.

Another possible solution discussed in the 1860s and 1870s, and another which also disappeared (at least in this series) in the early twentieth century, was emigration. Most writers saw this as the inevitable route of the best and brightest of working-class youth. For this reason they both lauded and were saddened by it. Writers as different in outlook as Smiles and Fawcett both approved of it; Smiles saw it as a form of self-help, Fawcett as a way of reducing the labour force and so raising wages. Ludlow and Jones believed *emigration had done more than unions to raise wages both for those who had left, and for those left behind*. Wright advocated even more union sponsorship of emigration to further this desired end. Only Rothstein, looking back at the decline of militant working-class movements from the vantage point of the 1920s, *bemoaned nineteenth-century emigration as yet another method by which class hostility and potential revolution had been defused*. By the early twentieth century, Paterson found it necessary to explain the absence of emigration from South London working-class areas. Like cooperation, emigration had ceased to be seen as a possible solution to the problem of poverty.

There seemed to be two main opinions about trade unions in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth. On the one hand, those like Smiles, who believed in "the inexorable laws of supply and demand," felt that

unions could only harm their members by making them think advances were possible when they were not. Smiles characterized union leaders of his day as mainly Irish in origin and ignorant of the consequences of their actions. Joseph Arch, whose autobiography, *The Story of My Life* (1901), is an almost perfect illustration of Smilesian self-help in action, would not have agreed with this assessment. Proud of his local origins and crafty in his political practices, his story strikingly resembles, in structure at any rate, the working-class unionist life stories of George Jacob Holyoake, *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life* (1892), Henry Broadhurst's *The Story of His Life* (1901), Frank Soutter's *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer* (1923), Thomas Burt's *Thomas Burt, M.P.* (1924), and A.W. Humphrey's *Robert Applegarth* (1913). All of these men recalled, albeit with some self-justification, a life in which union or working-class activity figured largely amid great personal sacrifice. In many of these works, there is mention of allies of the union movement, individuals from other classes who supported and advocated the growth and extension of unionization. Three of these were Fawcett, Ludlow, and Jones, whose works we have already mentioned. There are also others, like George Howell (in *The Conflicts of Capital and Labour*, 1890) and W.J. Davis (in *The British Trades Union Congress*, 1910) writing from within the working class itself, who agreed with these upper-class sympathizers on the proper role of the union. They commended unions not only for the moral and economic improvements they had brought to working-class life, but also as the means to quell violent and disruptive strikes, to introduce peaceful and rational arbitration, to act as benefit and savings societies for their members, and to lower the tax rates for the care of the poor. Only some working-class writers, B.L. Hutchins, a champion of unions for working women (*Women in Modern Industry*,

1911), the few socialists represented here, like Blatchford, Morris, and Bax (*Socialism, Its Growth and Outcome*, 1893) and R.W. Postgate (*The Builders' History*, 1923) spoke entirely in praise of the work of the unions. They all advocated, as Wright had much earlier, a growing international solidarity of working people. By 1915, Williams went so far as to assert that labour unrest was not due to too much union militancy; on the contrary, he urged his fellow workers to become more vocal and active in demanding not only a shorter work week, but increased control over the labour process itself. Industrial unrest, Williams concluded, was due to the selfishness, cruelty, and arrogance of capitalists. Rothstein agreed, cheered to see British workers throw off the illusory desire for class reconciliation, actively embracing the coming conflict not only with their employers, but with their unions as well.

The possibility and desirability of revolution is probably the point of view least represented in these volumes. Only the socialists noted above, with the addition of H.M. Hyndman, (*The Historical Basis of Socialism in England*, 1883) and the Russian Rothstein, are its spokespeople here. This is a reflection of the selection process, and not of the period. It is also my only major quibble with the two editors of these fine series. Why no work of syndicalism or of Red Clydeside? Surely English socialism of a sort left of the Labour Party was very much alive and well in the heady days of pre-war and wartime England. In this omission, in the exclusion of the works of Cole and Mann to name but two, we are left with the impression that revolution or revolutionary change, at any rate, was not a much discussed topic in the early twentieth century. This omission is also glaring in that, with the singular exception of Williams' fine book, we have no sense of twentieth-century working men or women speaking for themselves. Both John Burnett and David Vincent have demonstrated the

existence and powerful quality of working-class autobiography during this period. A volume incorporating several of these would have been of great advantage. Another possible addition would have been an introductory historical overview, drawing on and using these reprints as illustrations. Garland has done this most successfully in its reprint series of nineteenth-century novels: one would

think such a volume would be equally valuable for the historical texts. Still, both series make important contributions to a better understanding of an exciting and frustrating time, a time that seemed so full of trouble and so filled with promise, a time, that to us in the 1980s seems both terribly long ago, and frighteningly contemporary.

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