a curious amalgamation of witchcraft, the devil and Calvinism, the same amalgamation that we find in naive form in Jasmin's tale. After 1750, however, rural witchcraft was ignored again in its complex of beliefs, either in a reversion to "archetype", as in the affair of the Mimalé family where the devil and Calvin are totally absent, or in conjunction with ideas about diabolical possession.

None of this detracts from the importance of *La Sorcière de Jasmin* as an exercise in historical anthropology. The author's verification of the authenticity of the original characters was constructed according to all the rules of the art from those remaining parish registers, cadasters and notarial archives. We cannot help but feel that had more complete sources survived, particularly the notarial registers, the mystery of exact identities could have been totally elucidated. This probably successful verification of a folk-tale confined to oral tradition for 150 years is in itself an exciting event in modern historiography.

Gregory HANLON
York University

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JOHN E. MARTIN — *Feudalism to Capitalism. Peasant and Landlord in English Agrarian Development*. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, Inc., 1984. pp. xxii, 255.

This book is likely to be read mainly by those already versed in Marxist historical categories and rhetoric, which will be a pity, for those least sympathetic with its general positions may perhaps stand to profit most from considering it carefully. With only the caution that the "development of the argument in this book is complex" (p. xvi), its author projects the reader into the midst of an enduring historical debate over the nature of the "transition" from "feudalism to capitalism" in western Europe between the fifteenth and the early seventeenth centuries. Because Marxist historians have defined and occupied the central grounds of this debate, their concepts and terminology dominate the argument, as they do this study. But on one level the book under review speaks universally, for it raises, urgently if indirectly, the problem of the nature and logic of categories of historical analysis and of their relationship to the concrete events they at once identify and seek to explain.

Martin argues that the role of class struggle in the transition from feudalism to capitalism has been ignored by Marxist theories which, whatever their other differences, agree that historical change is produced "by theoretically specified components of modes of production, either internal to the F[eudal] M[ode of] P[roduction] (internal dissolution), or external to this mode and identified with incipient capitalism (external dissolution)" (p. 46). Both positions result from the failure of existing Marxist definitions of the economic and political structures of feudalism to establish the separation of the peasant producer from his economic resources in land and from "ancillary means of production" (p. 15), the former being the result of an economic power of exclusion, the latter of a political power of "denial of possession", which "feudal economic and political relations" vest in the landlord. This definitional failure accounts for the failure to recognize the importance of the role of class conflict — the "central concern" (p. 115) of this book — in the development of a new capitalist mode of production, and shows up another failure, a false conception of the nature of the feudal state and hence of its role in the process of transition. The argument on this last point, as "complex" as any in the book, presents the feudal political structure as intervening directly "at the level of individual tenancies" (p. 107) to assure the landlord of his power of "denial of possession", which, because it taxes peasant resources in addition to land, guarantees the peasantry's poverty, and hence the continued domination of the feudal lord. This "fusion" of the political and economic structures in feudalism "is replicated throughout the entire structure... [T]he distribution of political power was isomorphic with the distribution of economic power" (p. 108). Although, in the crisis of the fifteenth

and sixteenth centuries, "the feudal political conditions of "denial of possession' could not be maintained", the state

> supported the landlord class's claims to landownership and thereby increasingly secured the more fundamental feudal condition of landed monopoly... The right of exclusion from land was not ensured by centralized means outside of tenancies and feudal enterprises... Analytically, the power of the absolutist state is not separable from that of the landed class. (pp. 108-9)

But if "absolutism is *reproductive* of the feudal mode of production to the extent that such a centralized state is able to protect the landed monopoly" (p. 112) it was "also forced to stifle agrarian capitalism, because of its disastrous effects on the peasantry" (p. 114). As a result, the "articulation of absolutism with agrarian capitalism structured the conditions under which peasant struggles took place. The centralized state structure determined that peasant revolts took an increasingly organized and large-scale form: peasants seeking change necessarily confronted the central state, which held a monopoly of force" (p. 115).

The revised theoretical definitions of the feudal economic and political structures have now accommodated class conflict as an important force in the transformation to capitalism. But a problem remains: having avoided the Scylla of the "auto-effectivity" of change produced by motions within the mode of production, the navigator must equally avoid the Charybdis of "class voluntarism", class struggle as the expression of a "free play" (p. 57) independent of theoretical structures. Martin's solution is an appeal to three "modes of determination — ... structural limitation, selection and transformation":

> Structural limitation establishes limits of variation and probabilities which structure the class struggle. Selection involves a second-order setting of limits: within the limits set by structural limitation, it concretely determines ranges of outcomes... Transformation concerns the simultaneous reshaping by the class struggle of those structures which themselves exert the modes of determination discussed above. (pp. 56-7)

Parallel with his attempt to "theorise" the role of class conflict in the transition to capitalism Martin investigates the role of the English "peasants' struggle with their landlords over land" (p. 213). His analysis of agrarian developments separates peasant community into "felden" and "forest" — the village-structured arable and hamlet-oriented pastoral areas of the countryside — each with its distinctive economic, political and social structures, and its own responses to the challenges of divergent class interests. Warwickshire, combining forest and felden communities, provides the book's geographical focus, with Northamptonshire providing a focus for the analysis of the revolts of 1607. The author treats the 1607 disturbances as the culmination of a long period of class conflict and devotes his best historical energies to their examination. In terms of his theme of class conflict over land they present an apparent anomaly. Forest communities tended to escape enclosure, and yet in May and June of 1607 their inhabitants marched to join felden peasants in highly organized, anti-enclosure demonstrations in the felden. Martin explains their participation as a result of their dependence, as overpopulated communities, on the arable felden both as a source of demand for their labour and as a source of supply for their grain. Enclosure for conversion threatened both of these ties, and linked the interests of poor forest settlers with those of felden peasants threatened with dispossession. The differences — the preponderance of forest rioters were labourers and craftsmen, those from the felden included a significant complement of landholders — scarcely affected the pattern of peasant unity. But the peasants were defeated, so that the 1607 uprisings unite the theses of class conflict and the ultimately futile attempts of the state to protect a peasantry whose demise was, by 1607, in the interests of the landed classes.

The book raises important issues both of theory and historical interpretation. Although Martin conducts his theoretical discussion in unyielding jargon and virtually without reference to non-Marxist thought, his argument can be assessed, as it could have been expressed, in terms more accessible to the lay understanding. The book succeeds well in combining a diverse and complex series of interrelated theoretical issues into a coherent, structured sequence of propositions all bearing on its central theme of class conflict as a motor of historical change. Its chief weakness in this regard, a

failure to raise the discussion of any of the propositions much above the level of terse, logical demonstration, is in part the penalty it pays for its narrow, mechanical terminology. To the question of the degree of structural determinism in the growth of capitalism the author, in a passage cited above, answers with the obfuscations that result when the logic of an ambiguous specialist language is turned in upon itself. The inevitable difficulties on the theoretical plane are joined by others on the level of the treatment of historical data. To choose only one example, the author nowhere presents data from English medieval society to establish his crucial contention that peasants were successfully denied property in land on the scale that his theory requires. When most historians, Marxist and non-Marxist alike, suggest the contrary to have been the case, his failure here is particularly damaging.

If the book fails to make its case on evidential grounds it is, nevertheless, its attempt to unite a theoretical with an historical inquiry that chiefly distinguishes it. Its method forces on the reader questions that transcend particular ideological frameworks — the power of categories of analysis to privilege certain data, and hence the problem of the circularity of the explanations they offer for the phenomena they select. Its appeal to theory as well as experience as its grounds for placing the question of man's exploitation of man at the centre of its concerns challenges all those interpreters who ignore the question or assign it to the fringes of their inquiries. But if it challenges, it seems unlikely to convince. Its narrow insistence that the "economic" alone need be taken into account in the study of exploitation will strike many as a vicious circularity between a theory structured solely in categories of economic relationships and an explanation similarly structured. This narrowness of vision is likely to deny the author an audience who could learn from him — and from whom he too could have learned.

R.B. GOHEEN
Carleton University

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GÉRALD CHOLVY — *Mouvements de jeunesse chrétiens et juifs. Sociabilité juvénile dans un cadre européen 1799-1968*. Paris, Éditions du Cerf, 1985. 432 p.

Les mouvements de jeunesse ont fourni au 20e siècle les cadres de la société en Occident. Il était temps que les historiens se penchent sur ces milieux d'éducation entre l'école et la famille et qu'ils prennent plus au sérieux ces organisations liées à un âge de la vie que l'adulte a tendance à occulter. Cette histoire éclaire celle des idéologies, des « mentalités », voire l'histoire politique et religieuse. Tirant partie de la démographie et de l'histoire des couches socio-professionnelles, elle éclaire à son tour l'histoire de la société tout entière. Après les aînés et l'enfance arrivent donc l'adolescence et la jeunesse dans le champ de l'histoire qui se veut totale.

Suivant le mécanisme connu, l'histoire des institutions précède celui des classes d'âge ou des genres de vie. Aussi, l'histoire de la jeunesse restant *terra incognita*, on commence à peine à lever le voile sur les organisations de jeunesse accessibles à travers les archives souvent mal tenues (les organisations volontaires ont d'autres priorités!) et des témoignages oraux d'un usage délicat (tendance à l'idéalisation ou à l'apologie rétrospective).

Le présent ouvrage constitue une gerbe fort riche réunie par Gérard Cholvy, l'infatigable professeur d'histoire des mentalités contemporaines de l'Université de Montpellier. Plus de 25 historiens contribuent à un ouvrage d'une diversité remarquable quant aux organisations : du Sillon aux mouvements sionistes en passant par les scouts, la JEC, les patronages et les Y.M.C.A. Comme il arrive dans ce type d'ouvrage, chacun procède à sa façon et l'ensemble souffre quelque peu d'un décousu. À chaque auteur aussi sa conception du mouvement de jeunesse. Les périodes sont choisies au hasard des recherches. Tel article est moins intéressé à la jeunesse qu'à l'Église ou à l'idéologie.