My review cannot do justice to the enormous power of Professor McManners' reach. I hope it will touch every scholar who has thought about the eighteenth century.

Harvey MITCHELL
University of British Columbia

* * *

HARVEY CHISICK. — *The Limits of Reform in the Enlightenment: Attitudes toward the Education of the Lower Classes in Eighteenth-Century France.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981. Pp. XVI, 324.

Although Chisick deals with ideas rather than social conditions, his study should have considerable appeal for social historians. First of all, it is not a history of ideas in the tradition of Lovejoy, but a more modern genre, the social history of ideas. Before examining what the enlightened thinkers in eighteenth-century France said about education of the lower classes, he analyses the social origins, professional connections, and membership in learned academies of each of his authors. The results of this analysis are summed up in a revealing table. He also uses definitions of "*le peuple*" in contemporary dictionaries and encyclopaedias effectively to trace changing views of the role of the common people in society. These definitions show that there was a growing awareness among intellectuals of the services which the common people provided as agricultural workers, artisans, and soldiers.

Against this background of social connections and attitudes, Chisick then analyses the outpouring of educational treatises, tracts, and articles in eighteenth-century France. Although he gets his basic list from Buisson's *Dictionnaire de pédagogie et d'instruction primaire,* published in the late nineteenth century, a list which is not by any means complete, his graph of output year by year is extremely informative. He shows that from 1715 to 1759 there appeared just over one book or pamphlet a year. By contrast, from 1760 to 1790 there were over five per year. Moreover, there were many articles and letters to the editor in journals which are not included.

Chisick finds various reasons for this accelerated discussion of education, some of which are obvious. Suppression of the Jesuit Order left many colleges without teachers, which in turn called forth many proposals about what to do. Rousseau's *Emile, ou de l'éducation,* published in 1762, provoked a number of replies. Also Lockean sensationalist psychology, with its implications of the malleability of the human mind, produced an exaggerated belief in the power of education. However, Chisick argues convincingly that a deeper reason for the flood of writings on education was the belief in a crisis in France. This was not the socio-economic crisis described by many modern historians which contributed to the coming of the revolution. Rather it was belief in a moral crisis which was supposedly creating depopulation, immorality, sloth, and pursuit of selfish interests. Education was seen as a cure to this alleged social malaise.

Some historians of the eighteenth century have argued that the faith of the Enlightenment led logically to belief in education for the masses. Peter Gay, for instance, writes that the *philosophes* wished "to transform silent subjects into self-reliant citizens". Chisick argues forcefully that the enlightened community did not

draw such a conclusion from their basic belief. Examining closely what enlightened thinkers actually said in response to the question, "Should the people be educated?", Chisick finds not only a variety of answers, but carefully qualified ones — "yes, but", or "no, but". They were concerned as much with enlightenment spreading too far and too fast as they were in combatting ignorance.

Chisick finds the reasons for this caution in the fear that too much education would make the labouring classes discontented with their roles, lead peasants to migrate to the crowded and decadent cities, and perhaps even to protest their sad lot in life. He argues that at the deepest level the members of the enlightened community believed that a huge mass of labouring peasants and artisans was essential to the functioning of society. Although they were well aware of the hard life of the lower classes, the *philosophes* and their associates could not foresee any way in which this "people condition" could be changed. Since they could not yet even glimpse the technological breakthroughs of the nineteenth century, they could see no way in which the masses could rise above the level of bare subsistence. In fact, Chisick points out, belief in the inevitability of this condition persisted well into the nineteenth century.

Although enlightened thinkers frequently affirmed that men were born equal in nature, they thought that an hierarchical social structure was inevitable. Thus when they did call for popular education they meant training of the lower classes for their arduous tasks, inculcation of a social morality, and arousal of patriotic sentiment. Such an education would prepare each class for its place in the existing social structure and strengthen the bonds which hold society together. At the same time beneficence would be encouraged among the wealthy classes to assuage some of the admitted cruelty of the existing order. Why then all the talk about equality in the state of nature? It was not, Chisick contends, a justification for an attack on the existing social structure, but rather a reminder to the upper classes that the lower orders were after all composed of fellow humans who should be treated kindly.

Chisick finds that the strongest advocates of popular education were Jansenists and other very religious writers — men such as Crevier, Rivard, and an anonymous author who wrote a Latin discourse on how to improve the morals of the people — not the freethinking and secular members of the enlightened community. The Latinist, for example, argued that God had endowed all the people with the power of reason, that he expected them to use this faculty, and that it was indefensible to keep them in ignorance. Such pious writers of course were interested in using education for the spiritual enlightenment of the people, not for teaching manual skills or for providing social control.

Chisick's is altogether a fine piece of work, enriching our understanding of social attitudes in the Enlightenment, yet one must make a few criticisms. At times he defines his "enlightened community" very broadly in order to bring in conservative thinkers to bolster his argument. At the same time he gives too little treatment to some thinkers who were indisputably members of the Enlightenment who did advocate popular education — Diderot, Helvétius, and Holbach. He also completely ignores several utopian novelists who envisaged societies with no hereditary hierarchical structure where mass education would create an enlightened citizenry.

Most serious of all, Chisick chides me for claiming in an article some years ago that "the highest hope of the proponents of mass education was for a generally enlightened citizenry" (p. 263). He then omits not only the utopian novelists, but such authors as Fleury whom I had cited: "Il est aisé de pressentir que mon intention est que les Citoyens même du dernier rang, ne soient négligés. Oui! tranchons le mot; les pauvres mêmes seroient placés sans distinction à côté des premiers de

l'État." It is a shame to mar a useful study by suppressing evidence contrary to one's thesis.

James A. LEITH
Queen's University

* * *

NICOLE HAESENNE-PEREMANS. — *La pauvreté dans la région liégeoise à l'aube de la révolution industrielle: Un siècle de tension sociale (1730-1830)*. Paris, Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres", 1981. 509 p.

La misère was an integral dimension of European societies in the century beginning in 1730 and spanning the *ancien régime*, the Revolution, and the first three decades of the nineteenth century. Utilizing a number of official inquiries into the problem of poverty, Nicole Haesenne-Peremans provides a primarily statistical local study of the poor in the Liège region. After describing its economy — an agriculture that in poor areas featured peasant ownership but in more fertile areas required them to rent land from the clergy, nobility or urban bourgeoisie, and a varied industrial base in which two of the three principal industries were in decline by the end of the eighteenth century — she turns to the poor created by this socio-economic structure.

A feature of her analysis, although it relates to only one element of the poor, is a demographic study based on reconstitution of families that inherited poverty. Using successive lists of the poor with parish records, Haesenne-Peremans compares the demographic behaviour of these poor families with the general population. She finds that in the countryside the poor married at about the same age as their better-off neighbors, while in the city poor women married later than the rest of the female population. Household size, however, was considerably smaller for the poor — 3.6 persons versus 4.8 — than for the general population. The poor were more often women than men, a fact attributed to the relatively weak position of women in the labour force, lacking skills and forced to work in poorer paying occupations.

Most striking is that increasing industrialization of the region did not noticeably improve their lot, and may have made matters worse. The development of industry put many out of work, and placed them among the ranks of the poor. The availability of a large work-force that would labour for minimal wages made it possible for industrialists to keep down the labour costs of industry and made the region an attractive place for industrial development. Haesenne-Peremans gives little indication that this created social conflict; she provides, in fact, the striking example of the poor of Liège welcoming back to the city during the Revolution a merchant who would provide them with work. A second feature of her analysis, however, is her description of the growing sense by the bourgeoisie that the poor were to be feared and kept separate from the rest of society. There is no indication that this was the case — the seamier side of poverty, especially the criminal side, remains outside Haesenne-Peremans' study — but nevertheless the poor were segregated, first in their own quarters in the cities, and later in institutions that were expressly designed to prevent their contact with the rest of the population.

The statistical emphasis of this study provides much information about the poor and poverty in the Liège region, but there is a cost. The relationship of poverty to the developing industrial economy receives short shrift, in spite of the impli-