as intermediary between the employers (mostly German-Jewish) and the workers (East-European Jews). Though he is insufficiently critical towards the anti-anarchist bias of his sources, he at least includes labour as a dimension of the immigrant experience. The other contributors generalize about ethnic religion as a form of community imposed from below against the anonymity and exploitation encountered in American cities. Obviously, the labour movement represents another response and another form of community. That it may also represent an alternative is to be seen from the antagonism between Rabbi Morais and the anarchist organizers and the willingness of the Jewish workers to listen to the anarchists rather than to him.

In general, the essays are provocatively argued and well documented from research in the ethnic press, parish records, directories and field work on the groups treated. If the anthology raises more questions than it answers, that is a measure of the utility of the comparative perspective which it affords.

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MARK NATHAN COHEN. — *The Food Crisis in Prehistory. Overpopulation and the Origins of Agriculture.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977.

Still another 'model' in the ongoing attempt to explain the 'why' of incipient agriculture as an 'economic strategy'! This book is not a case of not being able to see the wood for the trees, indeed it is really not about trees at all, rather the attempt to paint a wood not from looking at trees but, at most, at the mirrored reflections of the shadows of the fragments of trees — the attempt to advance a hypothesis (model), not by autopsy of the evidence itself but by refining previous hypotheses (models), with an occasional glance at the evidence by recourse to studies of studies, or, as the author aptly puts it, by "heavy use of secondary or even tertiary sources" (p. viii).

The key to the model is the "coincidence between the end of the era of territorial expansion and the beginning of the period of rapid economic intensification as defined by the emergence of broad-spectrum economies and then farming" (p. 12), in other words, population growth. No documentation is provided to show that territorial expansion had come to an end! This population pressure, and resultant agriculture, is not, however, confined to one, or even several, regions, indeed there is "a general and synchronous worldwide adoption of an agricultural economy (p. 10)", agriculture being achieved "simultaneously on a worldwide basis". The time-span is 8000 years — which seems to presage, indeed require, a new dictionary definition of synchronous and simultaneous.

The hypothesis is undergirded by six central propositions, most of which have little or no reference to the evidence itself. They are: 1) "agriculture is not a single unified concept or behavior but an accumulation of techniques used to increase the range or density of growth of particular resources" (p. 15); those who do not become agriculturalists, do so not out of ignorance but out of lack of need; 2) "agriculture is not easier than hunting and gathering and does not provide a higher quality, more palatable, or more secure food base"; indeed, it has "only one advantage over hunting and gathering: that of providing more calories per unit of time and thus of supporting denser populations"; 3) "human societies

have in fact grown throughout their history and have encroached progressively on their resources to the extent that the continuous redefinition of ecological relationships were [sic] necessary" (p. 16); 4) hunting and gathering populations are essentially the same the world over; it is therefore "not unreasonable to find a roughly synchronous building up of population pressure over very large portions of the globe, with the result that agriculture was 'invented' or adopted by most of the world's population within the same fairly brief time span"; 5) "the events leading to agriculture in the various parts of the world show a remarkable parallelism when they are viewed in a reasonably broad temporal and geographic perspective", which implies a common cause. (This appears to be essentially a restatement of Proposition 4, except that in the former it is a "brief time span", whereas in the latter a "broad temporal perspective". Synchronous and simultaneous, it seems, are compelled to do duty for two different things at the same time); 6) "the record of Paleolithic and Mesolithic man, as well as that of preagricultural man in the New World, can reasonably be read as indicating fairly continuous population growth and increasing population pressure in preagricultural contexts, and that in each the adoption of agriculture appears to be only one in a long series of ecological adaptions to increased population".

Here it will suffice to single out the two central components of the hypothesis. The first is the definition of agriculture. It is "not a single unified concept or behaviour, but a combination of behaviours, any one of which may be either inadvertent or purposeful" (p. 23). The elements comprising this definition are as follows: 1) creation of clearings where plants thrive; 2) the enrichment of certain soils; 3) the planting of seeds; 4) the irrigation of plants; 5) the removal of competing species; 6) the practice of conservation measures; 7) the transporting of species beyond their original ecological boundaries; 8) the selection of preferred types. The conclusion then drawn is: "None of these behaviours alone constitutes agriculture; taken together they *are* agriculture". The implication, clearly, is that only the sum of these eight behaviours constitutes agriculture. Presumably, therefore, if even only one were to be missing, we should not have agriculture (at all events, if less than the eight suffice, we are nowhere told how many, or in which combinations). In the discussion which follows, the author nowhere demonstrates from the archaeological data that all eight behaviours ever existed at any given place at any given time, nor indeed even which lesser combinations did exist. At the same time, some of the behaviours are so intricately linked that there seems to be little point in separating them. Moreover, if the "transporting of species beyond their original ecological boundaries" is an integral element in 'agriculture', as on this definition it seems to be, then the definition must be seriously questioned. There is no logical reason why in many places this should be so; secondly, it is in many cases still unverifiable that it was so. One possible method of verification is pollen analysis, but this has been carried out only in very few areas, not to speak of specific sites. Furthermore, at times agriculture appears to be equated with nothing more than the planting of seeds, whereas at others a distinction is drawn between cultivation and agriculture, while in still others it appears to be equated with domestication, and elsewhere to "domestication and cultivation"! In short, this definition seems to raise more questions than it answers.

The second principal component in the hypothesis is that of population pressure, deriving from population growth. The crucial question here is: What in fact was the population situation at the time when agriculture was first introduced? To date no comprehensive study has been carried out on this subject, documenting from the archaeological data the precise (or even approximate) figures for any given region(s) at either a particular point in time or over a given period.

Indeed, the evidence is such that even if such a study were to be attempted, it could not yield concrete results. If there is any area in which the archaeological record is still stubbornly unyielding and leaves the archaeologist with an embarrassing feeling of uncertainty, it is in the area of precise population size. Since it is therefore impossible to determine the size of the population of any given area in prehistoric times with any meaningful accuracy, it follows that it is equally impossible to determine what economic pressure any given population may have exerted. Since we cannot determine the exact (or even meaningfully relative) increase, we obviously cannot establish the degree of pressure. The variables are so great that one can only too easily end up in the realm of pure speculation. Anyone who has examined even some of the archaeological evidence at first hand knows only too well how many basic questions still remain unanswered. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly clear that our understanding of the evidence is fundamentally affected by the retrieval methods used in bringing the data to light (e.g. the difference between conclusions based on flotation-retrieved and on non-flotation-retrieved evidence). At a most basic level, therefore, a considerable range of problems still requires clarification before sweeping generalisations can be formulated.

That population growth *alias* population pressure need not at all lead to fundamental changes in 'agriculture' may be seen by a glance at another period in antiquity, one for which there is a much fuller record. We have good evidence that in ancient Greece substantial increase in population was a recurring phenomenon. We also know that it resulted in very significant population pressure. But this, at a time when some of the most sophisticated contributions were being made in political thinking, art, philosophy and theoretical science, did not result in major technological innovations in agriculture; rather did the Greeks have recourse to other ways and means: the exposure of new-born infants; emigration (if the earth's population has steadily increased, as is argued, and there were still places to immigrate to in the seventh century BC, presumably there were also still places in the seventh millennium BC); importing of grain. Even the Romans, with the whole Greek experience at their disposal, as well as with all their own practical know-how, did not introduce radical changes in agricultural technology, but depended on the, often precarious, expedient of importing vast quantities of grain, down to the end of the empire.

A simple alternative to population pressure which the author does not consider is the manifest fact that in many parts of the world Nature does not provide a round-the-clock harvest. If in Europe Upper Pleistocene men lived in "environments poor in edible vegetation and as a result were strongly dependent on animal and fish resources", there were obviously long periods of the year when there was little or nothing to gather. Consequently, the idea and/or ability of storeable commodities may have, at least in some cases, been hypothetically as plausible a factor contributing to agriculture as population pressure.

This book demonstrates that models are relatively easy to come by. What is needed at the present time, however, is not so much another model, but (and this is much more difficult and tedious) *more evidence* — painstakingly retrieved and painstakingly assessed. A superstructure is no stronger than the substructure on which it rests, a model no more convincing than the evidence on which it is built. This model is built on very little actual evidence. Whatever appeal it may have, this it owes to its being applied not to the situation as it actually was but to the situation as it *may* have been at any given time between 10,000 and 2000 BC. This is not to deny that modern analogies may be suggestive, but they can never serve as a substitute for the evidence itself. And as the author admits in

connection with modern analogies, "given the range of these variables and the limits of the available data it is clear that little can be proved conclusively. We are left with impressionistic comparisons" (p. 34).

This study, then, is a hypothesis applied to an essentially hypothetical situation, and accordingly operates within a more or less closed system. As for answering the question of the actual 'why' of incipient agriculture, it unfortunately does not take us any further. The question will scarcely be answered by the construction of more models but by the long and arduous task of examining more evidence as it is meticulously brought to light. Much more work still remains to be done with the spade before rushing forward with the pen.

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PAUL GERBOD. — *L'Europe culturelle et religieuse de 1815 à nos jours.* Paris, PUF, 1977.

Paul Gerbod a publié un ouvrage qui répond presque en tous points aux objectifs de la collection où il paraît. La Nouvelle Clio se propose en effet de situer l'histoire et ses problèmes, de faire le point, ici en histoire culturelle et religieuse, sur les sources, l'état des connaissances et l'orientation des débats et des recherches dans ce secteur relativement et récemment constitué de l'historiographie.

Admirable au plan de la quasi exhaustivité et de la clarté d'exposition cet ouvrage constitue à la fois un panorama de l'évolution culturelle européenne depuis 1815 et un panorama de l'émergence de l'histoire culturelle comme secteur particulier de recherche.

Presque au même moment que Maurice Crubellier dans sa provocante et peut-être temporaire synthèse d'*Histoire culturelle de la France, XIX^e^ et XX^e^ siècle* (1974), M. Gerbod relève aussi le défi de la périodisation de la culture européenne de 1815 à nos jours. Si les raisons d'un point de départ en 1815 pourraient être davantage explicitées, l'affirmation de «l'impérialisme des cultures savantes» jusqu'en 1914 et de «l'avènement de la culture de masse» après la première guerre mondiale paraît bien fondée. D'autant mieux que M. Gerbod, attentif au socio-économique, aux structures et aux conjonctures, axe sa compréhension et son interprétation de la culture sur l'industrialisation et ses effets (urbanisation, modification des systèmes de communication). Sans affirmer un isomorphisme simpliste entre économie et culture, entre structure et superstructure, M. Gerbod comprend les changements et les persistances culturels à l'intérieur d'un schéma d'évolution des modes de production et de distribution et des effets de cette évolution sur les producteurs et les produits. Cet axe d'analyse permet seul de polariser, entre 1815 et 1914, la culture rurale et urbaine, la culture religieuse et profane et les formes d'expression ou media de la culture (imprimée et électrique, linéaire, visuelle et sonore). À tout le moins la périodisation de la culture passe par celle de l'économie.

La présentation des «sources», dans une première partie, (pp. 9-60) suit le schéma d'analyse et d'exposition de la culture utilisé dans l'ensemble de l'ouvrage. Cette riche bibliographie s'avère, lue d'Amérique, comparativement suggestive bien qu'elle soit beaucoup moins européenne que française. Cette limite