The editors also tend to jump to conclusions without adequate explanation. On 23 March 1927, workers and workers' pickets took two staff and a female foreman in custody and, next morning, forced them to wear a tall paper hat (a sign of humiliation) and paraded them through the street. For the editors, "this is the beginning of the practices 40 years later [i.e. the Cultural Revolution]" (p. 353). This is an interesting but not sufficiently substantiated remark. After the discussion of a yellow trade union – the postal union – the editors remark that its changes provide a reason for "our revolutionary trade union cadres to give a second thought" (p. 545). Whom do they mean, today's trade union cadres in China? To rethink what: to be or not to be a yellow trade union?

In view of the above comments, is the argument convincing that workers in Shanghai had become a class-in-itself under the leadership of the party? Despite this and the other problems mentioned above, the book should still be seen as a contribution to the study of the history of Shanghai's workers. One hopes that the editors will give a more considered account in their second volume.

Qi Lin

Cross, Gary. A Quest for Time. The Reduction of Work in Britain and France, 1840–1940. University of California Press, Berkeley [etc.] 1989. xi, 330 pp. $39.95.

In the century between 1840 and 1940 most Western economies experienced the transition from a working day of 10 to 12 hours and more in industry to a normal working day of 8 or 8½ hours. Since then workers have profited from economic growth mostly in the form of rising income and greater leisure. The continuing growth in leisure has mainly taken the form of work-free weekends, retirement, holidays and education, but not of a further reduction in the length of the working day. Eight hours is still our norm for a day's work.

Gary Cross has analysed the adoption of the eight-hour norm and the connected developments in the discourse on work, family and leisure in France and Britain. There is a clear link with his earlier work on immigration in France, where the declining birth-rate, the losses in the First World War and shorter working hours combined to give urgency to the feeling that France had to go *à la recherche du temps perdu*. Immigration of labour was one way to compensate for losses in working time. After his book on immigration Cross published several articles on working hours and leisure in France.[1] In this book Cross puts his views on the French situation into a long-term context and compares them with his findings on British developments.

1. G. Cross, *Immigrant Workers in Industrial France. The Making of a New Laboring Class* (Philadelphia, 1983); "Redefining Workers' Control: Rationalization, Labor Time, and Union Politics in France, 1900–1928", in J. E. Cronin and C. Sirianni (eds.), *Work, Community and Power. The Experience of Labor in Europe and America, 1900–1925* (Philadelphia, 1983), pp. 143–172; "The Quest for Leisure: Reassessing the Eight-Hour Day in France", *Journal of Social History* 18 (winter 1984), pp. 195–216; "Les Trois Huits: Labor Movements, International Reform, and the Origins of the Eight-Hour Day, 1919–1924", *French Historical Studies* 14 (1985) 2, pp. 240–286. See also G. Cross (ed.), *Worktime and Industrialization. An International History* (Philadelphia, 1988).

The arguments for shorter working hours were various, sometimes even contradictory. Cross divides the economic arguments for shorter hours into two categories: redistributionism and productionism. The redistributionists wanted to share (un)employment among all workers, the productionists believed that the growth in efficiency associated with shorter hours would mean that production would be at least as high as it had been when the working day had been longer. Trade union officials sometimes succeeded in using both lines of argument promiscuously.

The productionist argument was connected with the movement for scientific management (mainly in France) and with work science (Britain), which both promoted the concept that a longer working day was not necessarily the most productive one. Most trade unions were prepared to trade some of the workers' direct control over the labour process – which they were losing anyway – for a rationalization of work. Rationalization would make possible a more compressed and more effective working day and would thus bring higher wages and shorter hours, as it was believed to have done in the United States. Rationalized management would open new ways for the trade union movement to have a say in the labour process. Research in British war factories supported the view that shorter working hours could raise productivity. Some government authorities were impressed, but employers were not. The trade unions faced the problem that "class collaboration was impossible because of the lack of a willing partner in business" (p. 153). In the 1930s the rise of unemployment was attributed to rationalization, and it consequently lost much of its appeal to the labour movement.

Not all proponents of shorter working hours were concerned about economics. The Early Shop Closing movement in Britain or the Sunday Rest campaigns in France wanted shorter hours to enable workers to shop early on weekdays. Many advocates of shorter hours wanted to further workers' family lives or their opportunities for self-improvement, to fight alcoholism or to improve workers' health. A free Saturday afternoon, or the *semaine anglaise* as it became known in France, gave workers the opportunity to prepare themselves for the Sunday. The way workers used their free time was an argument in the discussion on shorter hours. In France the 1920s saw some discussion on the way leisure should be organized, in Britain this topic had been abandoned in the 1880s. Neither country was willing to organize leisure activities in the way totalitarian states did.

Workers themselves also chose to normalize working hours. They wanted free time for family life and leisure activities. They preferred to concentrate their work in as little time as possible and to be able to consume in the blocks of free time this created. The neighbourhood pub took the place of drinking on or near the job. Saint Monday was willingly traded for the free Saturday afternoon. Cross asserts that we should not see this domestication of the working class in a Foucauvian/Donzelotian or social control sense. There is little direct evidence Cross can offer for this position, given the scarcity of sources and the nature of the question, but I tend to support his conclusion. The workers opted for "respectable" ways of using their free time largely of their own choice, not because they succumbed to a bourgeois civilizing offensive. Cross also repeatedly states that this was not a form of embourgeoisement. This, to me, seems less convincing. The fact that workers choose certain cultural elements does not make these elements in themselves more or less bourgeois. A closer analysis of working-class culture itself and of the way these elements were used is required to answer this question.

Cross focuses primarily on the developments in the political discussion about

working hours, on the stands and policies of proponents and (less so) opponents of shorter hours. Practical economic and cultural developments (actual working hours, amount of Taylorite innovation, how free time was used) are not forgotten, but they do not occupy the centre of the stage. The few instances where Cross is not completely convincing are in these fields; he claims, for instance, that the eight-hour day "was not responsible for creating jobs, or eliminating them" (p. 195). This may or may not be true, but the arguments presented here are not conclusive.

First the nineteenth-century liberal conviction that legal protection should only be extended to "weak" women and children had to fade. Even then, the realization of the eight-hour day required the very special political and economic conjuncture of the aftermath of the First World War. The war ended in a climate of rank-and-file militancy. It had shown the possibilities of rationalizing production, had left governments with obligations to their worker–soldiers and had created an international synchronization of the political agenda.

In Britain a strong trade union movement, supported by the state, won the eight-hour day through crisis bargaining. The weaker French trade unions could not rely on their bargaining power. French law laid down the principle of the eight-hour day. It left the details of working hours regulations to decrees, to be promulgated by the factor inspectorate after consultation with labour and capital in each industry. This led to different rules for different regions and industries, depending on trade union strength and the political composition of the French government. The trade union movement tried to use the International Labour Organization to guarantee the eight-hour day internationally. Cross puts the blame for the failure of this attempt on the British. Indeed it seems strange that they were not willing to sign a treaty that would oblige their foreign competitors to adopt the same working hours that had already been adopted by British industry. The fact that the eight-hour convention would have limited British industry and trade unions alike in their freedom to bargain and the fact that the British trade unions had nothing to win for their members who already enjoyed an eight-hour working day explain this apparently irrational stance. However, by the end of the 1920s the eight-hour day had taken root in both countries (and in many others), to be followed by holidays. In France these were introduced in 1936–1938 by the Popular Front government, which also adopted the forty-hour week. This further reduction in the length of the working week, again realized in the wake of a political crisis but this time against the international tide, was not a success.

In the end the choice that reformist trade unions like the TUC and the CGT had made was realized: work was concentrated in periods of eight hours, thus freeing time for family life and consumption. Cross's book is not only convincing on the whole, he also shows himself to be a complete master of the field and offers his readers a compelling analysis which is furthermore a rich store of material on the eight-hour day.

Lex Heerma van Voss