relatives were disorderly and indolent. Naturally, the urban authorities had their own objectives. However, as this study shows, families were not only the victims of power politics, they also used the means the authorities offered to control their lives. *Disordered Lives* provides a broad and plausible picture of confinement on request and successfully places private confinement in a social context. It considers both socio-economic developments and personal experiences, and it presents sound conclusions concerning the increase in the number of cases of confinement on request, the growing proportion of confinements among lower social groups, and why men and youngsters in particular were confined. Perhaps because of this, this reader also feels somewhat dissatisfied. The authors reject the idea that the increase in the extent of private confinement can be explained by a "civilizing offensive". However, Spierenburg has demonstrated that in other cities in the Austrian Netherlands the middle and upper classes remained overrepresented during the eighteenth century and, moreover, that elite families were as much inclined to confine their relatives, particularly their male ones and children. The authors barely attempt to provide an explanation for these variant findings. The question remains then whether they would not have gained from comparing their conclusions with those of Spierenburg.

M.P.C. van der Heijden

LICHTENSTEIN, ALEX. Twice the Work of Free Labor. The Political Economy of Convict Labor in the New South. [The Haymarket Series.] Verso, London [etc.] 1996. xix, 264 pp. Ill. £39.95 (Paper: £13.95.)

Antonio Gramsci, writing from an Italian prison, observed that "The selection or 'education' of men adapted to the new forms of civilisation and to the new forms of production and work has taken place by means of incredible acts of brutality which have cast the weak and the non-conforming into the limbo of the lumpen-classes or have eliminated them entirely." In the post-Civil War United States, the institution of convict labor seems to fit Gramsci's model of a "new" system of production that was firmly embedded in draconian social relations. Prison laborers in the postbellum South, overwhelmingly African-American males, were routinely beaten, starved and tortured. One foreman of a crew of prisoners who built a rail line through a thick south-eastern swamp described one method of punishment, reminiscent of the medieval water torture:

> The prisoner was strapped down, a funnel forced into his mouth and water poured in. The effect was to enormously distend the stomach, producing not only great agony but a sense of impending death, due to pressure on the heart, that unnerved the stoutest.

W.E.B. Du Bois, in *Black Reconstruction*, argued that forced labor systems in the New South arose, in part, from the trigonal struggle between Northern capitalists and Southern elites on the one hand, and the freedpeople on the other, over the fruits of emancipation. Du Bois characterized the process that led to convict labor in the New South as "the duel for labor control". Looking back on some six decades of the convict lease and the chain gang, Du Bois ruefully noted that "The whole criminal system came to be used as a method of keeping Negroes at work and intimidating them [...] Above all, crime was used in the South as a source of income for the state." Alex Lichtenstein quotes one critic of Georgia's penal

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system in 1904 who noted that "'there is such a demand down in South Georgia for turpentine hands and sawmill hands' that blacks 'are given the full extent of the law on weakest evidence,' so that turpentine operators could 'buy them for their labor' in court".

Professor Lichtenstein's *Twice the Work of Free Labor* is part of an impressive renaissance of US studies that seek to place the institution of convict labor at the intersection of postbellum race and class relations, industrial capitalism and the South's road to "modernization". Lichtenstein demonstrates that the traditional image of the chain gang at work on the prison plantation must be enlarged to encompass the role that convict laborers played in building the South's industrial infrastructure. In doing this, he reminds readers that "southern convicts built railroads, mined coal, made brick, labored in the forest industries, and paved roads far more than they picked cotton".

While Lichtenstein's focus in this volume is the development of the convict labor system in Georgia, he makes a strong case that his findings may be applicable to the wider development of late nineteenth-century Southern penal systems that employed unfree labor. Indeed, one of the volume's many strengths is the author's well-timed comparisons with state-sanctioned bound labor in Alabama and Tennessee. Each state contained significant portions of the southern Appalachian mineral range. Each state leased convicts to private companies trying to establish extractive industry in the South. In turn, many of these corporations used convict labor to develop vertically-integrated operations that produced fuel to power blast furnaces and rolling mills, while simultaneously crushing the region's nascent labor movement.

Professor Lichtenstein firmly aligns himself with recent scholarship that rejects that idea that racialist institutions such as segregation and convict labor were the embodiments of a horribly stunted or "anti-modern" South. *Twice the Work of Free Labor*'s persistent thesis is that "Far from representing a lag in southern modernity, convict labor was a central component in the region's modernization." How else can one explain the remarkable achievement of rebuilding, within one generation, a regional infrastructure that had been shattered by the Civil War? Later, when the lease had been superseded by direct state employment of prisoners (a barbaric kind of "public works" program) Progressive Era reformers would be quick to argue that "bad boys make good roads". Hadn't "the Jewell of the South", Atlanta, been resurrected thanks in part to the slave labor of the great Chattahoochee Brick works and the prison crews who began rebuilding Atlanta and Fulton County roads in 1876? By 1880, Georgia was a national pacesetter in terms of new railroad construction. "In nearly every case of successfully completed railroad," Lichtenstein notes, "the essential but extremely arduous labor of grading the hundreds of miles of roadbed prior to laying the track was done by a force of convicts leased from the state." Throughout the late nineteenth century, African Americans made up approximately 90 per cent of these new slave-labor crews in Georgia.

Lichtenstein traces the emergence of convict labor after the Civil War by noting that the US South was only one of the many post-emancipation societies in the world grappling with the emergence of "free labor" in the nineteenth century. What made the postbellum South unique the author argues, was its relatively rapid pace of industrialization. Would-be industrialists, however, faced a highly

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recalcitrant labor force. Emancipated African Americans defined the meaning of freedom in terms of self-sufficiency and independence from white control along with family farm ownership. In this context, wage work – agricultural or industrial – was a temporary expedient for a portion of the black rural "proletariat". Yet, even for those who could not afford a homestead, labor mobility was still treasured. "For ex-slaves and their children", Lichtenstein observes, "the right to leave one employer for another was second only to the desire to work for one's self as freedom's most precious gift".

Southern industrialists chafed at the tendencies of freedpeople as well as white workers to combine wage labor with subsistence farming. At the same time, both industrialists and plantation owners bitterly opposed the idea of collective bargaining with their respective workforces. In pointing this out, Lichtenstein rejects the hypothesis that "Bourbon" planters and the region's rising industrial bourgeoisie were necessarily antagonistic towards each other's interests. "In harmony with the planters", the author notes, "the single most common complaint voiced by southern industrialists was their inability to command a reliable, predictable labor force."

In fact, convict labor had much to offer both parties. "For planters denied recourse to the slave whip," Lichtenstein writes, "the chain gang served as an important element of rural labor discipline with which to control 'their' sharecroppers." State-sanctioned bound labor also delivered a "flexible" labor force to railroads who complained that free laborers downed their tools once track-laying crews were ordered on to the next county or city. A decade later, coal and iron magnates would lease convicts for similar reasons. As Birmingham coal executives intoned, "how [is] the operator and producer [. . .] going to know how much coal or coke he is going to produce in the year or in the month if some of the miners work 10 days, some 15, some 12, and some 20 days in the month?" Thanks to the new slave labor, employers could count on fixed labor costs, longer hours and more days of toil from their charges. Lichtenstein notes that, in most years, convict miners in Georgia worked an average of fifty to sixty days longer per year than their free counterparts in West Virginia. During labor conflicts, this gap widened. "Thus," argues the author, "the convict lease was a method of labor 'recruitment' and control ideally suited to the 'Bourbon' political coalition forged by planters and New South industrialists in post-Reconstruction Georgia."

During the Progressive Era, the convict lease gave way to the state-controlled chain gang in most southern states. Proponents of the "Good Roads Movement" in Georgia and North Carolina argued that the corruption and brutality associated with the private lease system would wither away with the assumption of state control. They were wrong. However, these unfree laborers did achieve remarkable feats of construction. The counties in Georgia that resorted to prison labor after 1908 quickly outstripped their counterparts that still relied on the "antiquated statute system of road building". Lichtenstein notes that "Georgia's 13,000 miles of surfaced rural roads by the end of 1915 surpassed that of all other southern states, and indeed ranked fifth in the United States".

Lichtenstein is also effective in demonstrating that convict labor and the chain gang in the South did not exist in a vacuum. Federal support for the system proved crucial. For example, many agents of the US Office of Public Roads became boosters of chain gangs and provided engineering expertise for southern highways

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graded by bound black laborers. All the while, road gangs suffered from unsanitary conditions, poor diets and draconian punishments often indistinguishable from torture.

"Above all," Alex Lichtenstein writes, "convict labor made modern economic development of the South's resources compatible with the maintenance of racial domination." Noting that "Over four hundred convicts perished during the first twelve years of leasing in Georgia", Lichtenstein turns to Walter Benjamin's apt dictum that "There is no document of civilization that is not at the same time a document of barbarism." *Twice the Work of Free Labor* is an indispensable study of forced labor systems that will inform historians and public policy students as well as bring contemporary debates on "prison reform" in our own time to a higher level.

Paul Ortiz

HABERER, ERICH. Jews and revolution in nineteenth-century Russia. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [etc.] 1995. xv, 346 pp. £40.00; $59.95.

In this erudite study, Erich Haberer suggests a revisionist interpretation of central aspects of the highly politically sensitive issue of Jewish participation in the Russian revolutionary movement, particularly during its Populist phases of the *Zemlia i Volia* and *Narodnaia Volia* of the 1870s and the 1880s.

Haberer argues that the depiction in existent histories of the role played by Jews in Russian revolutionary Populism is dominated by an ideologically motivated sort of "accepted version" that is built of, or rather distorted by, fallacies and clichés. According to this version, in contrast to latter-day Russian Marxism with its Western internationalism and proletarian determinism, there was nothing in Russian Populism – imbued as it was with admiration for rural traditionalism and anarchic peasantryism – that could attract Jewish revolutionaries. Accordingly, this version continues, the participation by Jews in Populist movements was low – 4.4 per cent in the 1870s – and did not exceed their percentage in the population. The accepted version further marginalized the contribution of those allegedly few Jews who did join revolutionary Populism by describing them as merely "technicians of revolution", i.e. they were active in the organizational and logistic sides of underground activity, but had only negligible influence on Populist ideology and politics. Finally, according to this version, the Jewish revolutionaries underwent a process of "de-Judaization" and became "non-Jewish Jews". That is, they were cosmopolitan socialists and Russified assimilationists whose revolutionary activity was hardly influenced by their Jewish origin and was devoid of any specific Jewish content. Moreover, paying but little attention to the future of their own people, they assumed that Jewish suffering under the Tsarist regime would be solved by the revolution, an approach that reached its apotheosis in their passive attitude to the sympathy revealed by Russian Populist circles to the pogroms of the 1880s.

Haberer's revision is based on a reconsideration of the essential elements of the accepted version. His main conclusion is that they are empirically groundless and that the role played by Jews in revolutionary Populism should be "re-

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