

The construction of *pueblo bajo* (common people) in Madrid. Popular work, culture and politics in the crisis of the *Ancien Régime*

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ABSTRACT

On the 50th anniversary of *The Making of the English Working Class*, this paper studies the history of labor and popular politics in Madrid from the perspective of Thompson's classic. In order to pay homage to the author, we analyze the same period (1780-1833) and reproduce the thematic structure of his book. Firstly, this essay studies the impact of the French Revolution in Madrid and its role in the crisis of the *Ancien Régime*. Then it describes the changes on the social relations of production during the rise of capitalism, focusing on the proletarianization of artisan workforce. Finally it analyzes popular culture and politics, stressing the role of working classes in the conflicts between liberals and absolutists. Although these processes didn't create a working class consciousness, they led to the rise and fall of another historical subject that we refer to as "pueblo bajo" (lower people).

KEYWORDS: E.P. Thompson; "barrios bajos"; "majos"; proletarianization; popular politics; ultra-royalism.

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