

In this, the first issue of 2018, our six articles add to debates both new and old. In the first article – “Labor at the Taylor Society: Scientific Management and a Proactive Approach to Increase Diversity for Effective Problem Solving” – Hindy Schachter, Professor of Management at the New Jersey Institute of Technology, contributes to the “revisionist” school of thought regarding the work and influence of Frederick Taylor, the “father” of scientific management. This revisionist school, whose prominent members include Kyle Bruce and Chris Nyland, have taken umbrage at those who – to cite Bruce – “have demonized Taylor and Taylorism” (Bruce, 2016, p. 171). In the “traditional” view, perhaps most famously articulated by Harry Braverman in *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, Taylorism is depicted as an agent of work intensification, hostile to the interests of both individual workers and the organised labour movement as a whole. In Braverman’s (1974, pp. 120-21) opinion, “Modern management came into being” with Taylor, reducing workers “to the level of general and undifferentiated labor power”. The revisionist contestation of this view has largely occurred within the pages of this journal. It is a contestation that has, moreover, been well received, at least in certain quarters. In September 2017, for example, a previous article by Schachter (2016) in *JMH* – “Frederick Winslow Taylor, Henry Hallowsell Faquhar, and the dilemma of relating management education to organizational practice” – won the Bright Idea Award from the Stillman School of Business at Seton Hall University, an award that signifies that this article was judged one of the top ten published by New Jersey business faculty members in 2016. The reviewers for this article – which traces the involvement of trade union officials in the Taylor Society – clearly felt similarly, one observing that, “The paper is a significant and original contribution to the revisionist history of the relationship between Taylor Society and the trade union movement”. Among those who made formal presentations at the Taylor Society were representatives from the Amalgamated Sheet Metal Workers Union, the United Textile Workers of America, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Great Britain’s National Federation of Women Workers, the Boot and Shoe Workers Union, the American Federation of Full Fashioned Hosiery Workers and the American Federation of Labor. While Schachter does not contend that the Taylor Society was a “pro-labor” organisation, what Schachter does do is demonstrate that by the 1920s the Society was “explicitly reaching out to labor”. In the process, Schachter reveals as myth many of the previous views of the Taylor Society and Taylorism, articulated by Braverman and Co.

Our second article, by James Reveley (University of Wollongong, Australia) and John Singleton (Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom) – “Carbon Copy: The Mock Bureaucratic Setting of Colliery Explosions in Early Twentieth Century Britain and at Pike River, New Zealand” – is also one that takes old debates from a new or revisionist angle. As *JMH* readers would be aware, modern organisations are fundamentally “bureaucratic” in style. In *Economy and Society*, Weber (1978, p. 973) famously declared, “The decisive reason for the advance of bureaucratic organization has always been its purely *technical* superiority over any other form of organization”. In Weber’s view, bureaucracy was superior to all other forms of organisation in its “speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs”. In their article, Reveley and Singleton challenge the supposed advantages of a bureaucratic approach in the field of workplace health and safety (WHS). In questioning the efficacy of bureaucracy, they explore the circumstances at a number of horrific coal mine



disasters, namely, those at Genwen (1917, South Wales), Wellington (1910, Cumberland), Gresford (1934, North Wales) and Pike River (2010, New Zealand). In examining these disasters, Reveley and Singleton draw upon the little-known work of an American sociologist, Alvin Gouldner. In his work, *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy*, the author argued that organisations are often characterised by what he calls “mock bureaucracy”, wherein organisational members conspire to bend and ignore rules while at the same time providing superficial observance. It is this, Reveley and Singleton argue, that was behind the disasters at all the mines that they studied. At the Pike River mine on the northwest coast of New Zealand, for example, where 29 were killed when the mine exploded in 2010, both management and the workforce had been struggling to get the mine operational in the face of numerous geological and technological problems. Fearing that further delays would threaten the mine’s survival, workers and management persisted, ignoring major safety breaches: ignition sparks in what was a gaseous mine; a precariously located secondary exit, requiring ascent of a vertical ladder and a poorly located ventilation fan. New Zealand government safety inspectors, also fearful of contributing to premature mine closure, chose to engage in “mock” bureaucratic actions. When confronted with persistent breaches of regulation, their major response was to require management to complete a written “risk assessment”. In my view as Editor, this article has special importance for our understandings of WHS disasters. It is the first, to my knowledge, to question the efficacy of the “Robens-based” approach to WHS, an approach that emerged from the British Robens’ Report of 1974. Recommending “risk management” rather than rigid compliance to rules, this approach to WHS has generally been regarded as the pre-eminent WHS management model – a pre-eminence that Reveley and Singleton question.

Our third article in this first edition of 2018 – “The Business of Black Beauty: Social Entrepreneurship or Social Injustice?” – is by Simone Phipps (Middle Georgia State University, USA) and Leon Prieto (Clayton State University, USA). My first acquaintance with this work, in an earlier reiteration, occurred when it was presented to a Management History Division session at the Academy of Management’s Annual Meeting in Anaheim in August 2016. The story told, of black female entrepreneurs struggling to make a living in a hostile social environment, was one that immediately made an impression on me. I am, therefore, delighted to see a much revised version of the paper appear in *JMH*. In essence, Phipps and Prieto perceive the growth of the “black beauty” industry through a number of lenses: “fairness”, “entrepreneurship”, “social mission” and discrimination. Of these factors, it was discrimination that arguably was the main initial driver of the American “black beauty” industry. From slavery onwards, Phipps and Prieto recount, African Americans have suffered discrimination at many different levels because of appearance and “beauty” perceptions. Historically, “kinky” hair has been deemed less desirable than Caucasian-style straight hair, and fairer skin has been associated with a greater chance of material advancement than a darker skin. Even today, research shows that a person with an “African American” sounding name is less likely to be interviewed for a job – even if they have the requisite qualifications. Those who suffered discrimination and even exclusion by “white” businesses tried to redress their appearance to fit social norms. In tracing the entrepreneurial response to the discrimination experienced, Phipps and Prieto highlight the business success of two female Afro-Americans: Annie Turnbo-Malone and Sarah Breedlove (Madame C.J. Walker). The success of these individuals can be ascertained from the fact that both, at various times, have been declared the first female African American “millionaire”. Both are described as making a significant difference in employment. Turnbo-Malone’s business, which traded under the “Poro” brand, gave work to an estimated 75,000 female sales agents. These women, as Phipps and Prieto note, would have had “few other

(if any) professional opportunities". Madam C.J. Walker's manufacturing and sales business, it is believed, provided employment for 5,000 female agents. Both Turnbo-Malone and Walker were also philanthropists, funding hospitals, churches and schools. Walker also provided funds for the Tuskegee Institute, the YMCA and the NAACP. The problem that Phipps and Prieto understandably find in all this is that the "black" industry historically thrived in conveying a sense of "whiteness" that did little to foster redress of the underlying discrimination of African American people that undermined self-worth. As in many other areas of life, economic and social advancement in this case was built on a paradox.

Our fourth article – "Revisiting Perspectives on George Homans: Correcting Misconceptions" – is a theoretically sophisticated and wide-ranging analysis of sociological debates that primarily revolved around Talcott Parsons and George Homans at Harvard University between the 1930s and 1960s. Undertaken by Jeffrey Muldoon (Emporia State University, USA), Eric Liguori (Rowan University, United Kingdom), Josh Bendickson (University of Louisiana, USA) and Antonia Bauman (Emporia State University, USA), this study explores in what was a Golden era for social theory in general and sociology in general, Parsons and Homans – both of whom (most particularly Homans) had been influenced by fellow Harvard academic, Elton Mayo – were part of a movement that sought to explain human behaviour in non-economic terms. Parsons, the dominant figure in sociology by the 1950s, pioneered what is known as "functional" sociology. This held that human institutions take the shape that they do because they serve certain functions that are useful to a majority of the relevant population. The problem with this line of thinking, which contributed to its eventual demise, is that – as Muldoon, Liguori, Bendickson and Bauman note – "it took away cause and effect". In other words, explanations become circular, as the norms, beliefs and functions of a culture explain its institutions and its institutions are proof of the importance of norms, beliefs and functions. In countering this view, Homans played a seminal role in the development of "social exchange theory", which adapted Adam Smith's ideas of exchange to explain non-economic outcomes. In this, it is demonstrated, Homans was influenced by the London-based anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, whose study of the Melanesian society of the Trobriand Islands also influenced Mayo. From his observations, Malinowski noted how group behaviour was influenced by "reciprocity, a game of give-and-take". Drawing on such insights, Homans – unlike Parsons – focused on groups rather than institutions and on behaviour rather than social functions. From such insights, Homans was to develop his ideas of "social exchange theory". However, as Muldoon, Liguori, Bendickson and Bauman indicate, Homans himself came to dislike the term "social exchange", preferring to focus on human behaviour. Thus, for him, the complaint that he failed to fully distinguish between what is an economic exchange and what is a social exchange was largely inconsequential in that he "took a broader viewpoint of social interactions than did economics". Accordingly, his goal was "to reform the economic man, not overthrow him". Although it is only a minor point in this story, Muldoon, Liguori, Bendickson and Bauman also highlight Homans' role in the debates about the veracity or otherwise of Mayo's Hawthorne experiments, a debate in which Homans acted as a passionate defender of the experiment and its findings. In this, as in other things, the authors emphasise, Homans stayed true to the fundamental belief "that work could be studied through scientific means".

The fifth article in this edition – "Moving 'The Greatest Show on Earth': W.C. Coup as an Innovative Champion" – is an extraordinarily well-written and engaging story that tells of the entrepreneurial endeavours of William C. Coup, a showman who revolutionised the circus industry by integrating show logistics with those of America's railways in the early 1870s. In exploring Coup's ventures – which also included a New York aquarium –

Keenan Yoho (Rollins College, FL), Bob Ford (University of Central Florida), Bo Edvardsson (Karlstads University, Sweden) and Fred Dahlinger (Florida State University) draw on “effectuation theory”, which is defined as “a pragmatic approach to management and entrepreneurship that pays attention to the creation of novelty”. W.C. Coup, the focus of this study, was certainly one to create novelty. Having run away to join a circus at 16 years of age, in the early 1870s, Coup turned his attention to the economics of running a travelling circus. The problem was that a circus, which had to rely on horse-drawn transport, could only travel 10 to 20 miles per day. This meant that many performances had to be given before small-town crowds where the take was typically not much more than \$2,000. By contrast, at larger towns, \$7,000 per day could be garnered. Frequent moves to get to the next town also exhausted the circus performers. To get around such problems, Coup persuaded P.T. Barnum to come out of retirement and in 1872 put P.T. Barnum’s Great Travelling Exposition & World’s Fair on to the railways. Among the logistical problems that Coup had to overcome was the absence of standardised flat cars, a problem that he solved by having his own customised flat cars made for the circus. The scale of Coup’s endeavour can be ascertained from the fact that in 1872 it took two trains and 65 cars to move P.T. Barnum’s circus. In subsequent years, it involved three to four trains and up to 100 cars. So skilful did Coup become in managing this operation that the circus could move 100 miles overnight, arrive at a new destination at 6 a.m., and then run three shows a day – the latest starting at 8 p.m. – before moving on to the next town. Unfortunately, as readers will ascertain, Coup’s ventures subsequent to his parting ways with Barnum were less successful, Coup being forced into bankruptcy in 1884. In drawing lessons from Coup’s endeavours, note that entrepreneurial “champions”, who give substance to an idea, are people who in the first instance perceive “something in the environment that causes dissatisfaction with the status quo”. As the authors indicate, Coup certainly was such a champion.

The final article in this first edition of 2018 – “Social enterprise in antebellum America: The Case of Nashoba (1824-1829)” – is authored by Patrick J. Murphy (DePaul University), Jack Smothers (University of Southern Indiana), Milorad Novicevic (University of Mississippi), Foster Roberts (Southeast Missouri State University) and Artem Kornetsky (University of Customs and Finance, Ukraine). It tells an inspiring story of a female-led social entrepreneurial venture in the first part of the nineteenth century. As one would expect from a cast of authors that includes three former Chairs of the Management History Division of the Academy of Management – Murphy, Novicevic and Humphreys – this fascinating article is well researched and conceptually rigorous. It is a case study of a surprisingly early example of social enterprise. The entrepreneurial venture in question was called Nashoba, and it was the brainchild of a young female immigrant from Scotland, Frances Wright. The social enterprise intended to diminish the US institution of slavery. In 1824, the venture acquired land in Tennessee, where it launched a cotton farming operation. Local volunteers and approximately ten formerly enslaved persons, whose freedom had been purchased for \$400-\$600 each, maintained its operations. The freed individuals became employees of the Nashoba organisation and also received education and gainful employment. The farm’s cotton sales were intended to cover operational costs and procure freedom for additional enslaved persons, to grow the venture and increase its impact. A relative sense of the expenses involved – and of the massive cost of US slavery in the early nineteenth century – can be ascertained from the fact that a skilled blacksmith at the time earned about \$1 per day. Thus, the emancipation of one enslaved person entailed almost two years of income for an average tradesperson of the time. Nashoba was a social enterprise: Wright intended for the venture to become an economically self-sustaining venture that also

generated measurable social value in the form of freedom for enslaved people. Like most social entrepreneurial ventures, Nashoba also received revenue in the form of donations. Among its supporters were Lafayette, the French aristocratic who in his youth had fought alongside the patriots responsible for US independence, James Madison (President 1809-1817) and Andrew Jackson (President 1829-1837). However, many of these supporters turned out to be “fair weather friends”, becoming critics of the venture as threats to its business model emerged. After five years of operation, Nashoba failed for economic reasons related to industrialisation, rising international demand for cotton, and operational budgets that were overly optimistic. In any case, the venture would have eventually faced an impossible environment in the decades leading up to the Civil War. However, the authors make a compelling case for the historical significance of Nashoba as an early and foundational example of social enterprise.

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- Bruce, K. (2016), “Management science, planning, and demand management”, *Journal of Management History*, Vol. 22 No. 2, p. 171.
- Weber, M. (1978), *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, Vol. 2, p. 973.

Further reading

- Schachter, H.L. (2016), “Frederick Winslow Taylor, Henry Hallowell Farquhar, and the Dilemma of relating management education to organizational practice”, *Journal of Management History*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 199-213.