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Book Reviews

Consumer Society in American History: A Reader
LAWRENCE B. GLICKMAN (ed.), 1999
Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press
pp. xvi + 350, $34.95

When Robert and Helen Lynd published *Middletown* in 1929, they provided the first ethnographically based picture ever of the everyday ways that marked the lives of town-based Americans. In that pathbreaking book is revealed to what degree 19th-century agrarian self-sufficiency had retreated in Middle America, almost unnoticed, before an expanding market system. Town-based and urban Americans were producing less and less of what they consumed, and consuming more and more of what they had not produced. But *Middletown* reached its readers just as the effects of the world depression were beginning to be felt. What the depression meant to American consumers became much clearer in the Lynds' sequel, *Middletown in Transition*. In truth "Middletown" (Muncie, Indiana) ended up doing better than most U.S. towns, because it was home to the Ball jar—a basic necessity to successful canning at home. Hard-pressed Americans turned to canning with a vengeance between 1929 and 1935, and bought less of everything, rather than more, in the pre-World War II years. In a small way the Ball jar epitomized the constriction of wide-ranging consumption in those meager times.

People now in their 60s or older may recall the Depression; most of us know of it from being told about it. But it did happen. People did try to sell apples, rode the rails, lived in shantytowns, jumped out of windows, and even starved to death. Not only was there no paper toweling; there wasn't even any Kleenex. Those of my generation would say it was the biggest scare of the century; but then World War II provided a different sort of fright. Surely everything changed after 1945.

Pearl Harbor had launched us anew upon a career as a producing nation. Not until the war was over did we really become a consuming nation again, and it may fairly be said that we have not really looked back. Since the 1940s, American consumerism has had many critics, but few availing; and in this handy collection editor Glickman sets American consumerism within its historical and social context.

This anthology benefits greatly from the editor's thoughtful introduction and concluding bibliographical essay, and from his organization of the contributions into five categories. He tries to situate the study of American consumption historically by enumerating 35 (unnumbered) points, which vary from an initial assertion about the consumer-driven exchange between Europeans and New World aborigines, to taking note of David Caplowitz's pathbreaking *The Poor Pay More* (1963) and Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1964), and concluding with Benjamin Barber's plea that consumers let corporations know what they disapprove of. While offering a brief overview of approaches to consumption, Glickman explains his five categories: frameworks and definitions; roots of American consumer society; class, gender and modernity, 1880–1940; consumerism since World War II; critiques and celebrations.

This thoughtful and solidly documented collection looks at consumption with an eye both to the past and to the world, so that the U.S. does not come off *sui generis*, so much as ahead of the pack. Comprising 24 excellently chosen selections, from Raymond Williams's definitional consideration of "the consumer" to Juliet Schor's plea for shorter hours (and *higher productivity*), the book enables the reader to see both how consumption changed over time, and how the *analysis* of consumption has changed over time.

The selections vary in length; those by Williams and Schor are quite brief, and Alan Durning's sensible environmentalist view of consumption ("Nature doesn't care how many dollars get spent") is less than four pages long. But Michael Schudson's dignified attempt to square the giddy defenses of consumerism, *tout court*, with the sometimes silly attacks upon it, is 20 pages long; while Jean-Christophe Agnew's illuminating historical summary, which concludes the collection, is 25 pages long.

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A brief review cannot address seriously the wide range of views and outlooks this useful book displays. But this reviewer learned much from reading the book through, as well as from contemplating the perspective of the editor. Teachers of college courses on consumption and U.S. society will find much to enlighten their students here.

SIDNEY W. MINTZ, *Wm. L. Straus Jr. Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, Johns Hopkins University*

Neither Separate Nor Equal: Women, Race, and Class in the South
BARBARA ELLEN SMITH (ed.), 1999
Philadelphia: Temple University Press
pp. ix + 286, $39.95

The Southern Albatross: Race and Ethnicity in the American South
PHILIP D. DILLARD & RANDALL L. HALL (eds.), 1999
Macon, GA: Mercer University Press
pp. 282, $34.95

The South remains arguably the most frequently written about and analyzed region in the United States. These two collections of essays make clear that, despite an abundance of attention, there is still work to be done. Scholars have increasingly turned their attention from the stock characters of southern history to consider a more diverse South. Both of these books make race central to their focus, but balance racial issues with attention to questions concerning ethnicity, gender and class.

The Southern Albatross presents the work of eight historians who are exploring southern history by offering creative new angles of approach. In a brief epilogue, Donald Mathews suggests that all of the articles, explicitly or implicitly, "deal with the pervasiveness of myth, type, and image—that is, with popular belief that seems to hide or at least to confound the historical" (276). It is an insightful way to deal with a variety of topics ranging chronologically and topically from the Seminole Wars of the 1830s to revelations about the authenticity of a popular multicultural text in the 1990s. Samuel Watson opens the volume with a study of civilian and military relations in Florida during the Second Seminole War. Concluding that army officers demonstrated "accountability and restraint rather than recklessness and belligerence in their attitudes toward Indian removal and territorial expansion," he challenges the myth of American soldiers as one-dimensional Indian fighters (49). Clayton Jewett also explores Indian–white conflict; he suggests that on the eve of the Civil War relations between the two groups were "best characterized by mutual hatred and destruction" (54). Some Texans feared that secession and the removal of federal troops would leave them at the mercy of Indians. In Texas, Jewett claims, war with the Indians became "more serious and defining" than the war with the North. In this important contribution to Civil War historiography, a mythical united Confederacy is sharply challenged.

Most southern history assumes racism as a uniquely white construct and practice with blacks united in victimhood. In his study of "the uneasy relationship" between Louisiana's lighter skinned free blacks and darker slaves, James D. Wilson concludes that a large percentage of the former "did not actively join the fight against slavery and did see themselves on a level well above other blacks, particularly slaves and recently freed slaves" (123). Blacks could be racists themselves and whites, for example Leo Frank, could be victims. Stephen A. Brown uses a concept of myth as a means of explaining the 1913 lynching of Frank. He concludes that "many socially accepted and generally benign myths about Jews were transformed into racially motivated hate" (173). His interpretation is not entirely convincing. He does not explain why, in light of a tolerant climate for lynching in the South into the 20th century, Jews were so rarely victims (he acknowledges only one other case). Furthermore, he offers no comparison between the "Judaeophobic assumptions" in the South and other parts of the country, leaving it unclear whether he thinks they were much stronger in the South or about the same as elsewhere. Nancy Lopez also looks at the relationship of myth to murder in Atlanta in a study of the deaths of 28 black children there in the 1970s. Lopez concludes that the murders challenged Atlanta's myth of itself as a "city of progress and racial harmony," and made clear that the city "had not yet escaped the problems of race" (232).

What Mathews refers to as "the mythic aura of married life" is explored in two articles: Donald H. McGee analyzes the importance of family for recently freed blacks in a North Carolina county; Angela

Boswell considers a more negative aspect of marriage and family in her study of domestic abuse in Texas in the 19th century. Jeff Roche's article, "Asa/Forrest Carter and Regional/Political Identity," is a fitting conclusion to a volume organized around the theme of myth. This white supremacist and terrorist who renamed himself Forrest and reinvented himself as an Indian revealing his people's ways to the white world is, Roche concludes, "an example of how social and political conservatives have appropriated frontier mythology and symbolism to promote a particular agenda" (237). In his most popular novel, *The Education of Little Tree*, Carter so effectively assumed an Indian childhood that the book became a number one best seller and was widely adopted in schools. Revelation about Carter's background prompted defense of the book as separate from its author as well as condemnation by those who saw its use as undermining genuine multiculturism. Carter's activities were, Roche concludes, "an alarming example of how Americans' cherished myths and symbols can be appropriated for vulgar ends" (274).

This book of essays, skillfully edited by Philip D. Dillard and Randall L. Hall, will make excellent supplemental reading for courses in southern history. While never denying the centrality of race or white brutality toward blacks, these readings clearly establish race and ethnicity as more complicated and multifaceted than many traditional accounts reveal.

Use of the theme of myth as an organizational scheme works for much of *Women, Race and Class* as well; this collection explores many of the same issues as *Southern Albatross* but from a more contemporary and always from a feminist perspective; the articles here generally have a more personal and in some cases autobiographical approach than those in the collection of historical essays. Editor Barbara Ellen Smith acknowledges the considerable attention that historians have given to the South; her volume is intended as an effort to rectify the comparative neglect of the region by social scientists. Smith looks back to the "long shadows of history" in the South as well as forward to putting southern women's issues in the context of the "challenge posed by globalization" (3–5). She offers a theoretical essay establishing context for the 12 articles that follow. Most of them are based on interviews and personal reflection. An article by Darlene Wilson and Patricia Beaver explores the interesting and complex history of "Melungeons," mixed race women in 19th-century Appalachia; now telling their silenced stories, the authors argue, "contests the myth of Appalachia's lily whiteness and offers an opportunity for both recoloring and engendering Appalachian history" (35).

Articles on Priscilla Jacobs, chief of the Waccamaw Sioux, and professional women in the Mississippi Delta make clear that there is opportunity for women of color in the South to succeed. Other articles focus on the problems of poorer and less well-educated Southern women. Mahnaz Kousha interviewed white employers and black domestics to understand something about the personal relationship established in this hierarchical arrangement. Her work is also revealing about marital relations; although the white women she studied don't look upon their black maids as equal friends (a relationship some of the black women claimed), they did turn to them for solace and companionship when trapped in unhappy and even abusive marriages. Loida Velazquez reflects on her own experience relocating in the South in an effort to understand how Latinas in the South cope with the different cultural patterns they must adjust to in the United States.

Some articles make clear that southern women of all races and ethnicities can be activists, fighting the injustice and oppression they confront. Articles that explore black women successfully challenging white opposition to federal funding in a poor southern county, community building in Appalachia by Federation of Communities in Service (FOCIS), women leading a strike against a hospital in Kentucky and an organization promoting "worker-to-worker exchange trips between factory workers in Tennessee and Mexico" to promote better understanding of the international division of labor are examples. The concluding chapter, "What's Sex Got to Do with it, Y'All," by Mab Segrest, uses autobiography to make clear that lesbians must be included in an inclusive study of southern women.

Despite the volume of scholarly and fictional work devoted to the South, the region remains arguably the most mythical region in the United States. The final pages of *Neither Separate Nor Equal* recreate a conversation among three Mississippi blacks, a Jewish woman from New York, and Mab Segrest concerning lesbian sexuality—certainly not a topic associated with southern studies. When Segrest is told, "I never heard a gay person talk like that," she replies, "maybe you never gave them a chance" (266).

These two volumes make clear that there remain many southern stories that still need to be given a chance. They are important contributions to the ongoing effort to better understand the South and thus, perhaps, to better understand the United States.

BESS BEATTY, *Associate Professor of History, Oregon State University*

Yellow Steel: The Story of the Earthmoving Equipment Industry
WILLIAM R. HAYCRAFT, 2000
Urbana: University of Illinois Press
pp. xvi + 465, $34.95

This history of the commercial and technological development of one of America's under-discussed industries is an achievement that is perhaps more pertinent to economic and business historians than to labor historians. Some 93% of its text informs readers about specific companies, their mergers and their disappearance, about the relationship of the earthmoving equipment industry to the postwar economy, to political decisions and to trends in globalization and about major engineering breakthroughs. As such it is a valuable resource for historians who need basic facts or for business historians who are searching for research topics in the late 20th century. With but 7% of the text—to wit the Appendix—devoted specifically to industrial relations, readers of *Labor History* may wonder what is of interest for them?

The answer can either be a little or a lot! Some may write off *Yellow Steel* as a management survey of primarily post-1930s trends, with a slant towards hitting out at organized labor. Yet there is more to this volume than a blame-laden "slagging off." The difficulties faced by particular companies are also attributed to inept management, fluctuations in the American economy, and changing international exchange rates. Certainly labor is viewed as ceaselessly seeking improvements and the industrial relations scenario is perceived as adversarial, both of which tend to produce a negative and at times imperial tone! There is, however, much to be learned from the 27 pages that directly talk about unions and from the other direct sentences scattered throughout the text.

Perhaps it should be noted here that William Haycraft is a retired marketing executive of Caterpillar Inc., a major player in the national and international earthmoving equipment markets. He has much insider knowledge and has used this together with corporate annual reports, selective newspaper and periodical literature, some government publications and secondary sources that are company-sponsored, general interest and academic in their nature. There are some excellent photographs, usually from the archives of companies and much technological information. The volume should be greatly welcomed by machinery enthusiasts.

So what are the special items of attention for labor historians? William Haycraft briefly surveys union organization from the days of craft union beginnings, via works councils to industrial unionism in the 1930s and 1940s. He offers more information on the origins of rival unions, primarily the UAW–CIO and the UFE (Farm Equipment Workers). The postwar years were a period of strife and strikes as they were in many American industries and management was bitterly opposed to unions. The UAW worked towards a strategy of industry-wide bargaining in the automobile and equipment industry. By the mid-1950s this meant a union shop, dues check-off, an annual improvement factor to recognize the commonly accepted increases in productivity, a COLA (cost of living adjustment), five or six days' paid holidays, supplemental unemployment benefits, improved non-contributory pensions and some steps toward comprehensive medical insurance. Blue-collar workers were becoming middle class and secure in the comfortable years, 1956–79, when the earthmoving equipment industry benefited from the construction of the Interstate Highways, major dams, the Alaskan pipeline and new mines and from export markets. Unions continued to negotiate improvements gaining more paid time-off and non-economic benefits such as overtime scheduling and seniority rights, often in a contentious climate.

Change, however, was on the horizon. The industry contracted as demand for equipment levelled off, poor economic conditions prevailed world-wide and foreign manufacturers became more competitive. Downsizing became necessary. In such difficult conditions unions became focused on job security and cooperated with management to prevent losses. Gradually and with much animosity displayed through strikes, especially at Caterpillar, another era emerged in which management claimed back "traditional" labor rights. For example, there would be a two-tiered wage system with a lower starting point for newly hired workers, flexible work schedules, no wage increases for the lifetime of a contract and management's right to use part-time and temporary employees. The jury is still out on any assessment of the unions' compromises to cope with industrial downsizing and a highly competitive international labor supply. To some extent negations will depend on world economic conditions, but a younger generation of workers may have to face new working environments where they do not have a job for life and in which continuous retraining is necessary for any degree of comfort. Unions will need to direct more attention to the "unskilled" highly replaceable workers who badly need their assistance. But they may operate from a position of weakness rather than strength.

MARGARET WALSH, *Reader in American Economic and Social History, University of Nottingham*

Faces Along the Bar: Lore and Order in the Workingman's Saloon, 1870–1920
MADELON POWERS, 1998
Chicago: University of Chicago Press
pp. 323, $45.00

Students of labor history have often heard it claimed that the saloon was the "poor man's club." History professor Madelon Powers explores what that phrase truly means in *Faces Along the Bar*. She does not dispute its essential accuracy. In fact, as it true for her treatment of virtually all aspects of saloon life, she carefully examines, explains, and amplifies what others have often accepted as truisms. That applies, too, to the claim that the workingmen's saloon was nothing more than a den of vice.

The subtitle of Powers' book provides an excellent summary of how she intends to examine saloon life. Certainly there is plenty of saloon lore for her to study, and it might have been tempting to present it as a series of entertaining anecdotes; however, and to the benefit of all readers, she carefully teases out deeper meanings underlying saloon folkways. Powers examines the popular recitations "The Shooting of Dan McGrew" and "The Face upon the Floor" for what they reveal about social conventions, particularly the "drunkard's confession." That bit of pathos typically followed the outcast's bid for "sympathetic attention by invoking the familiar clubbing rituals of the treat and the toast. This puts the regulars in the uncomfortable position of having either to reject him overtly or accept him temporarily as a participant in their activities" (171–172).

Even more interesting is her discussion of "order" in the workingman's saloon. She uses the term to encompass the many unwritten rules of behavior that saloongoers were expected to follow, such as: "The first rule of barroom treating was that the recipient was expected to reciprocate, in drinks or favors or some other mutually acceptable manner" (94). "Order" is certainly the appropriate term to describe the body of rules because fellow drinkers typically punished a violator by shunning.

The true workingman's saloon lasted from the 1870s until the coming of prohibition in the 1920s. It served a useful purpose, argues Powers, especially the institution of the "free lunch," which she discusses at length. However, the saloon's unsavory aspects gave it such a bad reputation in the eyes of many Americans that when President Franklin D. Roosevelt announced repeal of Prohibition in 1933 he confidently asserted that it did not mean the return of the old-time saloon and all the vice it connoted.

As for the "free lunch," a term embedded in the general political vocabulary today, Powers explores it in fascinating detail. She finds that the "free lunch" originated mainly because of competition between breweries. How extensive the fare was varied from region to region and from city to city. It tended to be rather skimpy in some cities because high saloon licensing fees militated against vigorous competition. In Atlanta there was the complicating question of racial segregation and the saloonkeepers' dislike of stocking and maintaining double counters. In some cities, though, the "free lunch" was truly sumptuous. Yet, as with so many aspects of saloon life, a rigid set of rules, or "order," surrounded the "free lunch." All partakers were expected to pay for at least one glass of beer, usually at the cost of five cents, before helping themselves to any food. There were moochers, however, who broke the rules and risked the wrath of the saloonkeeper. For a poor workingman down on his luck, the "free lunch" played a special role in sustaining him until he found a job or times improved.

A special set of unwritten rules prevailed when it came to women in the workingman's saloon, especially if they were not prostitutes. Powers notes how a group of young working women in a commercial laundry in New York City started patronizing a bar, buying the obligatory five-cent glass of beer in order to have access to the "free lunch." The male patrons jumped up, grabbed their glasses, and went into the adjacent barroom to resume their lounging, chatting, smoking, and drinking. Powers suggests that such behavior might have been the result of "sheer confusion. They recognized that the working women's desire to take advantage of the free lunch was legitimate. But no clear social guidelines had yet evolved regarding proper male behavior when groups of respectable female strangers invaded previously male-dominated space" (211–212).

Powers, an associate professor of history at the University of New Orleans, obviously relishes her subject. Her extensive and detailed notes testify to the depth of her interest. The notes themselves carry on a fascinating dialogue between Powers and her readers, and even reveal Powers's own thinking process, as when she confesses in one note that "I am now in the awkward position of disagreeing with myself …" (304). This refreshing candor, which recognizes ambiguities inherent in so complex a subject, makes *Faces Along the Bar* a pleasant and highly informative study.

CARLOS A. SCHWANTES, *Professor of History, University of Idaho*

Coal: A Memoir and Critique
DUANE LOCKARD, 1998
Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press
pp. xi + 225, $39.95

When The Mines Closed: Stories of Struggles in Hard Times
THOMAS DUBLIN, 1998
Ithaca: Cornell University Press
pp. xiii + 245, $35.00

Under the "new economy," it is at times odd to recall how older manufacturing and extractive industries provided the economic backbone of entire regions, states, and communities in the "old economy" of the recent past. In the case of coal mining, the industry supported smaller working-class company towns throughout the southern and central Appalachians from Alabama to Pennsylvania. And in many respects, the stories of coal-mining communities in these regions remind us how, despite the rosy picture of today's technology "gold rush," that an economic bust lies inevitably beyond the boom.

These two books, *Coal: A Memoir and Critique* and *When the Mines Closed: Stories of Struggles in Hard Times* together provide an excellent overview of this economic trajectory from the early 20th century to the late Cold War Era. In this context of the boom and bust cycle endemic to mining, these books offer profound views of daily survival strategies of coal miners and their families. In large part, the greater story of these books addresses the ways that mining families and their communities struggled with corporate hegemony, limited union power and constant job insecurity from the 1910s to the 1970s.

Coal, as the title suggests, offers a memoir of the author's life in a coal-mining family and a critique of the industry as a whole. The author, Duane Lockard, is Professor of Politics Emeritus at Princeton University who grew up in a West Virginia mining community. Lockard's perspective is quite unique as an Ivy League academic and a grassroots insider of mining life. His father worked for the Consolidation Coal Company, as did he before heading off to college, so Lockhard provides a gritty and intensely personal account of life in the mines. Having lived with the industry from birth and through his father's death from black lung, Lockard finds inspiration in the bittersweet memories of his own family to criticize the corporate callousness that shaped his own life and that of other coal-mining communities.

Lockard, as he admits, makes "no claim to impartiality" in his observations, since, in his words, "coal has been the center of my family's history" (xii). But rather than simply a memoir of coal-mining community life, Lockard uses his family's experiences to illustrate the ways that corporate policies in the coal industry reflect the specific ways that large-scale capital operations generally inhibit democracy and justice for working families in the United States. As he argues, "coal operators' conduct was not so atypical as to be unrepresentative of the corporate experience as a whole." Through this criticism, he recognizes that bearing the agenda of "changing that worshipful view of the corporation assuredly will not be easy to achieve" (xiii).

Lockard organizes the book into various subjects exploring the history of the coal industry and its reflection of corporate avarice in general. After providing initially a vast historical overview of coal mining from ancient times to the 20th century, the author explores the political economy of the modern coal industry, and more specifically what he calls "the essential human factor in the productive chain." He accomplishes this feat by drawing from his own and his father's time underground to illustrate "how coal miners were at once proud, independent and hardworking," yet also how they were "harassed by forces [they] could neither control nor significantly influence without severe consequences not only for every member of the family" (21).

The author cites his own father's death from black lung disease to examine the poor health and safety record of the mining industry. He argues, as many studies have concluded since the 1960s, that companies flagrantly disregarded the laws designed to protect miners against the fatal disease. In a chapter devoted to the "miner's way of life," Lockard uses the coal industry to criticize ways in which corporations use gender and ethnic discrimination, paternalism and the threat of job insecurity to shape the social relations of mining communities. Again, his own life encounters bear out these social and economic forces.

Lockard naturally addresses the role that unions played in the lives of miners. In doing so he explores the complex role that the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) played in mining communities. On the one hand, he finds that the UMWA exploited workers by selling them out in the name of job

security, and yet it also helped workers by securing greater benefits and health care (148). Lockard provides an excellent synopsis of the historical evolution of the UMWA. And, true to his consistent critique of corporate policies, the author concludes that while union democracy and worker militancy increased during the 1990s, they are still hindered by company power, anti-unionism, a surplus labor market (in coal country at least), and mechanization.

The author saves his greatest tongue lashing of corporate America for the final three chapters in which he examines the lack of corporate responsibility towards workers and their mining communities. In a chapter entitled "Coal and Corporate Power," the author poses the central question: "how can political and economic decisions be made in a more democratic way, and one that brings equitable results and assigns more accountability—one that would be more just and fair to all concerned?" While the author remains dubious of "the prospect of curbing excess corporate power" (175), he nonetheless offers specific solutions to the problem of corporate power and greed, and even provides criteria for evaluating these proposed changes in not only coal but corporate America at large.

Whereas Lockard provides a personal view of one family's experiences with the ups and downs of coal mining in West Virginia, Thomas Dublin's *When the Mines Closed: Stories of Struggles in Hard Times*, takes the reader inside the lives of several families within three mining communities of south-east Pennsylvania. The text consists of edited excerpts of selected oral history interviews with nine different families in the small region of the Panther Valley. As the subtitle indicates, the histories indeed document the "struggles in hard times." Throughout, the subjects discuss how even during the heyday of mining in the region, problems of job insecurity, making financial ends meet, and staying healthy and alive in the mines made for a trying and difficult life. However, given their struggle, the interviewees do not ask for any sympathy, and they all generally recall their lives with pride, fondness, and humor within the context of tough times. Indeed, in the book, these families come across as active agents in the struggle for survival.

As a social and labor historian, Dublin chose wisely the selections to bring forth some of the larger social and economic forces that encompassed life in coal country. Like Lockard's account, these stories are set against the context of industrial decline and economic transformation. Most of the interviewees document the coming of the UMWA and the post-World War II downsizing of the mine labor force. Importantly, Dublin uses the oral histories to document the arrival of the garment industry in the 1960s to take advantage of the region's underemployment. While mining is the main focus, the clothing industry is a significant aspect—not only for economic history, but the important role of women as garment workers (and hence breadwinners) and also as mothers, wives and daughters. This focus on gender provides an aspect that is largely absent from Lockard's book. By including the role of women, one sees how important gender is to understanding the division of labor, kinship and hence a more holistic view of community life and economic forces in the region. In fact, women comprise six of eleven persons profiled in the book.

Dublin's interview subjects also reveal the importance of several other major historical forces. Immigration, of course, played a significant role in the ethnic and social fabric of mining communities. As the residents reveal, most families have roots in Eastern Europe, as coal-mining companies used and recruited immigrants, as did other industries, to find willing and oftentimes low-wage workers. In these small towns, ethnic institutions such as churches, fraternal organizations, and small businesses were central to community life and identity. Their story of immigration also reveals much of the nature of labor relations in the industry.

Naturally, labor organizing and union politics also provide a central theme through these stories. Many of the men interviewed discuss openly the role that the UMWA played in their lives by providing job security, wage increases and support for greater job safety. Interestingly, this region played a major role in the 1943 strike when President Franklin Roosevelt federalized the mines. Whereas the national media and many Americans remained critical of the strike for higher wages to meet war-time inflation costs, these stories provide a human element to the strike and hence give some balance to the overall story of labor's struggles during World War II and afterwards.

Together, these two books provide much needed voices to the struggle of coal-mining families, and the economic and social fall-out of the coal industry's downsizing, mechanization and inability to provide job security for hardworking families and their communities. Even more profoundly, these works offer evidence of the often illusory realization of democracy for workers in the U.S. under a system that benefits corporations often at the expense of the common man and woman.

CHARLES CHAMBERLAIN, *Adjunct Professor of History, Tulane University*

Brandeis and the Progressive Constitution: *Erie*, the Judicial Power, and the Politics of the Federal Courts in Twentieth-Century America
EDWARD A. PURCELL, JR., 2000
New Haven: Yale University Press
pp. 432, $37.50

In *Brandeis and the Progressive Constitution*, legal historian Edward A. Purcell, Jr. provides a thorough and well-written analysis of Justice Brandeis's jurisprudence and, in particular, of his majority opinion in the 1938 Supreme Court case *Erie Railroad Co. v. Tompkins*. Purcell seeks to explain the place of *Erie* within the broad transformation that takes place in 20th-century American constitutionalism. In showing how Brandeis was strongly influenced by the progressive political principles of his own era, Purcell persuasively challenges the prevailing interpretation of *Erie* and brings clarity to the principles animating Brandeis's legal philosophy. His book will be of interest to historians of the labor movement insofar as it contributes to the debate over a court decision that is viewed as a significant victory for organized labor in America.

The book makes its argument in three parts, the first of which provides an overview of the 60-year period leading up to *Erie* and suggests how the politics and jurisprudence of the period might have influenced Brandeis. Purcell accurately describes the period's activism by the federal courts in such decisions as *Lochner v. New York* (1905), in which the Supreme Court used its understanding of the broad and fundamental principles underlying the Constitution to strike down legislative efforts to regulate economic activity. For progressives like Brandeis, *Lochner* and similar cases represented an unwarranted interference by the federal courts with state attempts to implement progressive policies. The evolution of Brandeis's jurisprudential views is the focus of the book's second part, which contends that the Justice "sought to use his [*Erie*] opinion to institutionalize the goals and values of early twentieth-century Progressivism" (2). The final part of the book examines the impact of *Erie* on subsequent political and jurisprudential developments, and contends that many of those who currently champion Brandeis's opinion have, in fact, misunderstood its intentions.

Erie is relevant to labor history in that it overturns the 1842 holding of *Swift v. Tyson*. The *Swift* decision endorsed the notion of federal common law, whereby federal courts were free to disregard state judicial precedent in favor of their own understanding of the fundamental principles underlying the positive law. Progressives argued that the federal common law doctrine favored corporations, who could go directly to the federal courts under the diversity jurisdiction of the national judiciary. Federal courts regularly issued so-called "labor injunctions" against union activities that might have been treated more favorably in state court. *Erie* was critical to labor, then, because it overturned *Swift* and curtailed the independent power that federal courts had exercised under the federal common law doctrine.

One can see how *Erie* might naturally be interpreted as a landmark defense of federalism and judicial restraint. Purcell, however, seeks to debunk this view, and he does so effectively by showing that Brandeis's goal was not really to champion federalism or judicial restraint, but rather to "defend Progressive values threatened by a hostile judiciary" (122). The key to a proper understanding of *Erie*, Purcell argues, is to see Brandeis as a product of his own time, and consequently to realize that federalism and judicial restraint were merely the specific means required to effect progressive policy aims. This historical view of Brandeis is the foundation for Purcell's challenge to other interpretations of *Erie*, particularly that of Henry M. Hart, Jr., to whom Purcell devotes an entire chapter. "Hart's *Erie* was not Brandeis's *Erie*," contends Purcell (247), precisely because Hart seems to have confused Brandeis's pragmatic method (defending federalism and judicial restraint) with his more fundamental ends or intentions (greater freedom for state action in pursuit of progress). Hart takes the historically conditioned reasoning of *Erie*, and "transform[s]" it "into an abstract symbol of federalism and the rule of law" (229). Purcell's historical approach is also useful in pointing out the essential difference between Brandeis and Justice Holmes, both of whom joined in dissenting from many of the activist Supreme Court decisions of the early 20th century. While it is the case that Brandeis's *Erie* opinion relies on Holmes in order to reach the desired outcome, Purcell rightly explains that Holmes was committed *in principle* to legal skepticism, whereas Brandeis was merely "pragmatic" in his embrace of neutral principles (181). Brandeis was fundamentally "unlike Holmes" in his substantive approach to the law—in his desire to see it adopt his own progressive principles (122).

While many will be sympathetic to Purcell's viewing the *Erie* case through an historical lens, his approach is likely to be less satisfying to the original intent school of interpretation. The framers of the Constitution themselves, of course, did not intend for its principles to be historically contingent, and

they eschewed an amorphous constitutionalism which might fail to safeguard the individual rights that the framers understood to derive from the transhistorical laws of nature. Purcell is well aware of this point of contention, responding that "we can learn far more by recognizing and understanding [the] continuous process of change and reinterpretation than by pretending that we can discover and apply an objective and legally directive 'original intent' free from the limitations, pressures, and needs of our time" (6).

Overall, scholars will find Purcell's book a carefully researched, informative account of Brandeis and his era—one that should prove particularly useful to historians of the labor movement. The work also constitutes a major new force in the debate over *Erie*.

RONALD J. PESTRITTO, *Assistant Professor of Politics, University of Dallas*

US Labor and Political Action, 1918–24: A Comparison of Independent Political Action in New York, Chicago and Seattle
ANDREW STROUTHOUS, 2000
New York: St. Martin's Press
xii + 208 pp., $34.95

Werner Sombart's century-old question, "Why is there no socialism in the United States?" has long drawn attention to a central feature of what many see as American exceptionalism. And the lack of a vigorous and durable socialist or labor party in the United States has long served as the keystone in the exceptionalist argument that American workers lacked the degree of class consciousness exhibited by their brothers and sisters in other industrialized lands. Andrew Strouthous is determined to dispel the aura of inevitability that he sees pervading exceptionalist accounts of the failure of labor or socialist politics in America. By restoring a measure of historical contingency to this narrative, he aims to puncture the exceptionalist view itself. His account seeks to show that if "the experience of American workers was different" from that of European workers, "their aspirations were not very dissimilar" (171). His argument is that "ideology on its own" provides an "inadequate answer" to the question of "why did the left suffer defeat?" (172). Rather than succumbing to the power of a putative American liberal consensus, he suggests that the failure of independent labor politics in America has "far more to do with the balance of class forces than any ideological commitment of workers to American liberalism" (3).

To advance this argument, Strouthous focuses on the efforts to build independent labor parties in three labor bastions—Chicago, New York, and Seattle—during the half dozen years that followed U.S. involvement in World War I. The years 1918–24, he contends, witnessed "the most substantial attempt by organized labour to build a labour party to date" in the United States (1). In that effort, activists in his three chosen cities, although motivated by divergent political analyses and representing labor movements of different organizational tendencies, shared in common a "centrality to labour party and independent political action" (5). Launching their efforts at different times, and enjoying varying levels of success, these activists brought into being local independent labor parties that enlivened politics in their cities and helped shape the national fortunes of third-party politics from the Farmer-Labor Party of 1920 to Robert M. La Follette's presidential campaign of 1924.

The strength of this book is its careful treatment of the three cities it examines. In this slim volume, Strouthous manages to offer a surprisingly nuanced reading of the political contexts within which his labor party activists organized in these settings. He compares the industrial structures of his cities, the relative strength of their craft unions, the relations of their city centrals to state labor federations, the power of their local political machines, and their mix of ethnic and racial political blocs. His appreciation for the political complexity of these cities is further revealed in his sensitive reading of electoral data from local and national elections.

These case studies offer some surprises. For example, Strouthous finds little or no relationship between the existence of progressive "federated union" experiments (such as existed in the Chicago stockyards) and the success of progressive political action: New York, dominated by craft unions, yielded better third-party results in the end than Chicago. Nor was the degree of local union commitment the determining factor in the success of the parties. No city enjoyed firmer local union support for independent labor politics than Chicago, where John Fitzpatrick and the Chicago Federation of Labor enthusiastically backed such efforts. Yet the Chicago movement had utterly collapsed

by 1924 due to the withdrawal of support by the Illinois State Federation of Labor. In the election of that year La Follette did only marginally better among Chicago's voters (17.9%) than he did nationally (17%), and substantially less well than he did in either New York or Seattle.

In laying out his case studies, Strouthous occasionally displays a tendency to put an unconvincing best face on the consistent difficulties that labor party politicians faced. Thus, even in John Fitzpatrick's disappointing 8% tally as the labor candidate in the 1919 Chicago mayoral election, Strouthous finds evidence for encouragement. Fitzpatrick received all of 16% of the vote in the working-class 29th ward (adjacent to the stockyards), he notes, and support for his candidacy was probably higher than electoral returns reveal since many workers "did not have the franchise or register to vote" (65). But neither of these facts offered much comfort to pragmatic laborites who hoped the Chicago effort would ignite enthusiasm for a national party in 1920 (which helps explain why the Farmer-Labor Party of that year fizzled).

Yet only in his last chapter, in which he draws conclusions from these local narratives, does Strouthous stray from his otherwise generally careful tone. After reviewing all of the important factors that conspired against building a labor party, Strouthous suggests that perhaps another outcome was possible after all. Quoting Shakespeare on the "tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood leads on to fortune," Strouthous suggests that, if only the AFL had acted decisively in support of third-party action when it promised the greatest chance of success, in 1920, then subsequent history might have been different (162). "Something may have been salvaged" from the postwar labor upheaval if the AFL had acted in 1920 instead of offering its belated support for "Battling Bob" La Follette's 1924 candidacy long after optimal conditions for independent political action had passed (177). It is "most unlikely" that "the labour party could have become a national second party," Strouthous concedes (176). But there is reason to believe that "a small party with roots in the unions would have been well placed for future upheavals," especially those of the depression era (177).

To be sure, this is a more modest and intellectually defensible formulation than that advanced by some subscribers to the theory that there was a "lost opportunity" for radical political transformation in American labor history. Still even such a modest "what if?" speculation rests on tenuous ground. Strouthous's own carefully marshaled evidence makes clear that it was not simply the sabotage of Samuel Gompers and other national union leaders that made building a party seem like the labors of Sisyphus. The bulk of his account outlines how bitter local and state-level union factionalism, powerful and durable major party machines, and fractious ethno-racial blocs, among other factors, complicated and frustrated independent labor politics in his chosen cities—cities which Strouthous says were *best* positioned to launch an independent labor party. Therefore it is surprising for him to suggest that a "small party" could have transcended the significant obstacles in these cities and successfully campaigned in 1920—let alone somehow expanded their base in less hospitable environs—to achieve a lasting national presence. Nor is it clear or how such a party could have kept its "roots in the unions" during a decade of rapidly declining union strength and growing labor conservatism. Unless, that is, one were to suppose a different labor movement and a different America than existed in 1920.

Thankfully, though, for most of his book Strouthous steers clear of idle speculation. His careful analysis of the rise and decline of labor party activism in three crucial cities does what a fine historical account ought to do: it moves the discussion of American labor politics away from banal generalities about the pervasiveness of the American liberal consensus or the nature of American working-class consciousness and toward the messy, complex, and contradictory local political settings within which working men and women actually lived and acted. This, in the end, is no small contribution.

JOSEPH A. McCARTIN, *Associate Professor of History, Georgetown University*

Inventing Ourselves Out of Jobs: America's Debate over Technological Unemployment, 1929–1981
AMY SUE BIX, 2000
Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press
pp. 376, $45.00

Ever since John Henry, the legendary steel driving man, lost his life proving he could beat a machine, wage earners have struggled over the complicated question of labor-saving technology. Was it futile to try, as the coopers did in the 1880s, to stop mechanization in its tracks? Or was it better to adapt, as

the printers did, in the 1890s, when they agreed to let skilled workers run the machines that displaced them? Cigar makers tried everything from strikes to taxing employers who used power-driven machines, but they found no easy answers: even the American Federation of Labor's campaign for the shorter workday proved too radical a solution for most employers. Outraged by the general lack of concern for displaced workers, especially after the economy collapsed in 1893, Samuel Gompers used the newspapers to draw attention to the millions of unemployed men and women condemned to "poverty, hunger and despair." Now that "the ingenuity of man" had made it easier to produce life's necessities, he wanted to know, why should it be "more difficult for a large portion of the people to live?" (*The Samuel Gompers Papers*, *Vol. 3*, 446). At the time, however, no one was particularly interested in the question.

In fact, as Amy Sue Bix demonstrates in *Inventing Ourselves Out of Jobs: America's Debate over Technological Unemployment, 1929–1981*, it would take the Great Depression to draw national attention to these long-standing—and controversial—issues. Once middle-class families faced the same insecurities that working-class families took for granted, it was easier to raise uncomfortable questions about the costs and benefits of technological progress. And once federally funded New Deal agencies put researchers to work, investigating connections among production methods, unemployment, and economic recovery, they produced a wealth of industrial information that made informed discussion possible. For instance, when economists in the Works Progress Administration demonstrated that unemployment remained high despite evidence that business was already recovering from depression, they gave credence to the disturbing possibility that mechanization would result in permanent unemployment. Their conclusion enraged promoters of technology (who then launched a public relations campaign to discredit it), intrigued President Franklin D. Roosevelt (who incorporated it into his 1940 State of the Union address) and, in perhaps the most surprising outcome of all, entered the realm of public discussion (through books, movies, comic strips, and especially magazines and newspapers).

With the bulk of this book devoted to the period between 1929 and 1941, Bix examines this public debate—and its historical roots—in detail. Beginning with an intellectual history of the idea of technological progress that ranges from Jean-Baptiste Say's 1803 *Treatise on Political Economy*, to Stuart Chase's 1931 *Men and Machines*, she outlines an almost cyclical conflict, that continues to this day, between those who equate mechanization with progress, since it generates more jobs than it destroys, and those who believe that human satisfaction and skill are more valuable, in the long run, than cheap goods and increased production. The book follows the rise and fall of technocrats (like Columbia University's Howard Scott, who believed industrial employment had peaked in 1918) and technotax proponents (who believed business should pay for the privilege of putting people out of work). It traces the emergence of an alliance of scientists, engineers, and businessmen who made good use of annual meetings, World Fair exhibits, and advertising campaigns to remind Americans that technological progress was the key to material comfort and national success. And it examines the experience of displaced telephone operators, musicians, cigar makers, and steel workers, among others, who waged public relations campaigns that highlighted the human costs of technological progress but failed to protect their jobs. In the process, it uncovers fascinating details that animate the debate—the idea that Mrs. Herbert Hoover might refuse to switch to an electric refrigerator because she knew the iceman personally, for instance, adds a welcome human touch.

Bix follows the debate through the rise of automation in the 1950s, "stagflation" in the 1970s, and the explosion of computer technology in the 1980s, drawing on a variety of sources—official and popular—to examine links between perceptions of technology, consumerism, and progress. She also investigates the relation between what she calls technological determinism, the idea that workplace mechanization was inevitable and progressive, and American notions of civilization and superiority. Ultimately, though, the information this book provides is more interesting than the analysis: like works in labor history that assume the central question should be "why no socialism?" this book ponders "why no massive machine-breaking?" as if organized labor missed its chance to reroute technological history. But at least in the case of organized labor, the story begins much earlier than the 1930s and is shaped by significant historical circumstances that are glossed over here, including the corporation's superior economic and social power, the employer's longstanding, if contested, claim to managerial prerogative, and the fact that mechanization often made hard, dirty jobs more bearable. Thus, while labor historians will certainly be interested in learning about the AFL and CIO's central role in drawing national attention to the human costs of progress, they may question the conclusion that "assumptions of technological determinism ultimately locked labor into a passive, defeatist mindset" (309).

GRACE PALLADINO, *Editor, The Samuel Gompers Papers, University of Maryland*

"Rights Not Roses": Unions and the Rise of Working-Class Feminism, 1945–1980
DENNIS A. DESLIPPE, 2000
Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press
pp. x + 259, $39.95

Union women have not had it easy in the 20th century. They have been compelled by circumstances to claim a space for themselves not only in the face of encroachments on their dignity by employers, but also amidst the competing voices of union men and middle-class feminists. In the early 20th century, working women gained a measure of power and respect by securing protective labor legislation. But while this legislation lasted for half a century, it did not provide a permanent foundation for union women's power. By the 1970s union women had abandoned the cause of protective labor legislation and joined middle-class feminists in the call for gender equality both in and out of the workplace.

Dennis Deslippe joins a growing number of scholars who are documenting the tortured path union women took in the years after World War II as support for protective labor legislation eroded and "second-wave" feminism emerged. As noted in his Introduction, the "fault lines" between supporters of the equal rights amendment and advocates of protective labor legislation ran deep (5). Even as late as 1970 die-hard women unionists opposed measures that would undermine the security they had achieved through protective labor legislation. How union women navigated the shift from protectionism to gender equality tells us much about the class-based nature of feminism.

Deslippe makes a compelling case for the reciprocal nature of the relationship between middle-class and working-class feminism. On the one hand, middle-class feminism was an important catalyst for working-class women, creating organizational space for union women to put pressure on their own unions. But middle-class feminists' calls for equality in the workplace would not have had the credibility or force that they did without working-class women. Working-class women served on the President's Commission on the Status of Women, campaigned for equal pay, forced the EEOC to take the complaints of working women seriously, helped create NOW, and, finally, in the 1970s, persuaded the AFL–CIO to support the ERA.

While the relationship between second-wave feminism and union women's struggle is an important part of Deslippe's narrative, Deslippe also focuses on a second development of the post-war era: the shift of economic growth to the service sector and the increasing automation of blue-collar industries. This dual focus on both movement history and economic history gives Deslippe's work its insight and power. The expansion of job possibilities for women in the new service economy broke down psychological justifications for sex-typing of jobs, creating the foundation for a working-class women's movement based on gender equality. Meanwhile, in the old industrial sector, deindustrialization and automation produced discriminatory layoffs for women who had struggled for years to achieve seniority. Male unionists who were also threatened by deindustrialization coveted what "women's" jobs remained. Union women found themselves battling both employers and leaders of their own unions as they sought new tools for achieving security in the workplace.

To illustrate his themes further, Deslippe takes the reader behind the scenes in two detailed case studies. In the first, the packing-houses of the mid-West, union women faced fierce opposition to gender equality from men in their own unions. In the second, the electrical workers' shops of New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania, women found union leaders who made good-faith-efforts to comply with new non-discrimination regulations mandated by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Through these case studies we learn not only the diversity of union women's circumstances, but also how they negotiated situations in which their loyalty to their union was challenged. No matter how vigorously union women contested policies within their own union, women unionists invariably served as a loyal opposition, refusing, for example, to support proposals that violated collective bargaining agreements even if such violations protected women's jobs. Union women needed both a union and a voice independent of their union; the tension between these two imperatives finally coalesced in the creation of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW).

Deslippe honestly confronts the separateness of the struggles of African-American women and white women during this period. To be sure, he introduces black women into the narrative without grounding their perspective, as he did with white women, in an understanding of their pre-World War II experience. Yet it is illuminating to learn the way that black women's experience in the civil rights movement made them more seasoned and savvy leaders in the fight for gender equality in the workplace. Ironically, black and white women made common cause more often in the South than in

the North. In industrial settings where white women had not themselves become sensitized to the need for racial solidarity, black and white women's battles remained separate.

Deslippe's detailed narrative makes balanced use of union records, government documents and oral histories, enabling the reader to understand women's ambivalence and hesitation, as well as their courage and strength, within the context of powerful economic and social forces. It is an admirable achievement.

JANET IRONS, *Associate Professor of History, Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania*

Harvest of Dissent: The National Farmers Union and the Early Cold War
BRUCE E. FIELD, 1998
Lawrence: University Press of Kansas
pp. x + 244 $39.95

Despite the renewed debate about the legacy of Joe McCarthy and aggressive anticommunists like him, there is no doubt that the Cold War and its domestic progeny, the Red Scare, have fundamentally affected the institutions of American democracy. Chief among the long-term effects of these developments was an attack on the nation's progressive forces that severely weakened the American left. Amidst the paranoia and hysteria of that period, left-leaning social activists—especially those who dared question the premises of Cold War ideology—faced a devastating choice. They could remain true to their beliefs and suffer the consequences of anticommunist hysteria, or sacrifice their commitment to those beliefs in the vague hope of surviving the Red Scare. In short, many social activists felt compelled to choose between their ideals and their survival. Very few progressive organizations found their way safely around such a dilemma. This book tells the tragic and ironic story of how one, the Farmers Union, attempted to do so.

At the end of World War II, the Farmers Union was the most progressive of the major American farm organizations, and it stood alone in its commitment to the small family farmer. These two qualities—the embracing of the progressive ideals of the New Deal, and the commitment to the interests of small producers—brought the organization into conflict with the precepts of America's emerging Cold War foreign policy. The nation's hostile relationship with the USSR and her resulting tendency to act unilaterally, Union members argued, violated the progressive principle of internationalism. Furthermore, they saw in the Cold War a disturbing tendency for government and big business to cooperate, creating a world hostile to small producers like family farmers. As a result, the Farmers Union became one of the most consistent and vocal critics of the early Cold War, publicly opposing the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and NATO. National Union President Jim Patton did not mince words in his condemnation of the policies of the Cold War, referring to them in 1946 as the nation's "long step toward fascism" (31).

But Union leaders soon discovered that the Cold War brought with it new rules of political engagement. Such direct challenges to the premises of Cold War ideology carried significant risks, and the Farmers Union found itself under attack by conservatives in the U.S. Congress, rival agricultural organizations, and the FBI. Considered by many Americans to be sympathetic to—if not controlled by—the Soviet Union, the Farmers Union was relegated to the margins of political debate in America.

As a result of these pressures, Patton had decided by 1950 to push the organization back into the mainstream of American politics. Doing so would require a public act of contrition that would symbolically demonstrate loyalty to the Cold War. Patton found in the Korean War just such an opportunity. In a resolution replete with language the organization had only recently condemned, the Farmers Union's national leadership publicly voiced its support for the war. Significantly, however, not all Union members shared this new commitment to the Cold War, and Patton felt it necessary to either silence or expel those who disagreed. One of the tragedies described in *Harvest of Dissent* is the way National Farmers Union leaders emulated the anticommunist right in doing so.

It is at this point that the story Field tells becomes instructive of the damage wrought by the Cold War. He argues persuasively that the Union's move to the right in 1950 was an artificial one, borne neither of "genuine ideological catharsis" nor of "noble philosophical issues." Rather, the shift came solely as a result of "practical considerations of organizational survival" (5). Ironically, however, even such a dramatic transformation as this ultimately made little difference to most Americans. Despite its

new found support for Cold War foreign policy, Field argues, the Farmers Union continued to be dismissed as a procommunist organization.

Here, in a nutshell, is the irony and tragedy of the Cold War for so many progressives. Given the hostile climate of Cold War America, many thought they had little choice but to sacrifice their commitment to their ideals in the name of survival. But, despite their willingness to sell their souls, in the end it made no difference; most left-leaning social activists were still labeled as communist sympathizers and relegated to the fringes of political life.

Thus, *Harvest of Dissent* carries lessons that go beyond the Farmers Union. What happened to that organization in the postwar period involved political intolerance, lack of courage, the narrowing of the political dialogue, and the erosion of American democracy. Field is unflinching in criticizing Patton and his supporters, indignantly describing the way they misused their authority to expel entire state organizations from the Union. Yet he is strangely reluctant to bring that indignation to bear on the institutions of Cold War America, refraining explicitly from making "moral judgements" about American policy (6). Unfortunately, that reticence has the effect of narrowing the book's scope.

Harvest of Dissent is the fascinating and valuable story of one organization's unsuccessful attempt to remain relevant while escaping the ravages of anticommunism. While that is an important story in itself, Field missed the opportunity to use that story as a way of commenting on larger issues related to democracy, dissent, and intolerance in post-war America. Given the long-term effects of the Cold War on the American left, perhaps moral judgement is precisely what is called for.

JIM BISSETT, *Associate Professor of History*, *Elon College*

Dancing in the Streets: Motown and the Cultural Politics of Detroit
SUZANNE SMITH, 2000
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
pp. 320, $24.95

Several years ago I was invited to Sao Paulo to give a talk on Detroit's labor and urban past at a conference on globalization and the auto industry. One day, while on a tour of some picturesque villages nestled in the mountains outside of the city, a Brazilian in our group asked me pointedly, "Why do you study Detroit of all places? Does anyone really care about that city or even think about it very much?" As he finished speaking I looked up in surprise and said, "Listen!" And from the windows of an ancient structure next to us came the sounds of Marvin Gaye's "Heard it Through the Grapevine" from the speakers of an old transistor radio inside. "See," I smiled, "Detroit is everywhere! Doesn't that make it worth examining?"

But while Motown's music is indeed as familiar in Brazil as it is in the United States, my companion's questions clearly reflect the degree to which the Detroit context of that sound has become invisible. Suzanne Smith's wonderful new book, *Dancing in the Streets: Motown and the Cultural Politics of Detroit*, seeks to resituate the Motown sound within the history of the Motor City and, more broadly, to reconnect it to the larger historical moment of African American activism that was the 1960s. As Smith reminds us, a Motown hit like "Dancing in the Street" was "never just a party song" (2).

From the outset Smith's engaging narrative immerses readers in the fascinating tale of how Motown rose from its humble beginnings in Detroit to become a corporate conglomerate far from its Motor City roots. But this book's real strength is that Smith carefully weaves the Motown story into other equally important tales of the civil rights 1960s. Indeed, because Motown came of age during this conflict-ridden decade, Smith rightly maintains that we must understand Motown's evolution "in political terms regardless of whether or not the company or its artists perceive it as such" (11).

Curiously, however, by book's end Motown's actual place in the politics of the 1960s seems quite ambiguous. On the one hand, Smith argues, Motown's commercial success indicates that it had "achieved many of the economic objectives of black nationalism espoused by leaders such as Malcolm X" (55). On the other hand, she notes, as the civil rights movement in America became more politically controversial, Motown came to eschew any identification with its struggles. Because Smith sees Motown as sharing a "common generational legacy" (79) with militants like Malcolm X, she finds herself deciding that Motown's increasingly conservative posture ultimately stemmed from little more than its economic pragmatism and its misplaced faith in the transformative power of black capitalism. Yet perhaps had Smith located Motown, the company, more critically in the same political terms that

inform her book more broadly, this understanding of its conservative evolution might have taken on a new dimension.

It is undoubtedly true that Motown's reticence to identify its music as a radical vehicle for social change reflects its business acumen. It is also clearly the case that Motown miscalculated the degree to which black economic power alone could pave the way to racial equality. But, had Smith examined the Motown story even more specifically in terms of the contentious civil rights politics playing out in Detroit itself over the period 1963–1973, the company's actual role as a political actor in its own right also would have been illuminated. Indeed, by dissecting Motown's relationship with Detroit's civil rights revolution more explicitly we would see that this record company did not so much move away from its activist roots or potential, it had always set itself apart from both in ways conscious and consistent.

Specifically it is only by reckoning with the daily and brutal civil rights battles that erupted in Motown's home town, to the same degree that one examines those exploding elsewhere, that this company's continuous and deliberate removal from the vortex of black struggle is revealed. Admirably Smith does examine Motown's relationship to pivotal national civil rights events such as Martin Luther King's Poor Peoples' March in Chicago and she shows, among other things, how Motown's music came to symbolize such struggles. She also covers a great deal about life in the Motor City during the 1960s. But it proves important for Smith's analysis that we do not hear about what role Motown actually played in pivotal local civil rights battles such as Detroit's own Poor Peoples' March. This particular civil rights action, for example, prompted an extraordinary degree of police violence and, significantly, it unfolded mere minutes from Motown's headquarters. Yet notably, not after this battle, nor others like it, was Motown ever one of the many Detroit businesses and organizations that chose to respond to the rampant anti-black brutality plaguing this city by actively demanding accountability and immediate remedy.

Certainly Smith is right to call attention to Motown's role as a symbol for the American civil rights movement. In addition to embracing its music, some civil rights activists clearly saw Motown as the embodiment of "what Malcolm X and the Freedom Now Party advocated," while still others felt that the company exemplified "the ideal of racial integration via cultural exchange advocated by Martin Luther King, Jr. and SCLC" (88). But Motown was far more than a symbol. As an important political actor in its own right this company never championed either the liberal *or* the revolutionary strain within America's civil rights movement and this, as much as economic pragmatism, must explain its historical evolution. Indeed, the fact that Motown executives were never driven by the same activist dreams as Martin or Malcolm makes it far easier to understand why their company was no longer a tax-paying entity in Detroit when black mayor Coleman Young took political control in 1973. Like many white urbanites and businesses, Motown had seen the way the political and economic wind was blowing in 1972 and had decided, with them, to abandon the Motor City.

But while Smith might have more concretely located Motown's role in Detroit's own contentious civil rights battles, and thus have given Motown more political volition, she must be given tremendous credit for identifying just how powerful and malleable this record company was as a symbol of the tumultuous 1960s. And, indeed, her success at reconnecting Motown to the city that birthed it is equally worthy of note. With Smith's excellent and readable book no one here, nor even in Brazil, will be able to hear the Motown sound now and not think about the historical importance of Detroit.

HEATHER ANN THOMPSON, *Assistant Professor of History*, *University of North Carolina at Charlotte*

Opposite Poles: Immigrants and Ethnics in Polish Chicago, 1976–1990
MARY PATRICE ERDMANS, 1998
University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press
pp. xi + 267, $29.95

A sociologist, Mary P. Erdmans, has written an interesting and important book about the most recent history of Polish immigration to the United States, and the history of the Polish ethnic group. There are very few works on the subject. Some topics, which Erdmans raises were discussed by Stanislaus Blejwas among others. The Polish language literature about postwar Polish emigration talks mostly about Europe and is strictly focused on politics; events from the American scene are seldom mentioned.

Ms. Erdmans' book deals mostly with identity and social life of Polish groups, differentiated in many ways. Historians, political scientists, and sociologists will welcome this work with satisfaction as an

original and much-needed contribution to the literature about ethnic groups in the USA. One may categorize the book as being about the Polish diaspora in the United States, at least if we agree with Robin Cohen that contacts and activity on behalf of the country of origin constitute retention of (at least some) elements of the culture as being important elements of a diaspora's definition. Erdmans' empirical material comes from Chicago but might illustrate broader conclusions.

The Polish diaspora in the U.S., even at the time of the mass labor migration before World War I, has always been segmented. The same was true in the years 1945–1990. In the USA there were three "cohorts" of immigrants, namely generations of immigrants from the pre-World War I period (the so-called "old Polonia"); DPs and political refugees from the years of World War II and after; and a third group composed of illegal labor immigrants during the 1970s and 1980s, who are often called "wakacjusze" in Polish (meaning vacationers), immigrants entering the USA legally within the immigration quotas, and finally political refugees from the Solidarity and post-Solidarity periods.

(The author, of course, realizes the often deep differences between members of these cohorts. Nonetheless, considering their experiences gained in communist Poland she often considers them as a single wave of immigrants.)

Erdmans describes and analyses different approaches of the three cohorts to Polish and American reality, saying that Polonia was divided into "immigrants" and "ethnics". She points out the uneasy relations and tensions between the cohorts but finds that the ethnics and immigrants, despite differences between them at times, could and did cooperate, and their different experiences complemented the activity of each other. Members of the cohorts could be divided by relation to Poland and to communism. They competed among themselves regarding the shape and role of Polish ethnic groups in America. There were and there still are tensions, fights about leadership, and different answers to fundamental questions—what Polonia really should be.

Polonia of the time of martial law in Poland was not monolithic either. Often it was not even in a position to act jointly. Cohorts (not only the "old" and "new" Polonias, but the DP generation and the most recent ones) reacted differently to social and political events, had different perspectives and opinions about American foreign policy, and last but not least, had different identities. However, the most recent immigrants did not pose any threat for the old, established leadership of Polonia until 1989. The description of the conflict between the Polish American Congress and the "Pomost" group, which was very tense in Chicago, is a fascinating story, which Erdmans describes very successfully. The "new immigrants" emerged finally as the leaders in the latest period, in relation to the Polish Parliamentary elections in 1989. Then their activity gained them the support of the most recent immigrants, legitimized their position in Poland, and gave them support from American society. However, the 1989 Polish election and the question of Polonia's participation in them once again showed the existence of deep divisions withion Polonia.

Thus, Erdmans' book talks about the relation of a segmented Polish ethnic group in the United States to Poland, about tensions within their community. It discusses the national and ethnic identity of the people involved, identity construction, and the constant process of its reconstruction.

It is also a well-written book. There are few factual errors. However, In the year 1879 in Switzerland there existed no Polish Government in Exile; neither was there any during the years 1895–1904 (26); Roman Dmowski's activity which supported Poland was atypical of a group dispersed in the diaspora. The demarcation line between Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939 was drawn a little bit differently than was described on page 38. A slogan "emigration for emigration (*wychodźstwo dla wychodźstwa*)" was articulated at the beginning of the 1920s (53). It is a pity the author does not mention the most important (although mostly unpublished) work of M.E. Cygan about the Polish–American left (55). Fighting Solidarity's leader was Kornel Morawiecki (128). These are, however, very small details, and by no means change the general evaluation of the book, which undoubtedly must be only very positive.

ADAM WALASZEK, *Professor of History, Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland*

Divided Loyalties; American Unions and the Vietnam War
FRANK KOSCIELSKI, 1999
New York: Garland
pp. x + 195, $40.00

The hardhat confrontation in New York, organized by the union leadership, in which construction workers attacked an anti-war demonstration, was for a long time the basis of the view among many

labor historians that the American working class essentially supported the American war in Vietnam. Support for that view has eroded significantly but has not disappeared entirely. This balanced study of workers and the Vietnam war should help to lay that myth to rest.

The author devotes a chapter to George Meany and the AFL–CIO and another chapter to Walter Reuther and the United Auto Workers (UAW) and their relation to the war. Meany and the AFL–CIO leadership maintained a consistently pro-war stance. Reuther and the UAW were also pro-war but did not support the war uncritically. In addition, as the war went on, significant rifts appeared in the auto union leadership, with Emil Mazey, Secretary-Treasurer, and Regional Director Paul Schrade taking the lead in opposing the war.

The key to this book, however, is the study of a major UAW local, Local 600 at the Ford Rouge complex. This study combines examination of the local records and interviews with retirees who worked at the Rouge during the war. Local 600 was not a monolithic body. There were lively factional disputes and control of the local passed from one faction to another. Rank and file members did not always support the leadership, no matter which faction was in power. For example, "Despite the no-strike pledge (and Communist support of it) during World War II, there were 773 wildcat strikes at the Rouge mostly over supervision, discipline and working conditions" (98).

By the time of the Vietnam war, Koscielski describes the local as mellowed, partly because of the bureaucratization of the UAW: "Discipline shifted from management to the union. UAW contracts, in effect, promised a docile worker, provided by the union, in exchange for X amount of dollars" (102). Nevertheless, by late 1964 or early 1965 Local 600 opposed escalation of the war. But rank and file attitudes were not simply a vote for or against the war. All the workers interviewed believed that workers sacrificed disproportionately to the war. In general, workers opposed the war in proportions similar to the rest of the population. This was borne out in surveys done in 1968 which concluded that 43% of adults in union member families thought the Vietnam war a mistake, compared to 45% for the nation as a whole.

Opposition to the war did not mean that workers felt they were unpatriotic. This was reflected in the combination of opposition to the war and hostility to the anti-war movement. Often the view of the anti-war movement was of unpatriotic rich kids. Workers tended to want to support the soldiers while opposing the war.

An interesting side question that appears in this book is the difficulty in getting workers to consent to being interviewed. Koscielski was permitted to speak to a meeting of 900 retirees. The result: "Seven people volunteered, two of whom later refused to meet with me … Eventually, I obtained about 20 interviews" (12). He had sought about 50. I have had similar experiences in totally different contexts in which local union officers and members were loath to open themselves up to interview or research, even on matters which had little or no relation to factional questions or matters involving possible discipline. Does this relate to the authoritarian structure that the UAW has become or is it a kind of working-class resistance to a researcher who appears middle class?

This book is a useful addition to the literature of class in the United States and contains perceptive insights in working-class thoughts and attitudes.

MARTIN GLABERMAN, *Professor Emeritus, Wayne State University*

What Employers Want: Job Prospects for Less-Educated Workers
HARRY HOLZER, 1996
New York: Russell Sage Foundation
pp. x + 182, $32.50 (cloth), $14.95 (paper)

The Point of Production: Work Environment in Advanced Industrial Societies
JOHN WOODING & CHARLES LEVENSTEIN, 1999
New York: Guilford Press
pp. x + 166, $16.95 (paper)

Capitalist work involves the fair exchange of commodities: workers sell their time to capitalists for money. Orthodox neo-classical economists envision this "labor market" as a static process involving autonomous individuals with pre-determined preferences and productivity; labor market outcomes can be perfectly understood in terms of the preferences, talents, and training the workers bring to the

exchange and the employers's capital and technology. Labor markets then are seen to resemble other commodity markets where individuals buy and sell corn, furniture, and bubble-gum according to preferences and the costs of production given by the existing technology. Nothing distinguishes labor which is exchanged among individuals and capitalists in a process governed by individuals' demand and supply.

"Methodological individualism" lies behind Harry Holzer's study of urban employment, *What Employers Want*. Holzer seeks to explain persistent unemployment and low wages for inner-city minorities by analyzing what employers say they want in employees. Drawing on a Russell Sage foundation-financed survey (the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality or MCSUI) of over 3000 employers in four major metropolitan areas in the early 1990s, Holzer has a novel data set providing more information on what employers want than was ever available to earlier labor economists. Previous scholars attributed persistent inner-city unemployment to discrimination, a spatial mismatch between suburban jobs and workers residing in central cities, and poor education. Holzer essentially agrees with these views. But what is new in his study is the new evidence supporting them. The new data make Holzer's study a landmark in modern labor economics that should be read by all interested in the problem of urban unemployment. But his data do not mark a new direction for labor economics because Holzer continues to view the labor market from a static framework rooted in methodological individualism.

The MCSUI survey questioned employers about characteristics of jobs in central cities and elsewhere in the metropolitan areas of Boston, Chicago, Detroit, and Los Angeles. There are abundant job opportunities even in the central cities of these areas. Holzer finds, for example, that despite high unemployment rates it takes longer to fill jobs in the central cities than it takes to fill suburban jobs. The problem, Holzer argues, is that the available inner-city workers lack skills and characteristics needed for many of the available jobs. Almost all central-city job openings require substantial skills, such as daily reading, writing, arithmetic tasks, computer use, and/or customer contact. Furthermore, almost all central-city employers require credentials, such as diplomas, work experience, and formal training, and most are wary of workers with unstable work histories which they see as evidence of a criminal record. A lack of skills and unstable work histories of many urban minority workers produces a mismatch leading to the anomaly of high unemployment among workers and persistent job vacancies for employers.

First published four years ago, Holzer's study has attracted considerable scholarly attention. His innovative technique, the use of employer survey data to uncover the characteristics of labor demand, marks a profitable turn in empirical labor economics. His work also resonates because his findings, the importance of spatial-and skill-mismatch, are consistent with the policies of many liberals in and out of government. Academic liberals are especially comfortable with research that concludes that more education should be provided to help lift the poor out of unemployment and poverty! (Holzer himself is now in government, employed as Chief Economist in the United States Department of Labor.) But Holzer's work is still imprisoned by his methodological individualism, his observation of employers and workers as individuals entering into large markets.

Individualism, for example, denies the *social* construction of jobs and skill. Holzer sees "skill" as a set of discrete knowledge and aptitudes, the ability to perform particular tasks. For him, "skill" is accumulated in schools and training programs where workers learn to perform tasks. This approach leads Holzer to look only at non-college jobs, jobs that do not require a college degree on the grounds that jobs requiring college degrees required skills beyond those available to high-school graduates. But much that today requires a college degree in the United States did not require college in the past and does not require it in other advanced capitalist economies. This is because the "skill" requirement, the college diploma, is not mandated by the work but by the desire to pre-screen applicants. A college diploma is required to screen out those without desired class background, social skills, or just to narrow the applicant pool to those with greater cognitive abilities. Formal education may be a good thing, but it will not provide access to jobs where academic credentials are used as a convenient screen for other characteristics.

His eagerness to emphasize exogenously determined skills, I fear, leads Holzer to misconstrue the skill requirements needed for jobs. For example, one of the most commonly demanded "skills" that Holzer sees preventing inner-city workers from meeting job requirements is the ability to "deal with customers." But what does it mean to deal with customers? Some jobs require understanding and sensitivity in helping customers make difficult decisions regarding, for example, financial planning, the choice of the appropriate business software application, or in choosing a college major. But many other jobs, and I think this is more common in Holzer's study, require guiding a customer through a pre-set

menu of options, with little knowledge or sensitivity required. Workers behind the microphone at a drive-in hamburger stand "deal with customers"; but does their work require any special interpersonal skills?

Or consider another example: the question about the use of computers on the job. Some workers do complex activities with computers, work that requires specialized task-knowledge producing computer programs, designs, and reports. But there are many others whose computer work requires minimal knowledge of the computer or, for that matter, of much else because the knowledge has been embodied in the computer. Those include workers who mindlessly enter data into a computer; they only need to know where the number keys are and when to push the tab or enter key. So what does it mean that nearly 60% of non-college jobs require computer use? Is this a sign that the jobs require real knowledge and skill? Or does it mean that these jobs require little task-knowledge?

If he viewed the labor process as a dynamic social interaction, Holzer would not take employer statements of job requirements as fixed and immutable. As discrete individuals, workers enter the labor market with fixed characteristics. But, as social beings, members of a community, workers are learners who develop new skills as part of any work experience. Employers might prefer to hire trained workers but, when faced with tight labor markets, they train to fill job requirements or else adapt the jobs to hire available workers. Recently, low unemployment has forced many employers to hire workers who, in Holzer's study, were unsuited for available jobs. The problem of inner-city unemployment may not have been intrinsic in the workers or in the jobs. Instead, it was the lack of aggregate demand in the economy as a whole.

Thinking about how labor markets are embedded in society leads to John Wooding and Charles Levenstein's study, *The Point of Production: Work Environment in Advanced Industrial Societies*. Compared with Holzer's work, this is a light work, designed for an undergraduate survey of radical labor economics or political economy rather than as a scholarly research project. Focusing on occupational health and safety, the book surveys different approaches to capitalist labor markets to show the way capitalists exploit labor and manipulate our so-called democratic political system. *The Point of Production* adds little new to our understanding of capitalist labor markets. But it does highlight what is missing from *What Employers Want*: a sense of how labor markets are situated within a capitalist economy.

GERALD FRIEDMAN *Associate Professor of Economics, University of Massachusetts at Amherst*

Hard Traveling: A Portrait of Work Life in the New Northwest
CARLOS ARNALDO SCHWANTES, 1995
Lincoln, NE & London: University of Nebraska Press
pp. xii + 234, $50.00 (cloth); $19.95 (paper)

Over the past few decades Carlos Schwantes has produced a significant body of work on the history of labor in the Pacific Northwest. In *Hard Traveling*, Schwantes utilizes his expert knowledge of the sources on this subject to bring together over 180 contemporary photographs of work-related scenes in the states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The photographs depict a multitude of working environments, but focus especially on the lumber, agricultural, mining, and fishing sectors that dominated the region's economy between 1880 and 1930. Whilst acknowledging the diversity of workers' experiences, Schwantes contends that for many decades an "informal commonwealth of toil" (xi) existed in the Pacific Northwest, and he uses the photographic record to highlight the "features of work life *common* to all of the region's major industries" (11).

The book is organized into two parts. Part one consists of three chapters which briefly introduce the main themes explored in the book. These chapters are essentially a concise synthesis of Schwantes' previous work. The importance of railroads to the development of the New Northwest is discussed in chapter one, which outlines the key factors contributing to the region's rapid economic expansion from the 1880s onward. Chapter two explores Schwantes' well-known concept of the "wageworkers' frontier." Defining the "frontier" as "a place of abrupt intersection" (72) between pre-industrial living patterns and the subsequent urban–industrial ones (thereby cleansing the term of ethnocentric connotations), Schwantes argues that the West—in contrast to the nation's other regions—was largely settled and developed by wage-earning laborers working for major employers. The resulting preponderance of unskilled, wage-dependent, and itinerant laborers in the population contributed to the regional

distinctiveness of the West in general and the Pacific Northwest in particular. Chapter three examines the characteristically volatile nature of industrial relations in the nation's far corner. "The clash between harsh reality and unrealistic notions of a Golden West synonymous with success" (45), claims Schwantes, led to widespread disillusionment and discontent among workers in the New Northwest, which consequently gave rise to uniquely high levels of labor radicalism and violent industrial strife.

The second and most substantial part of *Hard Traveling* consists of eight folios of photographs. The first seven folios each explore a specific theme of work life during the age of the wageworkers' frontier, dealing in turn with the growth of communication networks, the scope of industrial activity, ethnic and sexual diversity within the workforce, worker communities, agricultural work, organized labor, and industrial strife. The final folio, containing photographs from the New Deal and World War II years, depicts a variety of work-related scenes from the post-frontier era.

This book cannot be properly evaluated without examining the author's choice of format, which is the complete inverse of standard academic works; here the photographs take center stage, with the text playing only a supporting role. This layout, as Schwantes is well aware, poses many dangers for the serious historian, not the least of which being the scornful reception that academics—partly motivated by snobbish elitism, but also by a genuine concern over scholarly standards—generally reserve for books apparently aimed at the popular market. Moreover, even the more highbrow attempts at working in this genre have frequently succumbed to grave methodological problems, a common error being the failure to recognize that photographs, despite their compelling visual properties, are not immune to either bias or misinterpretation. Photographs, therefore, should be treated with the same cautionary care as other forms of evidence and not wrongly attributed with a special ability to speak for themselves. Schwantes, fortunately, does not fall into any of these pitfalls. Indeed, *Hard Traveling* stands as a model of how photographs can successfully be employed as a tool for serious historical inquiry. The dynamism of the Pacific Northwest during the age of the wageworkers' frontier is powerfully conveyed through the book's carefully selected photographs, which have been skillfully arranged, both thematically and visually, in ways that maximise their potential as historical evidence. Schwantes has drawn these photographs from an extensive range of sources, including state and county historical societies, university libraries, company archives, local museums, and the Library of Congress. Moreover, he deftly uses excerpts from a rich variety of written documents—such as memoirs, autobiographical works, newspapers, Bureau of Labor bulletins, federal immigration and industrial relations reports, and Federal Writers' Project state guides—to provide an appropriate intellectual setting for the photographs and add depth to the stories that they tell. The photographs and text are also supported by a handful of illustrations and some useful tables of population data, but not, unfortunately, by any maps.

Hard Traveling is an engrossing work and will appeal to the general reader and specialist alike. Although the book contains few theoretical innovations, Schwantes does provide an accessible and yet authoritative insight into the social and economic history of the Pacific Northwest during a crucial phase of the region's development. In doing so, he makes an important contribution to the tasks of debunking popular misconceptions about the "frontier" and raising awareness about the historical importance of class, gender, and ethnicity.

JASON McDONALD, *Senior Lecturer in History, De Montfort University*

Hi-Tech Betrayal: Working and Organizing on the Shop Floor
VICTOR G. DEVINATZ, 1999
East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press
pp. xvi + 245, $22.95

The popular press is full of articles about the shortage of skilled workers. The rise of the high-tech industries, it is argued, brings with it a tremendous need for talented workers, multi-skilled and computer-literate. In this interesting and insightful first-hand account of work in a high-tech factory, Victor Devinatz calls this argument into question. His own work experiences and extensive research lead him to conclude that,

> In reality, the high-tech workplace is much more similar to the sweatshops of the late nineteenth-and early twentieth-century America, where poorly paid production workers toiled in the shadows of brutal foremen without the benefits of union protection. Instead of

> approaching the dawn of a new and exciting workplace of the future, for most production workers laboring in high-tech firms, the working conditions are marching boldly back to the future. In comparison to these working conditions, the unionized automobile and steel plants of the mid-twentieth-century offer a *progressive* alternative to the high-tech factories of late twentieth-century America.

Though this is a strong indictment and diametrically opposed to the common wisdom, the author very capably supports it.

Before describing and analyzing his stint as a high-tech factory worker, Devinatz examines work in the high-tech sector, defined either as industries "… in which the proportion of engineers, engineering technicians, computer scientists, life scientists, and mathematicians exceeds the manufacturing average" or those that have "a significant concentration of R & D [Research and Development] employment." Using data for a time period later than that of his own factory work (he worked in the early 1980s), he finds that high-tech labor is very poorly paid, almost universally nonunion, segregated by race and gender with a high concentration of Third World women, and rigidly managed through classical Taylorism. This section of the book is useful because it shows the reader that his factory experiences are still typical in these industries.

The heart of the book tells the story of his search for a high-tech factory job in the depressed conditions of early 1980s Chicago and his day-to-day activities as a worker in a plant which manufactures electronic medical equipment. It is difficult to capture the personal tone of the book in a review, but the participant observer approach gives the book an emotional impact and depth it might not otherwise have had. Some of the aspects of the work, which struck this reviewer, will be discussed below, but one thing should be noted at the outset. Tens of millions of people labor in workplaces like this one, and this is an appalling fact. Hour after hour, day after day, year in and year out, for low pay and no status, with nasty bosses, with worn out bodies and deadened minds, without much hope: these are the truths of so many working lives.

As soon as he is hired Devinatz is thrown into the work of making medical equipment. He quickly observes that, while the work is not skilled, it does require constant attention, considerable dexterity, and heavy demands on his body. He can't do it as fast as the time studies say he should, and he worries that he will lose his job because he is too slow. The work is all about speed and accuracy, and the company regularly speeds up the work to make sure that the workers are never idle. High quotas are set by time studies; ironically, the workers are so afraid of losing their jobs or being reassigned to harder ones that they usually speed up when the time-study engineer is observing them. Making matters worse, the monotony of the labor makes the employees super-conscious of time, and they play games to make the time pass more quickly.

The labor process is Taylorist, with management doing the thinking and workers doing routinized and/or mechanized labor. The managers distrust the employees and vigilantly supervise them. The dehumanized nature of the work can be seen in the assumption of the bosses that the workers are like children and must be watched and punished whenever they behave badly. Petty disciplines are frequently used, such as turning off the radio and punishing all of the workers when one worker does something wrong. Supervisors even lie to workers to get them to work harder, promising them raises or promotions that never come.

Workers do resist, and Devinatz gives us examples, from his own and his coworkers' padding of their daily production sheets, to upholding production quotas, to the Latino workers in a particular department conducting a wildcat strike. However, coordinated rebellion is rare, and most workers just complain or use drugs or quit. The author attributes the workers' general acquiescence to a demeaning and meaningless work regimen to a lack of a "culture of solidarity," which, in turn, is the result of the sharp racial, ethnic, and gender divisions among the workers. Racism is strong among the white workers who also happen to have the better jobs, and black, Latino, and Indian workers mutually distrust one another and tend to keep to themselves. In addition, few workers know anything about unions or their legal rights, and hence do not see unions as an obvious way to redress their grievances. When Devinatz tries to organize a union, he is betrayed by another worker and ultimately fired on trumped-up charges.

Devinatz ends the book with some useful suggestions for organizing high-tech workers. These include building labor–community coalitions, organizing on an industry-wide rather than a single plant basis, union involvement in worker training, union actions even when the union does not have majority support or is not certified, and international solidarity activities.

When academics actually look at work close up, they find that it is not at all as their university-bound peers say it is. Scholars waxed enthusiastic about the modern, post-Fordist auto plant, but sociologist Laurie Graham (*On the Line at Subaru-Isuzu*), who actually worked in one, came away with

a different perspective. Like Graham, Victor Devinatz has performed a valuable service to those of us who study work. His book deserves a wide audience.

MICHAEL YATES, *Professor of Economics, University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown*

Tales of a Lavender Menace: A Memoir of Liberation
KARLA JAY, 1999
New York: Basic Books
pp. 269, $25.00

Karla Jay's account of her experiences as an active and vocal member of the feminist and gay and lesbian movements of the 1960s and 1970s illustrates how the anti-war movement, second wave feminism, and gay liberation failed to include or even recognize the needs and demands of lesbians. All the usual suspects appear in this memoir—from Rita Mae Brown's agitation over lesbian invisibility to T. Grace Atkinson's polemical positions on female abstinence as the true feminist act to the formation of Lavender Menace, a group that launched a protest at the 1970 Second Congress to Unite Women for which they crafted the "now-famous manifesto called 'The Women-Identified Woman' " (140). While this is not a new narrative to a student of women's history, the memoir is a poignant example of how a focus on the actions of "ordinary" people can enhance our understanding of the development of social movements.

Jay vividly illustrates the complex nature of 1970s feminism. She describes the myriad of feminist groups, each of which had subtle yet profoundly different beliefs about what a feminist movement needed to focus on first, beliefs that rarely incorporated lesbian experience. Jay recounts her activism in the radical feminist organization, Redstockings, and in so doing explains how that group failed to address the needs of many women: "By formulating a Marxist class analysis that emphasized unity among all women and foregrounded sexism as the tool to analyze other oppressions, they had hoped to quell demands by other women that double and triple oppressions receive priority" (45). Jay also carefully describes the experiences of women in the gay liberation movement, a struggle that did not always recognize the demands of lesbians. Jay, and many of the lesbians active in feminist and gay struggles, experienced lesbophobia in most of the groups they worked with.

But lesbians in the feminist and gay liberation movements did not just disappear into the woodwork. One of the most important contributions *Tales* makes is in its discussion of active lesbian sexuality. Jay writes, "It might have been difficult for straight women to appreciate just how political a women's dance was. In New York State it was illegal for two people of the same sex to dance together. Just by dancing, we were challenging a system that refused to let us be ourselves" (128). In a reminiscence about her lover at the time Jay says, "I had not promised her I would remain monogamous, which I regarded as a dubious capitalistic method of transforming romantic attachment into personal property" (170). Lesbian needs, even when they were "merely" sexual or romantic, were profoundly political. But the story does not end with dances. Jay goes on to describe the active sex lives of many lesbians, including a rather embarrassing story about a bathroom she thought was being used by men only to be bowled over when four women walked out of the stall (182). This vignette shows that lesbians played a role in sexual liberation by having sex not constrained by heterosexual norms, a role too often assigned to men alone. Ultimately, the sexually charged atmosphere Jay recounts reminds us that the "sex wars" of the 1980s often erased a lesbian feminist position that recognized the power of female sexuality.

While Jay makes several important interventions into our understanding of the recent past, the text also betrays a particular perspective on the present. She seems torn between her recollections of past "radical" activism and what she sees as problematic in current liberal gay politics. Her concerns are well founded, especially when considering recent struggles over gay marriage, but Jay seems to ignore other work being done outside a liberal/rights-based framework. Recent scholarly work and activism around issues of transgender politics and global feminism, to name only two areas, are proof of what might be possible when traditional liberatory activism is connected to current conversations about the limits of identity politics. For Jay to say that "[t]hough I'm a poststructuralist now, it wasn't about theories then. It was about dreams and struggles" (32), reentrenches a false dichotomy between theory and practice. "Poststructuralism" and "struggle" do not have to be opposites. And if feminists are to remain a powerful force in ending oppression we must continue to think about ways to meld theory and practice.

Tales of a Lavender Menace will be valuable for any teacher of Women's Studies, Women's History, and even American History because it paints a full and graphic picture of what life was like for many women who took part in the social movements of the 1960s. Jay adds another voice to the chorus of scholars who reject the idea that the Stonewall Riot caused gay liberation. While her account of second-wave feminism joins work by scholars like Alice Echols, whose *Daring to Be Bad* documents the political and ideological differences between cultural and radical feminism. Beyond these contributions, *Tales* will be useful for teaching across levels—from introductory courses to upper-division undergraduate courses, to graduate seminars—because it embodies the feminist claim that the "personal is political."

JENNIFER BRIER, *Ph.D. Candidate in American and Gender History at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey*

British Society, 1680–1880: Dynamism, Containment and Change
RICHARD PRICE, 1999
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
pp. 349, $55.00

The author sets out to produce a general history, which, interestingly, he distinguishes from a textbook in two key respects. Firstly, he considers that a textbook would have "offered a survey of social experience," whereas he is concerned to make "an argument about a particular phase of a society's history." Secondly, his book is aimed at readers with different degrees of knowledge about the period covered—experts as well as novices—whilst a textbook would have been primarily aimed at "a less specialist audience of students and others." To define further the book's characteristics it may be noted that the approach is essentially historiographical, though the author also draws on contemporary works to illuminate aspects of his argument, and, as one would expect from such an eminent scholar, his work is based on an impressively wide range of social, economic, and political texts.

The main line of argument put forward in the book rests on an interpretation of periodization that differs from most others, the author contending that between the late 17th and the late 19th century there occurred "a distinct stage in the history of modern Britain." In making his case, Price seeks to demonstrate not only that the start and end of the period he selects was marked by fundamental change with regard to a range of major considerations, but also that some of the chronological divisions that are conventionally seen to apply within the period he delineates have been misconceived, being more properly interpreted as continuations of previous developments. Thus, in one of several chapters concerning economic dimensions of Britain's social change, he seeks to contest the idea that the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 marked a "genuine passage from one economic regime to another"; the real era of Britain's free trade, he maintains, arrived in the late 19th century when, alone amongst the major powers, Britain remained committed to nonprotectionism. Again, in one of the subsequent chapters dealing with political matters, he argues that a fundamental change in the relationship between national and local government was not achieved until the 1890s, when, amongst other developments, there "was a greater legislative direction from London …" And in his concluding chapter on social relations—a chapter which will have particular appeal to labor historians—he suggests that it was also in the 1890s that paternal social relations were finally displaced by class-based social relations, the culmination of a long-term process.

That the book has particular merit in making us think about the issue of periodization in social history is undoubted and on this score alone it is to be welcomed as an important contribution to the literature. Whether it will convince is another matter, not least because cherished and long-held notions about much shorter periodization with regard to social, economic, and political change during the period he covers will be difficult to abandon. The fundamental changes associated with the industrial revolution are a case in point, the more so since the concept is perhaps enjoying something of a revival, certainly at regional level, in the wake of growing dissatisfaction with the gradualist school of thought. And there is a nagging worry that we as historians can all too readily impose our own ideas about the points at which profound change can be discerned, without taking sufficient account of the views of those who actually experienced such change. For substantial numbers of people, the arrival of new eras within the time period selected for analysis would no doubt have been perceived. The rise of factory work, public railway travel and steam shipping are cases in point.

One other concern is how far the book will meet the needs of a wide range of readers. Without doubt

it will appeal to academic historians and will be valued by them, but whether it is always pitched at a level that will meet the needs of undergraduate students is less certain. This is not only because prior knowledge of some concepts, such as positivist-based history, or such technical terms as the gold standard and bill brokering, is assumed, but also because there is a great deal to plough through, not all of it an easy read, in order to appreciate the full impact of the main line of argument. At a time when the lecturing profession all too frequently complains of students' reluctance to read, it may be that more radical approaches are needed than this book achieves in the way we present both general histories and textbooks at undergraduate level. This said, there are sections of the book to which such comment can be applied with limited force, whilst the book will undoubtedly help students to think about periodization in history rather than simply accepting the time periods with which we all too readily present them.

GEOFFREY TIMMINS, *Principal Lecturer in History, University of Central Lancashire*

The Matriarchs of England's Co-operative Movement: A Study in Gender Politics and Female Leadership, 1883–1921
BARBARA J. BLASZAK, 2000
Westport, CT & London: Greenwood Press
pp. x + 209, $59.95

This book purports to be less a history of the Women's Co-operative Guild than an analysis of the gender politics and leadership style which marked that organization in the period under consideration. This begins with the Guild's founding year and ends when Margaret Llewelyn Davies, after 32 years of service, retired from the post of general secretary. It is her style of leadership which this study examines, while its investigation of gender politics is focused upon the relationship between the Guild and the wider co-operative movement in which it was embedded.

In contrast to previous studies, Blaszak seeks to demonstrate that, from its inception, the Guild was subject to the dominance exerted by the men in the Co-operative Movement, and that the Guild played into the men's hands by endorsing a rigid notion of the gender division of labor, according to which men were the producers and women, as homemakers, the consumers. Interestingly and convincingly, she argues that male co-operators were particularly wary of female intervention in the movement in view of the difficulties they had in reconciling their masculinity with the consumer orientation that co-operation involved. Moreover, Blaszak maintains, rather than empowering working-class women to stand up for their interests, the Guild leadership, and Davies in particular, imposed top–down decision-making to ensure that the rank and file would endorse their policies.

Blaszak's analysis is seriously flawed on a number of levels. Theoretically, she is hampered by her concept of gender, which is both static and idealistic. She conceives of gender as a notion which, having come down to the 19th century as part of the Western classical intellectual heritage, shaped the thinking of men of all classes. By implication, women's view of gender relations appears to have evolved in response and as a complement to men's. This is one instance of the way in which Blaszak consistently locates agency solely in male co-operators, who defined the framework within which guildswomen were allowed to operate. Though she convincingly demonstrates the boundaries they came up against, her lack of any notion of female agency blinds her to the manifold ways in which the organization may have transgressed and thereby extended any limitations imposed on it. Most strikingly, she fails to analyze the stand made by the Guild on its independence over the highly contentious issue of divorce law reform with regard to its implications for the degree of autonomy the organization may have claimed for itself.

Furthermore, Blaszak adheres to a normative idea of feminism. She labels Guild women "relational feminists," because they argued for public roles and voices of women to help them perform their domestic tasks of wives and mothers. Insensitive to the empowering potential this position may involve, she finds guildswomen deficient as compared to her conception of a supposedly more mature equal-rights feminism.

Factually, the study reveals little familiarity with English social history. In order to illuminate the condition of guildswomen, Blaszak relies on inferences made from studies of working-class women, without due regard to differences in these women's circumstances, which varied by both locality and status. This lack of discrimination also blemishes her account of regional variation in Guild develop-

ment. Nor does Blaszak reveal much understanding of the potential for cross-class empathy and the earnest desire to effect thoroughgoing improvements for women inherent in Davies' origin in the radical upper—middle class, which endowed her with independence in matters financial and intellectual as well as a developed social conscience.

Bent as she is on demolishing the admiration in which Davies continues to be held by both members and historians of the movement, Blaszak claims in deterministic fashion that Davies' origin in the middle class and the sexual orientation she imputes to her—Davies never married, but lived with a female companion—impeded the latter's ability to identify with the married working-class women who made up the bulk of the Guild membership. Blaszak casts Davies as a cultural imperialist who patronized her working-class wards. This assessment results from analogies drawn with female philanthropists and social reformers portrayed by other scholars, rather than being based on scrutiny of Davies' own activities, writings and the way they were received. This is typical of Blaszak's over-reliance on argument by inference, which mars her book throughout.

Blaszak's desire to depict Davies as insensitive to Guild members' needs involves her in a muddled argument. Though having herself portrayed the condition of working-class wives as dismally degraded, she castigates Davies for failing to appreciate that many Guild members were content with their lives and did not wish to be brought out of the confines of their homes. Yet when the Guild does turn to issues to do with reproduction—such as in the campaign to make maternity benefits the legal property of the wife rather than the husband—the organization is accused of cementing women's subordination by its adherence to relational feminism. Blaszak shows no appreciation of the Guild's significance in primarily catering for the needs of working-class housewives, who, isolated in their homes, were notoriously difficult to organize and had therefore been consistently neglected. Neither does she perceive any of the Guild's achievements in turning domestic forms of sexual oppression into issues of public debate and in evolving a unique blend of socialism and feminism. In sum, the negative slant of Blaszak's account fails to convince.

JUTTA SCHWARZKOPF, *History Department, University of Hannover*

John Charles McQuaid: Ruler of Catholic Ireland
JOHN COONEY, 2000
Syracuse: Syracuse University Press
pp. 526, $45.00

The Reverend Sydney Smith, greatest cleric wit of 19th century England, put it best. The approach of a bishop, he said, should induce in curates "a certain dropping down deadness of manner." The required posture, he implied, was genuflectory, with lips puckered to kiss the outstretched ring. Smith never lived to see the devotional revolution in Ireland, the extraordinary reinvigoration of Catholic practice in the middle years of the 19th century that has often been attributed to the trauma of the famine. Nor, of course, was he around when John Charles McQuaid became Archbishop of Dublin in 1940, remaining enthroned until 1972. All the same he would have recognized McQuaid as his *ur*-Archbishop: self-confident, imperious, intimidating and grand. Curates fell to their knees; so, too, did Presidents and Prime Ministers, governments, the press, the professions. An entire Catholic people, if we are to believe his latest and most exhaustive biographer, was in thrall to this County Cavan Richelieu. On the face of it, this seems improbable. McQuaid was shy, private, scholarly, a tad spinsterish: not the kind of person to have a whole country pay him court. Still, John Cooney makes a solid case that he was indeed "ruler of Catholic Ireland" for over 30 years in the middle of the 20th century. Since his death in 1973, he suggests, "no Irish Churchman has exercised [his] enormous spiritual, let alone the almost unbounded temporal power." Whatever they may think of his subject, few readers will be inclined to doubt that judgment.

McQuaid's origins did not foretell his future. The son of a country doctor, he had a provincial upbringing that combined small-town respectability and petty resentments, chief among them distaste for the social superiority of his Protestant gentry neighbors. After a brilliant academic career as schoolboy and student he joined the Holy Ghost Congregation and was ordained priest in 1924. Thereafter his advance was rapid and assured. He became Dean of Studies at Blackrock College (Eamon De Valera's old school) in 1925, President in 1930. His carefully cultivated friendship with De Valera (an exceptionally devout Catholic) gave him unprecedented influence in the drafting of the 1937

Constitution. That document remains in force today, its ultimate legitimacy coming from "the Most Holy Trinity, from whom is all Authority and to Whom, as our final end, all actions both of men and States must be referred." According to Cooney, McQuaid was "co-maker of the Constitution." That task completed and his friendship with De Valera secure, he was the obvious choice to become Archbishop in 1940. He took to the job as if to the manner born. No aspect of Dublin's, or Ireland's, Catholic life went unnoticed by him. An administrator of remarkable efficiency and zeal, he conducted the affairs of his archdiocese with an exceptionally firm grip. As a builder of churches and creator of parishes he was second to none. Although Cooney is reluctant to admit it, McQuaid's talents were precisely those needed to deal with Dublin's expanding Catholicism in the middle years of the century.

With commendable thoroughness, Cooney explores every conceivable aspect of McQuaid's episcopacy. The chief value of the book, indeed, lies its uncovering of a lost world of faith and devotion. Ireland today is an increasingly secular and pluralist place. Fifty years ago the story was a very different one. Younger readers may find it difficult to recognize an era of such collective and unselfconscious piety. Nor are they likely to warm to seemingly egregious exercises of archiepiscopal power: the silencing of dissenting priests, the condemnation of state-sponsored medical provision (the famous "Mother and Child" controversy of 1951), even the attack on the national soccer team for playing against Communist Yugoslavia in 1955. McQuaid was a cold warrior and an Ultramontanist *non pareil*. Now that the Cold War is over and the Second Vatican Council has met, his time seems long gone. Worse, his exercise of authority now has the appearance of tyranny.

It is here, alas, that the book falls down. Cooney, it becomes quickly apparent, simply loathes McQuaid and the era through which he lived. No opportunity is missed to bemoan his "narrowness, intolerance and rigidity" (155); no chance is wasted to condemn the "dreary Eden" of his dreams; no condemnation is too severe for the "Arch-druid of Drumcondra." McQuaid is not beyond criticism, to be sure, but Cooney's portrait is so relentlessly hostile as to be counter-productive. He quotes approvingly a pen picture by Dr. Noel Browne, McQuaid's antagonist in the Mother and Child controversy: "He had a long, straight, thin nose and a saturnine appearance, with an awesome fixity of expression, and the strong mouth of an obsessional." It is not long before the reader begins to wonder who, precisely, is the obsessional. In pursuit of his quarry, Cooney all too quickly acquires the characteristics he seeks to condemn: narrowness of mind, impertinent intrusiveness, a bizarre almost voyeuristic preoccupation with matters of privacy and intimacy. It is all too much. Lack of balance, historical perspective and common sense is one thing; utter lack of evidence for his more serious charges is quite another. McQuaid does not deserve Cooney but Cooney, an authoritarian liberal, somehow deserves McQuaid. The irony is obvious: it is not the Archbishop but his biographer who more closely resembles a tuppence ha'penny Torquemada. For all his research and scholarly pretensions, he has constructed a rather rickety rack. With a bruise here or there, McQuaid will survive it.

DERMOT QUINN, *Associate Professor of History, Seton Hall University*

Mazzini: A Life for the Religion of Politics
ROLAND SARTI, 1997
Westport, CT: Praeger
pp. x + 249, $59.95

After more than 50 years two biographies in English of Giuseppe Mazzini appeared in the 1990s. Denis Mack Smith, the doyen of British historians of modern Italy published his biography in 1994 (Yale University Press), followed three years later by Sarti's book under review here.

The English language reader now has two biographies that fill a gap in the literature of 19th century European history. Mack Smith's biography is more sympathetic to his subject than Sarti's. Although Mack Smith is not lacking in criticism of Mazzini's behavior, he praises his motives. Roland Sarti emphasises the contradictions in Mazzini's political and personal life and integrates both sides of this very private man to enlighten the reader about the evolution of his ideas and tactics. Mack Smith's biography feels more like an essay on the life of Mazzini and his times than a fully-fledged biography. Mazzini was exiled most of his adult life and spent most of that time in London. Mack Smith is very good on giving the reader a sense of how leading mid-Victorian intellectuals, politicians and influential families from educated middle classes were seduced by Mazzini's rhetoric and his example. Sarti is illuminating about his personal affairs, and certainly his shabby treatment of his lovers, the possibility

of three unacknowledged children, and the less appealing sides of Mazzini's dealing with his London friends makes him less of a plaster saint.

Both authors picture Mazzini as a heroic failure. His road to the unification of Italy was not taken, although he certainly forced Piedmont and Cavour to accelerate the process. Although he fell out with Garibaldi, his promotion of the relatively unknown military chief in the 1840s was important for the events in 1859–60. While most of his closest colleagues fell away from him, they are a veritable roll call of the political ruling class of Liberal Italy (Crispi, Visconti-Venosta, Zanardelli etc.). Sarti demonstrates that Mazzini's various organizations (Young Italy, the Democratic Committee, the Sacred Phalanx, the Italian Unity Association, the Friends of Italy, the Society for Mutual Progress, the Universal Republican Alliance) never matched the success of the National Society which he considered a sell-out to Piedmontese intrigue. Due to Mazzini's unsuccessful forays into Italy, where some felt he sacrificed lives needlessly, Sarti demonstrates how Mazzini alienated former comrades on the Right and Left. Sarti also demonstrates that Mazzini was not above cutting deals with the monarchical old guard if this would advance his cause of a united Italy. At various times in his career he entered into negotiations with the House of Savoy, Louis Napoleon and Bismarck.

Although Mack Smith and Sarti's treatments are important and interesting contributions to our knowledge of Mazzini and his milieu, they could have pursued in further detail Mazzini's impact on labor movements of the mid-19th century. By the time of his death in 1872, Mazzini was isolated from the large segments of the socialist and anarchist labor movement of Italy. He condemned the Paris Commune as a terrible monument to the worst excesses of atheistic, materialist communism. Although Mazzini detested the Pope and the papacy, his Jansenist upbringing in Genoa (brought out nicely by Sarti), meant that Mazzini always retained respect for the lower orders of the Catholic clergy and always retained a deep and sentimental spirituality. The younger Italian republicans, anarchists, and socialists who cut their teeth in the Mazzinianism of the 1860s were more firmly anti-clerical, materialist, and atheist than their first master. Mazzini always retained the religious sensibilities of the early 19th-century French utopian socialists. He was readily adapted by the educated middle classes of mid-Victorian London. He chimed in with the long English tradition of anti-popery. But also he sold them a religion of politics, a politics suffused in the tone of evangelical religion that was not far from the rhetoric of Liberals in Britain and Republicans in the USA.

As is well known, within the First International Mazzini was rapidly marginalized by Marx, while Bakunin stole his followers in Italy. Within the labor movement of Italy Mazzinian republicanism retained a minor but important role particularly in the Marches, parts of Tuscany, and the Romagna. But Mazzini had a great influence on the New Model trade unionists of mid-Victorian Britain. Mazzini advocated the establishment of independent associations of labor. Although his writings on the rights and duties of labor are suffused with a cloying paternalism, he thought that workers' associations and mutual aid societies should be independent of middle-class patrons. The working classes needed to create their own group of self-confident labor leaders and politicians in order that co-operation and partnership between classes could be achieved. Although he opposed the "horrors" of French and German socialism, Mazzini advocated free education for all, progressive taxation, and a rudimentary welfare state. Mazzini therefore advanced a form of radical republican virtue which infused the late 19th-century Anglo-American labor movements. As the readers of this journal know, this has been the subject of much of the most interesting labor history in the past 20 years.

I would recommend Sarti's book to students and scholars of Italian history and 19th-century European nationalism. It is a well-balanced and lucid monograph that achieves the admirable feat of adding new information for the scholar as well as being suitable to a reader with little or no knowledge of the Italian *Risorgimento*.

CARL LEVY, *Department of Social Policy and Politics, Goldsmiths College, University of London*

Rebel Life: The Life and Times of Robert Gosden, Revolutionary, Mystic, Labour Spy
MARK LEIR, 1999
Vancouver: New Star Books
pp. v + 238, $ 25.00

Those of us teaching and researching in the field of labor history often find ourselves uneasy in our efforts to negotiate the boundaries between university teaching and academic research and our concern

with serving the public, particularly the organized labor movement. Mark Leir successfully negotiates the terrain between the two worlds in his most recent book. *Rebel Life* is an intriguing tale of the transformation of British Columbia labor radical Robert Gosden from revolutionary IWW supporter to Agent 10, a paid labor spy for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Leir's expressed intent in writing a popular history is to make labor history accessible to labor movement activists who might want to write a history of other leading activists or a history of a union local. Leir accomplishes this objective while at the same time providing advice on research which is useful to those interested in writing labor history.

In the book Leir sets out to explain what led to Gosden's transformation from revolutionary to a spy with a fascination for Theosophy. Leir begins by describing Gosden's participation in the Vancouver Island mining strike of 1912–1914 and his role in the 1916 provincial election scandel during which Gosden was tried twice, although never convicted, on charges of perjury. Gosden took part in the anti-conscription movement during World War I and he was involved in the organization of the Federated Workers' Union, a quasi-industrial union chartered by the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada. Leir argues that Gosden's mounting disillusionment with parliamentary politics, the labor movement, and socialism together with a career of transient casual labor and material deprivation made it possible for him to abandon the radical left and become a hired informer for the RCMP in 1919. As a hired informant Gosden visited the mining camps of eastern BC and western Alberta and compiled written reports for the RCMP. Gosden's career as a labor spy was short-lived, however, and by 1922 he was back in Vancouver. He lived out his remaining years quietly with two women companions, Isabella Bunyan and later Helena Margaret Hesson. He died on 11 April 1961 in Gibson's Landing of stomach cancer.

Leir's effort to situate his narrative on Gosden in the context of the labor struggles in Western Canada during the first quarter of the 20th century is both a strength and a weakness of the book. Leir attempts to compensate for the dearth of academic labor history in BC by providing sidebars rich in bibliographical and contextual information. His purposes might have been served more effectively perhaps had he incorporated the information contained in the sidebars directly into the main narrative. As presented, the reader is constantly shifting back and forth between the narrative on Gosden's career and the background information on leading BC labor movement figures and politicians. Often the reader is left to figure out the connections between the two, and the detailed discussions contained in the sidebars sometimes distract the reader from the main narrative. This criticism aside, the richness of BC's labor history surfaces through Leir's discussion of Gosden's life.

On several occasions Leir alludes to Gosden's preoccupation with the idea of manliness, yet he does not draw on the growing body of scholarly literature on working-class masculinity which might have helped him to shape more sophisticated questions and build his discussion of masculinity. Had he engaged this body of scholarship Leir might have been able to explain more convincingly how the social construction of masculinity was a part of Gosden's radical politics and the radical left more generally. Did Gosden's idea of manliness draw on dominant middle-class discourses of masculinity which were then used for the radical's own political and class-specific purposes? Leir's research seems to indicate that they did. Questions about sexuality, particularly heterosexuality in the radical left, surface in Leir's discussion of Gosden's relationships with women, but are left unanswered. For example, Gosden did not marry any of the women he had long-term relationships with. Were these types of extra-marital relationships, which were decidedly uncommon in respectable 20th-century Canada more typical of labor radicals? Also, there seems to have been alliances involving networks of men and women with radical affiliations.

In the final chapter of *Rebel Life*, entitled "On the Trail of a Labour Spy," Leir reveals how he went about the process of tracking down Gosden. Leir's personal anecdotes and research expertise make the chapter an entertaining and useful guide for students or labor movement activists interested in engaging in their own labor history projects, hence fulfilling his objective of making labor history accessible to the non-academic public. In this chapter Leir includes a discussion of historiography, and attempts to explain to beginning historians "why the past keeps changing." The chapter also provides direction for pursuing studies in BC labor history which are complimented with an exhaustive bibliography of secondary sources.

Leir has done a commendable job in making BC labor history accessible to the public. I would highly recommend *Rebel Life*, both for its "spy-novel"-like intrigue and its useful insights about how to go about writing the history of labor radicals and activists who did not leave behind extensive documented source material.

CHRISTINA BURR, *University of Windsor*

Big Business in Russia: The Putilov Company in Late Imperial Russia, 1868–1917
JONATHAN A. GRANT, 1999
Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press (Pitt Series in Russian and East European Studies)
pp. 203, $45

Jonathan Grant's well-researched, informative, archivally based study of the Putilov Company is only marginally related to the main interests of the readers of *Labor History*. St. Petersburg's Putilov workers appear in Grant's story only occasionally and then as minor players. Since Grant makes no claim to be writing about labor history, this should not be taken as a criticism. Moreover, given the special role of the workers of the Putilov Factory (*Putilovskii zavod*, renamed *Kirovskii zavod* in the Soviet period, the jewel in the crown of the company's possessions), in triggering the 1905 Revolution and hastening the fall of the Provisional Government in 1917, any good book on the history of the company, which this one is, cannot help but deepen our understanding of the context in which these events took place.

Broadly, what Grant sets out to do is debunk what he sees as the myth of Russian exceptionalism in the area of business practices and strategies, specifically, the myth that Russian entrepreneurship in the late Imperial period was so tightly bound to the needs and will of the tsarist government and so beholden to the banks, as to prevent its free and dynamic development on a market-oriented model, similar to the strategies presumably followed by Western European countries and the U.S. Examining the history of arms manufacturing, Putilov's main activity at the time, was a useful way to test this hypothesis, since it has been generally accepted that the manufacture of consumer goods, especially textiles, concentrated in Russia's Central Industrial Region, was much freer of state interference than was the defense-oriented heavy industry of St. Petersburg. If Grant could make his case persuasively for the capital's metalworking industry, it would be easier to argue *a fortiori* that Russian business practices were much more in line with those of other countries, were, in a sense, more "modern" (though Grant eschews this term), than had previously been believed.

Though not fully persuasive at every point, Grant does a good job demonstrating the similarities between Putilov's practices and those of its counterparts in other countries, showing, in effect, that Putilov's owners and directors had a great deal of agency, autonomy, and independence from the Russian government (their primary, but by no means their only market), a government that was itself divided among competing interests over state procurement policy. If he achieves this goal in part by demystifying received wisdom about the company's entanglement with the state and the banks (showing, for example, the importance of Putilov's production of machinery for sale to private textile factories before the World War), he also does so by pointing out that Creusot, Krupp and other non-Russian firms were themselves not always consummate models of market independence. At certain moments, Grant develops his thesis in respectful counterpoint to views expressed in the important works of Joseph Bradley, Thomas Owen, and other "pessimistic" historians. Without pretending to be a business historian, I will simply register my opinion that Grant scores some very good points, especially for the period 1885–1914, but that his less sanguine adversaries' analyses sometimes trump his, even on the basis of his own evidence, especially during the years of Putilov's initial "rise and fall" (1868–1880) and during the World War, marked as it was by the sequestration of the company in 1916. On the other hand, as is well known, similar wartime processes were developing in the other combatant countries as well.

Grant's direct references to workers, though rare, are quite astute. He argues plausibly, for example, that the company's downward "squeeze" on wages, which it successfully suppressed during a period of high profits (1900–1903), provoked the "dramatic change in strike activity" among Putilov workers in 1904–early 1905, which in turn soon placed the factory at the "epicenter of the 1905 Revolution" (79–81). He also makes the case that the War Ministry's support for sequestration in early 1916 was based, though only in part, on its fear of the mounting labor unrest at what was then the largest factory in Russia. Putilov workers had interrupted essential military production by launching a major wage strike that February, and the War Minister reasoned that he could better handle such unrest if the factory was placed under direct control of his Artillery Department (a step the Russian government took but rarely). Even after sequestration and then after the fall of the monarchy, Putilov workers continued to plague their new military supervisors by sharply increasing the cost of operations through their upward pressure on wages, a sign of terrible troubles to come for the Russian Provisional Government by summer 1917. By taking over direct administration of the factory, the government displaced the Putilov administrators as the direct "adversary of labor" (135) in the eyes of the workers. In his most incisive statement about the workers, Grant correctly concludes that "Although the important role of Putilov workers in the revolutionary events of 1917 is well established, the business context that pushed

them into the streets has not been properly appreciated" (134). Nor, he might have added, has the way in which their taking to the streets transformed the business context.

REGINALD E. ZELNIK, *Professor of History*, University of California at Berkeley

Grace Hartman: A Woman for Her Time
SUSAN CREAN, 1999
Vancouver: New Star Books
pp. xi + 248, $19.00

The pinnacle of Grace Hartman's career was undoubtedly being marched from a courtroom in 1981 to serve a 45-day sentence for refusing to use her power as president of Canada's largest union to order Ontario's underpaid hospital workers to end their illegal strike. Susan Crean sets out to explain how this remarkable woman came to be taking such a stand and a good deal about how her union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), had evolved to this point. Crean is a skilled journalist who got funding for this project from CUPE and support from family, friends, and previous interviewers of Hartman. The result is a useful, highly readable account that avoids criticism, but gives a good sense of Hartman and her engagement with both public-sector unionism and second-wave feminism.

Hartman (born Fulcher) had been a gutsy young woman from a middle-class family in Toronto, who at age 16 found her life's partner—a handsome young Communist named Joe Hartman. He introduced her to radical politics, and his class-conscious mother became Grace's mentor. She joined the Young Communist League and attended classes at the Workers' Educational Association. When her father lost his job, she quit high school to work in a carpet factory, but, after marrying Joe in 1939, began work as a secretary, first as a temp, then for the Communist-led United Electrical Workers.

The demands of motherhood and the couple's decision to move out to one of Toronto's new suburbs in 1949 disrupted Hartman's links with radical labor (the book skirts by the impact of the Cold War here). Eventually, however, to help pay the mortgage, she returned to secretarial work, this time in the planning office of North York Township. The office was unionized, part of what was soon to be the National Union of Public Employees, and within months she was on the local executive. Hartman clearly showed leadership abilities: between 1959 and 1963, she became, in rapid succession, president of her local, the first female head of the district council, president of the Ontario division, and regional vice-president of CUPE, newly created out of a merger of two existing national organizations. In 1967 she stepped into full-time office when she was elected secretary-treasurer, and in 1975 began an eight-year term as president.

Crean gives us a glimpse of her shift from union activist to union politician, embroiled, first, in the nasty internecine warfare between the supporters of each of the merged unions inside CUPE, and then in the confrontations with an increasingly militant rank and file in the 1970s. At their urging, she led CUPE against the Trudeau government's wage control program, but nonetheless faced a rowdy, angry national convention in 1979 that was not content with the leadership's fight-back strategy. Her support for Ontario's hospital workers two years later was testimony to her recognition of the need to respond to this restive membership. Her leadership of CUPE also brought her onto the executive of the Canadian Labour Congress, where, as a public-sector unionist, a nationalist, a socialist, and a woman, she often did not have an easy time.

Well before Hartman took office in Ottawa in 1967, she had taken an active interest in the special problems of women, including their treatment in her union and the labor movement more generally, where she had faced plenty of disparagement already. In 1966 she was invited to join the Committee for Equality of Women in Canada, and became the lone union voice among professional women. She assisted the successful lobby to establish a Royal Commission on the status of women the next year, and later used the commission's report to prepare a comprehensive policy document on women's equality within her own union. She also participated in the follow-up conference in 1972 intended to form a government advisory committee (where Susan Crean first met her) and joined the dissident force that proceeded to launch the independent National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). She became NAC president in 1975, but had to resign as the mantle of union presidency settled on her shoulders. She nonetheless continued to be active in the organization, where she

struggled to get middle-class women to understand the concerns of their working-class sisters. She also helped women organizing on their own within the labor movement whenever possible.

Crean makes good use of the biographical mode to tell a larger story about an important part of the modern Canadian labor movement. She pastes the pieces of Hartman's life onto a larger canvass, drawn largely from well-known secondary sources. As can be expected in a union-supported biography, much cannot be told. Yet she leaves us with a sensitive, nuanced portrait of an eloquent, compassionate, tough, yet gentle and curiously reserved woman, who could deliver thundering denunciations of governments from platforms and be found knitting in a spare moment shortly afterward. Her impact on the wider labor movement beyond CUPE was limited, but, among many working-class women in her union, she was beloved and respected, and for many feminists of the "second wave" she was a welcome sister in the struggle for women's equality.

CRAIG HERON, *York University*

The Darkest Side of the Fascist Years: The Italian-Canadian Press 1920–1942
ANGELO PRINCIPE (Introduction by GABRIELE SCARDELLATO), 1999
Toronto: Guernica
pp. 272, $18.00

Fascism and the Italians of Montreal: An Oral History 1922–1945
FILIPPO SALVATORE, 1998
Toronto: Guernica
pp. 224, $18.00

These two books are important additions to the growing body of an often impressive literature on the history of the large Italian community of Canada. Neither Anglophone nor Francophone, Italian Canadians have historically played a sometimes awkward social and political role in a nation formally committed to biculturalism. Certainly no period was more awkward for Canada's Italians than the one that began in June 1940, when, in conjunction with its entry into World War II against the British and French, the government of Italy declared war on the Dominion of Canada.

Principe's *Darkest Side of the Fascist Years* is a useful study of the Italian language press in Canada in the Fascist period. His book offers a detailed study of three Italian newspapers, *L'Italia* (published in Montreal), *Il Bollettino* (published in Toronto) and *L'Eco* (published in Vancouver). He confirms that Fascism was promoted quite heavily in Canada by the Italian government, and that many leading Italian-Canadians were not only sympathetic to Mussolini's government and its policies, but that they actively promoted them within the Italian-Canadian community. There was little soft-pedaling of Mussolini's programs by the Italian-Canadian press. The Ethiopian campaign received strong support, as did Mussolini's anti-Semitic legislation. Fascist-sponsored attempts to create bridges to other ethnic communities in Canada, including a "Latin League" that aimed to unite the French, Hispanics and Italians, proved failures, although there was some admiration for Italian Fascism among French-Canadian political leaders. According to Principe, the Italian anti-Semitic legislation of 1938 had the unintended consequence of undoing Fascist efforts in Canada, since it resulted in opposition by the Catholic Church to Fascism. After 1938, the Canadian *Catholic Register* became quite forceful in its denunciation of "pagan Fascism," and forced to choose sides, most Italian-Canadians followed Pius XI rather than Mussolini. By 1940, when Italy declared war, Canada's Italian newspapers had lost much of their advertising income, and *Il Bollettino* in Toronto had become an especially vicious organ of anti-Semitism.

As the introduction by Gabriele Scardellato emphasizes, Principe's book appears at a time when there are strong pressures in Canada and the United States to issue official apologies for the internment of Italians during World War II. After Italy declared war (in the case of the U.S. it was on 10 December 1941), a number of Italian civilians—both aliens and naturalized citizens—were arrested, interrogated, and sent to detention camps until a separate peace was signed with Italy in 1943. There was nothing new in the practice, since the detention of enemy civilians had been a feature of European warfare at least since 1803, when Napoleon rounded up the British civilians in France after the collapse of the Treaty of Amiens. The Axis powers, too—most notoriously Japan, but also Italy and Germany—detained enemy civilians for the duration of the war. Still, there is something undeniably wrong in a

democratic government's denying fundamental liberties to its own citizens, and in the cases of Canada and the United States, both built by immigrant populations, it seems clear that injustice was done during World War II, most famously to the Japanese-Americans, who were interned in large numbers without evidence of their hostility to the government and only recently received an apology and reparations. Similarly, the U.S. House of Representatives recently voted unanimously to issue an apology to the much smaller number of Italian internees, but as of this writing the question appears stalled in the Senate. Principe's book serves as a useful reminder of how complicated this historical question is, since he gives ample evidence of the strong commitment to Mussolini of certain Italian-Canadians, just as other historians (John Diggins, Philip Cannistraro) have shown it among Italian-Americans. Few of Principe's readers will forget the words of the Fascist song composed and regularly sung during the war by Italian-Canadian internees at a camp in Petawawa, Ontario: "We march along with Germany as one; / In brotherhood with honest men and true … / We are the sons of Italy reborn, … / If our adopted land treats us with scorn, / The Duce will defend us in the fray."

Salvatore's book publishes a series of fourteen interviews with persons who had significant experiences of Fascism in Montreal. His interviewees include a French Canadian politician, a leftist Anglophone Canadian novelist, several surviving Fascists still proud of their activities, a clergyman, and several Italians who were anti-Fascist in the 1930s. The interviews offer numerous local details that generally confirm the strength of the Fascist movement in Canada. Particularly interesting are the recollections concerning relations between Fascists and French-Canadian political leaders. Also notable are the interviews with aging socialist anti-Fascists and their Fascist opponents. Several men who were interned during World War II continue to blame these socialist Italian-Canadians for having given their names to the authorities.

In the United States, where the internment issue is generally discussed only as a question of ethnic discrimination, there is little disagreement with those who are today calling for an official apology. These two books show that in Canada, where Italians who happened to be socialist fared slightly better than in the U.S. in the postwar period, there are instead two quite vocal sides to the discussion.

WILLIAM J. CONNELL, *Assistant Professor of History, Seton Hall University*

Australian Labour History Reconsidered
DAVID PALMER, ROSS SHANAHAN & MARTIN SHANAHAN (eds.), 1999
Unley, South Australia: Australian Humanities Press
pp. xii + 244, $35.00

The papers in this collection were first presented to the Fourth National Australian Labour History Conference held in Adelaide, South Australia, in 1995, though they were developed considerably between their presentation at the conference and their later publication. The articles are arranged in six parts: Culture, Gender and the Australian Workers; Organised Labour and Political Culture; Working-Class Communities and Political Identity; Australian Egalitarianism: Reality or Myth?; Alternative Identities; and Intellectuals and the Working Class: Australian Labour History Reconsidered. So what is the quality of this edited collection? In what ways is this publication distinctive? How does it compare to other recent publications? Will non-Australians find it useful?

Some of the sections, particularly part four which explores Australian egalitarianism, are nicely balanced and well-related selections of papers. However, as with many collections of conference papers, the work is uneven both in quality and coverage. Its origins as conference papers is telling with gaps in some of the themes. For instance there are two chapters exploring "Culture, Gender and the Australian Workers" essentially over different chronological periods: one on the masculine ethos of the Australian Workers Union in the late 19th century and the other on the Women and the Professionalization of Australian Nursing during the 20th century. Both chapters are good, albeit different. It is not the different subject matters or chronologies which are issues but that there are no internal references between them and no conversation emerges from these two different papers placed together in the one part.

Even the editors observe in their introduction to the section on working-class communities and political identity that the two contributions on the emergence of a labor identity "have, at first glance, a superficial resemblance" (89). One is on the emergence of a labor identity in Ipswich before World War I in one Australian state and the other is on organized labor and anti-Communism in Wagga

Wagga, another country town in a second state, in the 1950s. The editors argue that these papers offer different perspectives on the idea of political identity and solidarity in major county towns. Indeed they do. But we need to be told about the connections between these different perspectives, times, and places.

Labor history may not be a single narrative, but neither is it a collection of unconnected fragments. The section on "alternative identities" is introduced as a presentation of "very different perspectives of working life." It marries the "unusual work experience" emerging from oral testimony of Aboriginal Australians in the Central Desert with colonial immigrant workers' aspirations as revealed in their letters, the prejudiced stereotypes Italian and other Southern Europeans encountered and the issue of homosociality among Broken Hill men based on interviews. The editors claim one of the strengths of the entire collection is that it "reflects the wide diversity of 'labour' scholarship" (12), but it involves a weakness too. It is not helped by short introductions to the parts and there being no index to the whole collection. The last part is not even introduced.

The strength of this collection derives from its other major aim, to reconsider Australian labor history. One might wonder if we need yet another reconsideration of Australian labor history. There was a rash of reconsiderations in the early 1990s including Greg Patmore's monograph, *Australian Labour History* (1991) and Terry Irving's edited collection *Challenges to Labour History* (1994). A number of articles appeared in *Labour History*. However, this timely collection distinguishes itself from these others by its attempt to identify what makes Australian society and its working class distinctive from that of other countries. New Zealanders, and I am one, are often rightly skeptical about analyses which describe Australian distinctiveness. All too often, many of the factors transpire to be common trans-Tasman characteristics! In their introduction the editors tease out four particular features which they argue largely explain Australia's labor ethos: regulation, especially labor regulations and promotion of trade unions; the importance of union influence in the Labour Party; the targeting of social services and provisions for the interests of workers; and promotion of state enterprises in key areas of infrastructure and service (4). New Zealand shares all of these features but the editors' discussion of them and Australia's racial, ethnic and gendered history is subtle and nuanced. They indicate Australia's specificity. One can easily see that New Zealand's labor history differs in degree and, thus, nature. This introduction offers a useful anchor for the diverse papers.

Unfortunately, a number of chapters do not relate or develop the editors' useful framework. Some papers do and I think that they are among the strongest in the collection. Let me mention two papers in particular. Chris McConville's chapter is on interwar waterfront unionism in Buenos Aires, Melbourne, and San Francisco. He challenges historians to go beyond "simply detecting racism in comparative labour studies and do more than just re-order some national ladder of working-class 'advancement' " (86). Martin Shanahan attempts to calibrate the degree of income and wealth inequality in Australia and compares that to other countries. He reveals that Australia was no less class-divided than elsewhere and uses this to challenge the standard view that Australian society was egalitarian. In many ways, non-Australian audiences will find this collection, and I suspect these chapters in particular, a good introduction to Australian labor history.

MELANIE NOLAN, *Senior Lecturer, Victoria University of Wellington*

Identity and Struggle at the Margins of the Nation-State: The Laboring Peoples of Central America and the Hispanic Caribbean
AVIVA CHOMSKY & ALDO LAURIA-SANTIAGO (eds.), 1998
Durham, NC: Duke University Press
pp. vi + 404, $64.95(cloth), $21.95(paper)

Trade Conditions and Labor Rights: U.S. Initiatives, Dominican and Central American Responses
HENRY J. FRUNDT, 1998
Gainesville: University Press of Florida
pp. xxii + 385, $55.00

Two new works on Central America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean focus on struggles of working

people for social and economic justice, presenting new research that challenges conventional wisdom. Chomsky and Lauria-Santiago's outstanding collection of new historical scholarship on the late 19th/early 20th century highlights the intersection of class, race, ethnicity and gender in the evolving construction of the nation-state. Frundt's study focuses on a late 20th century cross-border labor strategy, of conditioning U.S. trade preferences on respect for labor rights.

Identity and Struggle contributes to an important new body of scholarship reinterpreting the social history of Central America and the Caribbean from the bottom up. Working people emerge as subjects in these essays, forging their own cultures and identities in complex interaction with dominant classes and the state. Consciousness is not derived in reductionist fashion from class categories; rather, the diversity of laboring peoples' relation to the land, and to each other, emerges in dynamic struggle with elites seeking to mold them into an agroexport workforce. The varied outcomes of those local struggles add much-needed texture to the historiography of these countries. Viewing history from the perspective of the popular sectors rather than the usual top–down approach suggests elites are not always fully in control, but rather continually forced to negotiate the terms of their power with the subaltern classes.

Race and ethnicity emerge as important dimensions of the contested historical constructions of the nation. Darío Euraque's study of the Honduran north coast banana plantation region shows how the myth of a homogeneous, mestizo Honduras was elaborated by elites to reassert their dominance during the late 19th/early 20th century influx of foreign capital and foreign immigration. He traces the "mestizo" construction to a racially exclusionary nationalism, reinforced by anti-immigrant laws of the 1920s–30s and antiblack labor laws. Elucidating this forgotten debate over national identity, Euraque challenges the standard view of the banana enclave economy, isolated from Honduran national history. Similarly, Aviva Chomsky's fascinating account of the class dynamics of Costa Rican mine worker/peasant interaction is enriched by the focus on racial manipulation by mine owners, who brought in Jamaicans to police Hispanic mine workers (who engaged in "everyday resistance" by appropriating some of the gold they brought out of the depths of the earth). She deftly shows how an uprising against the mining company was deflected into a race riot against blacks. Chomsky's focus on foreign-owned plantations and mines also calls into question the national myth of Costa Rican exceptionalism, rooted in a rural democracy of coffee and small landholding. Jeffrey Gould's study of highland Nicaraguan indigenous communities' adaptive responses to expanding coffee production shows resistance through the survival of ethnic identity; but also the subtle elite strategy of constructing the hegemonic national myth of a homogeneous mestiza society. This fine-grained local history offers a nuanced alternative to conventional depictions of extinction of indigenous identity through coffee expansion and proletarianization.

Other works in this volume also question the oversimplified peasant vs. proletarian accounts of class formation in national histories. Barry Carr's chapter on Cuban cane cutters shows that labor shortages in the sugar harvest and worker mobility, as well as the subsistence plots which represented footholds of freedom, gave workers considerable room for maneuver and negotiation. This forced elites to develop complex ideological strategies for labor control, quite different from the "semi-feudal" image of sugar production. Aldo Lauria-Santiago's study of a municipality in western El Salvador traces the conflictual transition from Indian-controlled communal cattle-raising to private peasant and farmer coffee production, showing how the weakening of the local identity and resource base reinforced the construction of the national state. His work suggests that top-down histories have ignored autonomous participation by Salvadoran peasants in emerging agrarian capitalism. Similarly, Julie Charlip's study of coffee production in the Nicaraguan department of Carazo, creatively reconstructing local history from money-lending records, paints a picture of thriving peasant capitalism. These accounts suggest a more diverse social history of the region than the agroexport capitalism model of landlessness and proletarianization implicit, e.g. in Robert G. Williams' *States and Social Evolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994). Indeed, the historical oversimplification of rural class relations in Central America has important implications for the intractable issues of agrarian reform in the region's contemporary revolutions, a connection which authors in this volume unfortunately do not pursue further.

One strength of these essays is their recognition of agency in the actions of those marginalized from power. Eileen Findlay brings early 20th century Puerto Rican workers' struggles to life, highlighting the central role of women in linking critiques of capitalism and of sexual power relations, even though radical critiques of sexism were flawed by the paternalism of men in the working class movement, who saw their role as "protecting" women from exploitation by the rich. Even chapters on the cooperation of Salvadoran peasants into the emerging repressive apparatus of the state (Patricia Alvarenga), or the populism of the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic (Richard Turits) reveal complex

negotiations of power, in which the sharp tongues and pens and occasionally machetes of working people are wielded in defense of their dignity. Cindy Forster's provocative reinterpretation of the 1944–54 period in Guatemala offers a radically different look at what is conventionally portrayed as a middle class "revolution from above." Her rich oral history research shows Maya rural laborers in San Marcos asserting their ethnic identity (despite the assimilationist leadership of the "revolution"), electrified by the Mexican revolution, defying the vagrancy laws before their repeal. Workers in the Pacific banana zone organized with Atlantic coast workers against the United Fruit Company, before the Arbenz agrarian reform law which gets all the attention in standard histories.

Forster's study—"rescuing the history of popular organizations and struggles from the silence of the mass grave," as Lowell Gudmundson and Francisco Scarano note in their conclusion (357)—clearly presents the massacres of banana unionists in this period as precursors of later state terror in Guatemala. Other chapters could be more explicit in exploring the implications of their historical reexamination for contemporary repression and workers' struggles. Overall, this is a first-rate contribution to the labor and social history of the region.

Activist/academic Henry Frundt's book on labor in the same region focuses on workers' rights in the 1980s–90s context of the Caribbean Basin Initiative, neoliberalism, and the integration of the circum-Caribbean into maquiladora assembly production for the global economy. Drawing on 20 years of work with union solidarity in the region, he examines the effectiveness of conditioning U.S. tariff reductions (under the Generalized System of Preferences, GSP) on labor standards in each country. This strategy requires new and complex interactions among governmental actors (USTR—the U.S. Trade Representative—and the labor ministries of the seven countries studied in Central America, Panama, and Dominican Republic); local unions; and the AFL–CIO and its hemispheric arm, AIFLD (the American Institute for Free Labor Development).

Trade Conditions challenges the assumption that U.S. unions pursue a narrow nationalist agenda of protectionism. The study sorts through a variety of intervening variables that may affect labor standards—including economic development, political forces, capitalist concessions, and union strength—to show that rules matter and are worth fighting for. While recognizing the Cold War encumbrances on AIFLD and U.S. government policy, Frundt identifies a thread of commitment to "free" labor that can be seized by union organizers.

Labor activists will find evocative images of repression of labor rights, and practical lessons for using bureaucratic tools for leverage. The theoretical argument about whether the state or the market is more likely to protect worker rights rests on an overdrawn dichotomy since, as Frundt notes, " 'natural' or 'neutral' trade does not exist" (57). The book needs editing and proofreading, and suffers from eclectic footnoting and loose interpretation of statistics. Nevertheless, there is a wealth of detail (particularly for Guatemala and El Salvador) on the intricate cross-border negotiations between unions, other NGOs, and state agencies.

With unions cracking the region's maquila sector and corporate campaigns making sweatshops a U.S. household word, this history holds valuable lessons for the struggles ahead. Frundt reminds us that the AFL–CIO was more reluctant to press the "reformist" Duarte government in El Salvador on labor issues than the U.S. Congress was; that the same U.S. executive that conditions trade on labor rights also sponsored the Nicaraguan contra war and the invasion of Panama; and that democratic Costa Rica has 2% private sector unionization and flawed labor laws (237). Applying the insights of the Chomsky and Laura-Santiago historiographies, it is important to recall that organizing space is won primarily by struggles from below and from within, not as a gift from the AFL–CIO and the USTR.

RICHARD STAHLER-SHOLK, *Assistant Professor of Political Science, Eastern Michigan University*

The Gendered Worlds of Latin American Women Workers: From Household and Factory to the Union Hall and Ballot Box
JOHN D. FRENCH & DANIEL JAMES (eds.), 1997
Durham: Duke University Press
pp. viii + 320, $30.00

This is a superbly constructed volume that sheds light on many different practical and theoretical aspects of women workers in Latin America in the 20th century. The essays complement each other to a degree unusual in such collections, and their quality is uniformly excellent. The research is

innovative, and the authors are particularly sensitive to the nuances of ideologies and consciousness as well as the qualitative and quantitative details of factory and working-class experiences.

A major focus of all of the essays is the disjuncture between dominant ideologies of gender, that posit women's sphere as the domestic sphere, and label women's entry into the industrial labor force as temporary, subordinate, generally "helping out" rather than supporting a family, and women's actual experiences as wage-earners. This set of beliefs was common to the different areas of Latin America that the essays study—mostly the southern cone countries of Brazil, Argentina and Chile, although two essays deal with Colombia and Guatemala—and common to industrialists, government agencies, reformers, and male and female workers. All of the authors are enormously sensitive to the issue of how socially constructed beliefs and categories may shape individuals' sense of self, and actions, while at the same time individuals can make their own use and meaning of these beliefs and categories.

A second theme that runs through the essays is that of oral history—the ways that historical actors construct stories that give shape to their experiences. Some of this construction is unconscious—different gender and class models and expectations shape women's consciousness. Some of it is more conscious—women manipulate categories and events to create a story that gives meaning to their own experience. Virtually all of the authors engage explicitly with this question of the shaping of stories, and how and why historical actors tell their stories as they do.

Some of the essays explore how women workers negotiated the contradiction between the dominant ideologies and their own experiences in their own lives and self-images. Daniel James's "Tales Told Out on the Borderlands" carries out a finely grained analysis of how Doña María, a long-time worker and union organizer in Argentina's meatpacking plants, explained and understood her own life through these contradictions. Deborah Levenson also analyzes the life story of one female worker and union activist, and notes that "she had to be 'alone,' outside of normal gender relations, to be an activist … she had to live apart from the constraints of gender to join a union" (209–210). In both cases, women had to challenge certain gender expectations in order to act on a working-class identity, since the working class was inherently gendered as male. Sonia Oliva, Levenson's informant, resolved the contradiction by separating herself entirely from traditional gender expectations; Doña María instead created her own interpretations of these societal values. As James notes, with respect to the issues of divorce and abortion, "the context in which Doña María places her criticisms shows that the influence of the dominant ideology is mediated, relativized, and ultimately minimized by her own sympathy and understanding of the limited options open to women in the real world" (49).

From another perspective, Barbara Weinstein examines how industrialists and reformers molded and propagated these very ideologies even as factories employed large numbers of female workers. The vocational institutions they created supported the idea that "skilled housewives could resolve such social problems as low wages, infant mortality, and malnutrition" at the same time that they contributed to maintaining a pool of underskilled, temporary female laborers (94). Ann Farnsworth-Alvear looks at both sides of the issue, examining female sociability in the mills, and how workers played with, against, and around factory discipline that tried to use reformers' goals of protecting female morality in conjunction with capitalist goals of maintaining an efficient workforce. Interestingly, she concludes that "resistance is not a concept that will help labor historians understand informal work cultures. Instead of flattening working people's interactions into meanings derived from their subaltern status as workers, labor historians might do more to explore the contradictions inherent in their being human beings even while at work" (171–72).

Men also negotiated contradictory social norms about gender roles and masculinity, as Deborah Levenson and Thomas Klubock point out. In two Guatemala factories, male workers described the origins of their unions in their attempts to protect female workers from sexual harassment by managers. "Outrage at the sexual abuse of women was informed by class machismo, and so was the question of the mode of struggle—the notion that men had to defend women—but it was also influenced by workplace class solidarity, which embraced sympathy for female workers" (223). In Klubock's study, male working-class solidarity was based much more on the exclusion and subordination of women. In echoes of Weinstein's essay, he describes how company reformers promoted ideals of the nuclear family and female domesticity. In the case of the Chilean mines, however, men used these very ideals in formulating their demands for improved working conditions.

Heidi Tinsman's innovative article looks most deeply inside the working class family, and how gender ideologies and structural factors play into domestic violence, and women's ability to contest this violence. By privileging the male wage-earner, the progressive agrarian reforms of the 1960s and early 1970s created a context that contributed to women's dependence on their male partners; the conservative counter-reforms of the Pinochet era sharpened rural poverty at the same time as they

created new, low-paying jobs for women and increased male unemployment. Male violence was a fact of life in both eras, but the reasons for it, and women's ability to contest it, changed. However, she cautions, "It was not low-wage jobs, family breakdown, and state repression that were 'good' for women, but women's access to work, the undercutting of the validation for male-headed and male-dominated families, and women's resistance to new forms of class exploitation and political oppression" (288).

Individually and collectively, these essays make a significant contribution to our knowledge of Latin American labor history, and our understanding of the many levels at which gender and class operate in the lives of Latin American men and women.

AVIVA CHOMSKY, *Associate Professor of History, Salem State College*

Peasants on Plantations: Subaltern Strategies of Labor and Resistance in the Pisco Valley, Peru

VINCENT C. PELOSO, 1999
Durham, NC: Duke University Press
pp. xxi + 251, $45.00

This book is a careful and meticulous study of the transition from a planter-controlled system of production based on slave and then indentured labor to tenant/sharecropper control of production on Peru's coastal cotton southern plantations between the late 19th century and the 1930s. It provides powerful insights into the relationship between landowners and tenants including micro-political negotiations, the contested culture of the plantation and disputes over control of production, land and labor. An important theme for the author is that simply looking for peasant resistance misses the intention by peasant actors of negotiating a just, moral order with their opponents: "At times the word 'resistance' has not always fully captured the intent of peasant actions. Peasants sometimes seem to have been engaged in a twofold struggle. In one sense they sought greater power. But in another sense they also sought to secure something more tangible: a set of rights" (xvi).

The book attempts to portray the great complexity of shifting forms of tenancy and production on the plantations. Inevitably, the discussion of these arrangements can be somewhat confusing but the author does a good job of keeping the reader aware of why these distinctions in arrangement are important and consequential. (A chronological chart summarizing the most important trends might have helped.) However, the author puts the rich archival sources from one family and its businesses in one coastal estate—this should serve as model and incentive to this kind of archival recovery in Latin America.

The author addresses both empirically and theoretically important debates in the study of agrarian development in Latin America. In particular, the book contains a significant contribution to the debate over the role of debt and indenture in determining the relations between tenants/workers and estate owners. Furthermore, the book provides sophisticated insights into the efforts of tenant families to survive and manage resources and demands from estate owners—again, the result of the careful use of extensive sources.

The author clarifies the important role of estate administrators not merely as intermediaries between owners and tenants but as complex actors in their own right. He also pays significant attention to the landless, migratory and more marginalized workers who worked seasonally on the estates. Still, the greatest value of the book is in its discussion of tenants, owners and managers, and how—despite great contestation—owners were able to reduce the status, power and income of their most privileged, and creative tenants by pushing towards a reliance on non-resident seasonal wage labor. The book also makes an important contribution by examining the autonomous role of estate managers in their negotiations over production with tenants—indeed, in many respects the administrators studied in the book seem to be entrepreneurs in their own right.

It is precisely because of the successful discussion of tenants and their relations with the estates, that one of the principal premises of the book comes under question. Indeed, while the book provides many good reasons not to think of agrarian social and class relations in rigid or fixed categories, the book also provides many reasons not to consider its main protagonists as typical "peasants." The book suggests the different trajectories of resistance and success that tenants could pursue in the context of estate attempts to increase production and reduce costs. But at least some of these tenants became

entrepreneurs in their own right, sub-renting plots and hiring outside labor. At the very least, there seems to be a process of peasant differentiation internal to the estates that is not highlighted in the book. The author himself acknowledged this theme in his preface ("… I would be looking at tenants or sharecroppers whose actions closely resembled those of farmers" xvi), but it does not appear as a distinct thread throughout the book.

Another dimension that could have used more development is the larger context of Peruvian social and economic development. The book provides many good reasons for wanting to understand the actions of "local" peasants and elites in the context of national developments. Indeed, one of the arguments stressed by the author is the active role of tenants and workers in shaping the region's development, but few connections are made to regional or national politics or development trends. Still, this relative lack of a national context is more than compensated by the unusually rich cache of documents that the author so very carefully mines. Scholars interested in agrarian social relations and regions that experienced a transition from slave-based plantation agriculture to other forms of development should find this book useful and stimulating.

The main body of the book is organized into six chapters plus an introduction and conclusion.

ALDO LAURIA-SANTIAGO, *Associate Professor of History, College of the Holy Cross*

One Industry, Two Chinas: Silk Filatures and Peasant-Family Production in Wuxi County, 1865–1937

LYNDA S. BELL, 1999
Stanford: Stanford University Press
pp. xvi + 290, $49.50.

The most distinctive feature of early 20th-century Chinese development, Lynda Bell tells us, "was the fusion of modern factory production with peasant-family production, and the interdependence of the two systems." The aphorism "one industry, two Chinas" in the title is meant to capture this key insight: the notion of one industry refers to "a single developmental continuum" in which investors and bureaucrats alike gave priority to new forms of mechanized factory production; while "two Chinas" denotes the linkages between a China "populated by sophisticated, urban-based merchants and industrialists," and another China inhabited "by peasant families who remained in the countryside" (2). After reading through this fascinating study of Wuxi county's silk industry, however, it is still unclear to me whether this "interdependence of the two systems"—"the structural backbone of modern development in the Chinese setting" as Bell puts it (2)—was a phenomenon particular to China. To what extent was the Chinese experience different from or similar to other development cases? Is "developmental continuum" the most appropriate way to describe it? Bell seems to suggest that there is something unique to the Chinese story, but she stops short of pursuing the issue systematically.

Instead, Bell's work makes a couple of important and interesting interventions in recent debates within the China field itself. She starts by providing the reader with the historical and topographical background to Wuxi's emergence as a center of sericulture in the latter half of the 19th century, as a part of the reconstruction effort in the wake of the Taiping rebellion and in response to increasing demands on the world market. As Shanghai became a center for export as well as for steam-powered silk filatures, a thriving cocoon-marketing network initially developed in Wuxi to supply its needs. By the beginning of the 20th century, the local elites in Wuxi were ready to launch their own filature ventures. In her analysis of the forces behind Wuxi's development, Bell joins the ongoing discussion on the nature of the relationship between local elites and the Chinese state.

The relationship, according to Bell, should not be characterized as a struggle for local autonomy, or for a "public sphere," on the part of the elites. Rather, it should be seen primarily as one of collaboration, even if the content of that collaboration changed over time. For example, interests of the local elites and those of the state in general dovetailed quite well in the late Qing. Concerns over increasing taxation from the 1910s onwards did cause tension between the two sides, but even then antagonisms remained in check. The intrusive state apparatus of the Guomindang in the 1930s, on the other hand, actually signaled "a revised form of local elite/state collaboration" (185) with a new generation of elites. Bell emphasizes the Guomindang government's role in supporting economic development. Indeed, in line with the recent historiographical trend, she gives us a very brief, albeit still telling, glimpse of the continuity in managerial and technical personnel in the Wuxi silk industry from

the Guomindang to the Communist periods, indicating that the 1949 divide might not be as sharp as many of us are accustomed to believe (188–190).

Moreover, by making use of the survey conducted by the Social Science Research Institute of the Academia Sinica (1929) and the Mantetsu survey (1940), Bell is able to give us a more nuanced picture of peasant participation in the silk industry. In particular, she focuses on the industry's predominantly female labor force. In doing so, she takes issue with those who maintain that market opportunities presented by the expansion of sericulture led to higher incomes and a clearly better standard of living for the peasants. By examining peasant participation within the overall context of the household economy and how the division of labor was gendered to the detriment of women, Bell leaves us with a portrayal of the complex economic calculations that typically determined the strategy of a Wuxi peasant household. Ultimately, Bell insists, as the elites tried to come up with more resources to improve the quality of their products and their competitiveness in the early decades of the 20th century, it was the peasants who had to bear the brunt of the burden of financing the endeavor.

Bell suggests that "in any given year, a substantial proportion of Wuxi households—perhaps as many as one-third throughout the county as a whole—relied either on savings or on loans to meet their basic consumption requirements" (130). Bell's data might not be comprehensive enough to convince the skeptics, but her argument should nonetheless be taken seriously. Yet, strangely enough, she has relatively little to say about the specificities of peasant resistance within the silk industry, other than to make passing references to the phenomenon and to reiterate the well-known improvement in peasants' property rights during the Qing. Her discussion of the difficulties in communication between sericulture reformers and peasants in the republican era has a somewhat glancing quality to it (141–145). More attention to peasant resistance would have made the view from below, so to speak, even more illuminating.

A short review cannot do justice to the rich details on the operation of the Wuxi silk industry covered in the book. This fine and thought-provoking volume deserves to be read widely.

MICHAEL TSIN, *Associate Professor of Chinese History, Columbia University*

Other Modernities: Gendered Yearnings in China After Socialism
LISA ROFEL, 1999
Berkeley: University of California Press
pp. xvi + 330, $40.00 (cloth), $16.95 (paper)

Anthropologist Lisa Rofel has written an insightful, introspective book about what she calls "the cultural practices of a postsocialist modernity" (157). Using what is often labeled "postmodern theory," Rofel crafts a highly interpretive analysis of her 1980s and early 1990s fieldwork in the Zhenfu silk factory in Hangzhou. Primarily, Rofel interviewed and came to know women workers in what she describes as three "cohorts": a generation of women who came of age during the halcyon days of socialism in the 1950s; a second generation who matured in their roles as silk workers and political activists during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s; and a third generation, who entered the factory during China's era of "economic reform." Rofel disputes claims by other Western feminists (including an earlier version of herself) that Chinese women have experienced little in the way of "liberation" over the past 50 years. This is not to say, however, that she paints a universally rosy picture of what Chinese women have managed to accomplish. Rather, she introduces women as subaltern subjects who have struggled through political agendas shaped by the party-state to craft their own identities, resulting in a nearly palpable, and, at times, extraordinarily sympathetic reading of their efforts.

There are many things to like about this book, although some readers interested in labor history and/or political economy might have wished for more attention to the concrete details of work and politics and less time spent referencing trends in theoretical studies of modernity. On the one hand, this is a book that seeks to develop new insights, based on a combination of theory and ethnographic fieldwork, into the general problems of modernity in a transnational context. Thus, it speaks most directly to readers who are interested in the analysis of China within the field of postcolonial, feminist studies. Nonetheless, there is also valuable detail about workers' lives, and Rofel's division of the workers she studies into distinct cohorts with different experiences of modernity over time, advances in very useful ways the qualitative study of Chinese women workers during the past half-century.

Specific points I found most salient include the following:

- that "speaking bitterness" among the first cohort of women was not just a political activity learned during the 1950s to craft one's own identity as a working-class heroine, but also, even in the 1980s, a form of nostalgia older women invoked to position themselves against new policies concerning workers' productivity employed by the postsocialist party-state;
- that the Cultural Revolution cohort continued to act according to a "politics of authority," a unique pattern of subaltern resistance in which they refused, even when called upon by the terms of their jobs, to assume any authority themselves; and
- that young women workers in the 1980s and 1990s have focused almost exclusively on becoming "feminine," and thus have become the creators of identities that assist the party-state in its current goal of securing a self-disciplining "modern" workforce.

One potentially controversial aspect of Rofel's analysis is that she gives the least amount of sympathy to the women of the third cohort in terms of their attempts to find happiness through "modern" marriage and family arrangements, the correctly noted preoccupation of most young Chinese women in the 1990s. An alternative reading might be to see this pattern as a form of personal political positioning that allows women to implicitly reject the types of party-state politics that once so fully occupied women's lives in socialist China—a kind of "personal politics of opposition" to the sheer continued existence of the party-state.

Rofel at times suggests such a reading herself, as in her telling of the story of Xiao Ma, a young woman who forsakes her job at Zhenfu after marriage and childbirth. But in the end she argues something else much more emphatically—that the youngest women, like the cohorts before them, have been engulfed by the party-state's current desires for an apolitical, pliable female workforce. In fact, these two readings need not necessarily be seen in opposition to each other; but how much weight one gives to one or the other creates a mood more pessimistic or less about the current state of affairs for Chinese women. I favor a bit more optimism than Rofel seems inclined to feel, but this would be a point worth debating with more varied information about a wider range of historical trends in Chinese women's lives, work, and politics.

Despite the above caveat, in the final analysis Lisa Rofel has crafted a "must read" book for scholars interested in the history of Chinese women workers. Her convincing message is that such women have played, and will continue to play, important roles in creating their own versions of modernity within the contingent, historically situated contexts of transnational capitalist development.

LYNDA S. BELL, *Associate Professor, Department of History, University of California, Riverside; Director, University of California Center in China, Peking University*