BOOK REVIEWS

John Belchem and Neville Kirk, eds., *Languages of Labour.* Brookfield, Vermont: Ashgate, 1997. vii + 222 pp. $68.95 cloth.

Neville Kirk, *Change, Continuity and Class: Labour in British Society, 1850–1920.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998. vi + 228 pp. $79.95 cloth; $24.95 paper.

The field of debate over the value of postmodernism for the practice of history by now has become littered with the remains of so many alleged authorities that even General Douglas Haig might quail before such a prospect. Cynicism is perhaps the best defense against the assaults being launched from both sides of this new no man's land. However, every so often, one contribution to such ritual bloodlettings acts as a flare to reveal the importance of the issues at stake at the same time as it cogently analyzes the arguments and assumptions underlying the controversy. Of the books and articles under review here, perhaps none will be of greater importance to historians than Richard Price's chapter on "Postmodernism as Theory and History" in John Belchem's and Neville Kirk's edited volume, *Languages of Labour,* which does just that.

Price admits both that the postmodernist challenge has served a useful epistemological purpose and that it has valuable things to contribute to the historical enterprise, but the principal object of this essay is to subject postmodernism to a thoughtful and thoroughgoing modernist critique. This is a necessary and indeed fruitful project, for, if it has not been made absolutely clear before, implicit in the postmodernist undertaking is not only the rejection of the positivist tools of observation and validation—the recourse to original sources, the importance of analysis and interpretation, and so forth—but also a more profound rejection of history's claim to offer anything of real intellectual substance to the understanding of the human self or society. It is in this sense that Keith Jenkins, a British advocate of the "linguistic turn," has written that postmodernism threatens both the practice of history with a small "h" as well as the value of History with a capital "H."

Price argues quite candidly that the logic of postmodernism implies, or in several important cases clearly denotes, that history and its sources necessarily fail in any attempt to explain or understand the past. Postmodernism's rejection of history's metanarratives and the consequent emphasis placed upon the linguistic distinction between the sign and the signified robs from history any claim it may have had to epistemological validity. Instead, past and present, source and interpretation, are collapsed uniformly into discourses that ultimately are exercises in power and terror. There is, therefore, no difference between what an historian writes and what is contained in an historical document because both are merely acts of creating authorizing discourses. That is, they are acts of literary fiction.

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If postmodernism presents such a clear threat to modernist history, does it offer any promise as a way out of this epistemological trap? For Price, the answer clearly is no. The allegedly liberating effect of the disciplinary transgressions whereby postmodernism delegitimizes history as discourse results, in practice, in little more than meaningless reductionism. This is largely because many postmodernists reject methodologies based upon rationalism, which itself is an artifact of a totalizing Enlightenment discourse. Postmodernism's rebellion against reason therefore serves to immunize it against judgments based upon the standards of positivist criticism. But in place of reason, postmodernist methodology offers little more than argumentation through assertion thereby rejecting the methodological function and purpose of techniques of verification, refutation, validation, and evaluation.

Without such modernist yardsticks, even though they may be premised upon an unknowable truth, the path perhaps inevitably has been laid open to forms of political and moral relativism that are inherently conservative and antidemocratic. The cases of Martin Heidegger and Paul de Man are well known, but much postmodernism also assumes the passiveness of the masses in the face of the discursive power of authority. Most postmodernist history, therefore, privileges either the analysis of authority and elite power or the rejection of metanarratives in favor of decontextualized microhistories. Both "answers" to modernist history, Price suggests, underscore the powerlessness and isolation of people in society and reject any possibility of a reciprocal relationship between the leaders and the led. Postmodernism, therefore, essentially is a conservative project. It is no accident, Price reminds us, that Margaret Thatcher approved of Jean Baudrillard.

Price's essay merits this rather lengthy attention in such a short review not only because I believe it is an important contribution to the postmodernist debate, but also because it stakes out a particular position with which the other authors under review would probably concur. Thus the volume in which Price's essay appears, *Languages of Labour,* is an extended riposte by labor historians to the postmodernist challenge. Ironically, labor historians, those plodding and contentious materialists often on the margins of academia, may be more sensitive to the sting of postmodernism because that field once laid claim to the hearts and minds of many of those who since have taken leading positions down the "linguistic turn": Gareth Stedman Jones, William Sewell, Joan Scott, and Patrick Joyce. However, the study of language has never been foreign to British labor historians; one need only recall that Asa Briggs's essay on the language of class was published in 1960, and it is Belchem's and Kirk's goal to bring together a set of papers that displays this "unduly neglected" aspect of their trade.

As in any such collection, it must be admitted that the results are mixed. Several essays are exemplary. Belchem's essay on Liverpool's unique scouse accent, Karen Hunt's contribution on the gendered and "fractured" language of socialist universalism, and Susan Levine's account of the struggles over the definition of a living wage during the American railroad shop-craft workers' strike of 1922 illustrate the vitality of a methodology that seeks "to situate language

within and investigate its complex and changing links with social structure" (2). Together, these essays express an understanding of language not only as a contested terrain but also as a medium that both reflects and constructs the "real" world. As Price notes, it is just this reciprocity between the "real" and the "representational" that is denied by postmodernist theory.

Other essays, however, while not uninteresting, seem to miss this editorial target. Leon Fink's essay on W. Jett Lauck (John L. Lewis's aide in the United Mine Workers of America), for example, is less concerned with the historical contextualization of language than it is with the political fate of Progressivism. And while Melanie Tebbutt offers a fascinating shop-floor ethnography of workplace gossip among a group of college lecturers, it is rather ill-matched to the other essays in this volume that are historical in nature.

Such inconsistencies are perhaps inevitable in edited collections, but Neville Kirk himself offers a more sustained response in his most recent book, *Change, Continuity and Class.* For Kirk, postmodernist historians are only part of a broader movement of "liberal revisionism" that also includes both "radical-feminists" such as Anna Clark and Sonya Rose and "liberal individualists" such as Alastair Reid, Jon Lawrence, and Eugenio Biagini. Just why these three disparate approaches should be grouped under the banner of liberalism is not made quite clear here. However, from Kirk's perspective, they share the revisionist objective of denying the Marxist and *Marxisant* historiography of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain that became standard fare after the 1960s and was elaborated in the works of E. P. Thompson, Eric Hobsbawm, and others. That perspective, of course, charted out the trajectory of the British working class, which was made during the Industrial Revolution, subsequently unmade by the labor aristocrats and trade union accommodationists of the mid-Victorian era, and finally remade once again after 1880 with the advent of mass trade unionism and the rise of the Labour party.

While the so-called "radical feminists" bear less of the burden of Kirk's displeasure in this book, one may rightly surmise from the title that the author's principal antagonists are those like Reid and Biagini who have become proponents of a new "continuity thesis." These historians have sought to emphasize the widespread persistence of a popular radical ideology, sometimes called popular liberalism, throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and, consequently, the shared political heritage of both the working and middle classes. For Kirk, such continuities not only smack of a rather disembodied "history from above" and thus bear an affinity to postmodernism, but also they deny more fundamental changes and discontinuities in politics, culture, and workplace relations. Kirk reasserts the importance of a "drift into reformism" (38) in the two decades after 1850 as well as the revival of a class-conscious, labor-dominated workers' movement after 1870. Although carefully eschewing any monocausal explanations, he is at particular pains to argue that, *contra* Reid and Biagini, the hegemony of popular liberal ideology was never uncontested. Both post-Chartist radicalism and popular conservatism bear evidence of this. More-

over, the half-century before 1920 was most conspicuously marked not by the continuity of liberalism into a "New Labourism" but by the rise of an increasingly assertive, independent, and largely collectivist working-class politics and culture.

The works under review here therefore share an antipathy toward some of the most recent trends in British labor history. As Kirk himself reminds us, there are several noticeable parallels between the intellectual issues at stake now and those of a generation or two ago when social and labor history was in its infancy. And as it was a generation ago, although postmodernists certainly would deny this, these are issues not only of intellectual legitimacy and academic fashion but also ones of moral choice and political conviction.

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Joseph P. Ward, *Metropolitan Communities: Trade Guilds, Identity, and Change in Early Modern London.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997. v + 203 pp. $45.00 cloth.

Joseph P. Ward's study explores the extensive but largely untapped early modern records of London's trade guilds (known as livery companies). In many respects, his work is intended as a corrective to previous interpretations, which followed a time-honored Enlightenment tradition. These tended to portray the guilds as hidebound, even retrograde institutions, committed to perpetuating urban oligarchies through various arbitrary controls whose ultimate effect was merely to dampen economic development. Ward seeks to deflate this commonplace view by revealing the inner workings of the livery companies and by examining their role in shaping the lives and identities of working Londoners during a period of immense economic and demographic upheaval.

Such an attempt is long overdue, particularly since recent estimates have suggested that three quarters of all adult males in the city of London during the Tudor-Stuart period were members (or "freemen") of one livery company or another. Roughly eighty guilds operated in the seventeenth century, each theoretically organized around a particular craft, and each endowed by the crown with legal rights, privileges, and jurisdiction. In theory, these organizations exercised oversight over virtually all aspects of labor and production within a given trade, including apprenticeship, quality control, and relations among members. They possessed the power to fine and imprison recalcitrant or disobedient Londoners and, perhaps even more dramatically, had the authority to dictate who could or could not practice a given trade within their jurisdictions.

In the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, these theoretical claims became increasingly problematic. London's dizzying expansion brought thousands of new residents to the city, flooding the labor market

with new craftspeople and creating large suburbs outside the legal boundaries of the city. Indeed, a number of recent scholars have made much of this growth in discussing the guilds. It has been argued that the expansion greatly undermined guild authority by creating a city-outside-of-a-city, which was largely beyond the companies' powers of regulation.

A dichotomy between a guild-dominated, economically traditional city and a market-dominated, unruly, and economically anarchic suburban fringe has become something of a scholarly commonplace. It is one of Ward's primary historiographical targets. He successfully marshals substantial evidence to demonstrate that in fact the guilds were a significant presence in even the most far-flung suburbs. Many livery companies claimed and successfully asserted rights to regulate trade throughout the entire metropolis. At the same time, Ward shows that by the seventeenth century, large numbers of guild members lived and worked beyond the city walls.

In the aftermath of these findings, scholars will no longer be able to draw a neat and simple boundary between the traditional, oligarchical city of London and the unfettered, freewheeling (and, by implication, modern) suburbs.

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Nancy Stieber, *Housing Design and Society in Amsterdam: Reconfiguring Urban Order and Identity, 1900–1920.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. vii + 268 pp. $45.00 cloth.

Eve Blau, *The Architecture of Red Vienna, 1919–1934.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999. xvii + 509 pp. $60.00 cloth.

These two books concern major chapters in the history of mass housing: Amsterdam in the first two decades of the century and "Red Vienna." Both programs were models of state welfare reform, but the political contexts are totally at odds: Amsterdam, with its settlement initiatives achieved through a corporatist compromise among moderate parties, and Vienna, where the Social Democrats attempted literally to build socialism in the midst of "a highly charged, often violent political conflict between left and right" (Blau, 13).

In *Housing Design and Society in Amsterdam,* Nancy Stieber documents the evolution of the Amsterdam program, which, with the initiation of comprehensive housing bills in 1901 and 1902, was the earliest of the great modern housing programs in Europe. Her account begins by introducing the unique policy of *verzuiling* (pillarization). In contrast to programs in the postwar years during which modernization moved inevitably towards a single, secular social ideal and mass culture, Amsterdam forged ahead a full two decades earlier and averted much of the political controversy through a policy that allowed each of the cen-

trist political parties—these representing the "pillars"—to interpret housing reform through its own lens. Each could in a sense take credit for the material improvements proffered its membership while configuring the housing and its interpretation to suit their political and cultural position. Thus the Christian Socialists emphasized family and church, self-reliance, and independence and embodied these in housing and settlement plans built under municipal auspices. The Social Democrats did the same in design terms that spoke of group solidarity and political engagement. Unfortunately, the fate of this *verzuiling* policy in the 1920s, when such corporatist models in other countries were largely dispelled, is beyond the scope of Stieber's history.

Stieber emphasizes her aim to write a social history of housing, not a stylistic analysis, and indeed readers interested in the details of the housing settlements or the careers of architects will find richer resources in the work of Helen Searing, Suzanne Frank, or Wim de Wit. What Stieber does offer is new information and a more detailed and nuanced account of the internal debate that shaped the program and the changing fortunes of issues and actors. She articulates two primary issues of the housing debate that engaged the interests of the various pillars: hygiene and what she calls aesthetic concerns. With regard to the first, Stieber offers a particularly clear account of how nineteenth-century housing reform was largely defined by the medical profession and its concern for public health, which led to the maxim that light and air are endemic to good housing (a theme that architects in the 1920s employed to define a modern aesthetic). In addition, she describes how the role of the medical profession came to be contested around 1900 with the rise of engineers who claimed superior professional expertise. Like Blau, Stieber provides a painstaking analysis of the standard house plans and how they reflected social and hygienic issues as they evolved over the period.

In the area of aesthetics (what one might term architectural language), Stieber documents the transformation of the bureaucracy and city planning issues, and how the civil engineers, who had come to dominate city planning and were preoccupied with transportation and sanitation, were then challenged by architects over the issue of civic beauty. Of particular interest is her account of the gradual move toward institutionalizing an aesthetic code that all projects were bound to confront. It is peculiar to the situation of Amsterdam that settlement and house plans were determined in isolation from the exteriors of the buildings, these being left to architects who interpreted the sponsoring "pillar" in design terms. By about 1916, the young members of the Amsterdam School (politically associated with the Social Democrats) dominated the municipal Committee of Aesthetics and often rejected work by older, established architects. However, as Stieber shows, many of these decisions were overturned by the mayor and aldermen, who were anxious for housing projects to go forward. It is in elucidating such policy battles that Stieber makes her greatest contribution.

In contrast to the relatively untroubled history of Amsterdam, Eve Blau's

The Architecture of Red Vienna portrays the poignant and desperate situation of an embattled Red Vienna in the decade following the First World War. Virtually cut off from the rest of the country by virtue of its majority Social Democratic government in an otherwise Christian Socialist nation, and artificially constrained in land expansion by a "border" fixed by the federal government, the city embarked on an isolationist effort to "build socialism" through a housing program that would serve as the basis of a new working class culture and identity. As Blau puts it, the Austro-Marxists endeavored to employ cultural hegemony as a means to political hegemony (Blau, 25).

Earlier accounts of Red Vienna housing, such as those by Peter Marcuse, Klaus Novy, and Manfredo Tafuri, have been limited in scope, primarily focusing on episodic descriptions or analytical critiques. Blau gives us the first major investigation of the housing program, from its legal structure and political basis to its material evolution. She begins her account with a magisterial overview of the history of Austro-Marxism, of the city and its politics, the state of housing, and the "prehistory" of housing reform in the city. This is followed by an account of the earliest postwar settlements, including the so-called *Wildsiedlungen,* unregulated squatter settlements, and the early garden allotment communities. Like Stieber, Blau elucidates the legal and tax structures that shaped the housing program and provides much new information on the evolution of housing policy and its impact on design. The majority of the book contains a detailed account of the city's organized building campaign, the settlements, and the participating architects during the 1925–1933 building period. These are the years that produced the great perimeter-block courtyard settlements that in the workers' consciousness came to embody, Blau contends, evidence of their political power and thus encouraged the belief that socialism was at hand.

This achievement was all the richer for the socialist lifestyle it represented. There was no question of pillarization in Vienna. Rather, a uniform working class and modern *Wohnkultur,* or culture of everyday life, was essentially invented in the course of the decade through the vehicle of housing and other social programs. Thus the social facilities in the Vienna program had a greater significance than the aesthetics or even the form of the housing itself. As Blau points out, Red Vienna has been criticized for its lack of architectural innovation: The perimeter-block settlement is largely a rehashing of a nineteenth-century type. But, she argues, through its typological specificity—in the appropriation of conventional forms, towers, courts, and balconies, for example—each of the settlements "laid claim to the collective memory of its citizens" (Blau, 400). More importantly, the construction of a socialist life and a new *Wohnkultur* in the form of innovative facilities and cultural programs was the primary substance of reform in Vienna. Whereas the Amsterdam School emphasized the imagery of communal or worker solidarity, in Vienna it was the social infrastructure that defined the nature of the new society. Facilities such as libraries, schools, crèches (nurseries), recreational facilities, meeting rooms, laundries, and the like facilitated the leisure, culture, and domestic life of so-

cialism envisioned by its makers. In the scope of this achievement, Red Vienna can only be compared to the housing program of Frankfurt-am-Main during the same years.

Blau's massive book contains not only an impressive investigation of archival material concerning specific projects and architects, but also numerous details concerning various design debates and issues. There is a detailed account of Adolf Loos's early involvement in the housing program and close discussion of the famed Karl Marx Hof settlement, to name only two instances from this rich compendium. Much of this work will be of interest primarily to historians of architecture or city planning; for them, there is much that is new here. For any reader interested in the material history of the city, Blau's account provides a richly textured view.

The subject of mass housing inevitably raises the question as to the effective role of spatial order: If it is not simply reflective of the larger socioeconomic context, what is its generative potential for cultural and political life? Stieber's assessment of the Amsterdam program is surprisingly pessimistic, coming down on the side of a Foucaultian precept: "[W]hatever gain in autonomy housing improvements might offer the individual was countered by the controlling tendencies of the norms applied by the forces of reform" (Stieber, 7). Blau, on the other hand, and in spite of the fate of Red Vienna after the *Anschluss,* is quite clear about "the process by which architecture itself can generate a collective discourse that includes all members of society" (Blau, 16). One difficulty in assessing these assertions is the dearth of material documenting public responses. This, in turn, results in a curious disconnection at what might be the climax of the story. Still, in their investigation of material ranging from social, public policy, architectural, and city planning history, Blau and Stieber have each made significant contributions in reconfiguring the history of housing and social space.

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Kenneth H. Tucker, Jr., *French Revolutionary Syndicalism and the Public Sphere.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996. x + 284 pp. $54.95 cloth.

The metamorphosis of French syndicalism is easy enough to discern. At the end of the nineteenth century, in the Bourses du Travail and the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT), workers talked openly about revolution. Employers and the government took them seriously, as they took themselves seriously. After all, French labor had a long and impressive revolutionary pedigree, and throughout the fin de siècle the working class kept adding to its scars as it continued to engage in frequent and violent confrontations with the forces of order. Thus the proletariat primed itself for the decisive showdown: the general strike, the heroic and largely spontaneous episode that would finish off bourgeois soci-

ety and bring workers to power. This was the revolutionary "myth" that propelled the labor movement forward.

Three decades later, at the moment of its greatest triumph, the labor movement looked very different. Through the spring and summer of the Popular Front, it is true, working people terrorized the *patronat* (owners) with factory seizures and occupations, pushing both employers and the new left-wing government to negotiate a generous new deal for employees: the Matignon Accords. Nonetheless, while enthusiastic workers showed the bourgeoisie their sharp teeth in 1936, they no longer had the same urge to bite. Promises of wage hikes and paid vacations put an end to most of the tumult. The CGT applied itself to negotiating collective conventions. What had formerly been the voice of revolutionary syndicalism was now that of "economism."

In *French Revolutionary Syndicalism and the Public Sphere,* Kenneth Tucker sets out to inspect this evolution from revolutionary to "productivist" discourse, a development of which he clearly disapproves. At the center of this transformation, and what most disturbs Tucker about it, is what he calls "the triumph of instrumental rationality"—in effect, the defeat of the democratic, egalitarian ethic of revolutionary syndicalism and its replacement by the hierarchical, bureaucratized, and ultimately alienating strategy that aimed to make workers better off by giving them higher wages and more leisure, but without reforming the organization of work.

His reexamination of revolutionary syndicalism also gives Tucker the opportunity to rescue it from the infamous "condescension of posterity." He feels that neither historians nor social theorists have paid revolutionary syndicalism proper respect. Rather, in what amounts to a "Whig history" of the labor movement (even if often written from a Marxist perspective), they have portrayed revolutionary syndicalism as an anomalous interlude, destined to fade as the French economy "modernized." Tucker regrets the disappearance of this democratic alternative to the principles of "corporate capital or a state bureaucracy" (5).

As a matter of method, Tucker follows the linguistic turn that labor history has recently taken. To explain the decline of revolutionary syndicalism, he focuses on the "language of labor"—principally on the writings of Fernand Pelloutier, Georges Sorel, Victor Griffuelhes, Alphonse Merrheim, and Léon Jouhaux—rather than, say, on the behavior of the unions and the CGT. This is not an idle strategy. Tucker believes that the move toward "productivism" was largely an epistemological affair.

Digging down another layer, the book also explores the discourse about the discourse. Tucker believes that the transition from revolutionary syndicalism has been overdetermined mainly because it has been undertheorized (37). His study is therefore driven by his concern for social theory and the desire to make a decisive contribution to the conceptualization of changes in labor ideology, as it formed a part of what has come to be called the "public sphere."

In effect, Tucker sets out to conduct "a relatively old-fashioned exploration of social contexts and institutions" to "complement the discursive turn of much

contemporary theory" (216). To this end, he offers relevant critiques of the work of Emile Durkheim, William Sewell, Charles Tilly, Joan Scott, Charles Maier, Pierre Bourdieu, and Anthony Giddens, among others, as he seeks to situate revolutionary syndicalism in a public sphere moving from the positivist rationalism of liberal republicanism to the "instrumental rationality" of neocorporatism. But Tucker's chief target in the reformulation of social theory is Jürgen Habermas. Indeed, his explicit aim is to articulate "a suitably historicized Habermasian perspective . . . [on] the rise of an instrumental productivism in French syndicalism" (9–10).

It is not just Habermas's alleged loose ways with the reality of the past that gives Tucker pause, however, or his failure to pay attention to "the autonomous role of the proletarian public realm in shaping public languages" (213). It is also that Habermas and his acolytes are too certain about the virtues of rationality, a position that leads easily enough to the depreciation of a movement like revolutionary syndicalism that was often stronger in spirit than in logic.

Tucker's doubts about rationality connect his interest in revolutionary syndicalism and social theory to his preoccupation with what he calls the "new social movements"—gay, lesbian, and ecological—which form the book's principal subtext. "Like them," he writes, "revolutionary syndicalism faced issues including the balance of democracy vs. bureaucracy, and the relationship of movements arising in civil society to political parties." He intends his study of yesterday's syndicalism to "illuminate many of the questions confronting today's new social movements" (11).

As a matter of presentation, the book proceeds along two tracks as it both traces the degeneration of syndicalist ideology and retheorizes the history of social movements. It begins with a look at revolutionary syndicalism in the Belle Epoque, in a public sphere still dominated by positivist epistemology, but quickly shifts from the history itself to the discursive context. The second chapter, "Syndicalism, the New Orthodoxy, and the Postmodernist Turn," is a methodological meditation on the best way to study French syndicalism. The third, "Public Discourse and Civil Society," examines "the constitutive role of public discourse in shaping social movement identities and political positions" while offering an interesting lesson in Habermas-eology. Tucker then imports these notions back into a survey of "liberal and proletarian public spheres in nineteenth-century France," where he tests Habermas's ideas on real history, before returning to the Belle Epoque. In the last several chapters, the author looks in some detail at the *rectification du tir* (correction of aims) of syndicalist ideology from the morally based *ouvrièrisme* (workerism) of Fernand Pelloutier, by way of Durkheimian sociology (sort of), to the "productivist corporatism" (186) of Alphonse Merrheim that found its classic expression in the CGT's Minimum Program of 1918.

If I have one reservation about this excellent and complex study, it is that Tucker's concentration on ideology and epistemology may hide much of what was actually propelling the political reorientation of the CGT. This makes it seem, in other words, that the CGT was being dragged by the leadership into

"productivism," with all its bureaucratic, instrumentalist, and undemocratic implications. My own study of the history of syndicalism, however, leads me to suspect rather that syndicalist leaders were pushed in this direction by a rank and file concerned above all with bread-and-butter issues. It may be that, down the line, revolutionary syndicalism would have brought improved material conditions along with a more democratic organization of work. In the short term, though, the conquest of the eight-hour day, the "English week," and better wages seemed to demand the kind of tactical realignment envisioned by Merrheim and Jouhaux. But this is a materialist's quibble with a fine book that takes a fresh new look at the old issue of French revolutionary syndicalism.

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Robert Mencherini, ***Guerre Froide, Grèves Rouges: Parti Communiste, Stalinisme et Luttes Sociales en France. Les Grèves 'Insurrectionnelles' de 1947–1948.*** Preface by Maurice Agulhon. Paris: Editions Syllepses, 1998. 307 pp. 140 FF.

The industrial unrest of November–December 1947 constitutes a major signpost in post-World War Two French society and politics, and, indeed, it has served to indicate the hardening of the then-emerging Cold War divide in and beyond France. Strongest in centers of Parti Communiste Français (PCF) and Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) power, this strike wave symbolized the definitive end of the postliberation tripartite governmental alliance among centrist Catholics, social democrats, and communists. The strikers' oftentimes militant activism led hostile observers to detect insurrectionary aims on the part of blue-collar workers, the CGT, the PCF, and the Kremlin. Because of the obvious centrality of the "red strikes" in late 1947, the paucity of serious analyses is all the more remarkable.

Robert Mencherini's remarkably fine-tuned and sensitive study is therefore long overdue. A thorough reading of this detailed work immediately suggests a major reason explaining the silence of serious historiography on this particular facet of postwar French history. For to untangle the web of myths and countermyths enveloping the *grèves rouges* necessitates sorting out a variety of forces operating on a variety of levels, closely connecting local, national, and international ones. It is this attention to the weight and relevance of motivating forces ranging from rank-and-file spontaneity all the way to the personal involvement of Joseph Stalin that clearly marks *Guerre Froide, Grèves Rouges* as a major contribution to French historical scholarship.

Although a local incident in Marseille triggered the wave of industrial unrest in late 1947, the readiness of French blue-collar workers to engage in militant action clearly corresponded to a predisposition toward such a course that

was shaped in preceding months and years. Mencherini suggests a declining standard of living as an important source of discontent. Coupled with a growing disappointment over the failure of postliberation France to bring about the expected overall improvements in the social and political position of the working-class population, this explosive mixture actually began to make itself felt in semi-spontaneous industrial action prior to 1947. However, labor unrest reached new heights in the first strike wave during April–May 1947. In the spring of 1947 the PCF still held governmental posts and was initially less than enthusiastic about supporting rank-and-file action. But Mencherini suggests that the PCF soon came down on the side of the strikers, though primarily to avoid a loss of popularity. Indeed, Mencherini shows that PCF membership had begun to decline and that even communist sympathizers began to place their hopes for concrete improvements more readily in the CGT than the PCF.

Of course, not all French blue-collar workers were involved in the late-1947 strikes, and not all strikers struck voluntarily. Mencherini emphasizes a distinct lack of internal democracy behind many positive strike votes. The pressure was on to avoid secret ballots and instead to have recourse to an open show of hands. When secret ballots were held, strike readiness proved itself to be considerably less pronounced than the widespread nature of strike activity may suggest. Still, there is no doubt that France would have experienced industrial unrest on a major scale even if all strike decisions had been subject to impeccably democratic procedures. And there is also little doubt that the role of the PCF in late 1947 was more proactive than earlier that year.

Just as it is rather superficial to lump all industrial workers into one camp in 1947, so the notion of "the PCF position" toward these strikes would miss the point. Mencherini underscores the necessity to differentiate between different levels of the PCF membership and even the PCF hierarchy, each one with its own desires and designs and each of these levels by no means characterized by unity of goals.

The November–December 1947 strike wave, though initially largely spontaneous (as were the strikes in the spring of that year), found the PCF hierarchy much more responsive almost from the very beginning. The fact that the communists had been definitively removed from the national government earlier that year certainly contributed to this hardening of the party line. However, Mencherini highlights the crucial role of the September 1947 Cominform meeting in Sklarska-Poreba (Poland) in shifting not only French but international communism into a decidedly more oppositional stance to Western powers and Western governments. At the same time, Mencherini emphasizes that this openly emerging Cold War rift did not lead Moscow to advocate an insurrectionary course. In a personal meeting with Maurice Thorez in early November 1947, none other than Stalin himself warned against such wide-ranging conclusions and counseled relative moderation. The post-Sklarka-Poreba course of a more clearly defined and unabashed defiance of Western interests should not be interpreted as a green light for an openly revolutionary course.

It is this complicated and rapidly shifting constellation of local, national, and international forces which best explains the political and industrial turbulence of 1947. Largely spontaneous in origin, the strikes of 1947 found a responsive chord within the PCF—in the spring of 1947 as a reaction and in the fall and winter by more conscious design. That on occasion the strike waves were accompanied by direct action bordering on small-scale insurrectionary activities was largely due, Mencherini argues, to a particular dynamic of the interaction between the PCF leadership and the ranks. Remembering PCF militancy in the fight against Nazi occupation forces and Vichy, many rank-and-file PCF members and sympathizers interpreted the turn toward greater radicalism at Sklarska-Poreba as a more far-reaching abandonment of the PCF's postliberation legalist course than was warranted by the actual deliberations in the Polish resort—or by the personal counsel to Thorez by the "father of all peoples." Due to the communist course correction on an international scale, itself subject to different interpretations and contentions on the part of the Communist parties and more specifically the PCF, a radical turn was signaled, though neither clearly nor ever openly defined. It was this particular moment of flux that permitted the outbreak of rank-and-file radicalism in late 1947, leading anticommunist observers to regard this unrest as a sign of renewed communist insurrectionary designs. That neither the PCF nor its Moscow overlords had embarked on such a revolutionary course was difficult to assess in the heat of the moment—both for anticommunists and the communist ranks. The subsequent Cold War atmosphere perpetuated these myths.

Mencherini closes his remarkable study with some pertinent observations on the more general significance of sudden twists in international communist strategy as moments of opportunities for pent-up rank-and-file activism. Based on documents unearthed in a host of French public and private archives, this book sets a much needed new standard for the study of postwar French society and politics and, indeed, French and international communism. An English translation of this volume could most certainly aid in introducing Anglophone scholars to this important and highly recommended work.

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Judith Pallot, ed., *Transforming Peasants: Society, State, and the Peasantry, 1861–1930. Selected Papers from the Fifth World Congress of Central and East European Studies, Warsaw, 1995.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. 1 + 256 pp. $69.95 cloth.

Transforming Peasants is a collection of papers that focuses primarily on the Russian peasantry between 1861–1930, with brief forays into Poland, the Kirgiz steppe, and Turkestan. Judith Pallot's introduction to the volume is informative and concise. She provides the reader with an excellent overview of each paper

and highlights each author's contribution to the existing debates within the context of Russian and East European peasant studies. Pallot is well versed in the comparative literature on the study of the peasantry and notes the degree to which new work on the Russian, Central Asian, and East European peasantries has been influenced, informed, and expanded by this comparative material. What unifies the various selections in *Transforming Peasants* is that each author is grappling with the way in which the state, intellectuals, or educated society conceived of or "imagined" peasants and how these conceptions, in turn, influenced, shaped, or determined policy aimed at transforming the peasantry.

The chapters that focus on the Russian peasantry and Marco Buttino's contribution on Turkestan complement and supplement one another insofar as they all address the familiar debates that have characterized the discussion of the Russian peasantry in works of Russian and Soviet history. Stepping back from each individual chapter to think about the volume as a whole, the reader is struck by the consistency of policy decisions, responses, and reactions to reoccurring situations in the countryside regardless of who happened to be in power in St. Petersburg, Petrograd, or Moscow.

Buttino's chapter, for example, "Economic Relations Between Russia and Turkestan, 1914–1918, or How to Start a Famine," is a well-written, coherent presentation of a rich and complex situation. Buttino explores what he describes as the colonial nature of the relationship between center and periphery during the First World War, in this case between Petrograd and Turkestan, with cotton production as the key issue. He conveys the subtleties and tensions that characterized relations both between the center and the periphery and within and among ethnic groups in the region. Buttino describes the effects of a situation faced by both the Russian and Soviet empires—a goods famine and the resulting peasant withdrawal from the market—and captures the similar ways a succession of local and central authorities dealt with the situation in Turkestan. The similarities between the responses of the Tsarist regime and the revolutionary regime are fascinating, and the parallels with the response of the Stalinist regime, as related by James Hughes in the volume's final chapter, should not go unnoted.

Yanni Kotsonis, in the volume's opening chapter, uses a case study of policy regarding cooperatives between 1905 and 1914 to characterize the debates between intellectuals and policymakers on the agrarian question. Kotsonis argues that seemingly diverse reformers were united in a shared conception of the peasantry as backward and by the shared conviction that transforming peasants, in the name of progress, was absolutely necessary. This theme can be traced, in the specifics of the Stolypin reform as discussed by David Macey, in Alessandro Stanziani's exploration of peasants and economic collapse in Russia in the period up to and including the First World War, and in Markus Wehner's study of the Ministry of Agriculture in the 1920s.

Also striking is the remarkable consistency in the authors' findings on the characterization of the wealthy exploitative peasant (*kulak* or "speculator") on the part of policymakers or educated society and the way in which this charac-

terization shaped policy before and after the revolution. The reader can draw stark parallels among the conceived notions of the exploitative peasant, which Kotsonis found informing policy toward the cooperatives, which Macey found informing aspects of the Stolypin reforms, and which James Hughes found shaping Stalinist policy toward the peasantry at the end of the 1920s and into the 1930s.

The popular conviction among members of Russian educated society of the existence of peasant exploiters in the village also appears in Lewis Siegelbaum's paper on *kustar'* industry and the exhibition of *kustar'* products in late Imperial Russia. *Kustar'* refers to goods supposedly hand-made by Russian peasants in their homes and villages, although in the late nineteenth century the goods were sometimes created in philanthropists' studios. According to Siegelbaum, Russian philanthropists saw their support of Russian folk art as a kind of "rescue mission," which would save peasants from other, exploitative peasants who sold raw materials for exorbitant prices and bought finished products for pitifully low prices.

One wonders, however, about internal village conceptions, constructions, and treatment of these "exploiters." How did villagers themselves view *kulaks* and speculators? What was their role and position within the internal village hierarchy and in village politics? What was their relationship to local authorities? Any of the contributions in the volume that dealt with this issue would have benefited by a further exploration of the peasant side of the equation.

In her introduction, Pallot promises that the collection challenges and moves forward the familiar debates in the field of peasant studies as well as contributes to our understanding of the "'inner workings' of the peasant world" (1–2). It is, however, in the latter area that the volume is lacking. While the contributors explored, nuanced, challenged, and expanded our understanding of the ways in which peasants were "constructed" by governments, states, institutions, and "educated society," we rarely hear the peasant voice itself. The village still remains very much in the distance, obscured and reflected in policy statements, newspaper articles, laws, and theories. Moreover, many of the authors are working with new and borrowed concepts and with nebulous entities such as the "state" or "educated society," and many of the contributions would have been much improved by a more rigorous presentation and explication of these concepts.

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Ronaldo Munck and Peter Waterman, eds., *Labour Worldwide in the Era of Globalization: Alternative Union Models in the New World Order.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. vii + 269 pp. $79.95 cloth.

In the wake of the Russian Revolution, labor radicals believed that they had discovered the ideal organizational form: internationally affiliated parties of pro-

fessional revolutionaries to coordinate the activities of national trade unions and mass political parties toward revolutionary ends. Communist "vanguard" parties proved capable of mobilizing masses but also of imposing dictatorial control over entire labor movements and for decades defended Joseph Stalin's hecatombs. Many of today's labor militants have ransacked the contemporary political scene for alternative methods of bringing unions into mass politics. The provocative and important collection edited by Ronaldo Munck and Peter Waterman argues that labor radicals should emulate social movements such as the peace, environmental, and feminist movements.

From a variety of sources, Munck and Waterman assemble an impressive collection of theoretical analyses and studies of national labor movements to make a persuasive case for a new "social movement unionism" (SMU). Contributions by George DeMartino, Richard Hyman, and Vic Thorpe argue that business unionism, social-democratic Keynesianism, and a neocorporatism of cooperating employers and unions can no longer bring home the bacon. The worldwide expansion of markets weakens the position of almost all unskilled workers and even many skilled workers in industrial nations. Although unions remain powerful entrenched interests within the majority of European socialist, communist, and labor parties, these parties' desperate search to expand their political base means unions no longer enjoy their old centrality.

Contributors to this collection agree that broadening the support for labor demands by orienting them toward an activist community concerned with social justice, global equality, and human rights may be promising, but only if labor movements are willing to rethink their own values and goals. André Gorz sketches a model society based on dramatically reducing the hours of work, a model to serve as a rallying cry for Western European unions fighting unemployment. Ana Maria Catalano wants unionists to recognize workers' multiple identities and give up their claim to be workers' representatives, instead becoming interlocutors for the diverse working groups within the factory community. Kirill Buketov argues that Russian unions can win popular support by embracing environmental causes even if this may cost jobs. The Confederation of Japanese Automobile Workers' Unions intends to combat unemployment by making safer and more environmentally friendly cars, establishing better contact between workers and consumers, and persuading workers to reorder their priorities to decrease overtime.

The essays in this collection make a compelling case that, more than at any time in the last fifty years, labor needs to take its case to the streets. To do so, labor must reshape its central identity to appeal to feminists, human rights activists, and environmentalists. The centrality of feminism to a labor movement increasingly composed of women and the heightened need to defend international human rights in a globalizing labor market are evident. To recognize more fully the range of women's work, Amrita Chhachhi and Renée Pittin discuss the need to redefine industrial work to include women home-workers and to extend minimum wages to domestic industry. One of the more refreshing and vital aspects of this collection is its internationalism. The editors have worked to em-

phasize the common problems facing workers in our global era. Eric Lee points out that at a time when international market expansion has dramatically increased the need for international labor solidarity, the expansion of communications technologies such as the Internet has created tremendous new opportunities for the exchange of ideas and information.

However valuable, the essays fail to address important problems. How far can labor go in emulating social movements? For labor is not—and never can be—a pure and simple social movement. Social movements ebb and flow as political opportunities present themselves, expanding dramatically when Western European parliaments debate the deployment of new missile systems, contracting almost to nothingness when such issues are no longer salient. The dues that unions receive as well as their cadre of organizers, experts, and officers gives unions resources exceeding those of social movements and a stability that social movements lack. Labor movements must represent and protect their members on a day-to-day as well as on an issue-to-issue basis. In advanced industrial nations, unions necessarily require a level of institutionalization conferred and supported by states that social movements lack. In the United States, the advantages of state-enforced union agreements on pensions have recently come home to younger International Business Machines (IBM) engineers whose employer has just gutted the retirement program. How can labor negotiate with employers for state-protected contracts while leading social movements against both employers and the state? Social movements have the luxury of avoiding institutional commitments and refusing compromise. Trade unions do not. Can labor adopt the positive aspects of social movements while retaining its institutional role?

Second, the essays in this book are generally vague about the relationships between social movement unionism and the socialist, communist, or labor parties with which unions enjoy a privileged relationship. Interesting essays by Glenn Adler and Eddie Webster on South Africa and by José Ricardo Ramalho on Brazilian unionism are particularly ominous in this regard. They document how hitherto successful social movement unions were disabled when the support of leftist parties surged or when those parties acquired power. Interesting but undeveloped is Waterman's idea that labor movements need "rearguard" parties to nourish and build social movements rather than "vanguard" parties to lead them. While social movement unions may, as DeMartino argues, represent a viable option in the United States, strategy in countries with substantial labor, socialist, and communist parties needs further discussion. Although theorists of the so-called new social movements have discounted or ignored their contribution, in much of Western Europe, labor party members have provided tacit support and negotiated concessions for environmental, peace, and feminist movements. Where labor parties have dominated the political Left and rejected social movement demands, as in the case of the French antinuclear movement, such movements have stagnated or declined. Can unions develop as an independent social movement while continuing to play a privileged role within established la-

bor parties? This failure to consider the relationship between social movements and labor parties is a significant omission.

Despite its limitations, the collection assembled by Munck and Waterman is a strong one. They have persuaded left-wing theorists to be concise, assembled a variety of essays that address a common theme, and secured contributions from scholars and activists worldwide. The volume contributes to an ongoing dialogue among those interested in the future of the labor movement. This dialogue is important because, in the history of the labor movement, although talk has never been cheap, the failure to discuss common goals and methods has proven costly. The history of the labor movement in the twentieth century is filled with records of unending hard labor and magnificent sacrifices—made too often on behalf of unworthy causes.

Michael Hanagan
New School for Social Research

Michael P. Hanagan, Leslie Page Moch, Wayne te Brake, eds., *Challenging Authority: The Historical Study of Contentious Politics.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998. vii + 284 pp. $54.95 cloth; $21.95 paper.

To create a *festschrift* in honor of a scholar as important as Charles Tilly is a daunting task. To their credit, the editors and authors of *Challenging Authority* successfully provide a thoughtful and particularly readable glimpse into both the past and the future of the study of contentious politics, a field in which Tilly's contributions have been undeniably crucial. From more traditional interpretations of Tilly's work to innovations in chapters by Kim Voss and Marc W. Steinberg, this volume displays the wide array of applications and insights provided by the political process model for studying collective action, whether in medieval Spain or 1989 China. However, the volume moves only in fits and starts toward the new "relational structuralism" (xix) that the editors herald as coalescing around the study of collective action.

As with any edited volume, the essays within *Challenging Authority* are somewhat uneven. Nonetheless, the book does an exceptional job of structuring the collection around three key concepts inspired by Tilly: first, networks, identities, and claim making; second, repertoires of political contention; and third, constellations of political opportunity. Within these second two groupings, two chapters—written by R. Bin Wong and Marifeli Perez-Stable—deserve particular commendation for their intelligent applications of political process theory. Wong's examination of changing contexts surrounding the seemingly consistent repertoire of tax resistance over several centuries in China not only shows immense historical reach, but also exposes fascinating shifts in the repertoire missed by those who simplistically apply western European models of contention to other settings. Like Wong's essay, Perez-Stable's treatment of politi-

cal opportunities leading up to the *fidelistas*' overthrow of General Batista in Cuba provides an excellent example of the need for social movement scholars to look back into history for a fuller understanding of any revolutionary situation and its outcome.

Although repertoires and political opportunities figure prominently in both Tilly's work and the overall field of contentious politics, the first section of *Challenging Authority*—focused on issues of identity, networks, and claim making—takes up the editors' call to develop a relational structuralism most explicitly. According to the editors, this relational structuralism "insists that changing configurations of networks cannot be understood without analyzing their spatial, temporal, *and linguistic* aspects because these are inseparably connected elements of network change" (xix, emphasis in the original). Though Tilly paid attention to networks and identities long before the current debates, the editors rightly point out that this new emphasis within the field is in large part a result of increasing criticism from what they dub "culturalist" schools of thought.

Three of the five chapters in this first section, offered by Tilly, Steinberg, and Roger Gould, do indeed shift the structuralist trajectory of social movement theory in a more cultural and/or discursive direction. All three authors provide careful, historically detailed, and innovative ways of approaching the relational structuralism sought by the editors, with a particular focus on the sometimes conflicting and sometimes reinforcing nature of national and local political identities. Tilly's own chapter builds on his earlier work regarding the increasingly national focus of protesting networks and their corresponding identities in nineteenth-century Britain, while Gould examines the impact national political networks or their absence had on the mobilization of leadership in the Whiskey Rebellion.

Steinberg's chapter on "The Riding of the Black Lad," which takes as a starting point Tilly's observation of the shift in working class protest from popular festivals to work-site focused actions such as strikes and demonstrations, will be of particular interest to readers of *ILWCH.* Steinberg makes a convincing argument that this shift marginalized what he calls the "disorderly woman" within popular protest while reinforcing capitalist constructions of public space (17). Not only does Steinberg identify important effects of the larger trends first identified by Tilly, he also gives us an excellent example of how structure and culture can be studied within the same framework. The result is history at its best, in that it provides new insights into the current relationships between gender and working-class identity.

In spite of these improvements on the structuralist school of thought, the volume—and the field as a whole—has a long way to go before a truly relational structuralism has been achieved. As Voss points out in her excellent essay on labor unions and their interpretation of defeats, Tilly (along with many others following his lead) "treats the cultural repertoire of claim-making groups primarily as a dependent variable" (136). As a result, Voss claims, culturalists may find themselves disappointed by a relative lack of attention to culture as a shap-

ing force (i.e., an independent variable) while simultaneously applauding the increasingly rich description of cultural factors. In order to rectify this shortcoming, she contributes a preliminary study of how the Knights of Labor and the British "new unions" framed their setbacks and outright defeats. She argues that the different cultural discourses available to each group may offer possible clues as to how the new unions were able to survive, unlike their American counterparts. Voss thus provides *Challenging Authority* with one of its most successful attempts at integrating cultural and structural analyses.

But the editors' desire for a new relational structuralism remains frustrated, partially because of the dynamics of the culture-structure debate itself, both in the book and in the field. *Challenging Authority* attempts to incorporate cultural analysis without throwing the structuralist baby out with the bath water. Yet the result tends to incorporate disjointed pieces of cultural approaches without taking seriously the deeper implications of those approaches.

Lumping together all cultural analyses into one extreme, easily dismissed entity exacerbates this tendency. Take, for example, the editors' description of "a self-styled poststructuralism or . . . a culturalism composed of strands of cultural criticism, social constructionism, semiotics, discourse analysis, and postmodernism" (xiii). All of these perspectives—each with its own unique strengths and weaknesses—are thereby conflated and rejected through the excesses of their most extreme proponents and accusations of "pure culturalism" (51). The historically grounded cultural analysis of many scholars—the influential Birmingham School is just one example—is overlooked in the haste to relegate cultural studies to the trash heap. The loss is significant, as scholars such as those of the Birmingham School have long sought to understand both cultural and structural forces in relation to each other.

Perhaps the goal of developing a "relational structuralism" (or "new interactional structuralism" as it is named elsewhere in the volume [xv]) is misguided. The term itself reflects an attempt to maintain structuralism's theoretical supremacy rather than openness to creating a unique synthesis from the best parts of both structural and cultural analyses. Relational structuralism as presented in *Challenging Authority* tends to tinker with the structuralist apparatus—albeit with parts imported from cultural analyses—rather than profoundly altering structuralism's approach to the relationships between culture and structure or the impact of those relationships on social movements.

Nonetheless, *Challenging Authority* offers important contributions to the history of collective action and contains an invaluable set of case studies for any scholar of social movements. The wide variety and high quality of both topics and approaches within *Challenging Authority* provide a clear indication that the historical study of collective action, not to mention the heated debate surrounding cultural factors within such scholarship, is alive and thriving.

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Craig D. Patton, *Flammable Material: German Chemical Workers in War, Revolution, and Inflation, 1914–1924.* Berlin: Haude and Spener, 1998. v + 315 pp. 169 DM cloth.

This clearly written, well-researched monograph analyzes the shop-floor actions, strikes, and general insurgency of German chemical workers during and after World War One, proving, once again, that reports of labor history's demise are premature. Patton's work suggests that we still have much to learn from an anatomy of militant working-class behavior. In the classic manner, *Flammable Material* surveys the overall economic and industrial context of rebellion while also offering a detailed comparative study of conditions, organization, and activity in specific companies—in this case, the four biggest concerns, Bayer, Höchst, Leuna, and BASF. Simultaneously, the book moves beyond traditional labor history (at least of the dominant German variety) by adopting the perspective "from below" as opposed to from inside trade unions and socialist parties. Moreover, Patton criticizes assumptions that often crop up even in the field of the new labor history. Indeed, his study was motivated by his dissatisfaction with explanations of the oft-noted volatility of chemical workers from 1918 to 1921. He challenges, first, the notion that their actions were "wild" or spontaneous, showing that they were driven by long-festering, well-articulated grievances and steered by shop-floor leaders and organizations. He disputes, second, the assumption that chemical workers were apolitical. To understand both the curve and content of workplace solidarity and militancy, he argues, the historian must consider the impact of partisan politics on chemical workers, on the one hand, and their intense concern with the balance of power between employees and management, on the other.

Patton's introduction lays out this interpretive scheme, while also offering a summary of trends and methods in labor historiography in general and of the course of class conflict in early Weimar Germany in particular. He acknowledges the significance of "long-term changes in urban and industrial life" to the formation of class identity, but insists that the pattern of chemical workers' protest "can only be explained with reference to the specific economic and political conditions created by war, revolution, and inflation" in Germany (11).

Chapter One appraises those structural changes, discussing the origins, rapid growth, expanding work force, and factory environment in the chemical industry up to 1914. Patton shows that employers fought off unionization with a combination of industrial paternalism and hard-line practices. He widens the scope of inquiry beyond the shop floor with a brief discussion of the evolution of "chemical communities" around Bayer (by Wiesdorf, near Cologne), Höchst (so-called after its location in that suburb of Frankfurt/Main), and BASF (in Ludwigshafen). Patton highlights not only the growth of these towns but also their changing (and differing) confessional mix and their particular "social networks," including leisure and cultural associations as well as the organized labor movement and political parties, especially the Social Democrats (SPD).

In Chapter Two, Patton turns his attention to the impact of the war, revo-

lution, and inflation on the fortunes of the chemical industry and the composition of its work force. Patton traces the variations in female employment: With considerable ups and downs in between, women were a very small part of the chemical work force in 1914 and in 1924. He also notes the industry's changing age structure: We know it grew older from 1917 to 1919 and, based on data from Höchst, seems to have become considerably younger again from 1920 to 1922. Whereas women's employment did not, it appears, affect patterns of labor protest, the age mix of its work force, he concludes, did—the more younger workers, the greater the level of unrest. Changes in the industry's skill structure also "shaped the potential for conflict" (81). The percentage of skilled craftsmen varied across time and, after the war, from firm to firm: Bayer stood at the low end (twenty percent skilled), while Leuna (near Halle-Merseburg in eastern Germany) occupied the upper end (over forty percent skilled). As before 1914 and in other industries, skilled craftsmen in chemicals (especially metalworkers) "played a key role" in wartime and postwar protests. This chapter, finally, charts the curves of union membership, real wages, food shortages, hours of work, and working conditions from 1914 to 1924.

Chapters Three through Five are concerned with the course and character of labor protest at, respectively, Bayer, Höchst, Leuna, and BASF. Patton examines all the major labor conflicts—including partial work stoppages, plant-wide lockouts, general strikes, and demonstrations that spilled out of the factory into municipal life. He dissects their causes, aims, leaders, organizational structure, and relationship to the fraught left-wing politics of the era. A review cannot do justice to the fascinating information that Patton has gathered from a wealth of primary sources and analyzed to arrive at general conclusions about chemical radicalism in general and to formulate specific explanations of differences in protests from firm to firm. Some of the conclusions are not surprising. For instance, the greater demand for labor in the economy as a whole or in a specific firm, the higher the curve of labor protest. The massive unemployment that came in the wake of hyperinflation (and only partially declined after stabilization in 1924) caused the collapse of the postwar wave of workers' radicalism. Similarly unsurprising is the conclusion that the radicalization (or lack thereof) of the local SPD and union leaders, on the one hand, and the militancy of local leaders of the short-lived Independent Socialists (USPD), on the other, affected the degree to which workers supported the USPD and later shifted their loyalties to the Communist party (KPD). Other findings are more unexpected. Patton attributes the quite extraordinary radicalism of Leuna's factory councils in part to the fact that Halle-Merseburg, unlike the Ruhr/Rhine area, was not occupied by foreign troops nor subject to the distractions of separatist politics. Rather than the French or Belgian army, Leuna workers blamed their ills on their bosses and on the republic's failure to socialize industry or introduce workers' control.

If this book demonstrates the considerable strengths of a labor history that combines sociological methods with greater sensitivity to the political context of workers' conflict, it demonstrates the weakness of a labor history that is only for-

mally interested in workers' culture and virtually blind to the nuances of workers' language. True, Patton bows to the dictates of the "anthropological turn" in his discussions of chemical communities. One would like, however, to hear more about how partisan and shop-floor divisions affected proletarian associational life after 1918. Patton touches on the "woman question" with references, first, to women workers and, second, to wives' community protests in support of striking husbands. He does not, however, explore the gendered culture of either the chemical communities or the workplace. In virtually every industry in Berlin from 1919 to 1920, newly empowered male workers and their shop-floor organizations insisted that women workers be the last hired and the first fired. Was that also the case in the chemical industry? Did the hiring or firing of women create tensions in the community? Did notions of the "family wage" influence wage demands? Rather than Patton's warm, fuzzy hues, one would like to see community culture, like shop-floor behavior, painted in the sharp colors of politics and power relations. Finally, a comment on language. It is certainly not unpleasant to encounter an analytically sophisticated monograph that never mentions "discourse." Yet it is neither fun nor enlightening to read so much about workers' protests without encountering a single quote from a worker or shop-floor leader. Their voices would have made Patton's portrayal of working-class struggle livelier. Instances of actual rhetoric would also have allowed him to prove more effectively that workers were concerned with autonomy, authority, and control on the shop floor. Having read many a socialist newspaper and police report from the 1920s, I find it hard to believe that Patton's impressive plumbing of these and other sources did not turn up diverse examples of the impassioned and evocative language of social conflict that characterized these years of German proletarian protest.

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John D. French and Daniel James, eds., ***The Gendered Worlds of Latin American Women Workers: From Household and Factory to the Union Hall and Ballot Box.*** Durham: Duke University Press, 1997. vii + 320 pp. $54.95 cloth; $17.95 paper.

This is an invaluable volume, expanding Latin American women's and labor history in important thematic, methodological, and theoretical directions. The authors explore the lives, struggles, and consciousness of urban working women in Brazil, the Southern Cone, Guatemala, and Colombia. By and large, the essays develop a nuanced understanding of the relationship between gender and class in twentieth-century Latin America. They incorporate postmodern approaches to historical analysis as well as the classic concerns of labor history with material conditions, social relations, and working-class political consciousness. The

contributors examine the multiple meanings of discourse and popular culture while insisting that it is indeed possible to recapture women's experience in some measure. They generally move beyond the dichotomy of celebrating women's heroism and denouncing sexism, instead showing how solidarity between laboring women and men could be intimately interwoven with male domination. Finally, several of the authors employ oral history in sophisticated ways, demonstrating that how a story is told can be just as important in shaping our understanding of history as the empirical detail it may seem to offer us.

Daniel James's analysis of the life stories of Dona Maria, an Argentinean woman who is a meatpacker, union activist, local Peronist political leader, and wife, demonstrate this point in provocative ways. He examines the various gendered political narratives produced by male and female meatpacking workers as well as by local and national Peronist myth-makers and how they jostled for legitimacy in twentieth-century Argentina. These stories helped to construct various proletarian female identities. James explores the tensions these identities created. The dominant masculine meatpacker identity prevents Dona Maria from recounting her own and other women's agency in working-class struggles. Work is both unbearable exploitation, wrenching her away from her children and family, while at the same time it is a force pulling her into a world where she can fulfill her rebellious potential. Dona Maria shoulders her way into the Peronist masculine political universe, implicitly challenging some of its basic tenets even as she accepts and reproduces its tropes of meaning. Rather than tidying up or sidestepping these incongruities, James urges historians to ferret them out and mine them for complexities of meaning, experience, and consciousness.

Barbara Weinstein develops a compelling analysis of the limiting power of dominant discourses about Brazilian women workers. Rejecting the model of disembodied discourses, which marks some poststructuralist historians' work, Weinstein's central concern is with demonstrating how particular conceptions of womanhood were "reproduced, reinforced, or reconfigured by powerful human actors" (72). Neither industrialists, nor social workers, nor even union leaders in Sao Paolo invented the category "woman worker," but they did intensify the marginalization of proletarian women and the idealization of the housewife until only the latter remained as a legitimate role for working-class women. Sao Paolo's industrialists set up vocational education programs that narrowed working-class women's acceptable roles even as they paid exceedingly low wages to the women who labored in their factories. These programs helped to create the gendered reverberations of the drive to modernize Brazil under the Getulio Vargas regime; workers were identified more sharply as "men" while women's sole identity was that of "housewife." By 1945, hundreds of thousands of working-class women had completed the industrialists' courses, and the concept of "woman worker" was erased from public discourse or emptied of any positive connotations. Weinstein's essay is superb in tracing the strategies of Sao Paolo's elites in reinforcing limiting gendered norms. She implicitly urges us to end the romanticization of resistance, masterfully examining the intimate relationship

between discursive production and the political and economic structures that shaped working-class women's options. In the end, however, she leaves us with little or no sense of whether and how popular agency might have diverged from dominant norms.

Heidi Tinsman's article on rural domestic violence in Chile provides a sobering analysis of such popular agency. Tinsman exposes the gendered implications of both the agrarian reforms of the leftist coalitions of the 1960s and early 1970s and the free-market schemes of the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship. Tinsman argues that in rural areas, the Left's agrarian reforms bolstered men's political and economic power but deepened women's dependence on male wages and political action. After Pinochet's installation of a military regime and a radical free-market economy, rural women were hired as waged workers in record numbers as the laboring classes faced intensified impoverishment. Based on their new identity as workers, women increasingly claimed the need to work outside of the home, the right to control their own wages, and their right to respect from their male partners. Men's violence, previously an assertion of assumed authority, now exploded as a backlash against women's growing autonomy.

Tinsman makes a number of important contributions in this article. She shows that there is no necessary relationship between the economy and familial power relations. New gender norms, in this study, are truly negotiated and contested. They do not simply "arise" from new material conditions. Second, she successfully historicizes domestic violence, showing that both its causes and meanings are historically specific. Third, she convincingly argues that Left-led movements are not necessarily empowering to women, even if they improve women's economic standing. This she accomplishes without whitewashing the sufferings during the Pinochet era. Increased social and economic vulnerability for women during this period went hand in hand with greater autonomy and consciousness of women's own potential for personal and political agency.

Tom Klubock most directly addresses the question of how gender relations shape class formation. His study of a Chilean mining community illuminates how the state and the Braden Mine Company successfully intervened in workers' gender relations through social welfare programs and the local judicial system to create a more stable work force. Klubock demonstrates how various definitions of family, production, and community became linked in different ways for both women and men. He also creatively explores how miners' conceptions of masculinity and waged labor simultaneously served the mining company's interests and fueled working-class militancy. The article is wide-ranging and insightful, although it seems to assume an almost natural tendency of working-class men to dominate women.

While many of the volume's contributors broaden the lens of labor history beyond production to family, sexuality, and community, Ann Farnsworth-Alvear inserts these thematic concerns into the study of the production site itself. In her analysis of social life within the textile factory walls of Medellin,

Colombia, Farnsworth-Alvear pays tribute to the irreverence of the workers who created a sometimes subtly rebellious cultural milieu within the powerful parameters set by local capitalists. Factories, to the women workers of Medellin, were liminal spaces between the containment of the home and the full exposure of the street, where it was safe to flirt and court, often to the chagrin of their supervisors. Farnsworth-Alvear rejects theoretical models built on dichotomies such as resistance and accommodation. Instead, she places great emphasis on the ambiguity of the meanings of women workers' experiences: Flirting and pleasure shaded in and out of sexual harassment; workers relationships with each other indirectly undercut industrialists' attempts at discipline, but also created conflicts among them and imposed limits on women's behavior.

This is a welcome anthology—theoretically and methodologically sophisticated while remaining accessible enough for undergraduates. It sets a high standard for women's and labor historians and merits attention from all Latin Americanists.

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Judith Stein, *Running Steel, Running America: Race, Economic Policy, and the Decline of Liberalism.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. xi + 323 pp. $59.95 cloth; $19.95 paper.

Judith Stein recounts two histories in tandem that all too frequently are narrated separately: "that of a changing [American] economy and that of changing race relations" (2). The brilliant originality of *Running Steel* is to bring the history of civil rights in employment together with larger questions of national, indeed international, post-1945 political economy. The struggle for racial justice appears neither a beneficiary nor a casualty of an easily invoked but vaguely defined "liberalism," as in so many other studies. Instead, the limits of fair employment prove an integral part of the making and unmaking of a political and economic totality with quite specific elements seemingly unconnected to race relations. In contrast to currently fashionable neoliberal accounts, Stein concludes "it was the foreign commitments and economic policies of liberalism, not the excesses of racial reformers or the racism of the culture, that transformed American politics in the postwar era" (6).

Though focused on the steel industry, Stein ventures nothing less than a new narrative interpretation of the postwar social order. The fulcrum on which the narrative rests is the contradiction between United States foreign and domestic economic policies. At home, a weak industrial policy, antitrust hostility to the cartelization of basic industries, and fiscal Keynesianism left the provision of cheap steel to market forces; abroad, however, the reconstruction and stabi-

lization of postwar allies and Cold War clients propped up their steel export capacity. Japan, Western Europe, and Korea pursued just the sort of national industrial policies eschewed in the United States. Low US tariff barriers to steel imports and the export of American capital and technology abetted foreign steel producers, who eventually captured up to a quarter of the US market. "We are industrializing the whole world, [and] deindustrializing the United States" (205), warned a steel executive—back in 1949!

The advent of Kennedy-style liberalism exacerbated these trends in the 1960s. "Kennedy was concerned with growth," Stein concedes, "but the economy was a handmaiden to the Cold War, his principal interest" (28). Searching for a robust economy to complement a muscular foreign policy, Kennedy fell back on a stimulative fiscal policy of tax cuts, but did little to address technological unemployment or structural change in industry. The price of this neo-Keynesianism, as Stein points out, was that debates about incorporating outsiders into the Great Society "became moral ones, debated in an economic vacuum" (36). Stein dismisses the War on Poverty as a poor substitute for a more comprehensive intervention in the nation's political economy to address agricultural modernization, automation, unemployment, and other pressing labor market issues.

In civil rights legislation as well, structural forces shunting blacks to the margins of the labor market took a back seat to combating social discrimination. Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act thus "separated the notion of discrimination from the more powerful causes of black unemployment" (87). Stein's ultimate judgment that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission proved a weak instrument for enforcing fair employment seems well placed, given the missed legislative alternatives of 1963 and 1964 she points to, such as Senator Hubert Humphrey's fair employment practices bill.

Among the casualties of Democratic economic policy were the African-American steelworkers of Birmingham, Alabama, largely invisible to the nation's emerging civil rights consciousness at the time. Their struggle for fair employment was fought out in a different arena than the streets, lunch counters, and schoolrooms favored by civil rights activists and the Justice Department. A harbinger of deindustrialization, Birmingham's coal, iron, and steel industries shrank during the 1960s, even while the displaced rural population they had once drawn on grew.

In sharp contrast to critics of the United Steelworkers of America's (USWA) record on race, Stein bluntly insists that "the union was the one institution in Birmingham where blacks had rights to equal treatment" (44). Scholars who take a dimmer view of the Steelworkers' commitment to civil rights will no doubt react with surprise to Stein's suggestion that, in general, union grievance procedures served blacks better than the cumbersome mechanisms of Federal antidiscrimination law. As Stein notes, the former strategy helped build a civil rights agenda into the union movement, while the latter pitted the interests of black workers against their white union brothers in a contracting job market. Stein argues throughout that, in contrast to civil rights organizations, the union

"was forced to balance [civil rights remedies] because it had a biracial constituency" (183).

It would be a mistake to read this as merely an apologia for the USWA. Stein openly questions the sacred cow of civil rights litigation as a solution to workplace discrimination, and *Running Steel* is sure to attract a withering storm of criticism, and not only from Herbert Hill (an important *dramatis personae* in Stein's tale). Stein prefers racial remedies rooted in union contractualism to the litigation strategy encouraged by Title VII and civil rights activists for good reason. In shifting the burden of redress to white workers, "the responsibility for the remedy was lifted from the perpetrator" (115)—the employers. Stein's evidence suggests that the court-ordered restructuring of seniority lines generated shop-floor racial tension while offering surprisingly little practical remedy to most black workers, who often declined to transfer jobs.

The relative merits of union-driven procedural attacks on workplace racism or civil rights litigation can only be weighed in the larger context of political economy that Stein describes. The unwillingness of the government to develop a job-producing industrial policy left black workers and their allies with few good options. "Neither seniority reform nor affirmative action addressed the amount of work available," Stein concludes (195). Between 1974 (the year of the US Steel fair employment consent decree in Alabama) and 1995, the number of steelworkers dropped from 600,000 to 169,000. Liberalism's lack of "an economic blueprint to match its social agenda" (195), not the "wages of whiteness" or "reverse discrimination," proved to be its fatal Achilles heel.

Still, while half-persuaded by Stein's pragmatic analysis of the flaws of litigation, many readers sympathetic to her larger argument may be reluctant to share her dismissal of retrospective remedies for discrimination built into past hiring, job allocation, and promotion practices. Nor will everyone agree with her assessment of white rank-and-file opposition to consent decrees in mills such as Lackawanna and Sparrows Point as "populist" (180) reactions against big government and big labor, untainted by a racial element. This smacks of the intellectual mood she tries to transcend.

There is much else to critically engage in this provocative book. The protectionism that Stein prefers to a global market in steel carries its own imperial freight, dependent as it is on the continued underdevelopment of other parts of the world. Her nostalgia for the world of heavy industry may strike some readers as misplaced, and her disdain for the remnants of the New Left, unable (in her view) to shake their hostility to "corporate liberalism" will dismay others.

Finally, despite its coherent argument, it must be said that *Running Steel* can be a difficult book to follow. There is a cast of hundreds: cabinet members, steel executives, union leaders, rank-and-file workers, civil rights attorneys, and economic policy wonks, among others. Stein frequently shifts her focus from Washington, DC, to the plant, to the boardroom, to the union hall, and even overseas. Moreover, the twin narratives of evolving fair employment law and stagnant global economic policy do not always mesh as well as they might.

None of this vitiates the value of the book, but it would be a shame if frustrated readers used Stein's occasional lack of precision as an excuse to avoid confronting her bold challenge to the racial shibboleths of neoliberalism. *Running Steel* appears deeply pessimistic about the long-term industrial vision of the nation's political and financial leaders. Nevertheless, at bottom, this remains an optimistic book, deserving of a wide audience. Few recent works of social science have demonstrated such an abiding faith in the collective abilities of working people, black and white, to work through America's abiding racial dilemma on their own.

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Olivier Zunz, *Why the American Century?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. ix + 254 pp. $24.00 cloth.

Ever since its birth as a nation, America has contrasted itself to the image of Europe. Intellectuals from both sides of the Atlantic have contributed to the myth of the New World and tried to express the essence of America's "exceptionalism."

At the turn of the millennium, Olivier Zunz, professor of history at the University of Virginia, looks back and raises the striking question, Why the American century? Why did the twentieth-century United States become not only the world's most powerful nation, but also a civilization that tends to see itself as a universally valid model? In his approach to this problem, Zunz carefully avoids the pitfall of ahistorical essentialism. Modern America is seen not as a direct function of unique national traditions, but rather as the result of an organizational, industrial, and cultural revolution that occurred at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.

For Zunz, it is a decisive fact that America was constructed as a modern civilization before it took on the role of a global superpower. Domestic achievements, giving rise to a particular model of economic development, political democracy, and social integration, gave Americans their sense of a civilizing mission in the postwar world. Thus, says Zunz, the "American century" is not to be conflated with the "Pax Americana." The former was an historical and logical precondition of the latter. This fact divides the United States sharply from its Soviet rival, who certainly was a formidable political and military force, but never developed into a genuine civilization.

Zunz's book is organized in four parts. The first part analyzes the organizational, technological, and scientific tools by which America was transformed from a continent of scattered communities to the world's most dynamic industrial society. The second part explains how the specifically American developmental strategy—social integration through mass consumption—came to deradicalize class and disarm socialism. In the third part, Zunz turns to the traditions of eth-

nic and cultural pluralism and discusses the precarious interplay between mass integrative and pluralist forces in America. In the final part of the book, the export of American strategies of modernization to other parts of the world is addressed through a particular case: the postwar reconstruction of Japan.

A leading idea in Zunz's analysis is that the strength of the American model flowed from a balance between pluralism and unifying forces. The flexible, fluid quality of America's institutional matrix is seen as a key to her exceptional economic and cultural dynamism. Such an open flexibility characterized the way in which the new scientifically based industry was organized at the turn of the century, in striking contrast to the rigid organizational pattern in Imperial Germany, America's chief rival in the second industrial revolution.

A similar pattern of institutional flexibility formed twentieth-century America's particular strategy of social integration. To create means of social reintegration in an America of huge cities, big business, great mobility, and deep cultural cleavages was an almost overwhelming challenge. One of Zunz's most fundamental theses is that while the European nation-states deradicalized class and recreated political legitimacy by the means of social welfare, America made a similar achievement by the means of mass consumption. Mass consumption did not simply "develop" in the wake of corporate capitalism; it was constructed in a complex interplay of different professional discourses and institutional innovations. Economists, marketers, pollsters, social engineers, and industrial entrepreneurs all played their part, sometimes with interchanging roles.

Social science and social engineering took a special path in America. Rooted in the social gospel of small-scale community, the social reform movement was gradually transformed into scientific "social intelligence," aiming at surveying and reforming a grand-scale society that had become opaque. While European sociologists drew sharp distinctions between traditional and modern forms of society and tended to see the qualities of *Gemeinschaft* as irreversibly lost, American reformers conceived of "social intelligence" as a means of reconciling the communitarian qualities of America with the new realities of industrial society.

In practice, the means of social engineering were instrumental in transforming a highly heterogeneous society into a rapidly expanding market of mass consumption. New knowledge technologies like opinion research and intelligence quotient (IQ) testing mapped out the population in bell-formed curves centering on the "average American." In the minds of marketers as well as consumers, this virtual character became a focus for attention and a cultural standard. The invention of the average American was accompanied by a liberal view of the middle class as the progressive agent of modern history. While Marxists put their faith in the proletariat as the "universal class," American liberals were convinced that middle-class values and forms of life were a bulwark of democracy, stability, and prosperity. Mass consumerism, gravitating around middle-class dreams of social security and upward mobility, imprinted in the minds of millions of consumers an image of society as simultaneously fluid and socially stratified. Marketers invented the "ladder of consumption" on which consumers

were invited to climb to higher levels of social and cultural ambition. Thus, by means of social engineering, sociology became a productive force in the American "dream factory."

Zunz analyzes modern America as a construction accomplished by a complex network of knowledge-seeking and concept-building practices. A comparison with Michel Foucault's "archaeological" exposition of relations of knowledge, power, and social control in the modern state is clarifying. Like Foucault, Zunz sees social-scientific discourses and related practices of social intelligence not only as means of creating knowledge, but also as powerful producers of social reality. But while Foucault stresses how these power—knowledge discourses deeply penetrate and control individuals, throwing a clinical, ice-cold light on everything human that seeks the dark, Zunz twists the perspective in an interesting way. Against those cultural critics who have seen a hidden totalitarian potential in American-styled "mass society," Zunz argues that statisticians, marketers, and pollsters forged the way for a reconstruction of society as mass market exactly by not penetrating individuals in depth. Defined as an "occurrence" in statistics, a "customer" in marketing, and a "respondent" in polls, the individual was hardly ever thoroughly investigated by the tools of social engineering. This relative freedom from all-embracing forms of centralized social control has been a genuinely liberal quality of twentieth-century America.

However, Zunz has other critical concerns about the American model. First, integration by consumption has its limits because abundance cannot be reproduced ad infinitum. Second, the perpetual effort to balance such integration with a cultural pluralism that protects the opportunity of individuals and groups to join the melting pot on their own terms has run into a number of obstacles, dilemmas, and paradoxes.

While hardly discussing the limits to growth and the sustainability of American consumption patterns, Zunz is deeply concerned about the balance of cultural pluralism and mass-market inclusion in America. This priority, as well as his rather firm refutation of nonliberal critiques of mass consumerism, indicates a certain ideological bias. Even if Zunz's powerful and convincing synthesis illuminates the twentieth century and America's role in it in a most stimulating and thought-provoking way, a little uncertainty remains: Is the concept of the "American century," with its slightly apologetic overtones, too dependent on the neoliberal *zeitgeist* of the 1990s? After almost a century of lengthy ideological "civil wars" on a global scale, fascism and socialism seem to be definitely defeated. A hegemonic Western ideology of modernization celebrates its victory, albeit with second thoughts. But unless the nuclear missiles that were built to protect or destroy America's hegemony are fired, there is no such thing as an End of History. History might still play devil with the American model of modernization, to the embarrassment of *fin-de-millénaire* prophets. The Owl of Minerva has yet to fly.

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Willis J. Nordlund, *Silent Skies: The Air Traffic Controllers' Strike.* Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishing, 1998. ix + 205 p. $49.95 cloth.

When labor historians construct lists of the ten most important strikes in United States history, the Professional Air Traffic Controllers' (PATCO) strike of August 1981 is certain to claim a prominent spot. Many labor activists and scholars of the contemporary labor movement see Ronald Reagan's firing of more than eleven thousand striking air traffic controllers as a sort of fall from grace, the beginning of the decline of the labor movement. To be sure, there are others who would disagree with them, but all would concur that this strike was of major historic significance. Therefore, it is surprising that this is the first book-length scholarly treatment of the strike. The author, Willis Nordlund, is Dean of the School of Business at the College of West Virginia, a veteran United States Department of Labor staff person, and a multiengine, instrument-rated pilot. *Silent Skies* bears the imprint of his background.

Nordlund adopts as his point of view neither that of the air traffic controllers nor that of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Neither does he assume the guise of the "objective," disinterested scholar. Instead, he assumes the perspective of the labor relations system itself, implying, if not openly arguing, that the conflict was avoidable, that such drastic measures need not have been taken by either side, and that there ought to have been a way to resolve the issues that led to the strike and the mass discharge. Rather than question why the system was unable to prevent such an ultimate showdown, Nordlund is content to place blame on both sides, particularly the leadership of PATCO and the FAA.

This perspective will disappoint scholars of the labor movement and activists alike. Nordlund is more interested in the personalities and foibles of individual union leaders and government bureaucrats than he is in the social and political forces that set the stage for this conflict. He misses a great opportunity to explore the breakdown of the labor relations system in a particular historical context precisely by assuming that the system itself was not part of the problem.

However, his analysis does have a valuable strength, equally rooted in his personal experience and interests. As a pilot, Nordlund understands how the air traffic control system was set up, how it works and does not work, its pressures and problems, and the on-the-job experiences of controllers. *Silent Skies* offers rich details about the controllers in their workplaces, the deterioration of their working conditions, and their growing frustrations. The reader also learns about the controllers' traditional perquisites and FAA management's efforts, in conjunction with the major airlines, to cut them back. Labor historians who have worked with Carter Goodrich's notion of a "frontier of control" will especially appreciate Nordlund's work here, even if it is not very analytically sophisticated.

In the end, however, this is a generally unsatisfying book. The PATCO strike and Reagan's actions are too narrowly construed. The reader hungers for more contextualization of the events themselves—what was happening nationally in labor relations in the 1970s that set the stage for such a showdown—and

for more exploration of their consequences, not only in the airline industry but in the world of labor relations and unions more generally. How does this conflict reflect its era and, at the same time, become a shaper of its era? Nordlund just is not interested in questions of this order. And frankly, in pursuing the questions that are of interest to him, he has written a rather flat and uninspiring book. He has taken highly dramatic and compelling events and made them appear mundane. While historians will surely refer to this book as a source of information, they will not be assigning it in their classes.

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Robert H. Zieger, ed., *Southern Labor in Transition, 1940-1995.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997. x + 346 pp. $42.00 cloth.

Beginning with the surge of interest in slavery a generation ago, the South has steadily emerged as an integral part of America's labor past. From the mid-1970s into the early 1990s, attention flowed chiefly to the period from Reconstruction through World War One. And pathbreaking studies continue to appear on the women and men, white and black, who worked the farms, homes, docks, mines, forests, craft-shops, railroads, factories, and service trades of the New South. Lately, though, the frontier of research has shifted to the eras of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), World War Two, the early Cold War, and the civil rights movement—a chapter of Southern labor history once left to journalists, activists, and social scientists. *Southern Labor in Transition, 1940–1995*, edited by Robert H. Zieger, offers a valuable road map of current scholarship.

Comprising essays by twelve historians—some influential, others just launching their careers—*Southern Labor in Transition* serves as a companion to *Organized Labor in the Twentieth-Century South* (Knoxville, 1991), also edited by Zieger. As with the earlier collection, unionism is central to the essays under review, although this should not obscure their narrative and thematic diversity. What really brings these volumes together is their repudiation of regional caricatures; they could in fact be subsumed under the title (with apologies to the present journal) *Against Southern Exceptionalism*. Although the image of Southern working folk as docile, ornery, and allergic to unionism has taken a battering for some time now, few have argued more effectively for the South's place in the mainstream of American labor history than Zieger has in his introductions to these two books. Particularly arresting is an irony made visible in the "lean years" of the late twentieth century: if the breadth of Southern unionism reconfirms the limits of regional distinctiveness, so, in our own time, does its long acquaintance with defeat.

Of course, none of the stories told here are unaffected by their regional setting. Some, like the two concerning textile workers, are of a decidedly Southern

cast. Surveying nearly a century of writings by scholars, reporters, and reformers, Zieger identifies three broad typologies of Piedmont labor: Primordial Folk, Emerging Realists, and Incipient Proletarians. Mindful that these perspectives have been neither static nor mutually exclusive, he deftly traces variations of scope, argument, and sophistication within each. James A. Hodges relates the ambivalence of J.P. Stevens employee Crystal Lee Jordan, the "real Norma Rae," over a Hollywood production that both popularized and trivialized her union struggle.

Its regional flavor notwithstanding, the wider context for this volume is everywhere apparent. Take one current focus of US labor historiography: the mixed impact of government on workers' lives. The capacity of an ascendant national state now to promote and now undermine the lot of Southern labor is central to Cindy Hahamovitch's compelling piece on black migrant farmworkers during the Depression and World War Two. In varied ways, Mike Honey, Mark Wilkens, and James Sullivan show how political clout and community sentiment shaped the prospects of public sector unionism. It was uncivil treatment from city government, Honey notes, that triggered the 1968 strike of Memphis's black sanitation workers, the setting for Martin Luther King's final stand. According to Wilkens, the predominantly white (but increasingly heterogeneous) fire fighters of Tampa found a friendlier political climate for organization in the 1960s and 1970s. Sullivan sees the defeated Florida teachers' strike of 1968 as a casualty of the conservative backlash then sweeping the nation, a reminder that unions were not always a "voice" of the Silent Majority—they could also rank among its targets.

Not surprisingly, the racial dynamics of Southern unionism take center stage in this volume; and, not surprisingly, they vary with each tale. In two illuminating essays on the postwar years, Alex Lichtenstein and Rick Halpern explore interracial efforts in Florida's air transport and Louisiana's sugar industries, respectively. Communist organizers mobilized effectively among Miami's black and white Pan Am employees, although not without trimming their commitment to racial equality along the way. An even bolder campaign at the sugar refineries found its own cycle of struggle and achievement. While the ability of the packinghouse union to "deliver the goods" allayed somewhat the fears of white workers, its anti-Jim Crow program alienated whites just as it impressed African Americans. In his profile of Louisiana congressman Hale Boggs, Patrick J. Maney shows how the federal pork obtainable through a well-connected moderate could help foster links between black and white workers.

If the pieces by Lichtenstein, Halpern, and Maney each highlight the extent of interracial solidarity, others accentuate the labor movement's betrayal of that ideal—or failure to adopt it altogether. Bruce Nelson's study of union steelworkers in Atlanta from the rise of the CIO through the civil rights era exemplifies the latter approach. Disenchanted by the reluctance of an avowedly egalitarian union to confront white privilege, black members came to view it more as an adversary than an advocate. Likewise, Honey's piece on Memphis sanita-

tion workers stresses the indifference of that city's white labor establishment to "civil rights unionism." In his look at Tampa firefighters, Wilkens reconstructs an insular station-house culture embedded in white and male identities and yet not wholly impervious to the inclusion of Hispanics, African Americans, and women, as each group in time claimed a piece of that coveted terrain.

Thus, while none of these authors sugarcoats the racial practices of Southern unions, some hold them to a more exacting standard than do others. At times, perhaps, these standards align more closely with current sensibility than with historical circumstance, as when Honey characterizes the ambivalent response of white workers to the Memphis sanitation strike as "schizophrenic" (163), or when Lichtenstein paints in symmetrical strokes the readiness of both communist and anticommunist leaders to put "the struggle for power ahead of needs of…black workers" (60). Black steelworkers may, as Nelson asserts, have found the gap between their union's equal-rights rhetoric and its actual performance to be "a cruel hoax" (137), but the continuing allegiance evinced by so many remains an outcome to be reckoned with. (This dual sense of alienation and engagement is evoked in a black worker's recollection that serves as both the title and final line of Nelson's piece: "The CIO meant one thing for the whites and another thing for us" [113, 138]).

For all their differences of tone, these inquiries into race and Southern unionism are most striking for their nuance and empathy. Together, they flesh out patterns brought to view by the recent wave of research. For one, interracial labor campaigns were seldom conceived as civil rights enterprises (although over time black unionists grew more and more inclined to merge the two), and most took care to leave the social boundaries of race undisturbed. In explaining why black and white workers tested Jim Crow in some settings and acknowledged (or endorsed) its hegemony in others, material considerations were often pivotal. Where an equal rights agenda threatened the tangible fruits of segregation (such as white domination of skilled positions), white workers were unlikely to subordinate their ingrained racism to a (usually quixotic) venture in interracialism; that latter impulse prevailed only where collaboration across the color line advanced prospects for better wages and conditions, job security, and the right to organize. Government played a vital yet indeterminate role as well, alternately encouraging and stifling interracial unionism. All told, these essays leave the racial dynamics of Dixie's labor movement looking more fluid than ever. Never has talk of a dichotomous "race-vs.-class" debate seemed more out-of-touch, or current study more seasoned and substantial.

Edited volumes seldom cohere neatly, and this one has a potluck quality typical of the genre. Inevitably, some groups, places, and issues get short shrift. Readers will note (as Zieger does himself) the marginality of gender to these essays. Tenant farming, domestic labor, coal mining, and federal employment are among the followings that go unexplored. Those seeking a full panorama or Grand Unified Theory of Southern labor since the war will find neither in these pages (or, for that matter, in any one book). This collection bears a humbler, yet

worthier purpose: to showcase the range of perspectives that continue to animate the field. On this score, *Southern Labor in Transition* succeeds admirably.

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Melinda Chateauvert, *Marching Together: Women of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.* Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1998. xi + 267 pp. $46.95 cloth; $17.95 paper.

Marching Together uses gender as a category of analysis along with race and class to reinterpret the history of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters from its inception in 1925 until the mid-1950s. Chateauvert skillfully accomplishes four goals. First, she provides a detailed account of the individual and organizational contributions of porters' wives to building the Brotherhood in local communities, belying the union's legendary account of courageous men of color battling a racist labor movement and exploitative corporations on their own. Second, she provides an analysis of the gender norms that governed the Brotherhood's organization and policies. Third, Chateauvert provides a critique of the union's treatment of women porters. Fourth, she provides a portrait of the civil rights activism of the Brotherhood and its Ladies' Auxiliary between 1941 and 1956. Based on a wealth of archival and published sources, *Marching Together* provides a multifaceted and sophisticated analysis of the way that gender norms and customary practices operated among Northern working-class African Americans.

Chateauvert argues that A. Philip Randolph organized the Brotherhood according to the dominant gender system of the day. In an era of pervasive racial and gender segregation inside and outside the labor movement, Randolph deliberately modeled the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters on the principles of the "big four" railroad unions, which represented male workers and organized wives into auxiliaries. Accordingly, the Brotherhood recruited African-American men, relegating female porters and porters' wives to helpmate status. Randolph wrote the constitutions of the women's groups in a paternalistic fashion, defining their programmatic agendas and making them directly accountable to him and other national union officers rather than to the heads of Brotherhood locals. Chateauvert argues that men and women agreed that the goal of the union was to secure a family wage that would permit male breadwinners to support their wives and children, an ideal that the American labor movement had embraced since the 1830s. The Brotherhood believed that whites would respect them if African-American men could support their families.

Chateauvert persuasively argues that porters' wives kept the Brotherhood alive during difficult times and helped it flourish once it was on its feet. During the late 1920s, when the federal government provided no protection for union

organizing and Pullman porters risked their jobs if they spoke of unionization, women's economic councils organized male porters, collected their dues, and obtained funds and community support from sympathetic wealthy women and social reformers. Once federal law protected the workers' right to unionize in the 1930s, the American Federation of Labor recognized the Brotherhood and, after two years of negotiations, the Pullman Company signed its first contract with the Brotherhood in 1937. Following the union contract, the women's councils became a Ladies' Auxiliary responsible for promoting labor consciousness among women and children. By 1940 the Auxiliary had enrolled 1,360 women in fifty-six locals (115). During the 1940s and 1950s, when the Brotherhood tried to unionize other nonoperative railway employees in the United States and Canada, the Ladies' Auxiliary promoted the war effort and civil rights activities.

As other historians have shown, ladies' auxiliaries could be important agencies for promoting labor-conscious consumerism. Chateauvert reminds us that consumerism was a civil rights issue for African Americans. The porters' wives conscientiously tried to convince housewives to view their spending habits as political work for the race. Auxiliaries in Chicago, Denver, St. Louis, and as far west as Los Angeles established study groups on consumer cooperatives and, in a few places, short-lived cooperative buying clubs. These Northern women also encouraged members of their communities to register to vote and support political candidates sympathetic to labor.

In addition to documenting the activities of the Ladies' Auxiliary, *Marching Together* evaluates the Brotherhood's treatment of women railroad workers who faced both racial and gender discrimination. Chateauvert repeatedly argues that the Brotherhood's commitment to the family-wage ideal disadvantaged female porters. Because the Brotherhood privileged men, it dismissed the importance of gender discrimination as a barrier preventing African-American women from obtaining better wages and different jobs. For the Brotherhood, only race discrimination mattered. As Chateauvert notes, however, many women had to work, including some members of the Ladies' Auxiliary. Even if the Brotherhood had opposed gender discrimination, Chateauvert acknowledges, the union faced so many obstacles in its efforts to represent male porters that it did not have the human or material resources to aid women. Under such circumstances, Chateauvert explains, employers were able to replace African-American maids with nonunion white female hostesses and steward-nurses in order to compete with commercial airlines without much objection from the Brotherhood. When Pullman rapidly reduced the number of female porters (only fifty were employed by 1939), Chateauvert notes, the Brotherhood dropped its demand for seniority rights for African-American women in order to get its first union contract. African-American women were stuck with heavy industrial cleaning jobs if they wanted to remain in railway employment. During the Second World War, when African-American railway laundresses and maids requested help from the Brotherhood, the union referred the laundress-

es to the Laundry Workers' Union and refused to submit an official racial discrimination complaint for the maids to state enforcement agencies or the Fair Labor Practices Committee, even though the maids had cause to complain.

For those interested in the theoretical implications of using gender as a category of analysis, Chateauvert's work provides an informative case study of the different applications of gender analysis. Although Chateauvert does not refer to her work in precisely these terms, I detect three overlapping but different meanings to her use of gender analysis. First, gender analysis serves as an affirmative-action or compensatory analysis—in this case, to demonstrate that women provided critical support despite the Brotherhood's claims to the contrary. Second, gender analysis reveals a chapter in the history of gender systems—in this case, to show that some African Americans embraced white, middle-class gender ideals and a gendered division of labor. Third, gender analysis is an independent explanatory variable, specific in time, place, and context, for the purpose of explaining realms of activity not limited to gender systems—in this case, to showcase the Brotherhood's local centers of strength which cannot be fully understood without including women's interracial, coalition-building activities. By using these different meanings of gender analysis, *Marching Together* shows that the Brotherhood was a hierarchical, grassroots partnership of men and women that embraced unionization as a vehicle for attacking racial and economic inequality. The gender norms to which these African Americans subscribed from the 1920s to the 1950s made it possible for the Brotherhood's national and local leaders to recruit wives' support while limiting their influence and, at times, belittling them. The family-wage ideal also gave the Brotherhood a convenient rationale for ignoring women wage earners' economic concerns. The very existence and fault lines of this hierarchical arrangement remained hidden until egalitarian gender ideals provided a perspective from which to reconstruct the women's story. With the publication of *Marching Together,* the Brotherhood will never look the same again.

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Rick Halpern and Jonathan Morris, eds., *American Exceptionalism? U.S. Working Class Formation in an International Context.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. v + 325 pp. $69.95 cloth.

The concept of American exceptionalism has been with us for a long time. The abundance of books and articles on the subject represents a vigorous cottage industry. This collection of essays is a welcome addition to the historiography but, as with its forbears, the issue remains a tricky if not a treacherous animal to grasp. As Halpern and Morris point out in their introductory chapter, "The Persistence of Exceptionalism," the concept is a "corpse that continually springs to

life" (1). These essays "spring to life" from the celebrated annual Commonwealth Conference at the University of London.

The first essay by Michael Zuckerman ranges far and wide, covering Thomas Paine, Alexis de Tocqueville, Daniel Bell, and others. For Zuckerman, "American Exceptionalism is a subject that reduces smart people to prattle" (21). His brutal honesty has much to commend it. But Zuckerman does not lay the ghost of exceptionalism to rest. He is forced to admit that every time the concept has been condemned as "obsolete," observers either are "waiting" or "searching" for its rebirth.

Ira Katznelson's essay also attempts, albeit less aggressively, to wave "a decisive farewell to American Exceptionalism." Relying on his earlier work on class formation and liberalism, Katznelson develops the notion of a "relational approach to periodization" in conjunction with other nations' "processes and events" (46). Each nation's liberalism, he argues, should be seen in a larger context of "international geopolitics and political economy." It is the uncertainty of liberalism's survival that gives it vitality, and it is how states respond to their international and economic context that determines the strength of liberalism.

Robin Archer's essay takes a more traditional approach of comparing the differing political experiences of Australian and US workers and unions. Specifically, he asks why the US labor movement did not create a viable labor party. Archer trots out the usual suspects of racial divides, differences in trade union organizational structures, as well as differences in the respective rural economies. Although an interesting examination, his analysis suffers from some glaring omissions. For instance, Archer neglects the existence of an American version of Australian "open unionism," namely, the United Mine Workers (UMW) and the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU).

Julie Greene's work undermines (especially at the local and state levels) the traditional assumption of "pure and simple" business unionism purportedly practiced by the American Federation of Labor (AFL).

Roger Horowitz's essay on American (male) military veterans adjusting to the post-World War Two period has much to commend it. Comparing the structural military unit with that of an informal work group, Horowitz constructs an ideal type of shared experience—specifically, both groups shared similar antagonistic attitudes toward authority. However, why is this fine essay in the collection, considering the fact that it does not explicitly address the book's principal concept?

Neville Kirk, building on his comparative work of United States and British labor history, astutely questions the notion of exceptionalism. Using liberalism as a guiding concept, Kirk convincingly argues, "It is the striking similarity of British and US workers' allegiance to liberal ideas and *not* the differences beloved of opponents of exceptionalism" that characterize their lived experience (108). Using British Prime Minister Tony Blair's "liberal turn" as a metaphor for the merging political cultures stretches his argument somewhat. Nonetheless, Kirk's elegant appraisal of class-based politics and identification is a succinct evaluation.

Two essays on religion highlight the shifting influence of Catholicism on American and Italian workers. Acknowledging that the religious experience of "Catholic America has been a varied one" (135), Leslie Woodcock Tentler argues that it generally provided survival strategies and helped nurture "an ethnic identity." However, while Tentler sees more of a universal Catholic experience, John Pollard's examination of Italian workers sees a critical bifurcation. In his view, the emergence of a Catholic labor movement to contest the anticlerical "Socialist-dominated working-class movement" resulted in a critical schism that severely weakened a collective response to the rise of fascism in the 1920s.

James Barrett and David Roediger argue in a thought-provoking essay that ethnicity provides a type of exceptionalism. Thus ethnicity or "inbetween[ess]" also created and encouraged a fragmented working class. Recognizing that their essay is "deliberately disorderly" (183), they nonetheless provide abundant anecdotal evidence of the shifting definitions of the racial and ethnic identity of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century immigrants. While not explicitly stating that such identities are necessarily exceptional, the authors certainly invite debate over the issue.

James Grossman plows familiar ground by examining the connection of the white-defined black "place" in the social order, and how the Great Migration threatened such a white construction. Grossman discusses how a sense of "place" was maintained through legal and extralegal means. The Great Migration certainly threatened whites' definitions of the proper place for blacks after thousands of blacks moved out of the American South, but whites placed blame on "outside forces" to quiet their fears. Again, while interesting, it is difficult to understand why this essay is in the collection because it does not steer the reader directly to the book's principal theme.

Peter Alexander's comparative essay on South African and United States labor certainly rectifies such an omission. In a tightly organized and argued essay, Alexander, while acknowledging differences, pinpoints the "important similarities" between the two labor systems between 1939 and 1945. Although there were differences in capitalist development and patterns of labor conflict, Alexander notes a "marked" concurrence of both labor systems during World War Two. For Alexander then, exceptionalist claims for this period are "unhelpful" (244).

Robert Gregg provides the final essay in the collection. Drawing again on a comparison of the United States and South Africa, Gregg calls for writers of comparative histories to address the "larger dimensions of the imperial system"—that is, to move away from their "nationalist bent" toward a more extensive and inclusive appraisal of human action (275). To some degree, Gregg calls for comparative historians to contextualize internationally the lived experience. Such attention, Gregg argues, could allow more accurate evaluation of the exceptionalist paradigm, leading scholars to either find value in its application or dismiss it as an unnecessary intrusion into historical inquiry.

This collection, although at times uneven in its trajectory, is invaluable for digesting the evolving reappraisal of the exceptionalist argument. True, much

that has been said on the topic is a simple regurgitation of familiar themes. Nonetheless, the debate has been useful, not least by forcing American historians to engage "other" national histories. This book highlights the continuing tension between proponents and opponents of overarching theories of comparative or transnational analysis. At the final session of the conference from which this book was drawn, participants bandied around new or alternative forms of comparative analysis. Such passion ensures that further debate is waiting in the wings, and the value of this collection is that it is a good starting point for that continuing debate.

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Kevin Kenny, *Making Sense of the Molly Maguires.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. xi + 336 pp. $18.95 paper.

Few episodes in North American working-class history have attracted as much attention as the rise and fall of the Molly Maguires. The term refers to a secret movement of Irish miners who employed threats and violence in confronting their adversaries in the anthracite coal fields in the decade after the US Civil War. Most interpretations have been ideologically charged and focused mainly on the violence itself, beginning with sensational newspaper accounts and Alan Pinkerton's own book based on information from his operative James McParland who infiltrated the movement. At least one study, J. Walter Coleman's *The Molly Maguire Riots* (Richmond, 1936), showed a healthy skepticism for McParland's biased sources—Pinkerton and others who were more interested in hanging the Molly Maguires than in understanding them. In *The Molly Maguires* (New York, 1983 [1964]), however, Wayne Broehl, Jr., developed the more typical view that the Mollies were terrorists and the Pinkertons heroes. Though he handled the evidence less critically than Coleman, it is Broehl's account that has been viewed as the standard, perhaps the definitive account for more than a generation. With all this work and much more, why do we need another study of the Molly Maguires and what is it that makes Kevin Kenny's by far the most valuable treatment of them?

As Kenny reminds us, quoting Herbert Gutman, "Excessive interest in the Haymarket Riots, the 'Molly Maguires,' the great strikes of 1877, the Homestead Lockout, and the Pullman Strike has obscured more important currents of which these things were only symptoms" (4–5). Kenny is concerned with the more important currents that lay behind the Mollies. It has been impossible to grasp their significance and understand their world without invoking a far broader scope—in Ireland and the anthracite region—and using the perspectives and methods that Gutman and other "new labor historians" employed to revolutionize our understanding of working-class life. At a point when this research is

attracting a growing chorus of criticism, Kenny's book demonstrates how a concentration on the broader context of workers' lives illuminates not only the Molly Maguires, but the whole process of industrialization and its meaning for common people.

Kenny's thoroughly researched and well-crafted study represents a breakthrough in many respects, but several of his achievements are particularly notable. First, he establishes that the phenomenon was the product of both the Irish countryside and the peculiar social and physical environment of the anthracite coal fields. Behind it lay a "transplanted Irish regional identity" shaped in the poorest areas of the northwest and north central counties, particularly a portion of Donnegal from which many of the Mollies or their families derived. Here impoverished Irish peasants organized a series of secret societies, of which the Molly Maguires was perhaps the last. These societies employed threats, destruction of livestock and other property, and occasionally murder to enforce a form of retributive justice on local authorities and on landlords' agents. Yet Pennsylvania's Mollies were also something new, an adaptation of these peasant strategies to the isolated but highly industrialized coal patches of the anthracite region. One submerged theme that Kenny deftly develops, using a range of corporate, state, and other sources, is the increasing control of the traditionally disintegrated and competitive industry of the lower anthracite by the Reading Railroad, one of the nation's most powerful corporations. If the strategies were rural and Irish in their origins, their targets in Pennsylvania epitomized modern corporate industrial capitalism. "Out of the meeting of these two worlds," Kenny concludes, "comes the American Molly Maguires" (44).

Both the miners' trade union movement—John Sinney's Workingmen's Benevolent Association (WBA)—and the Molly Maguires found their greatest strength in the more difficult and dangerous coal seams of the lower anthracite fields. Within these fields, the Molly Maguire activity concentrated on the "wild," isolated rural mining patches with their concentrations of young, unattached males rather than in the larger coal towns. Here Kenny delineates two fairly distinct upsurges of the violence. First, in the mid-1860s, the term "Molly Maguireism" was applied to a series of attacks and murders that occurred amid a broader pattern of draft resistance, nativism, discrimination, and ethnic conflict. Second, in the mid-1870s, in the wake of a failed strike and in response to the Reading Railroad's efforts to consolidate its hold and rationalize operations, another round of violence erupted, this one aimed particularly at legal authorities and company representatives.

Kenny demonstrates that the Mollies were at once part of the broader picture of anthracite coal workers' ethnic and class conflict in the decade following the Civil War and yet quite distinct from the WBA whose leaders roundly denounced their activities. At least some of the violence attributed to the Molly Maguires was instead more generic sectarian violence, particularly between Irish Catholics and the Welsh, which was characteristic of the region. Even much of the violence for which the Mollies were genuinely responsible was shaped by

discrimination against the Irish, the defeat of the WBA, and the official reign of terror unleashed in the region by the Coal and Iron Police, the Pinkertons, and vigilantes. Violence was not peculiar to the Molly Maguires, it seems.

The worst of it came as the "Long Strike" of 1875 began to crumble, and some of the miners turned to violence as a last resort. Six murders attributed to the Mollies in the summer of 1875 fueled old ethnic stereotypes about Irish savagery and local authorities settled into a siege mentality. While motivations for the Mollies' actions varied over the years, Kenny argues, most of these killings and much of the other violence in 1875 can only be understood as a misguided effort at class justice. In late 1875, having starved the miners out and all but crushed the WBA, the Reading Railroad, working closely with local law enforcement officials, Alan Pinkerton, and Catholic Church officials, turned on the Mollies as the last vestige of miner opposition. Dozens were arrested and tried, some with little or no evidence against them, in a series of show trials in 1876 and 1877. There were no Irish Catholics on the juries, despite their predominance in the population. Virtually all of the defendants were convicted except those who turned state's evidence, and twenty of them were hanged in mass executions, ten in one day. A hostile but perceptive newspaper reporter drew an apt comparison with the mass hanging much earlier in the century when the suppression of Denmark Vesey's slave uprising was followed by the execution of twenty-six alleged conspirators. Both the gallows and the special police flooding the anthracite region became powerful symbols of state—and corporate—authority.

Kenny's most original contribution may lie in his deconstruction of the Molly Maguires myth. Drawing on a wide range of sources, he links a conflation in the public mind of the WBA, the Mollies, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and other distinct movements with an older demonization of the Irish and a newer one aimed at organized labor in general. Rather than try to understand the anthracite coal miners' violence as an expression of the region's obvious social and economic problems, contemporary commentators drew on conventional wisdom and a rich literature describing the "natural" Irish tendency toward savagery. Countless instances of bloodshed and destruction were linked with "Molly Maguireism" which, in turn, became a "synonym for all forms of labor activism and popular crowd action" (265). Tapping into widespread prejudice against the Irish, the myth discredited the labor movement and turned Americans away from very real social problems and toward a pervasive but imaginary enemy.

Yet the killing of the Molly Maguires did nothing to end the anthracite coal miners' problems, nor did the miners give up. The Greenback Labor party thrived in the area, electing several state legislators in the immediate aftermath of the trials and executions. The Irish persisted in their own organizing, sometimes in the open as with the Land League, sometimes once again under cover as with the Clan-na-Gael. A succession of unsuccessful attempts to unionize followed the WBA. The region was firmly organized by the United Mine Workers of America in the early twentieth century. When John Kehoe, the alleged "mastermind" of the Molly Maguires who went to the gallows protesting his inno-

cence, was pardoned posthumously in 1979, Pennsylvania Governor Milton Shapp, prodded by the Pennsylvania Labor History Society, called the Molly Maguires "martyred men of labor" (284). Kevin Kenny's goal is not to exonerate the Mollies, however, but to explain them. He has succeeded admirably.

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Charles H. McCormick, *Seeing Reds: Federal Surveillance of Radicals in the Pittsburgh Mill District, 1917–1921.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997. ix + 244 pp. $37.50 cloth.

Very well-researched and well-written, this book provides an excellent discussion of the activities of federal surveillance agencies in the Pittsburgh mill district (western Pennsylvania, northern West Virginia, and eastern Ohio). However, *Seeing Reds* is neither about surveillance agencies nor the Pittsburgh Left per se, but rather about their intersection: the "federal government's effort to define, understand, and suppress leftists" during the period of World War One. It begins with an excellent survey of the early history of federal surveillance agencies, including the Bureau of Investigation (BI), the Office of Naval Intelligence, the Military Intelligence Division, and the American Protective League. McCormick pays special attention to the BI, the original name of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He looks closely at four men who, as special agents in the Pittsburgh Field Office, played a particularly important part in his story. Each had a background in either police and/or private investigative work or a college degree and/or legal training.

These agencies depended upon a wide variety of sources. Some information came from informers within radical organizations, the state police, private detective agencies, and "patriotic" groups, while other information came from individuals who simply gained access to it as part of their regular work. No informer was more important than Louis M. Wendell who, as Louis M. Walsh, provided information to the BI from 1917 to 1921. Submitted under the alias "836," Wendell's reports significantly influenced J. Edgar Hoover's thinking about how radicals threatened America.

A second survey chapter examines the Pittsburgh Left during the World War One era. It was, McCormick argues, a "tame Left compared to New York, Chicago, or even Cleveland; the captains of industry and authorities had seen to that" (27). As of spring 1917, Pittsburgh had no Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) local, so the BI's Special Agent in Charge targeted a group associated with Jacob Margolis, an anarchist and pacifist lawyer. Informer 836 was commissioned to infiltrate the group. The remainder of the first part of *Seeing Reds* looks at the BI's surveillance of the IWW, which 836 helped to organize and eventually led, and its collection of evidence on draft resisters and draft dodgers. (Here

the BI ran into what would become a reoccurring problem: It could not use 836's evidence without revealing his identity.) Despite the menace implied by such surveillance, McCormick argues, Pittsburgh radicals had the "support of only a minuscule portion of the regional work force" when Armistice Day arrived (87).

Part Two examines the Red Scare in the Pittsburgh area. Despite the weakness of the Pittsburgh Left, the city's BI agents became increasingly convinced after World War One that "radicalism was spreading like the flu" (96). They believed their worst fears to be confirmed when bombs exploded in Pittsburgh and seven other American cities on June 2, 1919. It was within the context established by these bombings that 836 and the Pittsburgh BI "played a central part in discrediting" William Z. Foster, a leader of the 1919 steel strike. (Part of its strategy was a deliberate misrepresentation of Margolis's role in the strike.)

McCormick's discussion of the Pittsburgh mill district's Palmer Raids comprises two chapters. Many of the radicals deported by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer came from within a 150-mile radius of the city; most were members of the Union of Russian Workers. The Union was not a "harmless educational association," as many have asserted, for it was "at least rhetorically revolutionary" (147). At the same time, it represented a "target of opportunity" for a "Department of Justice much in need of a public success to silence critics" (155). The second set of Palmer Raids in Pittsburgh focused on communists, among whom the BI had no informer and about whom it had little information since 836 had, for reasons unknown, distanced himself from them.

A final chapter discusses the successful efforts of the Allegheny County Bar Association to disbar Margolis. Working closely with the BI and the Military Intelligence Division, the Bar Association's case against the radical lawyer took up four days in the spring of 1920. In 1927, however, after repeated attempts, Margolis regained admission to the bar. He remained an anarchist his whole life. Informer 836 ended up doing industrial spying in Detroit in the 1930s.

Seeing Reds raises, as does every good work of history, important questions. First, is it possible to write the history of the workings of intelligence agencies entirely—or even primarily—from their own records? McCormick's research is superlative—especially given how difficult it is to use the BI's early records that are on microfilm—but too often he relies solely on the internal information that the agency generated. At a minimum, this issue requires a more extended discussion. Second, did the Pittsburgh Left matter to anyone but the surveillance agencies? Time and time again, McCormick makes it clear how weak it was and how little support working people gave it. Did working people approve of the BI's effort to suppress the Left and, if so, why? What does this tell us about Pittsburgh working people? Does this tell us anything about cultural politics and the state?

On the whole, this is an excellent study. We need more studies complementing its effort to understand the BI's workings at the local and regional level. *Seeing Reds,* along with Theodore Kornweibel's similarly titled study of campaigns against black activists at this time (*Seeing Red: Federal Campaigns Against Black Militancy, 1919–1925* [Bloomington, 1998]), suggest the benefits

as well as some of the pitfalls in using the early records of surveillance agencies, especially the BI.

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Daniel J. Walkowitz, *Working With Class: Social Workers and the Politics of Middle-Class Identity.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999. xi + 413 pp. $59.95 cloth; $22.50 paper.

This book examines the construction of middle-class identity in the twentieth-century United States through a focus on social workers. Much of the description of class formation in this book derives from glimpses at the experiences of Jewish social workers in New York City. For these social workers, class identity vacillated between proletarianism and professionalism, between working class and middle class.

Walkowitz sees class identity as constituted through material and symbolic struggles. Social workers attained middle-class status through efforts to define their work as a legitimate profession. Public recognition of social workers' professionalism depended on social workers' ability to manipulate the nature of their work and competing perceptions about their work.

Part One of the book describes the rise of the social worker. By the 1930s, a social worker was no longer an unpaid, moralistic volunteer. A social worker was a full-time, salaried professional offering services grounded in scientific methods and in the valued standards of objectivity and rationalism. Scientific professionalism gave social workers the veneer of middle-class identity. Yet, the public's conception of a professional embodied values and practices that were believed to be distinctly male. Leadership characteristics such as assertiveness, strength, rationality, and objectivity were considered masculine characteristics. Men led the field of social work. Women were mostly subordinate workers. The gendered nature of professionalism in social work privileged men.

In social work, women were denied promotions and paid low salaries on the premise that they were supported by their husbands or that they would eventually marry and stop working. Women's salaries in social work could barely provide the necessities of a middle-class lifestyle. Women social workers could not fulfill new expectations about what constituted appropriate living standards for professionals. Women negotiated their way between their visions of a certain middle-class lifestyle and the reality of low salaries and limited prospects for advancement.

Part Two compares public- and private-sector social work from the 1930s through the 1950s. The Great Depression strongly influenced conceptions of class for social workers. Threatened by low salaries and unemployment, social workers in the 1930s shared a new solidarity with their clients, a social and po-

litical bond that was reflected in the movement to unionize all social workers. Union movements sought to democratize social work to the benefit of both social workers and clients. Prounion social workers understood their work as a collaboration between social equals. They acknowledged client agency and shared class interests.

The emphasis on client advocacy and social action espoused by prounion social workers was viewed as unprofessional by some private-sector social workers. Private-sector workers, wary of competition from new government-funded social work agencies, saw themselves as more skilled than government social workers. Reliance on casework methods, Freudian psychiatry, and medical knowledge about personal hygiene gave credibility to the assertions of superior professionalism in private-sector social work. In contrast, public-sector workers were criticized for being political advocates and detracting from the professionalism of the field of social work.

The political climate of the 1950s stifled union movements nationally for both public- and private-sector social workers. Social workers withdrew into the comforts of consumer culture. They concentrated on securing their middle-class status through continued education, improved professional standards, and the purchase of possessions that clearly marked them as middle-class: a private home, an automobile, a television, and membership in social clubs. Social workers sought affirmation of their skills and did find a demand for their services.

In New York City, social workers responded to the loss of a vocal left-wing union movement by relinquishing their self-appointed roles as client advocates. Social work agencies in New York City implemented a management style that valued efficiency and changed the basis for evaluating social workers. Social worker performance was assessed on the basis of quantity instead of quality (i.e., based on a concern for meeting clients' needs). Social workers were encouraged to reduce the numbers of people deemed eligible for various services and they were pressured to assume and resolve more cases. Social workers were also instructed to monitor and minimize client abuses of the system.

The efficiency-maximizing approach to social work gained legitimacy in New York City as the population served by state-funded public social service agencies changed from white to nonwhite and as whites resorted to using fee-charging private social service agencies. Blacks and Puerto Ricans were increasingly visible to social workers and were perceived as needy clients. As the number of nonwhite and poor clients increased, the middle-class identity of New York City social workers was reconstructed in the 1950s in a racially coded way, as white. The public approved of social work as a bona fide consumer good: a necessity for the poor and a status symbol for the affluent.

Part Three looks at issues of race and class in social work in New York City, from the 1960s through the 1980s. Middle-class identity continued to imply whiteness and a demonstrated commitment to consumerism. Social workers modeled middle-class mores, which were imposed on clients as a condition of accepting services. Social distance between social workers and clients grew.

Clients were poor and nonwhite, whereas social workers were white degree-holders.

There were attempts to form new social work unions in New York City, but this time, clerical and maintenance workers were excluded. Clerical and maintenance workers were often nonwhite and not considered professionals by social workers, who were mostly white. Other factors compounded race and class tensions caused by this exclusion. Heightened protests by nonwhite welfare rights activists in and around welfare offices spurred resentment of social workers for their clients. The Department of Welfare separated cash assistance and child protection functions into two different jobs. Social workers were given responsibility for child protection while a new category of lower-paid, lower-skilled social workers called "human service workers" or just "welfare workers" was created as a money-saving device for the city. Blacks and Puerto Ricans were hired to fill these positions. Professional white social workers could hardly differentiate between their own clients and the new human service workers.

The book concludes with an examination of the narrative of Jewish success, often juxtaposed to the narrative of black failure. The social conditions in New York City that sustained those narratives are also detailed by the author. There is some mention of the effects of the Arab-Israeli conflicts, the Nation of Islam, the Jewish Defense League, local conflicts in housing and public education, and a meandering description of strikes by social work unions that negatively impacted race relations and ideology as concerned blacks and Jews.

The ending includes details about demographic shifts in social work at the beginning of the 1980s. Many white men left the field of social work for more lucrative positions. White women became private, self-employed therapists and counselors, or moved into high-level administrative social work positions vacated by white men. Blacks and Latinos joined the field in increasing numbers and were especially prominent in lower-ranked, lower-paid, public-sector positions.

This book starts off with a compelling question, but is somewhat constrained in connecting class formation to race and gender, partly because of its reliance on sources from just two agencies, each located in New York City: the Department of Welfare and the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies. There is no comment on Latino and Asian social work organizations and social workers, either in New York City or elsewhere. There are some clichés about blacks, such as a statement about the black church being extremely important to the marginalized black community. Other than that, black social work organizations and black social workers are absent from the book. Inclusion of such sources would have facilitated Walkowitz's attempt to explore the connections between class formation, race, and gender.

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Mercedes Steedman, ***Angels of the Workplace: Women and the Construction of Gender Relations in the Canadian Clothing Industry, 1890–1940.*** Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997. vii + 260. $24.95 paper.

Gender studies in history are at an intriguing point in their evolution. Having distinguished themselves from traditional historiography through a marked emphasis on language as the primary construction site of power relations, they have created a number of principal research tasks. One involves the retelling of history from the perspective of gender relations. A second consists of a description of the relationship between gender dynamics and those of other categories of identification, such as class and ethnicity. A third is the move from the "how" of the construction of gendered power relations to their "why." In other words, it is the move from description to explanation. Despite a number of attempts to undertake the second and third tasks, this monograph by Mercedes Steedman most clearly presents itself as a gendered retelling of the history of the Canadian clothing industry, and it is in this light that it should be appreciated.

Considering the subject as outlined in the subtitle and in the introduction, this study simultaneously delivers new knowledge and comes up short on relevant examples. The emphasis on the experience of women in the Canadian clothing industry results in an invaluable use of oral interviews with Canadian women garment workers and Canadian women union organizers. However, in an effort to link this experience with the discourse of domesticity, Steedman cites only British and American examples. This geographic discrepancy arises again later in discussions of workers' gender roles and union organization. If this is the indirect result of an international homogeneity or "globalization" that existed in the structure of the Western clothing industry, then Steedman could have enhanced her study through a more explicit discussion of that phenomenon.

In a manner similar to her description of Canadian women garment workers' experience, the author provides a wealth of information on the ways in which men in the roles of lawyers and union leaders created gendered laws and conventions in this industry. For example, her extensive use of the primary sources for International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) lawyer J. L. Cohen and of those for ILGWU organizer Bernard Shane give the reader detailed insight into the reasoning behind union strategies in Canada. At the same time, because a dynamic concept of gender does not consistently inform this analysis, the reader is left to make inferences regarding the functioning of this concept that may or may not be confirmed in the author's chapter conclusions. The bulk of Steedman's description of the adoption of Quebec and Ontario labor legislation of the mid-1930s, for example, reads more like traditional historiography where the role of gender is mentioned almost exclusively at the end of the section.

As part of its description of the gendered oppression of women in the Canadian clothing industry, the study also raises some provocative issues that are presented as important but secondary to the main subject. Given that its over-

whelming emphasis is on the exclusion or neglect of women in the bargaining process in this industry, it is understandable that the study would not be able to treat all of these issues in detail. Still, Steedman often begins by explaining the importance of such issues and then treats them unevenly. For instance, in the introduction, the author entices the reader with quotations from Alice Kessler-Harris regarding the importance of understanding the construction both of domestic gender roles and of masculinity in the explanation of gendered oppression in work outside the home. However, as was just mentioned, the dynamics of domesticity for these women is only briefly mentioned and is supported with examples that are not from the Canadian context. The construction of masculinity, which would have been a vital force in molding the reality of these groups of women, is not dealt with explicitly enough to justify the use of the theoretical concept of gender. This particular lack of emphasis comes perhaps from Steedman's commitment to "compassion in socialist scholarship" that would involve more of a reconstitution of relevant women's experiences.

Ethnicity is presented as another of these secondary issues. Without sufficient evidence, Steedman asserts that ethnicity as well as gender affected Canadian clothing industry hiring and wage rates. At any rate, this assertion is followed by a number of passages where the discourse of ethnicity is described at some length. Here, the author's recounting of ethnic tensions in the organizing of women workers is particularly useful. At the same time, in all the references to the importance of a woman's ethnicity in determining her reality in this situation, Steedman does not attempt a more concise and analytical description of the accompanying dynamics.

The topic of agency—that is, the capacity of historical actors to influence the outcome of processes that affect their lives—is always thorny and it always seems to come up in discussions of power relations as expressed in language. Steedman makes an extremely brief reference to it in her introduction and then deals with it implicitly throughout the study. As with her treatment of ethnicity, there are a number of evocative passages that describe how women clothing workers tried to improve their own situation in spite of their comparative lack of agency. Also, similar to the treatment of ethnicity is the lack of a more concise and analytical description of women's agency in the different periods examined. Given its emphasis on women and the construction of gender relations, the study would have benefited from a thorough theoretical discussion of agency in its introduction. Without such a discussion, contradictions rest uneasily with the reader. Thus, gender is presented in the end as an "invisible force," yet workers of both genders contest the definition of the "skill" of a job in explicitly gendered terms. Second, opportunities for such descriptions of agency present themselves in examples of women historical actors, but they are not taken advantage of. For instance, Steedman makes only brief reference to the creation of communities of women in work spaces and she does not explicitly investigate this phenomenon with her interviewees.

Two somewhat striking technical difficulties in the study should be mentioned. First, having identified Quebec as one of the prime locations of women's

work in the Canadian clothing industry, Steedman gives a brief description of the political climate for unions in the province. Although this description is acceptable as an analytical basis, one wonders why the most recent secondary source in the endnotes dates from 1930. Recent Quebec labor historiography written in French has been ignored, perhaps to the detriment of the study. Second, there is a slight contradiction in the book's conclusion. In the introduction, Steedman claims that labor legislation and union negotiations formalized gender roles in the clothing industry during the rest of the century. However, at the end of the book, the author states that women's voices were heard strongly and sharply in the labor movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The reader is left wondering whether these voices were able to alter the purported normalization of gender roles in this industry.

Since the concept of gender is an historical process open to contestation and redefinition, its application to historical studies is never a straightforward affair. The concept continues to be questioned in the abstract, as well as being evaluated both directly and indirectly through its application to particular subject matter. Mercedes Steedman's study of gender in the Canadian clothing industry provides us with a rich and appropriate basis for just such an evaluation.

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James B. Atleson, ***Labor and the Wartime State: Labor Relations and Law During World War II.*** Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998. ix + 307 pp. $49.95 cloth; $21.95 paper.

In *Labor and the Wartime State,* James Atleson examines "labor regulation during World War II and its subsequent effect on postwar labor relations and, especially, labor law" (1). In so doing, Atleson seeks to provide a corrective to existing labor history in which "the dawn of the postwar period is often perceived as unaffected by the war yet somehow quite different from the prewar era." This paradox of the "unimportant war" is not restricted to labor history, and Atleson's focus on the war can and should become a model for other scholars.

As the title indicates, Atleson studies a general and a specific question. The book is best on specifics. Atleson examines the policies of the War Labor Board (WLB) and finds that four specific features of postwar labor relations and law—arbitration, strike policy, managerial prerogatives, and union security—are strongly influenced by wartime WLB policies. Of the four, arbitration and strike policy (and the relationship between them) are the most important. During the war, labor pledged not to strike and arbitration was used by the WLB as an alternative to strikes and other forms of direct action by workers. This relationship was carried forward into the postwar period when arbitration was seen as the sole method of conflict resolution during the life of the contract. Strikes were

legitimate only in contract negotiation, never in contract administration. Indeed, Atleson shows that the Supreme Court took the position that the existence of arbitration implies a no-strike provision even in the absence of any such provision in the contract. Thus, a fundamental feature of postwar labor relations, that "management acts and the union can only grieve" (57–58), is rooted in wartime policies.

In a brief but excellent discussion, Atleson argues that the cohort of postwar labor arbitrators were trained during World War Two. He posits a cohort effect, which could have been further developed to show distinctiveness of the wartime period by locating it within the experiences of specific men. Regardless of the laws themselves, the implementers and interpreters of the law were produced by the wartime emergency. This evidence would have been particularly useful since many postwar legal decisions do not directly refer to the work of the WLB upon which Atleson argues they are based.

Atleson then demonstrates that the theory of management prerogatives was largely developed during the war. Atleson clearly shows that this issue was open prior to the war and that the wartime decisions of the WLB were carried forward after the war, eventually leading to Supreme Court decisions mimicking WLB policy. The importance of the war to the development of this policy is clear. The no-strike pledge combined with the WLB's refusal to consider issues under management prerogative left labor defenseless. The most important effects of this restriction on bargaining appeared during the 1980s, when management decisions related to deindustrialization were outside the scope of labor relations.

The final point discussed by Atleson is union security. The issue here is open, closed, or union shops. During the war the WPB used a compromise formula—maintenance of membership—to balance employer and labor demands. However, this form of union security died with the war and Atleson argues that its primary importance was in increasing trends toward bureaucratization and reliance on government.

Amid and around this discussion of specific features of labor relations, Atleson injects discussions of the larger issue of labor and the state in wartime. In the preface, he writes that "the exigencies of the war itself were as important as wartime legal rules. For instance, the need for continued production and selfless patriotism profoundly affected and limited the power labor could assert during the emergency." This is undoubtedly true as when unions were constrained by the no-strike pledge on the issue of managerial prerogatives. But, as Atleson consistently shows, the central question is, Why was the need for selfless patriotism limited to labor? To note only two examples, wages were controlled while profits were not. The War Labor Board held unions accountable for strikes even when it believed that management provoked the strikes. War should—and in other countries arguably did—involve mutual sacrifice and compromise on the part of capital and labor; in the United States labor's sacrifices were much deeper and more closely enforced by the government. Why was

this the case? Atleson describes this phenomenon and refers to it repeatedly but never really analyzes its origins. This is not necessary for his specific questions but it is important to Atleson's general argument that the wartime period defined the image of labor for the American people. Thus postwar strikes were viewed as opposed to the public interest just as they had been seen as opposed to the national interest during the war. But these strikes were also viewed as the fault of labor, not capital.

In the end, the key question is, How was capital able to act so selfishly without public relations damage, while labor, which sacrificed mightily, was widely disparaged for the relatively limited strike activity that occurred during the war and for the massive strikes after the war? Atleson's specific questions require him to show that this was the case and he does so adequately, but he does not provide an answer.

There are two ways in which I think Atleson could have strengthened this book. First, as an historian, he faces the problem of arguing for the special importance of a given period while linking that period to what came before and what comes after. This tends to diminish the distinctiveness of the period in question. Atleson plays out the war's consequences, but only within the historical narrative of what actually happened. The prewar, war, and postwar periods follow too naturally from one to another. Put differently, the alternatives are never quite clear. Arguing that the war was decisive implies that, but for the war, labor relations might have been different. This book could have been significantly improved had Atleson spent some time laying out the counterfactual alternatives. In the absence of the war, what would—or at least what could—postwar labor relations have looked like? If we knew the range of alternatives open to labor relations before World War Two, we would be better able to evaluate the distinctiveness and causal importance of the war. As it stands, the unique contribution of the war to postwar labor relations remains fuzzy.

Second, Atleson notes that while some aspects of wartime labor relations became the standard of the postwar period, others did not, most notably maintenance of membership and the Fair Employment Practices Commission. The book could have been strengthened by a comparative analysis of aspects of wartime labor relations that did and did not survive into the postwar period.

But these criticisms do not affect the core strength of the book, which is a success because it demonstrates its central argument. I am convinced that labor relations and law surrounding the issues of arbitration, strikes, and management prerogatives were fundamentally influenced by WLB policy during the war. The chapters that address these issues directly are excellent. The rest of the book is fine but does not provide an answer to the larger question of the relationship of labor to the wartime state.

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Ivana Krajcinovic, ***From Company Doctors to Managed Care: The United Mine Workers' Noble Experiment.*** Ithaca: ILR Press, 1997. ix + 212 pp. $37.50 cloth.

For much of the first half of the century the United Mine Workers (UMW) was the largest, most important, most powerful, and most progressive union in the United States. Among its many accomplishments was that it was one of the first to bargain for and win employer-financed health benefits. Health care was critically important to miners, many of whom were seriously injured on the job and by middle age were often disabled by black lung disease. In the isolated, rural mine patches, quality health care was rarely available. In the days before the organization of the UMW's Welfare and Retirement Funds, many miners found that the only health care that was available came from the company doctor. This medical practice was usually substandard and was one of the many ways the operators exercised power over the life of the miners, discouraging union and political organizing.

Under John L. Lewis's leadership, the UMW sought control of the health fund as a means of guaranteeing quality medical care and maintaining the loyalty of its membership. The coal mine operators were willing to go along with this arrangement and to make a commitment to pay a royalty of forty cents per ton to the Health Care Fund as part of a grand bargain with the union to stabilize the competitive situation in the coal fields. Under this arrangement, the UMW agreed to cooperate with management's mechanization program even though it was understood that modernization would cost hundreds of thousands of jobs. The 1950 contract ratified this bargain. Krajcinovic argues that in return for control of the Health Fund, Lewis agreed to link the union's demands to the fortunes of the industry: Contributions to the Health Fund were to be based on productivity and the union agreed to drop its longstanding opposition to mine mechanization.

Krajcinovic sees this arrangement as both a great watershed and a mixed blessing. It brought modern, first-rate health care to the miners, but also led to a steep decline in mining employment, as it gave the large mechanized operators a decisive competitive advantage. Lewis was transformed "in his role from that of an irascible opponent of management to that of a 'labor statesman' dedicated to promoting the vitality of the industry." Placing the Fund at the center of labor relations meant that the union was committed to "cooperating with management in order to preserve the Fund" (43–44). According to the author, this proved to be a serious mistake. It split the UMW, sacrificing the interests of the miners working in small, nonmechanized collieries. Moreover, by linking the fortunes of the Fund to those of large operators, it blunted coal miner militancy and helped to set the stage for the decline of the union. As more and more coal was produced by nonunion miners, the Fund became insolvent and benefits were steadily reduced.

Much of Krajcinovic's book is devoted to a description of the organization

and operation of the Fund. She describes the dramatic improvement in medical care that it brought to the coal fields, its innovations in health care delivery (particularly the introduction of what we now call managed care), the hospital system that it organized in the coal fields, and its pioneering work in rehabilitative medicine (particularly in the treatment of black lung disease and other occupational disabilities). There is a very interesting discussion describing the relationship between the Fund and the American Medical Association (AMA). Not surprisingly, the AMA opposed efforts to move toward a system of managed care and this created tensions between the union and organized medical community. This conflict often made it difficult for the Fund to recruit doctors and provide quality medical care. In an era when the managed care concept has been hijacked by the insurance industry as part of its effort to maximize profit, this discussion reminds us that in the years after the Second World War, prepaid health plans that attempted to regulate or control physician autonomy were a progressive idea that was championed by organized labor as a way of bringing quality and cost-effective health care to its membership.

While there is much that is very interesting in this slim volume, there are also some shortcomings. The author is an economist rather than an historian, and perhaps this explains why this book was written from an institutional perspective that ignores the voices of the miners. While it would have been very difficult to reconstruct the attitude of the union's rank and file, this is a perspective that could have added an important dimension to a study of this kind. As written, this book leaves the miners strangely silent as if they were disinterested observers in the discussions that took place between John L. Lewis and the operators. Perhaps one way Krajcinovic could have brought the rank and file into her story would have been to look at the union dissidents, of which there were many in this period. What was their critique of the Fund and how was it expressed? Were there any local newspapers that gave them voice? Certainly oral history interviews with rank-and-file miners could have helped the author tell this part of the story. The critical questions that this reviewer had when reading Krajcinovic's book are: How important was health care to the miners when compared to other issues such as wages, employment levels, mechanization, and safety? How important was it to the miners' families (their wives and children)? One would expect that there were differences between the older, retired generation and the working miners. How did this play itself out within the mining communities and the UMW? Where does race and ethnicity fit into the picture?

This brings up the question of historiographic context. There is now a very large literature that explores the relationship between work and community. It would appear that some of the insights developed in this historical scholarship would have been relevant to this study. Unfortunately, Krajcinovic's book ignores most of this scholarship. It fact, it often reads as if the history of the United Mine Workers began in 1950. There is a long union history dating back to the late nineteenth century that might have added a useful perspective on the relationship between the UMW and the operators. As far back as 1897, the union contract was designed to regulate cutthroat competition in such a way as to pro-

vide the large operators with a clear competitive advantage. This agreement, which was the model for all subsequent union contracts, put the UMW in a position where it was responsible for labor peace and market regulation. Thus the arrangements that John L. Lewis negotiated in the late 1940s and 1950s, whatever one might think of them, were certainly not without precedent. These accommodations for the most part benefited both the union and the operators, since stable markets made higher wages possible. Krajcinovic believes the bargain that Lewis made linking health care to mechanization contributed to the decline of the union. While this may be true, it would appear that long-term changes in the energy industry (the transition from coal to oil) were more decisive as was the increasingly hostile environment that unions faced at the end of the twentieth century. It is unlikely that the UMW could ever have successfully resisted mechanization. The labor-management dynamics that were put into place with the Health Care Fund may have contributed to the decline of the union, but the UMW was the victim of much larger economic, technological, and political forces, to say nothing of its own corruption and authoritarian tendencies.

Michael Nash
Hagley Museum and Library

CORRECTION

The editors of *International Labor and Working-Class History* would like to bring the following correction by Professor Gary R. Mormino to the attention of its readers:

Gary R. Mormino
University of South Florida

I wish to take this opportunity to apologize to readers of *International Labor and Working-Class History.* An article entitled "The Reader and the Worker: *Los Lectores* and the Culture of Cigarmaking in Cuba and Florida" appeared in *International Labor and Working-Class History* 54 (Fall 1998), pages 1–18. This article contained portions of a previously published article by myself and George E. Pozzetta entitled "The Reader Lights the Candle," which appeared in *Labor's Heritage* V (Spring 1993), pages 4–28. I should also have included George E. Pozzetta as coauthor of "The Reader and the Worker," since the *ILWCH* article drew upon joint research and writings. I accept full responsibility for this error.

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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pacific Northwest Labor History Association. The conference will be held May 19–21, 2000, in Tacoma, Washington. The theme for this year's conference is "From Artisanship to the Information Age: Lessons in Labor's Struggle." Presentations and panels may address the following: organizing in the information economy; technologies of resistance and control; race, poverty, and gender in the information age; communities of skill, past and present; organizing by trade versus industry; and schools, labor, and knowledge work. For more information, contact Daniel Jacoby, University of Washington, Bothell, 22011 26th Ave. SE, Bothell, WA 98021 USA. Telephone: (425) 352-5365. Fax: (425) 352-5233.

International Congress of Historical Sciences. The nineteenth ICHS will be held in Oslo, Norway, from August 6–13, 2000. This congress, which takes place every five years, is the largest regular meeting of professional historians from all over the world. For more information, contact the congress-secretariat at the following address: P.O. Box 1008, Blindern, N-0315 Oslo, Norway. Fax: +47 22 85 47 00. E-mail: oslo2000@hf.uio.no. Internet: www.oslo2000.uio.no.

North American Labor History Conference. The twenty-second annual NALHC will be held at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, USA, from October 19–21, 2000. The theme of this year's conference is "Labor and the Millennium: Class, Vision, and Change." Suggested panel and paper topics include: labor and the future; class and the millennium; working classes and millennial movements; class, work, and science fiction; and the future of labor history and the future of academic labor. For more information, contact Elizabeth Faue, Coordinator, NALHC, Department of History, 3094 Faculty Administration Building, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202 USA. Telephone: (313) 577-2525. Fax: (313) 577-6987.

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