

BOOK REVIEWS

Sally Sargeson, *Reworking China's Proletariat*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. xviii + 278pp. \$75.00 cloth.

Barbara Entwisle and Gail E. Henderson, eds. *Re-Drawing Boundaries: Work, Households and Gender in China*. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000. xii + 344 pp. \$19.95 paper.

The past two decades in China have seen massive internal population movements, a proliferation of forms of property relations, and the wrenching move from a planned socialist to a quasi-capitalist economy. These transformations have responded to, and resulted in, an ongoing restructuring of work and labor. The two books under review offer perspectives on, and insights into, this complex process.

Sally Sargeson's informative study, *Rethinking China's Proletariat*, explores the relationship among place (registration status, *hukou*), power, and particularism (social connections, *guanxi*) in the re-forming of China's working class during the post-Mao period (1978–present). Although her study focuses on several workplaces in Hangzhou, a wealthy city in south-central Zhejiang province, the integration of her findings into China's general transformative processes indicate the wider implications of her claims. Using ethnographic, sociological, and cultural studies approaches, Sargeson delivers—for the most part—on her stated goal to explicate the, “formative links between the development of capitalism and non-class forms of identity, organization, and activism” (16). While the theoretical targets of her inquiry are reductively rendered accounts of “the” Marxist model of proletarian consciousness and “the” Weberian model of industrial rationality and worker economism, fortunately these straw men rarely intrude into Sargeson's engaging and clear-headed account. Indeed, it comes as no surprise that her case studies demonstrate the crosscutting, non-linear and often economically non-rational relationships between workers and bosses and among workers themselves.

In the book's first part, Sargeson establishes the theoretical, historical, and local background for her inquiry; the second and third parts move into a discussion of her three sites: the Jinshagang factory, which produces electronic components and greeting cards for Japanese client companies; the Sanlian Bakery, a Zhejiang University owned enterprise; and the Laolian company, a University-affiliated enterprise involved in technology products. Combining documentary and site-specific research with illuminating interviews of employees and bosses, Sargeson demonstrates how changing property relations, labor recruitment, and workload allocation—each of which depends upon complicated and ever-shifting local practices and national policies—are structurally mobilized and individually understood by actors in the various sectors of the enterprises.

What emerges clearly is that, due to the purposive segmentation of workers into local vs. outsider statuses—a segmentation which draws upon while significantly reconstituting older urban/rural, mental/manual labor, intellectual/ business divides—a homogeneous class of proletarians does not exist as such in today's China. As Sargeson notes, "The making and remaking of stereotypes continually modifies the conditions under which people enter and act in the work force . . ." (73). Resultant prejudices are internalized by many of the workers, even as those most disadvantageously positioned struggle against such ascriptive identities. As one of her informants asserts: "It's difficult for people with rural registration to get good jobs," while another interjects: "It's ridiculous isn't it? We have the same habits, speak the same language, get the same education, and we can't do the same jobs" (79).

The most satisfying parts of the book explore the ways in which certain workers are constructed by bosses and neighbors as deserving of the working class—they fit in, are locals, dress properly, watch the same movies and go to the same karaoke bars and restaurants, have similar taste, etc.—while others are stigmatized as social problems that, no matter how necessary in filling labor requirements, are to be endured rather than embraced as fellow workers. The growth of these differences is reinforced by the rapid retreat of the state from direct labor allocation and union sponsorship in favor of a quasi-free labor market. Yet, as Sargeson carefully documents in her discussion of power and particularism, this retreat merely means that the state's role in labor issues has gone underground, now accessible only by those with money and connections rather than by those who might require its protection against abuse. However, in implicating the inadequacies of the previous Maoist top-down pro-workerism and pro-urbanism in the contemporary process of remaking the proletariat, Sargeson begins a discussion that deserves more attention. For, while it is clear from her account that the erstwhile all-encompassing *danwei* [work unit] concept has little relevance for bosses in today's economy, the *danwei* ideal evidently continues to have a hold on the imaginations and expectations of workers, rural and urban alike. As such, the contemporary neo-liberal ideological transformation from a prior politico-economic emphasis on the primacy of labor, to a purely economic focus on the advantages of a docile working class is not adequately explored, while vigorous national-level debates through the 1980s and 1990s on this transformation are given little space. This results in a severe particularization of the Chinese case—which is undoubtedly particular, but not uniquely so—manifested in an almost complete neglect of the impact of China's recent full integration into the global capitalist system. This is not a minor objection. Nevertheless, Sargeson's writing is fluid and she displays a passionate sympathy for workers' efforts to contest their situation. She concludes her study by noting that perhaps the full disintegration of the state sector will lead to coalitions that overcome the current competitive segmentation. However, with China on the eve of joining the World Trade Organization (WTO), what such a coalition might look like or augur is not at all clear.

The passion that Sargeson exhibits is little in evidence in the distanced tech-

nical essays that constitute the majority of Entwisle and Henderson's anthology, *Re-drawing Boundaries: Work, Households and Gender in China*. Aiming to provide some general and specific perspectives on the question of "work" [*gongzuo*], "gender" and "household" in contemporary China, the essays in the volume attempt to come to grips with a situation in constant flux. The strength of the volume is that it works as a unitary whole, primarily because of the evident dialogue among many of the authors. Each part contains three to four essays followed by a brief commentary that ties them together. Moreover, despite many differences of perspective, approach, and interpretation, the overall consensus of the volume is that "work" is all but undefinable these days, and that "different kinds of work are differentially visible" (49). However, again there is nary a mention of global forces that might allow one to put China's wrenching transformations into a broader context. Indeed, the first chapter by Susan Mann, as well as the introduction and conclusion by the editors, stake out an unmistakable case for a completely internal view of China's changes. Mann's whirlwind tour through several millennia of Chinese thinking on "work," while doing its stated job admirably and concisely, does not quite get us to today's global situation. For while it is clear that conceptual lineages can be delineated, these concepts need to be situated more closely with and against global issues, at the very least for the modern period onwards. By the same token, the editors' plea in the conclusion for the special significance of boundaries to Chinese thought and practice—evoking the Great Wall as the ultimate boundary—merely establishes a trans-historical, culturally exceptionalist view of China that ill suits today's situation (or any situation).

Most of the essays are less sweeping in their claims, although few make adequate, or even any, distinction between the concepts of "work" [*gongzuo*] and "labor" [*laodong*], a peculiar omission given that in Maoist China the relevant category was the latter. The contribution that comes closest to addressing this problem is Gail Hershatter's consideration of rural women in Shaanxi. As Hershatter helpfully notes, "what the revolution did for these women was not so much remove the stigma of 'outside' labor as to change the context and rewards associated with it" (83). Combining this insight with Rachel Rosenfeld's findings as well as those of the multi-authored chapter two, it could be postulated that what the post-Mao period has plausibly done is leave women laboring—both inside and outside the home—without, however, considering much of their labor "work" (55).

One of the central disputes that runs throughout the volume is whether capitalist modernization leads to greater gender equality or generates new forms of inequality (that may look like older forms, but have new material bases). Some contributors make the case for equality, even while noting that such problems as patriarchy remain; for example, Michelson and Parish conclude that "women are advantaged by more open economies where men have fewer opportunities to influence hiring decisions" (151), a conclusion that Martin Whyte generally supports. Others insist that inequality is constantly being produced and reproduced; Li Zhang's essay is the standard bearer on this side. Indeed, Li's is perhaps the strongest contribution in the volume, because she puts as many vari-

ables as possible into motion. Her multilevel analysis of gender, work, and household relations in Zhejiangcun—an immigrant ghetto in Beijing—demonstrates that “the asymmetric control over social spaces by migrant men and women is both an effect of the structure of social domination and a condition for producing gender exploitation” (172). This asymmetry, she notes, is most developed in the wealthier families/ households, where “gender equality actually has decreased with the family’s economic gain” (193). Indeed, she concludes, “women’s economic activities are not automatically translated into socially recognized value” (194).

If there is an overall conclusion to be drawn from reading these two books together, it could possibly be that “work”—and the re-forming of the proletariat into an atomized working class in post-Mao China—cannot be measured in purely sociological terms. Rather, it must be understood and interpreted as part of a larger framework of analysis that takes constantly changing, but often non-quantifiable, aspects of society and larger forces seriously.

Rebecca E. Karl
New York University

Robert Bruno, *Steelworker Alley: How Class Works In Youngstown*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999. x + 222 pp. \$47.50 cloth; \$17.95 paper.

Deborah E. McDowell, *Leaving Pipe Shop: Memories of Kin*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1996. 364 pp. \$23.00 cloth; \$13.00 paper.

Jack Metzgar, *Striking Steel: Solidarity Remembered*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000. vii + 264 pp. \$69.50 cloth; \$22.95 paper.

“If you ever want to amount to anything,” Deborah McDowell’s grandmother told her repeatedly, “you have to break out of Pipe Shop.” And break out she did; first to her grandmother’s world of “semi-privilege” in the hills above her steel town home, then to college at Tuskegee, and eventually to graduate school and a professorship at the University of Virginia. And yet, she never fully left the Alabama village that surrounded U.S. Pipe and Foundry, where the men of her family had worked since her “ancestors had yoked their prospects for survival to the might of steel” in 1905. Born in 1951, McDowell grew up during the heyday of steel production in the United States, which accounts for her many fond memories from those years and also for her ability to escape the industry that took a crippling toll upon her father, her family, and her community.

McDowell’s account of her childhood in Pipe Shop is the first of three recent memoirs by college professors who are the children of steelworkers. All three works revolve around the contrast between steelworkers’ status among the best paid wage earners in the world and the economic instability and political marginalization that persisted during what Jack Metzgar dubs the “golden age” of working-class power in the industrial United States. Between 1936 and 1959,

average real wages for US steelworkers increased 110 percent. Members of the United Steelworkers of America forced their employers to contribute to health insurance and pension plans in 1949, and by the mid-1950s union contracts mandated several weeks of paid vacation, holidays, and even a thirteen-week “steelworkers sabbatical” for older workers. Each author argues forcefully that such relative prosperity did not diminish the significance of class tensions and class consciousness in shaping theirs or their parents’ lives. Taken together, these memoirs reveal the varied and often contradictory ways in which working-class Americans experienced an era so often associated with consensus and homogenization.

Of the three, Robert Bruno’s, *Steelworker Alley: How Class Works in Youngstown*, is the most narrowly focused upon disproving the theory that economic prosperity eclipsed working-class consciousness in the 1950s and 1960s. Drawing from his own memory—as well as seventy-five interviews with men and wives of men who worked in Youngstown, Ohio steel mills between 1937 and 1959—Bruno provides countless examples of how, “class informed every facet of their lives and their life stories” (17). He is at his strongest when illustrating how supposedly homogenizing practices—such as home ownership, church or lodge membership, or consumer spending—all retained a working-class character in his community. Through everything from housing patterns to leisure activities to local politics, Bruno’s father and his co-workers constructed a distinctly working-class society, one that operated according to a distinct and, Bruno argues, morally superior set of cultural norms.

Satisfied with proving that steelworkers retained a class identity, Bruno ignores the much more complicated question of how race and other social differences informed the experiences of particular members of steel communities. He provides convincing evidence that shared work experience and union membership unified steelworkers across racial and ethnic barriers, but his own evidence belies his statement that “inside the plant workers were workers in spite of racial identity” (54). If, as he writes, “class formation was a product of neighborhoods,” (23) then what are we to make of his claim that racial and ethnic housing segregation, “did not necessarily hinder a worker’s identification with class” (36)? His skillful discussion of how steelworkers forged their identities, both at work and in the community, will leave readers wondering how—perhaps whether—women and children learned and expressed class identities without entering the mill. Ambivalent toward diversity among steelworkers, Bruno ultimately fails to deliver upon his initial promise to overturn the “sociological doctrine” of declining class consciousness in the 1950s. Were his subjects typical of other members of the working-class, as he implies, or did their “commitments to class deviate from national opinion trends,” (137) as he states in a brilliant chapter on local politics?

According to Jack Metzgar’s *Striking Steel: Solidarity Remembered*, sociological doctrine and Bruno’s experience were *both* typical of the 1950s. He attributes the disparity between them to the outcome of subsequent class struggle. Metzgar shares Bruno’s admiration for steelworker culture, but argues that its

viability depended upon the strength of working-class institutions, most importantly unions, which have been destroyed by de-industrialization and the ascendancy of middle-class professionals into nearly uncontested control of American society. While most Americans continue to live economically working-class lives, he points out, cultural and political discourse is dominated by an "imperial" middle-class (in which he includes himself) that defines, "everybody else as essentially like us, just closer or farther from fulfilling the norm" (213).

In place of a classless view of postwar America, Metzgar offers his family story as a model for making sense of the various ways in which working-class people experienced the 1950s. The post Second World War decade was a moment of power and hope for industrial workers, he asserts, challenging a common leftist view of the decade as one of repression and defeat. At the same time, he challenges conservative and liberal myths of consensus and uniform prosperity through an analysis of how union power and increased wages were enjoyed unequally within working-class families and communities. Metzgar illustrates this "dialectic of liberation and repression" most clearly through the story of his mother, a school teacher turned submissive housewife who embraced the civil rights movement as a vehicle for her own liberation within a white working-class household that became increasingly patriarchal in the 1950s. Metzgar's liberation came in the student movement of the 1960s, which—like his mother's National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) branch—provided a "virtuous minority" where he could distance himself from what he, at the time, believed was the "racist," "sexist," "imperialist," "pig" culture of his steelworker father (197).

In Metzgar's formulation, the decline of class consciousness was an ideological victory, won in part by those like himself who created a caricature of the working-class to justify their own middle-class aspirations. While this explanation helps to make sense of his own actions and memories, it seems dubious to attribute his mother's rebellion to social climbing. To do so, Metzgar explains that his mother was a college graduate and a former school teacher, but he also tells that she left that occupation willingly because, "teaching school had always been a second choice, well behind a first choice she'd never expected to have: that of being a dedicated wife and mother" (186). Like Bruno, Metzgar allows his father, a white, male, wage earner, to epitomize the working-class. His mother chose to live a working-class life; and she actively participated in building a working-class family and community, but ultimately, he implies, she was not quite working-class.

If Metzgar complicates Bruno's attempt to define a singular working-class consciousness, Deborah McDowell, in *Leaving Pipe Shop: Memories of Kin*, illustrates that race, as well as gender and generation divided steelworkers as clearly as any other population in the 1950s. Her childhood world contained no potential caricatures of working-class identity, not even the men, union steelworkers all, who before a civil rights suit banned employment discrimination in the 1970s "had been systematically and routinely assigned to dead-end jobs that paid half the average white man's wage" (21). Whereas Bruno emphasizes the

United Steelworkers' role as a "common ground" between black and white workers, and where he praises the "courageous stand" that the union took by hosting a meeting to protest lynchings in the South, McDowell illustrates clear limits to interracial solidarity in the 1950s (58). Opposition to lynching was hardly controversial in the 1950s, but the union remained silent in the face of much more widespread injustices such as "redlining" and wage discrimination that robbed black workers of the reputed middle-class lifestyle that characterized white steelworker communities in the 1950s and 1960s. Despite Bruno's insistence that employers were the primary culprits in this discrimination, it is not surprising that McDowell identifies the targets of civil rights litigation as, "twelve Birmingham locals of the United Steelworkers of America" (21).

But race is not the only factor that complicates McDowell's view of steel town life. Written against the grain of a postwar African American literature dominated by the civil rights movement, *Leaving Pipe Shop* demonstrates that even the most earth-shattering events can seem peripheral to a working-class girl growing up only twelve miles from Birmingham. Readers first hear of the movement after a hundred pages, and only then because a twelve-year-old Deborah was chosen to recite the Gettysburg Address at her church's annual Lincoln/Douglas Banquet. Later we learn of her attempt, as a black working-class college student, to obtain an abortion in the pre-Roe vs. Wade era. Through her intensely personal approach, McDowell accomplishes—what Metzgar and Bruno attempt through social science—rendering the point that through the eyes of the child of a steelworker, the postwar world looked very different from the view commonly presented in sociological and historical writing.

Perhaps the most complicated, and therefore revealing, character in *Leaving Pipe Shop* is "Mother," the paternal grandmother who urged Deborah to "break out." McDowell recalls that her early life was marked by a contrast between her parent's world of "material want" and that of her grandmother, "gilded with absurd rituals of bourgeois social climbing" such as antiques, debutante balls, and social and savings clubs (89). Yet she also explains that each "solidly middle class" member of Mother's club was married to a steelworker (233). Borrowing from Bruno's analytical tools we might question whether such institutions were not "middle class," but ways in which working-class households found social security in the pre-union era. The same question might be asked of Mother's occupation as a "private-duty" nurse, which allowed her to anchor both her finances and her social status to a wealthy white family. All of which raises the question of how much class was a generational experience.

At a time when issues of class conflict and class consciousness drift ever distant from the realm of political debate, these books provide a collective picture of both the importance of class and the difficulty of articulating a coherent analysis of how class informs people's lives. How do we make sense, for example, of the simultaneous nostalgia and aversion that each of these authors display for their childhood worlds? Was the working-class that Bruno discusses primarily white and male? How did non-steelworkers fit into steelworker families and communities? If we invent a new narrative of the 1950s, one that as Metzgar says

“has a working-class in it,” then what will the 1960s look like? Historians Judith Stein and Thomas Sugrue have begun to answer the question of how African Americans experienced the working-class power of the 1950s. We might turn that question around to ask how white workers experienced the liberating movements of the 1960s. Finally, to what extent is class a generational experience? Perhaps one of these authors will write a sequel about their class experience now that they really have broken out of steel town and into the middle-class.

William P. Jones
Rutgers University

Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World*. London: Verso, 2001. 464 pp. \$27.00 cloth

Three great global droughts, in 1876-1879, 1889-1891, and 1896-1900, afflicted much of the most populous part of the tropical world in the late nineteenth century. These droughts were the result of what we can now recognize as a more or less regular succession of mega-climatic events known as El Niño. These phenomena occurred previously, notably in the late eighteenth century, but the late nineteenth century events were extraordinarily severe, and death by starvation and disease was on a staggering, unprecedented scale. Estimates of the number who perished range from thirty-one million to sixty-one million people. The sheer magnitude of what can rightly be called a holocaust of non-Western peoples has generally been obscured by a persistent metropolitan perspective, by the social distance from mass suffering of colonial administrative elites and by historians incurious about, or dismissive of, such “cycles of Cathay.” It is a signal service of this impressive, eloquent study that the dimension of this human suffering on a global scale has been both exposed and foregrounded in the operation of late-Victorian formal and informal imperialisms.

This study does not simply offer an exposé of the ineptitude and culpable prejudices of imperial officialdom. It is an ambitious political economy and political *ecology* of famine with a world-history perspective. The story moves from Korea to Java, Egypt and southern Africa, though the argument rests most heavily on evidence drawn from Britain’s formal empire in India and the plausible effects of informal imperialism in China and Brazil. It is informed by both a Marxist analysis that emphasizes the social relations of subsistence crisis—locally, regionally and internationally—as well as recent environmentalist work on the way ecological changes in general may be engines of historical transformation, not as primary and sufficient causes, but as factors that act in tandem with forces of social and economic control. The book is divided into two vivid narrative sections (these should be required reading for any course on late-Victorian imperialism), a more technical meteorological part deciphering El Niño oscillations, and a final interpretive analysis of the political ecology of famine and the origins of the “Third World.”

As in the Ireland of the Great Famine, official inaction was rationalized

by liberal and Malthusian dogma, often grounded in a kind of racism. There were long-persisting Orientalist ideas about the inevitability of recurring famine among unprogressive, Asian peoples trapped in cycles of subsistence crisis. Davis graphically reveals the prejudices of the vice-regal establishment. Fearful of the assertion of a right to poor relief among the “teeming millions” of the Raj, the British authorities resisted the most elementary measures to save the starving, and demanded bizarrely doctrinaire restrictions on the relief that was provided. In general, relief required manual labor distant from home villages on a diet calculated to have been less nutritious than that offered at the Buchenwald concentration camp.

The central thesis is that the late-Victorian famines cannot be simply explained away as natural disasters made worse by population growth and traditional, local economies of subsistence farming. Davis argues that formal and informal imperialism often undermined traditional methods of control and relief. Further, the scale of famine was clearly related to the heightened vulnerability of peasants around the globe coerced into developing global market economies. Following the work of leading subcontinent economic historians, Davis dismisses the contemporary British claim—one repeated in many twentieth century histories of the Raj—that beleaguered officials, by encouraging the growth of export crops and the building of an infrastructure of railways and canals to facilitate long-distance trade, were slowly modernizing India in a way that would work to save the people from Malthusian disaster. Such “modernizing” efforts—intended to facilitate export trade—made more of the population dangerously vulnerable to a fall in the world market for monoculture export products, and to “price famine” when world markets for subsistence produce moved in the other direction. At a local level, money lenders and tax collectors conspired with drought to drive ever larger numbers off of the land, to starve or to become cheap Coolie workers in distant parts of the Empire. Nor did improved transport encourage, as British officials claimed, the easier relief of famine by allowing the movement of foodstuffs from areas of high production to areas of scarcity. Between 1875 and 1900, including the years of great starvation mortality, annual grain *exports* from India increased from 3 million to 10 million tons, supplying by the end of Victoria’s reign nearly a fifth of *Britain’s* wheat consumption.

More contentiously, perhaps, Davis argues that the parallel distress in China can also be traced to the growth of (informal) capitalist imperialism. In the high Qing period, government had been able, apparently, to reign in the worse effects of drought at the end of the eighteenth century by a complex system of grain reserves, canals, irrigation and price controls: “India and China, in other words, did not enter modern history as the helpless ‘lands of famine’ so universally enshrined in Western imagination” (287). These measures of an efficient Confucian bureaucracy, however, badly unraveled in the nineteenth century. Faced with rebellion and the European threat, the state lacked the resources to maintain traditional inland methods of drought control and relief. Moreover, much of the peasantry was shifted from growing foodstuffs to producing opium and cotton, at a time when world cotton prices were bound to fall. But the cli-

mate crisis was particularly severe and population had risen. Whether the traditional Chinese state *could* have coped had it not been for the admittedly disruptive intrusion of Western imperialism will remain for some a more open question than in the clearer cases of India or liberal Brazil.

A short review cannot do justice to a sustained 400 page argument that moves around so much of the world with such great, informed facility. Davis's book is impressive for its reach and convincing in its large brush strokes; but as always with such comparative studies, regional specialists may have issues of interpretation and fact to pick. Others will no doubt be uncomfortable with some of the Marxist underpinning, with statements such as, "great hungers have always been redistributive class struggles" (20); though it is a virtue of this work that such categorical statements are rarely offered in place of close research and analysis.

Inevitably, Davis's synthesis is indebted to the work of scores of scholars in the various regions he incorporates. Perhaps more problematically, he relies heavily, and somewhat uncritically, on contemporary Western travelers' and missionaries' accounts and illustrations in detailing the gothic horror of mass starvation. This evidence may involve questions of motive and perspective. For example, Davis repeatedly cites very common assertions, by Western—often missionary—"observers", of widespread cannibalism due to starvation. The cannibal libel was so common in the nineteenth century that it is practically a racially coded trope for non-Western character. Therefore, historians must use such second and third hand testimony with care. More important may be the reservations some will have about *the degree to which* the kind of social-economic changes Davis brings forward as the chief causal factors of mass starvation characterize the regions he has chosen. Others may feel that he has not quite scotched the Malthusian snake, that the population factor remains critical. Overall, however, this is a persuasive, passionate book that should generate a lively and productive debate.

Had the mortality revealed here occurred in the West—the equivalent of thirty Irish Famines or sixty Somme battlefields—it would doubtless be regarded as the central experience of modern historical memory. What Davis has done is not only to raise the visibility of this human calamity, but to draw us away from lazy assumptions about non-Western famine as "natural history," to reinvest it with human agency as—at least—a partially engineered and sustained phenomenon that often served the interests of the rich and powerful.

H. L. Malchow
Tufts University

Sean Dobson, *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920: The Story of a Relationship*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001. xvi + 352 pp. \$50.00 cloth.

This case study of the "red" city of Leipzig seeks to examine the German revolution 1918-1920 not simply from the perspective of World War I, but to look

back into prewar years, to see the development of Leipzigers' particularly revolutionary stance as a product of both long- and short-term experiences. In doing so, Dobson concludes that the case of Leipzig refutes generalized assumptions concerning German laborers' complete "integration" into the Wilhelmine system (1890-1918), arguing rather for Leipzig workers' consistent rejection of repressive Wilhelmine authority, and their longstanding alternative vision of a radically democratized society. Dobson argues his case through "relationships," particularly within and between blue- and white-collar workers.

Part One offers a broad examination of Leipzig, and its class relations and circumstances. This section covers 1910 through January 1915, claiming that, in terms of Leipzigers' experience, mobilization engendered less significant a change than the first intense ramifications of what, by the end date, promised to be a protracted war. The first chapters adopt a traditional social history mode, employing quantitative analysis concerning Leipzigers' wage, salary, education, housing quality and location, and marriage patterns. Dobson claims that, while we ought make no assumptions concerning the usefulness of class or other definitions and identities, the areas he addresses reveal social and economic structures that maintained clear divisions between manual laborers, skilled and unskilled alike, and (broadly speaking) "bourgeois" groups. The clearest evidence for this is the extreme lack of possibility for social mobility. The German schooling system systematically prevented such movement, while marriage patterns clearly demonstrate that matrimony did not provide the potential to rise in society. Moreover, wage relations, the author claims, were in no way perceived by manual laborers in Leipzig as representative of freely entered and maintained contracts between employer and worker. In this context, Dobson finds workers were very likely to reject the authority imposed on them by this relationship. They saw this as evidence of the illegitimate authority that ruled generally in Wilhelmine society. This conclusion anticipates the next chapters, in which the author discusses such perceptions more generally, undertaking an overview of blue- and white-collar experience in these years. The study reveals that manual laborers did perceive themselves as a distinct group, united by their circumstances, which seems to have largely superceded other identities, such as gender, skill level, age and confession. This identity was marked by their very rejection of the "class state" (*Klassenstaat*). While white-collar workers also seem to have constituted themselves as a single, united identity to some degree, this identity was far more fissiparous, leading them in turn toward no consistent sentiment or ideology. This group identified in this period most often with "the bourgeoisie," though they sometimes demonstrated discomfort within the system.

The second part of the book picks up in 1915, as Leipzigers struggled with a war now in full swing: indeed, already a "total war," as the author characterizes it. The extreme shortages of consumer goods *inter alia*, particularly of food, led to regular, rancorous protests in the streets as well as on the shop floor. Reich-level authorities, particularly concerned about Leipzig, sought means to reimpose government authority, especially military authority. One important and exemplary means throughout Germany was the enactment in late 1916 of

the auxiliary service law, requiring adult men to perform war related labor if they were not on the front: exemplary because of the resort to repression and force, particularly exercised toward blue-collar workers. However, Leipzig's manual laborers rejected this new ratcheting of repression, in the name of a war in which they had very little investment and of a state for which they had already demonstrated so little support. This is the crucial point. Dobson claims that, to some degree or another, Leipzig workers had already afforded authorities, from the municipal level on up, so little legitimacy from well before the outbreak of war. The war was only a final, decisive element, and one that informed an alternative vision. This "dialectic of popular radicalization" (167) led workers to rebel against the leadership of the more conservative (Majority) Social Democratic and trade union leaders, despite their apparent effectiveness in moving party leadership leftward. Leipzig's workers turned out in full force for the revolution beginning November 9, 1918; demonstrating, Dobson claims, widespread radical ideas for the future including the notion of democratization from the ground up. The experience of war likewise cemented for manual laborers the already strong group identity they had developed in the prewar era. For white-collar workers, by contrast, the initial revolutionary phase turned their allegiances temporarily against the rest of the bourgeoisie, as they fought more narrowly for better pay and working relations.

Section Three, concerning November 1918 to April 1920, examines this newly constituted relationship among blue- and white-collar workers. It also highlights the former's ever-strengthening commitment not only to the radical workers' and soldiers' councils, but also, specific to Leipzig, to the emergent factory councils, through which the most radical democratization was imagined. White collar workers by contrast, winning their limited demands, quickly reverted to their earlier allegiances, supporting counter-revolutionary forces in the form of the newly-formed "*Bürgerausschüsse*," representing both citizens and bourgeois committees. It was these groups, including those outside the city, that "invaded" Leipzig and effectively occupied it, in fear of the radical potential that lay in the vision of blue-collar workers. In response, as a "third wave" of the revolution, these Leipzigers gathered in great force to hold a general strike that rocked the city. But by the time of the "Kapp Putsch," the extreme right *coup d'état* that paralyzed Germany in April 1920—until a national general strike returned the nation to the Weimar authorities, the radical Leipzig workers were exhausted. If they had contributed to temporarily defeating this newest right-wing threat, the experience, along with the extreme pressures of the war and its aftermath, left them unable to maintain the level of unity, conviction, and force that had permitted their previous endurance. However, Dobson claims, the vision of egalitarian society propagated by Leipzig workers, beginning at the level of wage relationships, continues to offer "rich food for thought" (296).

As the author claims, this study provides important insight for this period into Leipzig and central Germany in general, an area greatly ignored in the dominant literature. Dobson's periodization is also original and important: while numerous historians have treated the "decade of unrest," 1914–1924, few have con-

nected the prewar to the war and postwar era. The author convinces us that historians neglect this to their peril. Thus, while innumerable studies exist of wage relations, the stratified German schooling system, Social Democratic politics, the wartime strikes and the workers' and sailors' councils, this study puts them all together in a local context. This is an impressive aspect of the book, providing suggestive lessons for both additional local studies and more general conclusions concerning worker quiescence, stratification, and other issues.

Nevertheless, this study remains an apparently largely unrevised dissertation, with all the attendant pitfalls. This is visible in the rambling historiographic section, leaving out highly relevant references and caricaturizing others, as well as in the unsophisticated theoretical section. It appears in the opening chapters offering too broad a background (presaging unevenness throughout), and drawing for evidence of experience on a very few, unique sources without reference to the limitations entailed therein. It stands out in the amateurish statistical analysis, as in the selection of photos, which add little to the study. The claim on the first page of the book is startlingly misleading as it stands: that, "By 9 November Worker and Soldiers Councils . . . held power almost everywhere in the Reich." For example, the councils' weakness in the event (in part a function of their commitment to local governance) is not explained for non-expert readers. The comparative aspect is very difficult. Though Dobson attempts to paint a complex portrait of Leipzig's specificities, the book is unclear from page to page whether the phenomena he discusses were Reich- region- or only city- wide, and what, most importantly, we are to do with this local study in terms of understanding the bigger picture. This is an intelligent study with potential significance, but this significance is not fully realized.

Belinda Davis
Rutgers University

Dennis A. Deslippe, *'Rights, Not Roses' Unions and the Rise of Working-Class Feminism, 1945–80*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000. xii + 259 pp. \$49.95 cloth; \$21.95 paper.

Through case studies of gender relations in two unions, the United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA) and the International Union of Electrical Workers (IEU), Dennis A. Deslippe argues that working-class feminists were at the vanguard of resurgent feminism in the 1960s and 1970s. In the book's opening chapters, Deslippe synthesizes scholarship in labor and women's history to reiterate that working-class feminists helped shape the policy oriented activism of the union movement and women's organizations between 1945 and the passage of the landmark Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Labor unions actively promoted equal pay legislation after passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 initiated a new phase of labor and management relations characterized by "social unionism", seeking justice through legislative action, in addition to collective bargaining. Unions pursued equal pay legislation as another means to protect

“men’s” jobs and wages against competition from lower paid female workers, but rank-and-file women embraced its potential for gender equity. Deslippe adds depth to this fairly familiar story by suggesting that union women’s “shifting consciousness” toward an equal rights perspective also occurred because automation exposed the capriciousness of categorizing jobs by sex and led to layoffs.

Another impetus to nascent feminism, under emphasized in Deslippe’s study, came from changes in women’s labor force participation. Shortages in some occupations during the 1950s elevated women’s work as essential for continued economic growth, a trend publicized by *Womanpower* (the 1957 study on women’s employment by the National Manpower Council). Changes within the postwar consumer economy engendering attention to part-time work, continuing education, and employment placement not only fostered gender solidarity, but also provided the ideological justification for the creation of the President’s Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW). Economic policies and splits among women’s organizations over the Equal Rights Amendment had more influence over the deliberations of the PCSW than union politics. President John F. Kennedy appointed just one female labor activist to the Commission: Mary E. Callahan, a member of the Executive Board of the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers. Addie Wyatt, Catherine Conroy, and Angela Bambace were not PCSW appointees, as Deslippe implies, but consultants on ancillary committees investigating particular issues. Wyatt and Conroy did, however, serve on state commissions on status of women in Illinois and Wisconsin respectively.

Still, Deslippe acknowledges the precariousness of working-class feminism until the Title VII interregnum. Without a mass movement to bolster equal rights claims, female union functionaries effected few challenges to discriminatory practices by recalcitrant locals and employers eager to maintain control over workplaces. Moreover, rank-and-file women failed to break the glass ceiling to leadership positions. A deep ambivalence about upending traditional male and female roles hindered their efforts. Even so, they persevered to become leaders of the modern women’s movement.

The book’s core chapters trace the UPWA and IUE’s institutional responses to feminist activism over time. By the time the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) effectively enforced civil rights laws with regard to sex after 1968, each union had well-established patterns of gender relations. Deslippe employs this historical context to account for the divergent responses to Title VII enforcement within the labor movement. The UPWA adopted a “confrontationalist” stance to Title VII because the international leadership privileged the autonomy of male dominated locals over the grievances of a small percentage of female members. Fierce competition for jobs in the declining meatpacking industry also made gender relations acrimonious. UPWA officials, in collusion with employers, fought to maintain the sex-segregated work force to insulate male workers from cutbacks. Deslippe presents a fascinating account of feminist activists’ persistent efforts to challenge the machinations of employers and union officials to undermine EEOC guidelines.

Deslippe makes a convincing argument that the IUE's less confrontational approach to the threat of Title VII litigation relates to its "legacy" of nurturing female leaders and addressing gender discrimination, including advocacy of equal pay legislation. The IUE had a tradition of developing gender-based policies because women made up a critical mass of the membership. It was in this milieu that IUE staff members constructed an internal Title VII compliance plan. In spite of a history of receptivity to women's issues, though, not every IUE local accepted the inevitability of social change and not every rank-and-file woman wanted to avoid litigation. IUE international officers and female leaders worked in tandem to promote the internal plan to the rank-and-file. According to Deslippe, the centralized structure of the IUE made such negotiations possible.

Deslippe's conclusion reminds readers that anti-discrimination policies did not stop injustice on the shop floor. Subtle inequities persisted. At least inter-union feminist coalitions became more prevalent in the 1970s and 1980s, the most important of which was the Coalition of Labor Union Women; so that working-class feminism could thrive in a broader network.

Deslippe's well written and thoroughly researched book broadens our understanding of the interconnections between public policy and grassroots activism. In the process, he illuminates the presence of feminist generations within the labor movement. Even though the younger women filing Title VII complaints receive less attention here than the small cadre of women employed by labor unions during the postwar years, Deslippe deserves credit for pointing the way to further research.

Kathleen A. Laughlin
Metropolitan State University

Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2000. 433pp. \$30.00 cloth; \$18.00 paper.

This fascinating and important book covers the revolutionary resistance to the rise of capitalism around the Atlantic basin, including North and Central America, Great Britain, Ireland, Western Europe and Western Africa in the years from the English Revolution (in the 1640s) to shortly after the French and Haitian Revolutions (in the early 1800s). It is based on extensive research in contemporary documents and publications, assisted by the use of modern studies of the events and struggles that form the content of the book. Sailors of various races and nationalities are an essential ingredient of this study, partly as an example of the brutal oppression of working seamen, but more importantly as an example of the continuing resistance to that oppression. Some Forms of that resistance included mutinies on both merchant and naval vessels and the development of a more democratic structure and culture in piracy. However, more than these direct struggles, there is the crucial part that seamen played in the

spread of knowledge of revolutionary struggles, assuring that these struggles would become international. One example was noted by David Montgomery in an article published in the March 2001 *Journal of American History*. He cites the case of David Walker, a used clothing salesman frequented by sailors, who often sewed copies of his *Appeal . . . to the Coloured Citizens of the World* in the pockets or lining of jackets so that they were carried to ports around the world.

Involved in these struggles were Irish resisters to British rule who had been sold into slavery or indenture in the West Indies, British proletarians, Africans, both slave and free, English peasants fighting against the enclosure of their common lands, American revolutionaries, and more. There was a thick thread of abolition running through all of these struggles. Moreover, there was widespread use of the Bible and Protestant religion to justify and provide an ideological basis for many of these struggles, beginning with the Diggers and Levellers in the English Revolution. Linebaugh and Rediker trace the uses of Christian doctrine and biblical passages to justify and sustain revolutionary developments. They also give these struggles concrete human faces by tracing the histories of different kinds of revolutionaries such as: Robert Wedderburn, born in Jamaica of a slave woman and slave master; the Irishman Edward Marcus Despard, hanged as a traitor for fomenting revolution in England; and his African American wife, Catherine.

One of the strengths of the book is the manner in which the authors draw as many conclusions as they can from the evidence they amass. This is an improvement over the practice of many academic historians who often draw minimal conclusions from historical evidence and therefore tend most often to be conservative in their understanding of events. This, however, has risks as they occasionally draw conclusions not warranted by evidence. One example is in a chapter entitled "A Blackymore Maide Named Francis." A church elder, Edward Terrill, published a record of the church. He devoted one long paragraph to Francis in which he quotes her dying wish. From her last words, Linebaugh and Rediker conclude that Francis was revolutionary. "Proletarians of different provenance were cast together and began to realize that together they could do more than they could do separately. This is the dynamic that Francis helped set in motion . . ." (101). Their conclusion strikes me as being unwarranted. Another example is their use of William Shakespeare. Using words of his characters in *The Tempest* they conclude that Shakespeare "advises" that ships and sailors be firmly controlled "by the rulers overseeing the process of colonization" (31). It is hard to see how this could be justified. Would they blame Herman Melville for the words and attitudes of Ahab? Fortunately, these lapses do not damage the fundamental power and documentation of the book.

Another problem of the work is the authors' idealization of the commons. The book ends with the statement, "Yet the planetary wanderers do not forget, and are ever ready from Africa to the Caribbean to Seattle to resist slavery and restore the commons" (353). The commons were not some pre-capitalist socialist form of agriculture. The commons were derived from feudal society, not notoriously egalitarian. Peasants worked their own plot of land and perhaps shared

the common to graze an animal or two. The enclosure acts were a major source of discontent among peasants and workers who were forced off the land. But the commons did not represent some golden age and their restoration does not represent some future utopia.

The book provides valuable material in understanding the origins of racism. "After each major uprising, the racist doctrine of white supremacy took another step in its insidious evolution" (284). Every indication is that racism was imposed on the working classes of the United States, England and elsewhere. It was not a result of any natural tendency towards racism inherent in the proletariat itself. There is also another element of interest. Eric Williams, Theodore W. Allen and others have documented the economic origins of racism. But this is only half the story. In other times and other societies, slavery was economically and socially valuable to the ruling class without leading to what we understand today as racism. In the case of plantation slavery in the period of the rise of capitalism, a balanced rendering demonstrates that the immense profitability of slavery and the slave trade took place in a time of democratic revolutions based on the equality of all men: the English Revolution, the American Revolution, the French Revolution and the Haitian Revolution. What this book demonstrates is that the democratic revolution was more than the national revolutions that took place at this time and then subsided. It was a continuing struggle for freedom and equality that has lasted for centuries. This is a fully documented and remarkable book. It demonstrates that the contradiction between the profitability of slavery and the massive and continuous struggle for freedom could not be contained without the imposition of a theory of the inherent inferiority of the Africans.

Martin Glaberman
Wayne State University

Editor's note: Martin Glaberman, a contributor to ILWCH, passed away in December 2001. His career as a labor activist, educator, and author spanned more than sixty years and his love for storytelling and great sense of humor made him an invaluable transmitter of labor lore across generations. We will miss him and feel privileged to have had him as a collaborator. MPH

Carmen Teresa Whalen, *From Puerto Rico to Philadelphia: Puerto Rican Workers and Postwar Economies*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001. 336pp. \$74.50 cloth; \$24.05 paper.

For nearly a century, scholars, politicians, and social service workers in the United States have attributed high levels of poverty among Puerto Ricans, on both the island and the North American mainland, to deficiencies in the behavior, beliefs, and values of the Puerto Rican people. Carmen Teresa Whalen presents an exhaustively researched and carefully argued rebuttal to these "culture of pover-

ty” arguments in *From Puerto Rico to Philadelphia: Puerto Rican Farm Workers and Postwar Economies*.

Whalen shows that Puerto Rico’s status as a US colony subjected the island to an economic regime designed to provide the metropole with inexpensive raw materials and low wage labor, while leaving Puerto Ricans with little protection against changes in US policies or fluctuations in the global economy. Specific programs and policies orchestrated by the United States government, along with private interests, destabilized Puerto Rico’s rural economy during the 1930s. Subsequent federally sponsored programs of labor recruitment encouraged the migration of low wage labor to the US to fill labor shortages in agriculture during, and after, World War II. These migrants entered agricultural work on the North American mainland at the very moment when large scale mechanization reduced the bargaining power of farm workers as never before. Many of them moved to cities to work in industries, but racial discrimination by employers and unions left them largely concentrated in under-capitalized industries seeking low wage laborers. Soon, state-sponsored automation and capital flight led to the elimination of these jobs. At the same time, racial discrimination in housing and employment made Puerto Ricans particularly vulnerable to the economic restructuring of the 1970s and 1980s, which favored the interests of investors and home owners over the interests of low wage workers and renters. Whalen’s work helps us understand how the culture explanation of Puerto Rican poverty obscures the role of colonialism, state sponsored policies regarding labor migration, class politics of economic restructuring, and persistent racism—through residential segregation, employment discrimination, and educational inequality—in damaging the opportunities and life chances of the Puerto Rican people.

Because the history of Puerto Rican migration to the mainland has so often been rendered through insulting anecdotes and cultural generalizations rather than on the basis of detailed empirical research, Whalen was forced to construct her own database for this study. She makes extremely effective use of baptism and marriage records, correspondence by government officials, transcripts of court cases, photographs, newspaper clippings, and oral histories (some thirty of which she conducted herself for this book). At the same time, she displays a comprehensive and encyclopedic command of material to include: local government documents—from Puerto Rico, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, federal records and information from dissertations, books and articles from around the nation and the world. Whalen’s recovery of previously overlooked evidence makes an important addition to the historical record and is valuable by itself. Yet, her true contribution comes in the way she assembles her evidence to make original and generative contributions to our understanding of important topics ranging from the “culture of poverty” to the transformation of gender relations in migrant communities. She illuminates the role of racial and gender difference in generating surplus profits for capital—thus sowing division among the working-class—and highlights the new status of the national citizen in an age of transnational investment, migration, and trade.

Whalen’s research exposes once again the weaknesses of the “culture of

poverty” interpretation of Puerto Rican poverty. It is internally inconsistent. For example, it blames Puerto Rican women for being both too weak and submissive to their husbands *as well as* being emasculating and independent by working outside the home for wages. While purporting to rest on knowledge of Puerto Ricans’ “Latin mentality and tradition,” culture of poverty interpreters—like Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Nathan Glazer—reveal themselves to be shockingly ignorant of actual Puerto Rican history and culture. For example, they imagine that women working outside the home for wages constituted a devastating break with tradition for Puerto Ricans, when the life histories of migrants reveal that women’s paid labor had become important to Puerto Rican families long before migration to the US. Most important, the culture of poverty thesis became a self-fulfilling prophecy that inhibited the creation of alternative hypotheses for Puerto Rican poverty. Once policy makers and social service workers decided that Puerto Rican culture caused poverty, their only remedy was “assimilation”, a policy that attacked the very social networks, support structures, and institutions most useful in fighting poverty among Puerto Ricans. Moreover, once the public believed that Puerto Ricans caused their own poverty, the emerging structural inequalities of the global economy—that had such a devastating impact on the real wages of all workers after 1973—became obscured from view and cut off from analysis and interpretation.

One of Whalen’s most important discussions involves the category of citizenship. Unlike other Spanish-speaking migrants to the US from countries once colonized by Spain, Puerto Ricans come to the mainland as US citizens. Yet, citizenship did not always work in their favor. Government policy planners favored Puerto Ricans as labor migrants during the Cold War because their citizenship made it easier for them to come to the mainland than Jamaicans, Haitians, Trinidadians, Cubans, Bahamians, and other migrant laborers. However, Whalen shows that employers, and their allies, found US citizenship for Puerto Ricans a liability. It tended to make them less docile, more likely to complain about illegal treatment, and allowed them to stay permanently in communities that wanted their labor but not their dark skins, language, or culture. Whalen’s research reveals that Puerto Rican migration began in part because some growers viewed Jamaicans as too contentious and too reluctant to follow orders. Once Puerto Ricans had been laborers for two decades, growers started to favor the importation of more Mexicans, because they viewed them as more docile and less likely to stay in the US when their specific work contracts expired.

This uneven history of citizenship reveals the hypocrisy behind attacks on non-citizen migrant workers such as California’s Proposition 187 or the anti-immigrant provisions of the 1996 welfare reform bill. Employers, consumers, and citizens may wrap their claims in the flag and contend that their hostility to immigrants stems from their deep reverence for citizenship. However, the history that Whalen relates—that of changing attitudes toward Jamaicans, Puerto Ricans, and Mexicans—reveals that what employers really want are not citizens, but workers who are weak, who have little recourse to legal action, and who will bring their labor—and the profits it produces—to the US, but not themselves or their families to stay as residents or citizens.

Carmen Teresa Whalen has made a splendid contribution to Puerto Rican history, urban history, and labor history with this fine book. Perhaps most important, her work reveals the necessity of combining labor history with ethnic studies in order to say true and useful things about class and race. The ethnic studies “culture of poverty” theorists misrepresent race because their analysis does not allow them to see Puerto Ricans as labor migrants who have been victimized by changes in production in Puerto Rico, the rural US, and North American urban industrial areas. Yet, labor historians have generally failed to explain the racialized class experiences of workers like the ones who appear in Whalen’s book. In actual practice, the linked fate of waged labor has not made workers more and more similar as Karl Marx predicted. Instead, capitalism constantly seeks to generate new distinctions and differentiations by gender, race, and nationality in order to create new sources of surplus profit. Racial division is a class issue; just as class subordination stems from the same sources of oppression and suppression that underwrite racialization and make inequality seem natural, necessary, and inevitable. Blending labor history and ethnic studies approaches will not be easy, but Carmen Whalen’s wonderful book presents an exemplary model for us to emulate.

George Lipsitz

University of California, San Diego

Duncan Tanner, Pat Thane and Nick Tiratsoo, eds. *Labour’s First Century*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000. x + 418 pp. \$49.95 cloth.

In the British parliamentary election of 1900, the nascent Labour Representation Committee (LRC), born a mere six months before from the union of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) with three small socialist bodies (the Independent Labour Party, the Social Democratic Federation, and the Fabian Society), contested fifteen seats, polled two percent of the votes cast, and returned two of its candidates to a House of Commons of 670 members. In 1997, in the last general election of the twentieth century, the Labour Party, as the LRC had become in 1906, ran 639 candidates, won 43.2 percent of the vote, and, with 418 Members of Parliament (MPs), commanded an impregnable majority in the Commons. Four years later, the electorate confirmed Labour in its mandate, again with an invulnerable parliamentary majority. At the end of its first century, Labour had come to appear Britain’s natural party of government, and its principal foe, the Conservative Party, a wanderer in the wilderness of internecine conflict and impotent opposition.

Such a rags-to-riches trajectory would seem to recommend itself readily to a romantic emplotment, but few of Labour’s historians, hagiographers aside, have been tempted to cast the party as the ill-starred chance child that grows up to be the prepossessing prince of the realm. More often, the tale of Labour’s first century has been represented—by “well-regarded left-wing polemicists . . . Marxists . . . Liberals . . . [and] feminists” (1)—as a satire of incompetence and immoderation or a tragedy of benighted birth. In light of the electoral record,

the force of such story lines is not hard to feel. Labour succeeded in winning a working majority in just three of Britain's twenty-six twentieth-century elections. Including the years when the party held office as a junior partner in coalition governments, Labour had a hand on the reins of power for only a third of its first one hundred years.

Labour's First Century seeks to set the narrative of the party's history straight. In place of other-worldly romances of Labour's holiness and nether-worldly farces and tragedies that "assault . . . everything that Labour has attempted to achieve" (5), Duncan Tanner, Pat Thane, Nick Tiratsoo, and their fellow contributors substitute a this-worldly comedy in which the hero, "when given the opportunity" (2), "has usually given of its best" (5). "The constraints of the immediate context" (2) on Labour's freedom of purpose have, to be sure, often been severe, and the party, Tanner, Thane, and Tiratsoo admit, has had "its weaknesses" (ibid.). Despite it all, through "the peaks and the troughs in popularity, the tensions and the conflicts, the moments of unfulfilled hope and of dark despair" (5), Labour has enjoyed "far more success than failure" (ibid.). The history of its first century is one about which "all those associated with this party should feel justly proud" (ibid.).

The literary device by which the twelve authors of this volume carry the comedic emplotment of Labour's history is the topos of continuity through change. Already in their introduction, Tanner, Thane, and Tiratsoo claim this rhetorical ground as the book's own. "Changes during the century," they write, "have required Labour to adapt its policies, to move with popular opinion, to embrace changing expert views, in order to create effective economic and social policies. Yet there are also many continuities, both in terms of values and specific policy areas" (5). The landslide victory of Tony Blair's New Labour in 1997 stands in this story as the epitome and apotheosis of Labour's capacity to rejuvenate itself while remaining faithful to its core ideals of social justice and equality. "Once again," we are assured, "many of the party's key aims and values have remained intact, even though items of its traditional faith have been challenged in the process" (ibid.).

The mantra of continuity through change rings incantationally through the thematic essays that make up the body of *Labour's First Century*. Jose Harris testifies in "Labour's political and social thought" that the conviction "that social evolution was inexorably unfolding in a Labourist direction" to which "the young Ramsay MacDonald" adhered remained vital enough in Blair's Labour Party that the first secretary of the LRC and Labour's first prime minister "would have found in New Labour at the end of the twentieth century a congenial spiritual home" (39). Jim Tomlinson attests in "Labour and the economy" that "while there have been considerable twists and turns in the specific policies put forth by Labour, there have also been important continuities in the general assumptions embodied in the approach to the economy, often associated with certain essentially ethical or moral notions about how society should function" (46). Pat Thane pronounces apodictically in "Labour and welfare" that "the continuities between New Labour welfare policies and deep-rooted Labour traditions

are clear" (114). Duncan Tanner professes in "Labour and its membership" that the party's members have "*always* been sympathetic to leaders who developed a successful, constructive, and moral programme" (272, emphasis added); and that as a "constructive party, with power in its grasp, presenting its policies as part of a clear socialist vision," New Labour "once again won support through the purchase of its ideas" (271).

The authors of *Labour's First Century* reveal continuity through change to be the truth of Labour's history even where appearances are to the contrary. Stephen Howe affirms in "Labour and international affairs" that while the "Labour government elected in 1997 seemed to break substantially with that legacy of conservatism [in socialist international thought and policy] . . . important continuities [still] could be perceived, not least in the underlying values which Labour proclaimed in its international policies", and this even though "almost every aspect of the context, whether global or insular, was being transformed almost beyond recognition" (144). Miles Taylor avers in "Labour and the constitution" that there "is more continuity than is often supposed between New Labour's constitutional designs and the policies it inherited" and that "looked at in the longer term, the Labour Party has proved itself a friend of constitutional reform" (173). Alastair Reid verily uncovers the truth of continuity where change has been most pronounced: in the party's relations with Britain's trade unions. Allowing that "at the end of its first century, the trade unions play a much less prominent role in the Labour Party's affairs than would have been thought possible at any earlier point in its history," he solicitously safeguards the uninitiated against the deception of appearances. "Trade unions in Britain continue to organise a higher proportion of the workforce than in other advanced economies" (221), Reid avows, and "despite the seemingly continuous decline in their importance over the last twenty years . . . understanding the complexities of the historical relation between Labour and the trade unions remains just as relevant as it has ever been" (222).

The topos of continuity through change is an ambiguous device, however, available for satiric as for comedic emplotment. In the hands of Nick Tiratsoo, as a co-editor an author of the archetypal Labour Party comedy inscribed in the volume's introduction, the formula works to great farcical effect with Labour playing the party that couldn't shoot straight with the electorate. The Labour Party he portrays certainly remained true to itself, but the self to which it remained true frowned upon "innovations like opinion polls and television broadcasts," distrusting "their American origins and commercial connotations" (297), "remained addicted to voluntary effort and suspicious of any measure that involved bringing in expert advisers" (300), and "was inept at marketing itself and relatively slow to appreciate opportunities offered by the electronic media" (ibid.). By page 300 the record that on page five counted "far more success than failure" has dimmed to "hardly dazzling," at least in the small matter of winning votes, securing seats, and gaining governmental power.

The rhetoric of continuity through change likewise propels a satire of Labour's ineptitude in the book's concluding chapter, Steven Fielding's "New

Labour and the past." Fielding's theme is "the 'progressive dilemma'"—the problem of constructing an electoral coalition extending far enough beyond the manual working class into the middle class "to maintain a long-term [progressive] hold on office" (386). His treatment of it is continuities all the way down—"timeless' values," "an ageless electoral predicament," "the most antediluvian of strategies"(ibid.)—and what stands out most among them is the "pitiful response" with which Labour's efforts in this direction have "usually" met (ibid.). Taken together with Tiratsoo's tale about "Labour and the electorate," and the suggestion in Martin Francis's "Labour and gender" that the central continuity of the party's history in this regard has been the enduring conflict between Labour as a "broader project of emancipation . . . emphasiz[ing] human dignity for all" and as a body for the defense of "the interests of male manual workers" (191), Fielding's essay forms a narrative of Labour's first century that satirically subverts the grand comedic history that the editors intended their book to enshrine in place of the manifold accounts insensible to Labour's achievements.

Labour's First Century is thus a neurotic effort that compulsively reproduces the very narrative that it consciously seeks to supersede. This neurosis, like all neuroses, originates in an unresolved conflict. The master fact of the Labour Party's history has been the furious ambivalence about its practices of those most devoted to its ideals. Acted out, sometimes uncontrollably, during Labour's terms in office and often hysterically during its many years in opposition, this ambivalence has consistently crippled the party's capacity to encompass the progressive sensibilities of the British electorate. A book that faced up to this ambivalence and worked through it analytically would have served Labour's first century well, perhaps even its second. To attempt to repress this ambivalence was bound to fail.

Michael Dintenfuss

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

James S. Amelang, *The Flight of Icarus: Artisan Autobiography in Early Modern Europe*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998. ix + 497 pp. \$60.00 cloth.

Let's begin with the mythological allusion in the title *The Flight of Icarus*. Its inspiration comes from a translation into Castilian of a seventeenth-century Catalan personal chronicle by a tanner from Barcelona named Miquel Parets. The relevant passage reads as follows: "may this worthy ambition serve as a sun to illuminate my endeavors, rather than to cause me to plummet like Icarus . . . even though destiny assigned me to a lowlier sphere, it did not rob me of the wish to aspire to higher things." (1, 164) According to Amelang, the Icarus myth was one of many classical models that informed the writing and self-images of early modern Europeans of humble as well as more exalted origins. His interpretation suggests that the anonymous translator (as well as the original author himself) understood artisan writing to be a bold, even transgressive, act that

challenged social and cultural boundaries. The Icarus myth, then, in this and related usages, serves as an ambiguous class allegory: either as a morality tale about the just punishment for pride, or as an exhortation to attempt ascent, and delivery from the labyrinth, even in the face of overwhelming odds.

The writings in question here are to one degree or another autobiographical. But it needs to be made clear that this book does not restrict itself to autobiographies in the more common sense of the term. It also assesses a range of other forms of artisan writing including memoirs, diaries, family record books, spiritual autobiographies, personal chronicles, travel writing, and autobiographical fiction. The book's appendix on "Popular Autobiographical Writing" offers information on over 200 such texts by European artisan authors born before 1770. Amelang wants to recover and explore these writings for the pleasure they still can bring readers, although he does "admit to having come across a few that remind [him] of other people's home movies" (8). But as a historian, Amelang is most interested in the potential for these texts to add new dimensions to our understanding of early modern European popular culture, the complex relations between elite and popular culture, and the connections between the individual and society.

In studying popular culture, the author focuses on texts *produced* by artisans rather than merely *consumed* by them, "following the path of Carlo Ginzburg, Natalie Davis, E.P. Thompson, and others who, while attentive to the question of the circulation of cultural forms, have nevertheless insisted on the need to locate popular culture in specific social and occupational venues" (23). Curiously enough, there is little here on work. But that is, so Amelang insists, because in their personal writings early modern European artisans did not talk much about work. They had pride enough in their day jobs, but writing was something that set them apart from that and connected them instead to more exalted realms. It would take several more generations before description of workplace practices and rhythms would seem important to many working-class authors, writing by then for audiences who included people fascinated by but quite distant from sites of production. Amelang's writers do apparently talk about guilds, but what they have to say plays a rather small, though not insignificant, role in Amelang's story.

Instead, guild and corporate communities figure among the many sets of "allegiances", the dense networks of association within and across milieus and localities, in which artisans were enmeshed. Such allegiances are demonstrated through detailed empirical analysis of artisan contacts alluded to either in the autobiographical texts themselves or in other forms of documentation available through close scrutiny of the mostly local historical records. Here the case rests heavily on Amelang's research on Parets (which, I admit, at times did remind me of someone else's home movie!) since even to explicate one case requires formidable scholarly legwork. Though at moments the local detail is tedious, it eventually serves to make an important point about context. The network of family, friends, trade and guild connections, and neighbors who made up Paret's social universe were crucial elements in his personal cultural world and they

shaped both his writing and the life that his writing documented. We also learn a great deal about the practices of, and audiences for, artisan writing of all sorts, and thus about the ways in which such practices both reflected and defied boundaries of a more social and material sort. Amelang's analysis, like much recent cultural history of early modern Europe, reminds us of the heavy traffic in written words, especially in urban areas, and of the influence of writing of many sorts even among the un- and semi-lettered.

The Icarus myth and other classical references are also examples of the sorts of stories that crossed back and forth between elite and popular culture, although sometimes with different valences. Moreover, for all of their insistence on writing "plain speech" as a subtle critique of the stylistic excesses of learned culture, artisan authors prided themselves on their learning. Their writings were often driven not just by the desire to be remembered by familial descendants and in their own occupational milieu, but also by the need to "witness" more publicly as an act of citizenship and a claim to a place in history. In a manner that echoes analyses of modern workers' autobiographies, Amelang too argues that "a final, and in some ways the deepest, motive for the writing of autobiography by craftsmen [was] inscribing, and ensuring, the author's sense of value, of being worth something" (194).

Methodologically, the book draws on both historical (social and cultural) and literary models. The study is very ingenious in its uncovering of connections between text and context, and at analyzing the practices and products of artisan writing in their social, cultural, political, and spatial settings. Amelang argues effectively that such contextual legwork reveals the important degree to which even such personal texts as autobiographical writings are simultaneously individual and collective products. His approach draws on literary insights but he criticizes exemplars of New Historicism where "social context is more often evoked through arresting metaphors than reconstructed through patient documentary research" (12).

His analysis falls short at times for its insufficient attention to the ways in which literary form mattered. For many of the points he wants to make, this may not be important. Nevertheless, there are moments in the analysis when attention to the differences between, for example, family record books and chronicles would have paid off. The only point at which Amelang discusses this is when he picks up the questions of motives in Chapter 7. Readers who are expecting to get a flavor of the artisan writings themselves will also be disappointed. With the exception of Parets, there is not much elaborated textual evidence presented in the artisan authors' own words. Instead, the argument rests on Amelang's wide reading of a range of texts supported by brief quotations or paraphrases. Moreover, wide ranging as Amelang's reading is, he is reluctant to argue comparatively within the broad geography covered by his texts (he discusses works in Spanish, French, English, German, and Italian). I ended up without a sense of the variety in artisan autobiographical writing across the sweep of Europe that comes under Amelang's purview. The breadth is admirable. But the story is told in a way that suggests the commonalties but not the variations along the lines of

language or locality. This is perhaps not inappropriate; Europe appears to be a map of discrete cities in which artisanal culture thrives locally; nevertheless, the observed similarities across a larger map call for interpretive attention.

Amelang, to be fair, sees his book as an introduction of new sources to the scholarly conversation about early modern European popular culture—sources that have received far more attention in the modern than in the early modern era. His valuable study and its appendix have certainly accomplished that goal. Moreover, his book will also interest historians more generally who track the flow of ideas, and social identities. Early modern artisan autobiographers reveal that same creative ambiguity so often experienced by marginal types (workers and other Icaruses) whom “destiny assigned . . . to a lowlier sphere” but who “wish to aspire to higher things.”

Mary Jo Maynes

University of Minnesota

J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999. xxvii + 635 pp. \$35.00 cloth.

Until the 1980s, historians of Soviet Russia could be divided into those who subscribed to the totalitarian theory of Soviet history and those who subscribed to a more nuanced view. In his landmark book, *Origins of the Great Purges* (Cambridge, 1985), J. Arch Getty single-handedly split Russian historians into two new camps: those who were horrified by Getty's work and those who were not. At the root of the controversy was Getty's provocative challenge that historians “rethink Stalinism,” taking into account that one man could in no way be solely responsible for the Terror of the 1930s. Getty turned his attention to provincial party officials, documenting the way the purges assumed their own momentum away from Moscow. In so doing, he seemed to minimize Stalin's role and, according to his critics, Stalin's culpability.

In his latest work, a fascinating collection of recently declassified documents that he sifted through with Oleg Naumov, deputy director of the Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Documents on Recent History, the former *enfant terrible* retreats somewhat from his original position. Although he still refuses to capitalize the word “terror,” Getty allows that Stalin's role was much more than that of a “bureaucratic moderator.” In fact, by the end of the 1930s, Stalin was a “virtual autocrat” (6). As Getty points out, “We can now see his fingerprints all over the archives” (xiii). Finally, Getty had always fudged when it came to estimating the number of the Terror's victims, writing only of “thousands” in *Origins of the Great Purges* (8). Now, thanks to his findings in recently opened Communist Party and NKVD (Stalin's political police) archives, he can say with authority that there were some two million “excess deaths” in the 1930s (592).

Yet, Getty makes it clear that archival documents also support much of

what he said in 1985. In particular, they confirm his earlier argument that the Terror did not stem from some “well-prepared and long-standing master design” (xiii). They also reveal how the Terror ebbed and flowed, and how various interest groups supported the Terror, often for their own reasons. Documents in the archives show how party members willingly, often gleefully, participated in the purges. According to Getty and his co-author Naumov, “The notion that we have clung to for so long—that there must have been ‘liberal’ or ‘decent’ Bolsheviks who tried unsuccessfully to stop Stalin’s plan for terror—is no longer tenable” (xiv). The party leadership’s *mentalité* is displayed in this collection in all its bizarre glory. Document after document suggests that “the Stalinists said the same things to each other behind closed doors that they said to the public” (22). For the authors, this is evidence that the party bosses had become “prisoners of the symbolic construction—the ideology—that they created” (22). By focusing on the zealousness and, implicitly, the guilt of the entire party elite, Getty and Naumov effectively reinforce earlier attempts to minimize Stalin’s role. What we see here is not just Stalin, but *Stalinism*, a belief system based around an individual who served as a locus of unanimity.

The book itself contains some 200 documents framed by an ongoing and extremely useful chronological narrative. This brief review cannot begin to do justice to the revelations contained within. Suffice it to say that the documents touch on such controversial subjects as the assassination of Sergei Kirov, the rise and fall of NKVD chief Nikolai Yezhov, the purge of the Red Army generals, and most poignantly, the undoing of Nikolai Bukharin. One of Bukharin’s worst crimes, it appears, was his refusal to adhere to a script or “apology ritual” (79) that required party members to confess all the ills ascribed to them, regardless of their veracity. Indeed, upon hearing Bukharin’s picky, legalistic defense to the charges leveled his way at a Central Committee plenum in early 1937, I too—in the wake of his own lack of mercy for others similarly raked over the communist coals—silently joined those comrades who accused him of having betrayed the party.

Bukharin is one of many Bolshevik leaders who reveal themselves more fully in these documents. Stalin also comes alive. His contributions to inner-party discussions are particularly intriguing, displaying him not only as one voice among many, but as one whose words are by no means the most perfervid. Especially striking is the way he intervenes on Bukharin’s behalf three times over the course of the 1930s, thereby evincing “zigs and zags” (7) instead of adherence to some diabolical master plan.

Getty and Naumov nevertheless admit to having found Stalin’s name, “all over the horrible documents authorizing the terror” (451). Though the authors confess that they have not found the proverbial “smoking gun,” a single order by Stalin to launch the Terror, their disclaimer is somewhat disingenuous: they come quite close. Yezhov issued probably the most sobering document in this extraordinary collection on July 30, 1937. It referred to the “former kulaks, criminals, and other anti-Soviet elements” (473) still at large, dividing them into two categories to be sentenced by extra-legal three-person committees. Those who

fell into the second category were to be given lengthy sentences and sent to “concentration camps.” Those who fell into the first, more serious category were “to be shot” (475). This document established quotas *in round numbers* for every republic, region, and territory of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), reaching a chilling total of 222,650 projected victims. Consequently, in keeping with their practice of exceeding plans set by Moscow, gung-ho Soviet officials dutifully over-fulfilled these quotas too! Though Yezhov penned the document, Stalin in his capacity as Secretary of the Central Committee wrote a memo confirming it.

The collection ends with a conclusion that is fully supported by the documentary evidence. This was a Terror characterized by wavering decisions, hesitations, and backtracking, i.e., by a *history* that can now be traced. It began in the early 1930s as a “joint project of a power-hungry Stalin and an insecure elite to centralize power, protect the regime, and clean up the party” (582) at a time when they felt themselves to be under siege by the newly collectivized peasantry and a political opposition. Their alliance broke down however, when in 1937 when Stalin “turned against” the party elite, and when “that elite turned against itself, and both struck out at a variety of ‘enemies’ in the party” (572). Essentially, what we need to understand as “politics” (582), competing groups acting against and with other groups in the Communist Party, gave way to “centrally authorized chaos” (583). The chaos ended when Stalin and the remaining Politburo members realized that they “could not govern without a nomenklatura” (496).

One of several volumes in the “Annals of Communism Series” of Yale University Press, this work is absolutely essential to a more accurate and more balanced assessment of Russian and Soviet history. The documents display the inner workings of the party elite, as well as attest to something even more frightening: the banality of evil in Soviet Russia. There are occasions on which Getty and Naumov cannot fully substantiate their interpretation of the documents, but their general argument appears sound and must, by necessity, find its way into our historical narrative. In *The Road to Terror* the authors have made vital strides in explaining the Terror and charting its murderous course.

Laurie Bernstein
Rutgers University, Camden

Eric Hobsbawm, *On the Edge of the New Century: Eric Hobsbawm in Conversation with Antonio Polito*. New York: The New Press, 2000. i + 192 pp. \$14.95 paper.

This is not the book for which Eric Hobsbawm will be remembered. Readers of his many historical works will know better than to regard it as “a concise summary of the thinking of one of the century’s preeminent historians,” as the fly-leaf claims. But if you ever wondered about the intellectual fit between this brilliant historical talent and his erstwhile Stalinist “socialism,” this book may provide some answers.

Any wholesale assessment of an extended and complex period is likely to produce both a breadth and a narrowness of judgment. And perhaps any sweeping pronouncement of the sort Hobsbawm repeatedly attempts in this book (foolishly or courageously) is likely to disappoint as often as it satisfies. He does not shrink from writing, for instance:

We should not forget that whatever yardstick is used the majority of the peoples are [sic] better off at the end of the twentieth century, in spite of the extraordinary catastrophes that have marked it . . . overall, we have today three times the population there was at the start of the twentieth century and all of these people are physically stronger, taller, longer-living, and healthier . . . This is also true of poorer countries. After all, there hasn't been a famine in India since 1943. Hunger in most of the world, with a couple of exceptions, is no longer something human beings are obliged to live with (85).

Even though he exempts from this pronouncement the cases of Africa and Russia, (and partly because he does so) the judgement expressed here is breathtakingly sanguine when you consider that the number of people living in poverty today is actually greater than a quarter century ago. Without denying the actual material progress achieved, many will wonder at the facile optimism in these pronouncements. Do they express the effort of a professional historian and teacher to balance out other, negative judgements? Do they exemplify the attitude of a movement that clung to a form of state socialism long after it had betrayed the Left and lowered its own expectations? There seems to be a family resemblance between such a yardstick of progress and Khrushchev's 1961 revelation that Communism will have arrived in Russia when decent levels of housing and food production were achieved. Some hoped that Communism would amount to more.

Hobsbawm's views on globalization express a similar optimism, based in this case on his appreciation of its transformative role. Rather than deploring the decline of labor movements in the developed world due to the flight of work to low wage areas, as might be expected from a left labor historian, he stresses the progressive results of globalization in technology and consumption, expressing admiration of such developments as "the revolutionary technological advances in transport and communications since the end of the Second World War," (62, 63). In this view, globalization has brought an end to the worldwide division of labor along national lines, which implies that the proletariat has thereby achieved a formal unity. Yet, he seems to take no interest in the length of the road from formal to actual unity or in the glaring inequalities and ethnic divisions among nations that will make such commonality of interests more than an abstraction for the foreseeable future.

Like Karl Marx in another period of capitalist expansion, Hobsbawm is not unaware of the human costs of globalization, although he describes them more as discomfort and adjustment anxieties than as the kind of raw immiseration Marx described. In a second chapter dealing with the results and impact of globalization on peoples and culture, Hobsbawm discusses the breakdown of family

loyalties, employment insecurity, and the rapid assimilation of immigrants by metropolitan cultures. At the same time, he is keenly aware of encountering a much wealthier world than that in which he started his career, and he seems to be equally concerned with the dilemmas in the quality of life of the wealthy beneficiaries of globalization as he is with those of its victims and losers. He also brings a divided mind to his comments on the cultural impact of globalization, both applauding the cultural linkages being fostered by an internationalized pop culture, entertainment and fashion market and deploring the loss of regional cultural identities.

Hobsbawm's upbeat mood about the world's prospects in 2000 is due in part to a politely concealed but unmistakable Eurocentrism. After all, the globalized present and future do not appear as well-balanced and progressive when viewed from the developing world. Such Eurocentricity is all the more jarring coming from one who has tried, since his earliest publications, to integrate European historical experience with that of the wider world. To be sure, he is quite "politically correct" where questions of racism are concerned, deploring the treatment of Europe's sizable racial minority populations and hoping for the political inclusion of Turkey in the European Union (EU). Only rarely does he step glaringly over the edge, as in his patently biased, even prejudiced, claim that India has a more promising future than China and "the Far East in the Confucian area," offering as evidence the assertion that "the Indians have always managed to develop a very important philosophical and mathematical tradition. On the other hand, the degree to which China and Japan have a philosophical tradition, at least in the European sense, is arguable" (56). Hobsbawm's Eurocentrism asserts itself much more pervasively and consistently in his complacency and optimism about the progress that has been made in the last century and his notion that the program of the Left has been largely attained.

That notion may also explain why his judgements on the contemporary Left and its prospects are as harsh as they are out of touch. He believes not only that the Right/Left distinction in politics is still valid, but that a "secular left" will one day criticize the moral evil of capitalism once again (58). Yet it is not clear how that day will be reached from the present. To judge by his chapter "What's Left of the Left?", Hobsbawm's Left is in the tradition associated with the French, American, and Russian revolutions (96) and, more specifically, a tradition that stresses electoral politics, a single unifying issue, and a single social base and voting constituency: "middle-income families of working age" (112). Such a definition of the Left makes its revival even more problematic because he has next to nothing to say about contemporary labor movements and labor politics. At the same time, he puts no stock in the political enthusiasms of today's youth, whose "depoliticization" he stresses overall, and whose activism he disparages as barely constituting politics at all. He still thinks that the women's and environmental movements (Greens) are single issue movements, that the former is too narrowly focused "even on women's questions," and that the Greens stand for a halt to material progress (98, 103). Indeed, only reluctantly does he concede that they

may be considered “left” at all. What is regrettably clear is that Hobsbawm identifies with left traditions that ended around mid-century, and that he not only has no message for the contemporary Left, but he has even lost interest in it.

Be that as it may, the book provides a vastly learned, consistent and useful benchmark for young and old alike of where that Left has been, the distance of today’s issues and movements from it, and the manner in which a great historian from that tradition regards the present moment.

Gerald Surh

North Carolina State University

Suzanne Mettler, *Dividing Citizens: Gender and Federalism in New Deal Public Policy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998. ix + 272 pp. \$19.95 paper.

With so many studies of the New Deal, it is difficult to imagine anyone saying something new about this critical period in American politics, yet Suzanne Mettler has managed to do so. Bringing the gender biases of social policy boldly into the foreground, Mettler retells the story of the formation and implementation of New Deal social policies from a fresh perspective. Surpassing prior studies that concentrate on the gendered notions of the policymakers (such as the assumption of a male breadwinner), Mettler reveals how ostensibly gender neutral debates concerning policy design produced gendered outcomes nevertheless. In particular, Mettler demonstrates that New Deal policies consigned citizens to the governance of either national or state authorities on the basis of gender and points out the fundamental significance of this split. Whereas white male wage earners benefited from the national administration of uniform social policies, most women and minority men were indirectly excluded from these national policies and left under the jurisdiction of parochial and illiberal state governments, thereby dividing citizens. Instead of treating women as independent and rights-bearing citizens, state-administered programs treated beneficiaries as needing “supervision and protection” through a variety of invasive regulations. Incorporating women into the polity at the level of state government, Mettler contends, produced a distinctly inferior form of citizenship. To demonstrate her argument, Mettler presents a rich historical description of the enactment and implementation of Old Age Insurance (OAI), Old Age Assistance (OAA), Unemployment Insurance (UI), Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), and the Fair Labor Standards Act (FSLA).

Mettler offers three explanations for the development of this pattern of divided citizenship based on gender. First, key policymakers within the Roosevelt administration on the Committee on Economic Security (CES) and the Children’s Bureau were committed to the notion that states, not the national government, were better suited to administer social policy. Coming from personal backgrounds steeped in state-level social insurance programs and the social work tradition of public assistance, “old guard” elements in the administration including Frances Perkins, Edwin Witte, Arthur Altmeyer, and others were de-

voted to decentralizing social relief policy. Others, however, differed. For example, Barbara Nachtrieb Armstrong, the planning director of the CES old age security staff, and her associates argued in favor of national programs. Mettler deftly demonstrates how the clash between these two camps in the administration pivoted on sharply contrasting notions about federalism.

Second, drawing from institutionalist approaches, Mettler considers how policy implementation generates political interests among bureaucrats to maintain and extend their agencies. In order to bolster support for old age insurance, the Social Security Board, pushed for the adoption of amendments that included offering benefits to women as wives and widows of men in covered occupations. While the 1939 amendments codified these proposals and broadened old age insurance to a vast number of women, these changes incorporated women not as independent citizens but as dependents of male wage earners.

Finally, Mettler demonstrates that conservative southern opposition contributed to the production of divided citizenship. Aware that the availability of generous public assistance might allow African Americans to refuse to cultivate and harvest the cotton crop, these southern congressional representatives often pushed for concessions in social policy. Thus, in order to maintain white control over African-American labor, southern representatives on key committees repeatedly acted either to eliminate disproportionately African-American occupational categories from coverage under nationally administered programs, or clamored for decentralization to maintain local control over social policy.

Concentrating on the formulation of legislation within the Roosevelt administration and on policy implementation, Mettler tells a different and more nuanced story than those who have focused primarily on the role of southern Democrats. Yet, at times, these stories seem less than clearly separate, as administration officials sometimes preferred decentralization due to anticipation of the "southern veto." Even though Mettler makes a strong argument that the diverse personal backgrounds in reform explain the divergent preferences among administrative policymakers, it is clear that political concerns, especially winning the support of southern Democrats, sometimes shaped these preferences. Clearly isolating the degree to which Roosevelt administration officials supported state-level initiatives for political reasons, or alternatively, because of a belief in the merits of state-level autonomy with federal fiscal support, is difficult.

At key moments, administration officials allowed or even encouraged southern Democrats to revise New Deal legislation to the detriment of African Americans, and thereby magnify the gender bias in social policy. For instance, Mettler notes that, after the administration social security bill arrived in Congress, the House Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committees proceeded to eliminate agricultural and domestic employees from the bill's provisions. These actions suggest that, while the narrative of the administrative development of the legislation adds important nuances to accounts of the legislation's enactment, the fundamental factor shaping the legislation was the intervention of the southern congressional delegation. Regarding unemployment insurance, the Ways and Means Committee again weakened the modest national standards

that the CES included in the bill. While certain CES planners favored state-level policymaking, they nevertheless sought to impose minimal national standards on state programs. These nationally defined standards met with southern opposition, which led to their weakening or ultimate deletion in congressional committees. Irrespective of administration plans, the southern delegation obtained changes to exclude most African Americans or to give control over eligibility and benefits to state or local authorities. Had not the southern delegation repeatedly intervened, the gender bias of New Deal social policy might have been substantially reduced.

Although Mettler incorporates southern Democrats within her analysis of the development of American social policy, she might have more clearly singled out these interventions as often decisive. Almost irrespective of the various reform approaches vying for dominance within the administration, southern leverage in Congress continually reappears in the narrative to transform legislation to maintain white control over black labor. Had administration legislation been enacted as submitted, the obligation for states to adhere to nationally defined minimum benefits and the introduction of merit systems may have made state administration far less problematic. Yet, due to the repeated interventions of southern Democrats, the provisions that could have obliged states to deliver policy in a more equitable fashion were eliminated. While Mettler's account is clear and powerful, she might have strengthened her causal argument by placing greater emphasis on these extraordinary interventions.

Southern modification of administration legislation was indeed so common that the exceptions to this pattern emerge as puzzling and worthy of attention. For instance, Mettler states that, while the House Ways and Means Committee "appeared to be looking for a way to exclude" agricultural, domestic, and transient workers from coverage under OAI, it was Treasury Secretary Morgenthau who provided the justification, citing the difficulties collecting payments from employers in these categories. With this suggestion in hand, Ways and Means went ahead with the changes that they had hoped to make. Here, Mettler might have offered further analysis of Morgenthau's decision since her most provocative insights involve revealing the Roosevelt administration's distinctive contribution to the gendered design of American social policy. A similar puzzle can be found in the failure of the Children's Bureau chief to object to deleterious changes made by southern Democrats to the Aid to Dependent Children component of the legislation (139). In cases such as these, Mettler might have offered more explanation for the conduct of administration personnel to bolster her institutional analysis and thereby supply a narrative of gender bias in the legislation less conditioned by race.

Overall, Mettler offers an extraordinarily rich and compelling account of the gendering of American social policy with attention to a wide range of causal factors from institutional legacies and reform traditions to the nitty-gritty political interests of congressional committees. While the narrative might have elevated the significance of southern representatives among the various causal factors and in some cases better clarified the motivation of administration officials, these criticisms should not detract from what is undoubtedly the most compre-

hensive and provocative study of the gendering of New Deal social policy. In addition, the analysis of the relationship between federalism and social policy elucidates how institutional arrangements critically affect the character of social citizenship rights. Mettler's interpretation thus brings new insight to this topic and will make a lasting contribution to studies of American political development.

Joseph Luders
Bard College

Michael E. Gordon and Lowell Turner, eds., *Transnational Cooperation Among Labor Unions*. Ithaca and London: ILR Press, 2000. 310 pp. \$19.95 paper.

In what still remains something of a desert, every oasis is to be viewed with relief. In this particular wilderness, however, we also need maps, signposts, and travelers' guides. Michael Gordon and Lowell Turner provide us with a number of original and valuable case studies of union internationalism, and these justify the book's place on the so-far meager collection of such efforts (Carew et. al. 2000, Waterman & Wills 2001 a, b). Nevertheless, the study lacks an editorial orientation sufficiently historical, relevantly theoretical or broad enough in its view of the terrain. Readers are likely to feel themselves better informed, but suspicious they are being left without the necessary large-scale map or trusty compass they need to navigate the field. Allow me to consider what's missing.

Labor internationalism as history: The first international meeting of union leaders, Gordon and Turner tell us, took place in 1864 (16). Can this possibly be the founding congress of Karl Marx's International Workingmen's Association known to history as the First International? Given the Marxist times many consider we are now again experiencing, reference to this early period of labor internationalism might provide readers with both ideas and inspiration. But taking us, as early chapters of the book do, through the history of institutionalized union internationalism—without either an external point to stand on, or a lever to move these venerable institutions—can only reinforce these hegemonic bodies as the norm, in the sense of being both permanent and desirable. Yet, this is a moment in which unions face their most profound challenge in more than a century. This challenge is a multi-front affair, coming as it does from outside and below, as well as from above. Some of these challenges do appear in various chapters of this book, but not to the extent that the normalcy of the institutions is put in question.

Theoretical disarmament: This is a theory-lite book. There is no editorial reference to the rich series of attempts over recent decades (typically stimulated by waves of activism; admittedly sporadic; not necessarily gelled in union consciousness) to both theorize and strategize about labor or union internationalism (*not*, incidentally, synonyms). Instead, the editors offer us concepts simultaneously anodyne, irrelevant, unsubstantiated and ultimately abandoned—drawn in the first place from something called “inter-organizational relations” (x). The value of sensitivity to more general theory is demonstrated in the chap-

ter by Mark Anner, which also shows how case studies can expose limited theories, such as those of 1950s-type positivist and institutionalist industrial relations. The limitations of even *sophisticated* theory—if it is too narrow—is revealed in a chapter by the late Harvie Ramsay. His justified concern with the specificities of multinational corporation (MNC) behavior leads to a theoretical impasse that could lead affected unions, as much to a renewed corporatism within these entities, as to a more generous vision of labor solidarity without (or beyond) them.

The name of the terrain: This may be a post-1989 collection (Fall of the Wall) but it is certainly not a post-1999 (Battle of Seattle) one, even if the latter is mentioned (261) and prefigured in various case studies dealing with cross-border, cross-class and cross-movement alliances. The problem with failing to see that the terrain has been dramatically broadened by this new social movement, extending from the enterprise and industrial relations to corporate capitalism and the commodification of all social relations, is that the new “anti-globalization,” “anti-corporate,” or “anti-capitalist” movement may then be seen in terms of what *it* can do for institutionalized unionism, rather than what the latter can do for, and with, the former. It is here notable that while Ramsay’s chapter, “Know Your Enemy,” is addressed to the MNC, Amory Starr’s recent book, *Naming the Enemy* (2000), is addressed to corporate capitalism in general.

Having assessed the work with loud complaint, I now have the problem of recommending it to the putative reader! This book definitely grew on me, particularly as I moved beyond the editorial parts and the generalities that echo the public self-image of the international union institutions.

Even in Part 1, “The Industrial Relations Environment” and 2, “Interorganizational Structures that Promote Transnational Cooperation”; there are shafts of light that illuminate the murky international union predicament. One is in Ramsay’s chapter which, while too narrowly focused, makes a point echoed elsewhere in the book: that general labor movement attitudes towards MNCs (tending to the monolithic and apocalyptic) need to be replaced by specific knowledge of their quite different dynamics and pressure points. Another is the George Martin and Andrew Ross chapter about the Europeanization of labor relations. After a long march through the inter-state institutions, the authors feel obliged to conclude that the European Trade Union Confederation has not only developed from the union top, rather than out of a social movement from below, but that it is also highly dependent on the dubious resources provided by the European Union (EU) (149). They see this union internationalization as tenuous and even dangerous—allowing for possible nationalistic backlashes from below—as the EU’s market logic demands its half kilo of flesh from workers, who may not define themselves as European, far less value themselves in Euros. This logic, of a union sub-elite’s subaltern dependence on the internationalization of high-modern capitalism, has been—it must be said—long general to union internationalism on the international scale.

Part 3, “The Practice of Transnational Cooperation,” contains more nuggets. Here we have two case studies of international union cooperation in the media and telecommunications sectors. This effort is exemplary for understanding the likely future of globalization, privatization, restructuring and de-

unionization, as well as the potential problems and possible successes of energetic campaigning in such sectors. Common to these case studies is their authorship by activists—whether these are from the hegemonic international union institutions, such as the US American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organization (AFL-CIO) in its pre-reform era, or not. What commonly comes across here is commitment to, or identification with, the movements and workers themselves, even if workers only make rare appearances from the wings. Mark Anner's earlier mentioned piece eventually plumps for international social movement theory as the most powerful and—presumably—empowering. He is dealing with the local and transnational in combating sweatshop practices in one part of the United States' backyard, Central America and the Caribbean. The contemporary US social movement school he draws from has its origins outside union and labor studies. This provides it (surprise!) with a wider view and more relevant tools for the understanding and advancing of international *labor* struggles! Here are emphasized the centrality of cross-movement and cross-border alliances, as well as that of cultural warfare (media and meaning) in undermining the legitimacy of an industry highly dependent on image. Anner also strikes useful cautionary notes about heavy-handed solidarity from outside and above.

Anner's piece brings us closer to the "world according to Starr"; and, for that matter, to Naomi Klein (2000), as well as Brecher, Costello, and Smith (2000). Capitalism, work, wage-earners and labor struggles are here hardly addressed in the language of inter/intra-organizational relations, industrial relations or international union cooperation/merger (something that still has to prove itself to be more part of the solution than part of the problem). Labor is there, rather, addressed in a broader perspective, appealing to interests and identities more widely, deeply and—I dare suggest—more historically understood. Because, before its century-long self-subordination to an expanding national, industrial (sometime liberal-democratic) capitalist order, labor was *le mouvement social* (the name of a still-extant labor studies journal). It was also the movement against which all internationalisms were measured. In order to ensure that what the first time was tragedy is not this time farce, labor is going to have to abandon its workerism. It will have to see itself as one contributor to a more general social movement, from which it has as much to learn as to give, even where unions are involved in international collective bargaining within quite specific occupations, industries, or corporations.

One last point before concluding. Although customarily used in relation to domination of society as a whole, the earlier use of the word "hegemony" seems not inappropriate to the domination of a movement, whether national, international or meaningfully global. While this work has a remarkable geographic spread, it implicitly reproduces the Eurocentric bias the world is increasingly suffering. This book represents, unavoidably, labor internationalism as seen from the center and the top, with those at the periphery presented more as consumers than producers of this precious new commodity. Before, or while, celebrating the new labor internationalism of the United States, or Western Europe, authors need to be explicit regarding their perspective, and their vision for how we can

develop the multi-positioned and multi-vocal solidarity we will need, if the labor movement is to have any meaningful future in times that are both hard and globalized.

Peter Waterman

Global Solidarity Dialogue, The Hague

Paul Buhle, *Taking Care of Business: Samuel Gompers, George Meany, Lane Kirkland and the Tragedy of American Labor*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1999. ix + 302 pp. \$18.00 paper.

Labor historians have always been better at explaining what should have been than what was. This problem plagues Paul Buhle's *Taking Care of Business: Samuel Gompers, George Meany, Lane Kirkland and the Tragedy of American Labor*. No one familiar with Dr. Buhle's work—his detailed treatments of socialist radicals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century—will be surprised by the conclusions of his most recent work. The leadership of the mainstream organized labor movement always has been an anathema to the far left, and Buhle attacks Samuel Gompers, George Meany, and Lane Kirkland with a vengeance for having undermined true social democracy in favor of personal gain and corporate accommodation with employers and the state. These themes already have received significant development from the likes of Nelson Lichtenstein, Kim Moody, and Michael Goldfield. Relying almost entirely on secondary sources, Buhle has little to add to previous treatments, although he does focus more closely on the issue of racial exclusion. Ultimately, he breaks new ground only in the passion and uncompromising nature of his criticism. Buhle spares no hyperbole in assaulting the three “over-fed fat cats”—Gompers is a “doddering conservative,” Meany as a young man was “neither conspicuously bright or mechanically talented,” and Kirkland, is “a colorless functionary.” The author's aim clearly is to denounce rather than to understand.

Buhle's opening treatment of Gompers focuses less on the first American Federation of Labor (AFL) president than his radical opposition—Daniel DeLeon, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and others. Despite the divisiveness and violence-prone nature of these individuals and groups, Buhle insists that they offered desirable and viable alternatives to Gompers and the AFL. In turn, Gompers's antiradicalism, his supposed embrace of “globalism,” and his cooperation with Woodrow Wilson and the Democratic Party are all derided. Building on the work of David Roediger and others, who have explored the issue of race and labor, Buhle takes particular aim at Gompers's tolerance for segregated, exclusionary unions (he does concede that the AFL president did encourage some biracial unions). But as unfortunate as were Gompers's decisions on the race issue, the work of historians exploring “whiteness” makes clear that prejudice was deeply ingrained among the working class of Gompers's time (and well after). Exactly how the AFL could have chartered a different course on race and survived in the era of Jim Crow is left unexplored. At the very least,

Buhle's treatment of this and other questions might well have profited from consulting the excellent published collection produced by the Gompers's editing project—which places the early AFL and its president in a much richer and complex context than does Buhle.

George Meany is also excoriated on the race issue and condemned as an unimaginative product of the privileged and exclusionary craft trades. Buhle depicts Meany's ascent to power as the triumph of narrow interests and petty politics. Buried and dismissed by Buhle are several episodes—such as Meany's tense relationship with the New Deal and Democratic Party and evidence of a streak of anti-statism—seen when Meany leads strikes against the Works Progress Administration (WPA), firmly challenges World War II-era economic controls, and leads the attack on the Taft-Hartley Act. These seeming contradictions to Buhle's general depiction of Meany suggest a populism and independent spirit that might help explain how he remained such a powerful figure on the political scene for over thirty years. Elsewhere, Buhle presents Meany's intense and often caustic anticommunism as the incomprehensible product of paranoia. Likewise, the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations' (AFL-CIO) relationship with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is an obsequious one, in which American labor appears manipulated and unable to recognize the damage it perpetrates in the Third World. We know now from the work of Tony Carew and others that American labor's work with the CIA was fraught with tension, differing agendas, and frequent breakdowns. A more complete treatment of labor's clandestine work might yield the same sense of tragic decisions and wasted resources, but at least readers would understand that more than slovenly maliciousness was guiding labor's foreign policy.

In the late 1960s, a “sort of political aneurism exploded in Meany's brain,” Buhle informs us, and the aging leader grew ever more critical of environmentalists, feminists, gays, and the increasingly radical civil rights movement. (Buhle mentions several times, Meany's “gay bashing,” when the author himself extemporaneously introduces an AFL-CIO staffer as a homosexual and gleefully comments on J. Edgar Hoover's supposed cross-dressing). To the radicals of the New Left, indeed, Meany must have seemed a crude caricature, and his frequent ill-tempered outbursts could only have lent credence to this image. But the period was one of bitter cultural and social cleavages. Dismissed by radicals, Meany clearly meant something very different to his alienated supporters, plagued by what observers at the time called the “blue-collar blues.” Again, it is a story requiring context and sensitivity. Buhle's conclusion that Meany somehow snapped hardly qualifies as historical analysis.

Having attempted to interview Lane Kirkland on one occasion, I can attest that he could be a particularly difficult character. To Buhle, he is much more—the personification of “[l]abor's most intellectually retrograde era and its modern organizational nadir” (205). Hailing from the South and with no personal trade union background, Kirkland is the inevitable product of a century of business unionism and bureaucracy, according to Buhle. Surrounded by neo-conservative sell-outs, Kirkland increasingly made common ground with the

American foreign policy and defense establishment. Meanwhile, as Kirkland devoted himself to foreign affairs, the AFL-CIO lost membership. Increasingly legions of workers were left in out in the cold.

Buhle's story is a tragedy, but a tragedy told with a purpose. Despite labor's oppressive leadership, there survived, Buhle insists, a faint but always-present genuine social democratic alternative (in the form of, among others, the IWW, the early CIO, and continuing hopes for a labor party). In 1995, insurgents ousted the old leadership in favor of a brave new activist approach. Buhle is cautious not to fully align himself with the Sweeney group—which already is showing signs of capitulation. Still, he holds out hope that labor radicals will make common ground with militant feminist, environmental, and other groups (apparently on the basis on their mutual antipathy for capitalism), and some sort of effective third party coalition will emerge.

History told with a specific political purpose tends to be a perilous affair. Dr. Buhle's story no doubt serves his purpose, but in the process he sacrificed much subtlety, context, and an opportunity to explore rather than simply to denounce the past. Even Buhle's careful synthesis of secondary sources presents problems to his readers, as his footnotes can only be described as a mess, mis-numbered in places and completely missing in others.

Edmund F. Wehrle
Eastern Illinois University

Julie Greene, *Pure and Simple Politics: The American Federation of Labor and Political Activism, 1881–1917*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998. xi + 293 pp.

They were right! Samuel Gompers really did deserve the rancor that Progressives, Socialists, and proponents of a labor party heaped upon him for more than three decades. Throughout the critical formative period of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), he stamped his own personal vision upon, and placed his own personal interests ahead of the interests of the American working-class. Furthermore, after reading Julie Greene's thorough debunking of the AFL's political strategies, it will be increasingly difficult to argue that Gompers even advanced the interests of that narrow band of white, male trade unionists with much success. What happened to the immigrant trade unionist who showed such a remarkable understanding of the problems confronting the working-class when he testified before Congress in 1883?

To Julie Greene, the critical moment for organized labor arrived in the 1890s. In its first decade, the AFL had to fend off challenges from the more inclusive Knights of Labor, the more political Socialists and the ravages of a severe depression that enabled employers to assault the craft unions that workers had built. Each of these threats deepened Gompers's and the AFL leadership's commitment to a political program based on a rejection of "partyism" and hostility to the expansion of the state. As Greene notes, much of this reflected a

shrewd assessment of the options for politics among a working class largely disfranchised by race, gender, and naturalization restrictions and wedded to the anti-party traditions of American republicanism. Moreover, the lessons learned from challenges to the primacy of craft unionism reinforced Gompers's vision. The debacle of 1886 diminished the appeal of more broadly solidaristic forms of unionism; and the depression of the 1890s foreclosed that option in the minds of many trade unionists. Here, Greene broadens William Forbath's work on the importance of the judicial system by extending the story beyond that single-cause explanation. She also adds the very personal side of the AFL's political odyssey to "pure and simple" politics resulting from Gompers's defeat at the hands of the Socialists in 1894. Ultimately, that temporary setback would more firmly entrench the pure and simple approach.

After surviving these challenges, Gompers and his allies devoted their full attention to building economically solid national craft organizations for control at the workplace and lobbying Congress for very specific goals. Those goals focused on freeing the unions from judicial persecution and unfair competition with immigrants, convicts and children; giving workers more access to politics through such reforms as the initiative and referendum; and making the federal government a model employer. The AFL also ceased following the model of the British trade union movement. Gompers had previously pointed to the British model of anti-partyism to justify his own vision. When British unions formed a labor party in the 1890s, however, Gompers understood that the leaders of such a movement in the US, the socialists, would become his foes. At this point, (and Greene could make this point more forcefully) Gompers began to clearly place his own career above the needs of the labor movement. This strategy was not without successes. The AFL weathered the economic collapse and entered the new century riding its greatest era of expansion. The Federation's leaders used this growth to hammer the Socialists and to convince trade unionists that anti-partyism worked—that unions, not government, would win for workers the material benefits promised by American capitalism.

Much of the story to this point fits with the dominant interpretation of the AFL. But the wheels came off Gompers's juggernaut when aggressive employers launched the "open-shop drive" after the turn of the century. For a decade, the open-shop movement stymied the Federation's growth, tore up the national trade agreements that unions had won, and placed the weight of the state against all the weapons that organized labor had at its disposal. In response, Gompers threw off the shackles of anti-partyism to launch two unprecedented efforts at mass political mobilization in 1906 and 1908. In part two, Greene details these efforts in the most original and important part of the book, important not only for establishing an accurate history of the AFL's politics but also for the lessons it offers the labor movement today. In 1906, the Federation's leaders formed an alliance with the Democrats and developed a strategy of mass politics with little or no consultation with the troops they were trying to direct. The AFL focused on negative campaigns and tried to rally trade unionists to its "Bill of Grievances," issues that national labor officials deemed critical but that held far less

importance in various localities. As a result, the attempt to deliver the labor vote in 1906 against the congressional opponents of organized labor turned into a fiasco, alienating many workers who had imbibed Gompers's anti-partyism. In 1908, the AFL was more positive, trying to reward friends and not just punish enemies. However, this left the AFL with a confused message and little party discipline, in large part because it remained a top-down campaign involving limited local input.

Both campaigns detail the barriers labor faced in terms of resources, access to politicians and potential options. They also highlight the fierce independence of working-class voters, exemplified by the Michigan worker who complained to Gompers in 1908: "When you promised to hand me over to the Democratik Convention you sir counted without your slave" (278). This remains an important point; in the 2000 presidential campaign labor households voted for Gore by rates ten to twenty percent higher than non-union households, depending upon the state. But the top down approach to politics also meant that in a state like West Virginia, which could have tipped the Electoral College vote in Gore's favor, forty-five percent of union households voted against the Democrats. Finally, Greene's work demonstrates that Gompers's stubborn insistence that union leaders determine organized labor's political agenda outside broad reform alliances proved disabling. The successes of women, Progressives, and urban liberals in obtaining meaningful reforms when labor floundered is a powerful reminder of the political vitality that the AFL's strategy left untapped. *Pure and Simple Politics* concludes with the AFL's retreat from mass politics and its ironic and serendipitous inclusion within the circles of power at the onset of World War I. Despite Gompers's continued antipathy to the growing power of the state, the labor movement made some headway in the good graces of Wilsonian liberalism.

Greene has written an important book offering historical insights for problems still relevant today. One can hardly read about the fascinating Martin Mulhall and his later confessions and not think of Marty Levitt's 1993 book, *Confessions of a Union Buster*. Likewise, the upheaval in the American Federation of Labor/Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) in the 1990s compares eerily, but thankfully not perfectly, with Gompers's travails a century earlier. But *Pure and Simple Politics* also should force historians to reevaluate the simple generalizations about trade unions and politics at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. With sound judgements rooted in impressive research, Greene shows just how divided workers were on election day. She also weaves together the personal ambitions, the local complexity and the structural barriers that hampered organized labor. The fact that American unions did not create a labor party is just a prologue, not a conclusion, to a discussion of what labor expected from the American political system. To her credit, Greene has pushed that discussion to a new level of sophistication.

Ken Fones-Wolf,
West Virginia University