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REVIEWS/COMPTES RENDUS

Luca Codignola and Luigi Bruti-Liberati, *Storia del Canada. Dalle origini ai giorni nostri* (Milano: Bompiani 1999).

CANADA OCCUPIES a very small place in the consciousness of most Italians. It is stereotyped as a cold land of red Indians and immigrants, a lot of bad architecture, and a Québec population who always seem ready to leave. Two Italian historians, Luca Codignola and Luigi Bruti-Liberati, have set themselves the task of providing a historical account of a country still *terra incognita* to most Italians. The result is a remarkable 800 page history of Canada. It is the first Italian language survey of the history of Canada ever to appear in print.

Storia del Canada is an impressive achievement. It is written mainly for Italian-speaking university-level students, but in many ways it is accessible enough to embrace a wider audience — hence, perhaps the picture of the RCMP musical ride on the book's cover. It even may find a market of sorts in Canada itself, within the Italian-Canadian community, which is the subject of the final chapter. The appearance of *Storia del Canada* also serves for Canadian historians as an opportunity to see ourselves as others see us. It is splendidly researched and well-presented, replete with useful tables and vital statistics about Canada and Canadians. The discursive bibliography is impressive, and both the analytical index and detailed table of contents act as accessible and definitive points of reference.

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The authors are no strangers to Canadian history, either. Luca Codignola teaches Canadian history at the Università di Genova, and is a notable contributor to the English-language historiography of New France. His work in the archives of the Holy See and its connection to French America has contributed in vital ways to his field. Luigi Bruti-Liberati is a professor of contemporary history at the Università di Milano. A political historian, Bruti Liberati has written extensively on the foreign policy of the Holy See and on relations between Canada and Italy.

The book they have produced is divided into two discrete parts. The first part, written by Codignola, extends from 1800 BC to Confederation in 1867; the second part, from Confederation to the 1990s, is written by Bruti Liberati. The year 1867 not only signals a division of Canadian history between pre- and post-Confederation; it divides two very different halves of a single whole — in approach, style, and organization. This book, then, is really two books united by a single isbn number. In some ways, pre- and post-Confederation Canada require different approaches. Other tools need to be employed. Often, the failings of contemporary Canadian historical writers are painfully obvious — the authors of such sweeping surveys are, after all, bound by the literature they have to work with. By contrast, they must also be judged by how well they weave what is available into an engaging narrative.

The first chapter of Part One of *Storia del Canada* leads off unconventionally by

beginning its journey in Ethiopia about four and a half million years ago at the emergence of *Australopithecus Ramidus*. Attention turns quickly to the continental origins of the first Americans, their way of life, habits, customs, and languages until the contact period. Codignola's account of aboriginal peoples, first European contact, then European settlement in New France is followed by an examination of the New World as missionary territory and crown colony, a discussion of conflicts with Indian nations and the development of English colonization. Chapters on the many aspects of life in New France enrich the portrait by providing insights into social structure, the life of the Church, the nature of work and leisure, and even what was cooking in colonial kitchens. Moreover, the 18th century contest between imperial powers in North America is linked with informative discussions about Indian alliances, metropolitan and colonial commercial interests, the fur trade, and settlement. In a chapter aptly entitled "Unforeseen Changes: Conquests, Revolutions, and Civil Wars, 1744-1791," the momentous events leading from the War of the Austrian Succession, through the Seven Years' War, the Conquest, and its aftermath, to the establishment of British North America are all examined in context.

The final chapters of Part One examine the development of British North American institutions, with a particular emphasis upon the constant search for equipoise between regional demands. Political and social conflict naturally come to the fore in the 1830s and 1840s when rebellion, relations with London, and the winning of responsible government take centre stage. There are also good discussions about the social and spiritual importance of religion not just in maintaining institutional stability, but also in the daily lives of Canadians — factors often neglected in standard Canadian history texts. Such diverse topics as the proliferation of religious institutions in the colonies in the mid-19th century, the infrastructure of continental

trade, and the diffusion of anti-Americanism are all woven into the narrative, and serve to enliven the discussion. Another chapter deals with communities such as Newfoundland, Rupert's Land, and British Columbia. Finally, the last chapter examines several important facets of the mid-nineteenth century Canadian experience as Canada slowly becomes a continental reality. Migration patterns, economic diversification, and technological innovation are discussed alongside the emergence of a working class, the development of social conflict, and the changing role of Church and State in British North America. Part One concludes not with the British North America Act (though there is a fine passage on this too), but with discussions on entertainment and diversions, individual creativity, and the birth of a Canadian voice in literature. Quite appropriately, the chapter ends with an examination of how that voice sounded — in Canadian English and Canadian French, and why Canadians preferred to rhyme "clerk" with "lurk" instead of the more British "dark." A sentence such as "My wife is right about the house," spoken in Canadian English came to be immediately distinguishable from American or British English, shaped of course by the influence of the Scots.

In both its style and organization, Part One of *Storia del Canada* is an outstanding and sophisticated account of Canada's history. Though perhaps not as shining after 1830, Codignola nonetheless succeeds in bringing together a disparate array of sources, sub-disciplines, and specialized studies into one compelling narrative. Where appropriate, the discussion is interspersed with historiographical references. Moreover, historical debates are deftly presented without interfering with the progress of the narrative. These chapters not only offer the reader a broad survey, but also brief and stimulating examinations of the many dimensions that forged lives and guided destinies in New France and British North America. It is also done with a keen eye

for the most recent research. A multifaceted and balanced picture of Canada and Canadians emerges. In particular, the discussion of the role of the Catholic Church both in the daily lives of the faithful and as a vital political and social institution in the early history of Canada is remarkable as much for its sophistication as for the new context it provides. From the nature and profundity of Huron conversions to Christianity through to the role of the episcopate in the 19th century, Codignola's expertise is very much in evidence. The reviewer ventures to say that Part One represents the finest synthesis of Canadian history of its kind in any language.

Part Two is a very different book than the one we leave behind. Luigi Bruti Liberati covers Confederation to 1998 in eight chapters. This last half of the book is further divided into two main sections. *Canada and the World* (Chapters 10 to 12) examines the emergence of political nationhood in the mid-19th century, Canada's role in British imperialism and the links between empire, race, and nation. He also tackles Canada's role in the two world wars and foreign policy, its role in the Cold War, and the nation's emergence as a "middle power." Throughout, Bruti Liberati attempts to pull Canada into a wider context.

The last part, "La Confederazione Canadese," brings us back once again to 1867 and the attempts at nation-building from Macdonald to Laurier. Here, railways, RCMP, politics and religion, economic development, and the emergence of a labour movement are examined. Subsequent chapters focus closely on federal politics, whether in reaction to the tumults generated by World War I, constitutional crises, depression or radicalism. As we move into the 1960s, Bruti-Liberati examines immigration, Québec and the Quiet Revolution, the problem of Canadian unity, and concludes with a section on Canadian society on the eve of the 21st-century. The last chapter is devoted to a brief examination of the Italian experience in Canada. These chapters are gen-

erally well written and easy to follow. Some of the "great questions" of Canadian history are well-rehearsed and presented. Organizationally, the passage from "Canada and the World" and "Canada and Confederation" produces a small shock as the reader moves from the end of the Cold War to Sir John A. Macdonald's Conservatives.

Bruti-Liberati's passion is clear — it resides with Canadian politics. For him, this seems to be an opportunity to construct the Canadian political narrative from its origins to contemporary times and offer a broad-gauge perspective on the course of Canadian political development over 130 years. Passion, however, must be tamed — in this case, for the sake of balance. The kind of Canada that emerges from Part Two is too often a flat, *one-dimensional projection* of politics and prime ministers, dead or alive. The reader is warned in the preface of the more political orientation of Part Two because Canada begins to define itself both inside and outside its borders. While this may justify dividing the book at 1867, it does not explain why there ought to be such an exclusive focus on politics. There are lots of things one can safely leave out of such a broad survey, and things that must be included. The West and Atlantic Canada are neglected. Labour is given two pages (606-608) to contain its rise from mid-19th century to World War I. Women find it even more difficult to emerge from these pages. The contributions of Canadian social history over the last quarter century are virtually ignored. Canadian specializations in public utilities, telecommunications, banking, insurance, and regulation — fundamental attributes of the economic life of the country — deserve at least some treatment. These omissions represent a lost opportunity — all the more so since many who will read this book will not have easy access to what is missing from these pages.

These objections aside, *Storia del Canada* stands as a major contribution to It-

aly's understanding of Canada. It fills an important gap in the Italian-language literature and deserves to be widely read. Those who read this book both here and in Italy will transcend stereotyped representations of Canada to discover that its history is multivocal in character, and hopefully a good deal more interesting than supposed. Codignola and Bruti Liberati have brought the Canadian experience to an Italian audience. By so doing, they have rendered an important service to Italian scholarship.

Laurence B. Mussio,
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Peter Baskerville and Eric W. Sager, *Unwilling Idlers: The Urban Unemployed and Their Families in Late Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1999).

THERE ARE important contemporary lessons to be learned from *Unwilling Idlers*. The authors conclude their investigation of unemployment at the turn of the last millennium by stressing that Canadian workers then as now "chose work, not unemployment" and by noting the devastating and immeasurable costs of unemployment for individuals, their families, and nation states today as well as in the past. These are important lessons as we start a new millennium, in which too many of our policy makers are armed with understandings of unemployment that echo those of turn of the century employers, charity workers, and social reformers who placed the blame on individuals and sought solutions that were piecemeal and moralistic. The book clearly demonstrates that few families at the turn of the last century were able to survive on the wages of a male family head alone. And, unlike other historians, Baskerville and Sager are able to place a monetary value on wage contributions to the family economy because of the richness of the 1901 census. For every dollar that a working-

class family head earned in 1901, a further 30 cents were earned by other family members. Children rather than wives continued to be the most usual additional earners, just as they had been when earlier Canadian censuses were taken. Despite labour laws and compulsory schooling in some provinces, a minimum of one in every ten Canadian families that had offspring aged 10 to 14 had at least one of them in the labour force in 1901. Gender wage differentials were so great that "the very presence of sons rather than daughters increased the chances that a family would not be in poverty." (140) Nor did sending their offspring out to work necessarily save families from the poverty that was so prevalent as a result of both unemployment and low wages. One of the ironies of the book is their finding that low monthly wages rather than unemployment were the major cause of poverty — a finding that will resonate with the working poor today.

Among the major contributions of this book are the authors' demonstration of the extent of unemployment in Canada at the cusp of the last century and of the importance of unemployment as an issue for the labour movement. It was under pressure from the TLC that questions were asked about unemployment in the censuses of 1891 and 1901, and analysis of the answers to these questions is the major source for *Unwilling Idlers*. Baskerville and Sager's analysis of the latter census suggests that in 1901 one in five self-identified wage earners was without a job, and one in seven urban families could not earn enough to pay their most basic living costs, frequently because of unemployment. Through a variety of statistical exercises, they reveal much about unemployment and poverty from the rich evidence about incomes and work patterns in the census of 1901. Chapter 6, which examines family, work and income, includes important evidence demonstrating the decline of incomes and the rise of unemployment as household heads aged. Aging family heads could not com-

pensate for their falling wages by sending other family members out to work, as the fall in their wages occurred just as such potential workers were leaving home. Here is powerful evidence of why Canadians needed to struggle for old age pensions, and why such programmes must be maintained.

Chapter 3 offers a profile of the unemployed which reveals some expected results and a few surprises. Those most likely to be unemployed were men rather than women, visible immigrants, labourers, and those in primary occupations as well as older workers. Evidence in the chapter on "Seasonality, Occupations, and Labour Markets" shows the strengths of their decision to use a comparison of six cities as the basis of their study. Readers used to considering Montréal as one of the nations' poorest cities will be interested in the evidence that demonstrates that rates of unemployment were higher in Victoria and Vancouver than Montréal.

Baskerville and Sager begin the book by claiming that social science methods are not sufficiently known among social historians in English Canada and by vaunting the merits of quantification. While many of the findings in this book are statistically based and useful, I suspect that only the converted will be inspired to undertake similar research. At times the discussion of statistics dulls the impact of their findings, sometimes leading to arguments that seem circular, curious or, as in the following example, obvious. In considering whether family members could minimize the effects of unemployment on each other they suggest not, explaining that: "the odds were very high that a family sheltering an underemployed person would find itself in the lowest family-income quintile. As the number of severely underemployed persons in a family rises, the probability of finding the family in a low-income category also rises." (120) Their faith in the ability of regression analyses to isolate the impact of particular variables belies much feminist and other theorizing stress-

ing how individuals' multiple identities are interlocked in ways that defy separate identification.

This is not only a work of quantitative social history. Baskerville and Sager also detail the ways workers made unemployment a public issue, in chapters that deal with the "discovery" of the problem and "The Working Class, Social Reform, and the State." The sources read for these chapters allow them to examine the changing use of language around unemployment and to pay some attention to new links being forged between masculinity and sober participation in the labour force, for example. There are a few welcome illustrations, though these might have been analyzed in the text of the book to demonstrate the work they did in spreading understandings of unemployment.

Baskerville and Sager went to laudable lengths to try to integrate consideration of women into this book. Yet the results are variable because gender seems to appear at moments rather than being conceptualized into the analysis and methodology throughout. Indeed, although the book's subtitle refers to the unemployed and their families, the book only sometimes places families at the centre of the analysis. It would have been stronger had they argued early, rather than late in the manuscript, that the "household was a profoundly gendered space." (161) They might then have explained what they meant for husbands, wives, sons, daughters, and other household residents and the consequent power relations and likely involvement in the labour market. They could then have explained the different and sometimes contradictory measures they developed to deal with women. Then the logic behind their decision to assign housewives to their own separate class and work position in the chapter on "Dimensions of Space and Community," and their assignation of all women who were not housewives and did not list an occupation to the "unmeasured labour pool" might have been clearer. For, without

such an explanation, it seems odd to be considering housewives as a class in a study of unemployment, especially in a chapter that attempts to measure "ward and subdistrict-level segregation by social class and by work duration." (101) They do not explain how they determined which of the females in the household was the housewife, or even whether the housewife was always a female. And, classifying housewives as a separate class detaches them from the men and other workers whose wages they stretch. The decision to consider all women, and indeed men who were neither housewives nor reporting a job, as potentially part of the labour market is an important gesture of recognition toward women who might be under-enumerated because of the "sexist bias inherent in the census." (46) Yet in suggesting that "another census might well have included them among the unemployed," Baskerville and Sager go too far in conflating the labour force and the population. In the process they downplay the likelihood of daughters and other females in households contributing to domestic labour, dismiss the possibility that respectable working-class families might have wished to keep daughters out of the labour market, and minimize the levels of dependency among the old or sick. The other curious omission regarding women is that there is no mention of whether many families were headed by women, although two examples crop up of female family heads, one widowed and one apparently separated. Readers could well assume all families were headed by men. The Canadian Families Project sample from the 1901 census suggests that some 12 to 13 per cent of families were female-headed. Because gender dynamics within families have not clearly integrated throughout, it comes as a surprise to be informed in the conclusion that unemployment "deepened the division of labour within households and thereby exacerbated gender distinctions." (185)

This is an important subject. *Unwilling Idlers* demonstrates how much can be

learned from past censuses when combined with other sources at a time when historians are struggling to make sure that this source remains available for future generations of historians and genealogists. Historians of the working-class, of families, of cities, and of labour-markets will find much to use in lectures and their own writing and much to question. They may not be convinced that "social science methods" produce better results than others, they may think some of the findings are obvious and some of the interpretations dubious, but they will learn a lot about workers and their patterns of employment and income in Montréal, Hamilton, Winnipeg, Halifax, Vancouver, and Victoria at the turn of the last century as well as about the poverty and determination that characterized so many of their lives then as now.

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Harold Griffin, *Radical Roots: The Shaping of British Columbia* (Vancouver: The Commonwealth Fund 1999).

ON THE COVER of this colourful and generally well-written book is Fraser Wilson's 1944 oil painting called "Organization," which depicts the organizing of the Vancouver shipyard workers during World War II. I looked forward to reading the sections on labour strife in British Columbia during and after the War from the point of view of a Communist journalist who lived through it all. Unfortunately, the book primarily focuses on the period before 1918. The period after World War I occupies only about ten pages. Moreover, the first half of the book has little to say about workers, and when they are discussed it is in the context of traditional labour history: unions, strikes, and labour politics.

According to the back cover, Mr. Griffin had planned a concluding chapter, but he died in June 1998. The final chapter

would have had to have been rather long to get anywhere near the present, but it is a pity that he was not able to go further. Instead, by way of a conclusion, we are left with three historically-oriented columns from *The Pacific Tribune*, one on May Day, another on labour councils, and a third on aboriginal land title.

To use the phrase "labour of love" is often code for "not very good," but I mean it as a compliment. Hal Griffin did a tremendous amount of research for this book, and his fascination and respect for his subject matter shines through the work. One of the liveliest chapters in the book is the first. Here Griffin's devotion to amateur archaeology is quite apparent in his discussion of the migration of people across the Bering Strait perhaps 40,000 years ago. The chapter also contains Griffin's interesting argument that the first non-aboriginal people to reach the coast of British Columbia were five Buddhist monks from China in 458 or over 1,300 years before the voyage of Captain James Cook. The Chinese may have been first, but they had far less impact than the Europeans, especially in regard to indigenous people.

Despite his obvious interest in aboriginal people, Griffin has little to say about aboriginal-European relations in either the maritime or land-based fur trade. The usual cast of explorers and fur traders are discussed, but aboriginal people are barely visible. As a Hudson's Bay Company officer and later colonial governor, James Douglas, of course, warrants a fair amount of attention. Griffin has little regard for Douglas's motives in signing fourteen treaties with aboriginal people on Vancouver Island. Company interests stood above all others, and we are left with the suggestion that the wily governor hoodwinked what must have been gullible natives, although, again, they are not really part of the story. While no one wants to resurrect the tainted image of Douglas as benevolent benefactor, Griffin might have noted that these were the only treaties signed in British Columbia

until Treaty Eight at the turn of the century.

Griffin pays much more attention to Asian-European relations, and he does not shy from describing the vicious racism that was at the heart of the British Columbia labour movement for decades. He baldly blames the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council for the September 1907 riot against the Chinese and Japanese in Vancouver. Griffin also devotes a considerable amount of space, some twelve pages, to the fate of the passengers of the *Komagata Maru*, a ship carrying nearly 400 British subjects, most of whom were Sikhs. They were not allowed to disembark at Vancouver when they arrived on 23 May 1914. The ship sat in the harbour for two months before it was finally forced to leave in late July. He follows the ship to India where twenty of the passenger were massacred by the Royal Fusiliers in September 1914.

No doubt, *Radical Roots* is a quirky book. Ginger Goodwin makes his appearance, and is shot by special constable Dan Campbell in 1918. Yet the labour revolt of 1919 is not mentioned. This quirkiness could leave the book open to much criticism, especially the pointed comments of academics. True, *Radical Roots* needed a thorough edit and some fact checking. I would have also appreciated an introduction by the author and an index. Still, I enjoyed sitting and reading this book. The pages and time passed quickly. One can not often say that about much historical writing these days.

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David Bright, *The Limits of Labour: Class Formation and the Labour Movement in Calgary, 1883-1929* (Vancouver: UBC Press 1998)

DAVID BRIGHT, author of several scholarly articles on Alberta labour history and co-editor (with David J. Bercuson) of the popular reader, *Canadian Labour History*, forthrightly locates his new book, *Limits of Labour: Class Formation and the Labour Movement in Calgary, 1883-1929*, as exemplary of an emerging "third generation" of Canadian labour history. At the risk of collapsing the complexity of an extended historiographical review, the third generation rejects both the narrow institutionalism of first-generation writers, and the oft-debated "culturalist" enthusiasms of the second.

The author's review of relevant literature is to some extent selective. I am unconvinced of the fact that traditional historians have "accepted and perpetuated" a long-ago dismissal of Calgary's labour leaders as "Lloyd George coalitionists" by a representative of the District 18 miners. (152) A more sustained treatment of the relationship between the two Alberta groups, or their links with British labour thought, however, might well be helpful. Nor is it clear that Bryan D. Palmer's discussion of Hamilton Freemasonry rejected the idea that friendly societies could be agencies of incorporation. (57) Both the old and once-new labour history, however, is under threat from diverse quarters — this much is well established here — and must respond, so Bright believes, with painstaking caution underpinned by not untraditional advocacy stances. A more rigorous "new institutional" approach, we learn, aims to "explain, rather than explain away, the historical divisions that have fragmented the working class," while sharing an "ambition to explain the limits of labour to realize the potential unity of class." (6) One can accept Bright's point that more needs to be learned from social theory and sociological history (Ira Katznelson, an

American synthesizer of Marxist and Weberian categories, looms large in this study), but whether this alone can revive labour history's fortunes among the non-committed remains an open question.

The main burden of this book is, in fact, a case study of the politics of labour, at least partly aimed at explaining the background of a specific series of events in Calgary's political past. In 1919, and again in 1932, the same city played host to historic conferences of new and more inconclusive organizations of labour and the left: the OBU and the CCF respectively. Neither one, however, gained a strategic purchase on the Calgary working class, and the fact that organized socialism (by one or another name) was almost literally wiped off the map in Calgary during the 1930s proved most portentous of the future woes of class-based movements in Alberta politics. A city that had been among the labour movement's most promising areas of electoral strength became, instead, the cradle of a classless urban populism called the Social Credit movement. Any number of studies have documented the unhinging impact of the Great Depression in Alberta politics: one describes the failure of the Alberta CCF as an "accident of history." To extend the metaphor, Bright argues, in so many words, that this was also an accident just waiting to happen, structured by the fragility of working-class consciousness and often yawning gaps between leaders and led. Labour's fight to win state responsibility for unemployment in the 1930s, for example, is starkly described as having been "over before it was even begun" in Calgary. (183) The interests of workers as ratepayers and as relief recipients were typically diffuse, and predictably reflected in crippling conflicts between communist "agitators" and social democratic activists in local government. "Politics," Bright argues even-handedly, joined ethnicity or gender as a recognizable "line of fracture" in the wake of key ideological schisms unfolding between 1919 and 1935. (205, and *passim*).

As readers of *Limits of Labour* will not be surprised to learn, working-class experience in Calgary was contoured by uneven development: a miniature "industrial revolution" that did not, however, lead to the creation of a large or stable industrial base. The census of 1911, for example, netted just over 20,000 Calgarians credited with gainful occupations, and depending on the statistical source, 40-odd manufacturing enterprises then employed a payroll of anywhere between 2,000 and 3,500 people. The single-largest workplace in early 20th century Calgary was the Canadian Pacific Railway's Ogden Shops, a grain-trade dependent complex which employed as many as 1,200 craft workers and apprentices (1929 data). But the city in no way resembled a stereotypical company town controlled by outside forces that could be easily constructed as a capitalist Other (not Dr. Bright's own phrase.) While craft fortunes waxed and waned, a cohesive group of local entrepreneurs Bright calls the "manufacturing class" assumed or asserted leadership in the city, supplying over one-fifth of city council membership, for example, between 1883 and 1912. (23) The famous Calgary Stampede was first organized in 1912 as an elite-led celebration of a fast-receding (if not entirely mythical) frontier past, when "social equality and economic opportunity [rode] spiritedly across the prairies." (3) Its permanence significantly dates to 1919, when civic leaders faced the local echo of the Winnipeg General Strike. Labour Day had, hitherto, been one of the largest events on the civic calendar, with as many as 3,000 marchers and 15,000 spectators participating in 1907, for example. Yet a carefully orchestrated public-spiritedness, not class antagonism, was the hallmark of such theatre during the boom years, and Bright marshals plenty of evidence to show how the community-building project tended to co-opt and marginalize labour's identity. Bright reports that "it is difficult to conclude that there existed in [early] Calgary a distinct

working class culture, let alone a subculture of opposition." (65) Distinctive features of the Calgary community are also outlined in some detail. One was its overwhelming British/Irish character, together with the apparent absence of sectarian discord within the majority group. Calgary would be the site of several illuminating skirmishes in the nativist and anti-Asian campaigns. A "Chinatown" was typically permitted to exist — as a provider of cheap laundry and food services for more transient white workers. More than simply underlining race/ethnicity as a factor in the fragmentation of an ideal-type "unity" (the sociological dimension Bright chooses to emphasize) these episodes presumably helped construct a more cohesive anglo-Canadian identity here. Class was fairly visibly mapped out in Calgary's early neighbourhoods; on the other hand, the city was well-known for a wide distribution of small property ownership.

Bright's understatement of artisan culture in frontier Calgary makes it harder to follow the political narrative than might have been the case. As economic circumstances straitened in the period after 1912, small property owners became the backbone of a municipal labour bloc that was comparably as strong as any other in the country, and outdid all others save Winnipeg's in electing labour reformers to provincial and national office, circa 1921-1930. Organized radicalism reared its head in battles over unemployment, conscription, or women's rights; unionism spilled over into such industries as flourmilling and meatpacking, as well as the broad service sector that concentrated wage-earning women in the city. Rail or postal workers, blending old and new styles of unionism, buttressed bouts of militancy directly challenging the state. The Calgary labour community of the teens and twenties strikes me as one with many — perhaps too many — different tricks up its collective sleeve, and with regard to generalizations like the influence of the Lloyd George coalitionists, it

is important not to throw the proverbial baby out with the bath water. Calgary's labour-political leadership included a phalanx of credible moderates — Alex Ross of the Canadian Labour Party, Robert Parkyn of the obscurely schismatic Dominion Labour Party, R. J. Talon of the Division 4 railworkers, or Amelia Turner of the CCF — all firmly anchored in a bravely reformist world view. It is no mystery why "unity" never emerged on such questions as revolutionary industrial unionism, whose history in Calgary is in Bright's view one of failure to even inspire, let alone organize, the bulk of working people. (Despite their differences over the modeling of labour history, David Bright and Bercuson do agree that the OBU was an unstable mix doomed not to congeal in Western Canada: see ch. 7, and *passim*.) More remarkable, perhaps, was the left-reform influence on local governance, which, as the author mentions, survived well into the oil-boom era that economically remade the city after World War II. I hope that specialists in marxist or near-marxist social studies will not be the only readers of this book, which shows, between the lines, how labour did make history in Calgary, Alberta.

Allen Seager
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Robert L. Ascah, *Politics and Public Debt: The Dominion, The Banks, and Alberta's Social Credit* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press 1999).

THIS MAY BE THE DRIEST of the many books on Alberta Social Credit, a subject that has produced a virtual cottage industry in academe. Yet for those who want to know something about the political power that banks have wielded in this country and continue to wield, it is worth the slog. For make no mistake, while Robert Ascah has nothing whatsoever new to say about Social Credit, he has much to say about

the influence that banks have had since the 1930s in establishing monetary and fiscal policy. To some degree, the experience of Alberta's Social Credit regime is simply a backdrop for Robert Ascah's exploration of how the major financial institutions have steered the federal government and the Bank of Canada in the direction that finance capital regards as most beneficial to its interests.

Ascah carefully details the financial policies that were followed in Canada in the 1930s, particularly with regards to dealing with the hundreds of thousands of debtors who could not afford to pay the debts they had accumulated before the bottom fell out of the economy. Small business operators, farmers, and homeowners with mortgages all looked to the state to help them rearrange their debts with financial institutions so as to avoid destitution. They looked in vain to governments, both federal and provincial. While legislation that reduced obligations to creditors was passed, it was fairly conservative and followed the lines proposed by the bankers themselves. Ascah sums up the behaviour of governments in matters where the interests of financial capital and the interests of ordinary people conflicted as follows: "The depression years reinforced the importance of government policies in Canada that were hospitable to the claims of finance capital. Politicians were under enormous pressure to revise the rights of debtors and often were obliged to pronounce directly on the centrality of credit-worthiness for the nation. This allegiance was a necessary corollary to the huge refunding and ongoing borrowing operations which, in order to be a success, required favourable capital markets. Favourable markets in turn meant government policies that maintain stability in the relationship between debtors and creditors." (52)

No wonder then that *Social Credit* found an audience in Alberta for theories that economists regarded as half-baked. And also no wonder that *Social Credit's* efforts to limit the power of finance capi-

tal was greeted with hostility by the federal government. What appeared on the surface as a jurisdictional dispute over who has the right to control financial institutions was, in fact, a larger dispute over the degree to which finance capital would control the lives of Canadians. While Ascah does not deal in any detail with Social Credit's ideology, or its class base, he does emphasize that its financial policies in its early years in office were quite radical. Its efforts to control bank operations were contained by court rulings, but even still the Aberhart government managed to take a few punches at the bankers. In April 1936, the government defaulted on the principal of a maturing obligation, the first and only time this has happened in Canadian history. To insure that no other province was tempted to follow suit, the federal government and the Bank of Canada used carrots and sticks: new relief money for Saskatchewan and Manitoba, while Alberta got the cold shoulder when it requested funds from either the federal government or the Bank.

Ascah traces the development of federal financial policies up to the late forties, and at some point seems to lose interest in Social Credit *per se*. Ernest Manning, who succeeded Aberhart as premier in 1943, was too busy battling imaginary Bolsheviks and sucking up to oil company executives to carry on the good fight against finance capital. So the story of finance capital's successes in the late forties is a rather depressing one from the point of view of ordinary folk. Despite the pressures on governments to find money for a variety of new social initiatives during and after the war, the interests of finance capital were rarely confronted. Indeed, though Ascah does not deal with this, it seems probable that the conservatism of the Mackenzie King government after it won the 1945 federal election with vague promises of creating a welfare state was the result of its inability to serve two masters at once: finance capital and the people.

The government's fiscal policies consciously promoted monopoly capital. R.B. Bryce, the key policy advisor to Clifford Clark, made this clear as he attempted unsuccessfully to dissuade the government from following through with a policy to return 20 per cent of the wartime "excess profits tax" to companies at war's end. No Marxist, he nonetheless saw clearly that: "the proposal is open to the very serious objection that we are proposing to continue after the war the same domination of industry by big monopolistic corporations that plagued us before the war. It may be argued with some justice that the people who will gain the most from these provisions will be firms like International Nickel, Consolidated Smelters ... and others who are well established and making very large profits. The 20% returned to them on the condition that they must re-invest it, will help further to establish them in the Canadian industrial picture and enable them to consolidate their gains and achieve even more dominance than before the war." (97)

In Ascah's book, we learn of an effort in 1941 by a young Walter Gordon, still relatively junior in the Finance Department, to convince the government of the wisdom of a 15 per cent withholding tax. Finance capital prevailed, and Gordon would learn, when he eventually became Finance Minister in 1963, that the logic of a market economy limited his ability to impose such a tax even when he held high office. Indeed, as Ascah notes, in the post-war period, the federal government gave up the right to control its own costs of borrowing — "to market forces largely set outside Canada's borders" (129) — never mind the movement of private capital across borders.

Mackenzie King, who pointedly did nothing to limit the accumulation of greater power by finance capital during his many years as prime minister, could nonetheless justly lament in 1946: "Of course I feel that Clark and all his group and all the Finance Department and the

Bank of Canada people, the big trade interests and so forth have only one point of view and really are a world of finance — feeling a greater common interest in finance than they do any interest in common with the political world.” (138)

Ascah notes that today’s so-called globalization of capital places new limits on state efforts to control finance capital. But it is hard to leave this book, despite the author’s emphasis on technical matters and his efforts to avoid being too judgemental, without concluding that finance capital has been in the driver’s seat for as long as this country has existed.

Alvin Finkel
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Daniel J. Robinson, *The Measure of Democracy: Polling, Market Research and Public Life, 1930-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1999).

IN 1929 THE J. WALTER THOMPSON advertising agency opened an office in Montréal and during the winter of 1929-30 the company completed the first Canada-wide marketing survey. The survey focused on a variety of food products sold across the country and included among the survey’s findings was the fact that 75 per cent of the women polled purchased *Magic* brand baking powder.

What could the manner in which these findings were obtained possibly have to do with the re-election of Mackenzie King’s Liberal government fifteen years later? A great deal, according to Daniel J. Robinson. Between 1930 and 1945, public opinion polling in North America was transformed from small independent surveys on the back pages of newspapers to national polls commissioned, sometimes secretly, by political parties. In Canada, the rise of social scientific approaches to measuring public opinion produced, for the Liberal party in particular, a potentially magical solution to much of the guesswork involved in political cam-

paigns. These polls, Robinson argues, remained closely connected to the consumer marketing surveys from which they were derived, and thus were easily adopted by the Liberals and others to serve partisan, rather than public, interests.

To understand the genesis of polling in Canada, Robinson demonstrates, we must look back to the rise of the consumer marketing survey in the 1920s and, in particular, to the influence of the American pollster, George Gallup. Gallup and other pollsters championed polling’s democratizing functions and juxtaposed their efforts to access the “common sense” views of the general public with the dominance of special interest groups and, increasingly in the 1930s, the threat of fascism. Public opinion polling, for these men, provided an opportunity “to rekindle the immediacy and vibrancy of civic debate from an earlier ‘golden age’” of informed political discussion and widespread public debate. (45)

The democratic promise of polling, however, would remain unfulfilled, Robinson convincingly reveals, because public opinion polling could not shed its “marketing” heritage. Polling throughout the era of Robinson’s study remained beholden, in both form and motivation, to its precursor: the consumer market survey. Early market research surveys were, not surprisingly, biased towards those deemed most likely to possess disposable incomes. American market researchers thus deemed certain groups unimportant; because African Americans and the working class did not possess sufficient consumer spending power to make their opinions count, they were systematically underrepresented in the surveys. This line of thinking was fundamental to the construction of political polls as well. When market surveys gave birth to political polling in the United States, they passed along measuring techniques which discriminated against racial minorities, the lower classes and women (all of whom were deemed less likely — or, of course, in

some cases were unable — to vote). With such biases incorporated into the polling process, public opinion polling failed to deliver on its promise of renewing democracy. The commercial imperative of market research surveys reemerged, in fact, as a political imperative that prioritized the interests of the governing over the governed.

As the final three chapters of the book reveal, Canadian public opinion polling drew directly on American expertise and personnel. The establishment of Gallup's Canadian Institute of Public Opinion (CIPO) in November 1941 was the most tangible indication of this development and in Canada the pattern of discriminatory polling practices continued. Here white collar males were over-represented in surveys while women, the poor, and French-Canadians were under-represented. One key difference north of the border pertained to the reaction of those concerned with polling's influence. In the United States, polling's detractors complained that, in reality, manipulative polling practices worked to undermine the views of the general public. In Canada, however, critics voiced a concern that polling might allow for too much democracy and opponents raised concerns about the perils of bowing to the public will.

The surveys themselves also reveal a great deal about the real motivation behind polling. During World War II, the CIPO was quickly approached by a federal government anxious to take advantage of Gallup's claims that polling helped democracies become more efficient. For the King government, efficiency meant employing polls to find the best way of *selling* its policies. The Canadian public was polled on issues such as conscription and rationing in the hope of finding the best way to buoy government support. Polling here was being utilized to further state interests rather than to ensure a more democratic rendering of the "public interest."

Impressed with polling's possibilities, the Liberals were the first major political

party in Canada to employ opinion polls as part of an election campaign. One of Robinson's chief motivations in completing this study was to demonstrate that political party polling in Canada "originated in the 1940s, not the 1960s," as others have suggested. (127) In the final chapter of the book, Robinson documents the manner in which Liberal enthusiasm for polling combined with structural characteristics within the CCF and the Conservatives to ensure that the Liberals were the first Canadian political party to employ political polling.

Robinson succeeds in demonstrating that opinion polling potentially offered the Liberals a clear advantage during the 1945 election, and convincingly details why they were the first political party in Canada to take advantage of its possibilities. However, it remains difficult to see, in the final chapter, where the pre-existing advantages of the Liberals' superior organization and advertising campaigns end, and where the impact of polling begins. Robinson first envisioned this study as a detailed examination of the impact of opinion polling on Canadian politics from the 1940s to the 1960s, but quickly concluded that such an examination needed to be preceded by a study of the origins of opinion polling in Canada. It is likely, then, that his future research on the later time period will unearth the sources necessary to confirm polling's importance in the 1945 Liberal victory and in other elections as well.

This is an important and valuable study that refreshingly incorporates categories such as race, class, and gender into its analysis, without a litany of historiographic trumpet-blowing. While Robinson's study does not engage directly with the debates surrounding the transformation of the "public sphere," his findings should encourage Canadian historians to take more of an interest in the literature and debates surrounding the ostensible decline of democracy in modern society. *The Measure of Democracy* will be welcomed not only by scholars interested in

Canadian political history, but also by those interested in charting the rise of consumer culture. For if, as Billy Bragg, suggests, "Freedom's just another word for nothing left to sell," understanding the relationship between the rhetoric of democracy and the phenomenon of consumerism should be occupying far more of our attention than it presently does. In charting the impact of consumer market research techniques on Canadian politics, Robinson's study takes us several significant steps in some very promising directions down a number of historiographical lanes.

Michael Dawson
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Gillian Creese, *Contracting Masculinity: Gender, Class, and Race in a White-Collar Union, 1944-1994* (Toronto: Oxford University Press Canada 1999).

AS WE ENTER the 21st century, the structures of trade unionism are increasingly criticized as "male, pale, and stale." That is, large numbers of writers note that mainstream union leadership has remained the domain of (apparently) heterosexual, white men, despite significant changes in the composition of union membership overall. But while the tendency of the organized workplace to have entrenched systems of privilege and exclusion is widely acknowledged, surprisingly little research has been done to explain the underlying dynamics of employer-union negotiation which gave rise to, and continue to normalize, such inequities.

Gillian Creese's *Contracting Masculinity: Gender, Class, and Race in a White-Collar Union, 1944-1994* takes on precisely this task, as the author examines the roots of the gendered and racialized trade union through a case study of the Office and Technical Employees' Union (OTEU) Local 378 at BC Hydro. Creese traces the history of the union's bargaining relation-

ship with management in order to investigate not sexist or racist attitudes *per se*, but how privilege was initially incorporated into bargaining demands, then made invisible and finally normalized within the collective agreement.

Creese uncovers a wide number of mechanisms which have served to foster and codify gender inequity within both the OTEU-BC Hydro negotiating process and the collective agreement itself. Two concepts stand out for particular mention, however, as they resurface in the OTEU numerous times over several decades, and form the backbone of Creese's analysis. The first of these, white-collar masculinity, was quite carefully constructed by the union to enhance the status of its male clerical members as compared to the blue-collar workers of Hydro's second union, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The second, the notion of the male breadwinner, developed as a component of that masculinity, and went on to inform contract negotiations and bargaining priorities for many years.

Creese demonstrates that the construction of masculinity as a key characteristic of member identity was critical to the OTEU's formation and institutionalization. As one of Canada's first predominantly white-collar unions, it devoted considerable effort to defining the work of its male members as "professional" and "masculine." And one important means of gendering that work was the myth of the male breadwinner, to which Creese devotes considerable attention. A product of the 1950s, the breadwinner myth created an explicit hierarchy of workers, on the premise that men required higher pay and greater career mobility in order to fulfill the social role of family provider. This privileging of the male worker was central to union demands in the early years, creating a link with the traditional masculinity of blue-collar unions, and defending the employment status of men from perceived encroachment by increasing numbers of women in the paid workforce.

Contracting Masculinity provides a detailed deconstruction of bargaining demands, union documents, and meeting notes as Creese peels back decades of industrial relations history to uncover the gendered origins of contemporary contract provisions. Tackling her project as an identification of now-hidden meanings, the author finds numerous ways in which gender difference was quite purposefully constructed into labour-management relationships. For example, the concept of the male breadwinner very clearly underlay negotiation of a "female differential" which the union bargained into the collective agreement, and which stipulated that a woman would be paid twenty per cent less than a man for any given job. But Creese finds that both white-collar masculinity and the breadwinner myth extended their influence far beyond wages, together forming an important cultural foundation for union-company negotiation, and creating for union and company alike an image of "the worker" which was white, male and steeped in an engineering-oriented industrial culture.

As the related notions of masculinity and breadwinner demonstrate, what is critical for Creese is not the specific day to day relationship between women and men in the office or the union hall. Rather, it is the way that such constructions of masculinity came to form a cultural foundation for labour relations between BC Hydro and the OTEU. As founding values of the union-company relationship, both ideas remained entrenched in collective bargaining and contract clauses long after their overt sexism had been seemingly overcome with the transition to gender neutral language and formal equality.

Much of *Contracting Masculinity* explores the ways labour-management negotiation defined equality as *sameness*. That is, though equal treatment for women in the workplace was a central concern of the OTEU relatively early in its history, such equality was limited to the incorporation of women into employment

mechanisms that had been designed for the ideal-type worker – white, male, professional. Not only the female wage differential, but many other contract provisions too, were developed within a workplace culture that quite intentionally privileged men. Contract clauses as common as seniority rights and wage scales (one for typically-female office work, another for typically-male non-office work) are revealed in *Contracting Masculinity* to have their origins at least partially in the defense of male privilege. It is no wonder, then, that still today such provisions frequently appear as obstacles to genuine equity, as their very definition of equality as "sameness" serves in practice to maintain privilege precisely because "normalcy" was an is interpreted according to gendered and racialized conceptions of "the worker." Such normalization, Creese argues, has lasting implications for union attempts to overcome discrimination. Indeed, even struggles for pay equity and equal representation fail to address important bases of inequity which are entrenched invisibly in the collective agreement through such seemingly neutral mechanisms as seniority rights and wage scales.

Contracting Masculinity is not a history of race and gender relations within the labour movement, nor is it a class history of OTEU 378. Indeed, the book is surprisingly silent on questions of class struggle and composition, focusing instead upon bargaining and structure-specific issues. This is both a strength and a weakness of Creese's work. On the one hand, working people themselves are absent through most of the book, either as a collective and unitary "union" or as competing sectors within a fragmented and often conflictive working class. There are no stories of struggle, no reflections on victory or defeat. In fact, upon finishing the book, the reader has hardly any sense of who the OTEU is. But while workers themselves are absent from *Contracting Masculinity*, Creese accomplishes exactly what she sets out to do. By focusing on contract

language and bargaining, Gillian Creese is able to make her history speak far beyond the boundaries of this particular case study. The processes she traces, the ins and outs of clause-preparation and negotiation, are common to unions across industries and across countries. And it is precisely the ability of this author to write a history of *process* rather than of *subjects* which makes the book so significant.

A more glaring weakness of the book can perhaps be found in the disjuncture between title and subject-matter. *Contracting Masculinity* is not about race or ethnicity. Though subtitled *Gender, Class, and Race in a White-Collar Union*, the book deals almost exclusively with gender. Race is certainly mentioned, but only briefly in a few passages, and with little analysis of its dynamics; Creese is clearly aware of race, consistently noting that a non-problematic Whiteness is assumed throughout the history of collective bargaining. Yet being aware of invisibility is not the same as making visible, and on this latter count the book is surprisingly silent. *Contracting Masculinity*, then, really never deals at length with the problems and potentials of analyzing multiple systems of domination. The author's intent to probe intersections of gender, race, and class is clear throughout the book, but only as subtext, and with little theoretical elaboration. The book itself is well-written, thoroughly-researched, and coherently argued. But the title is misleading, and one quickly realizes that a significant portion of the stated project is not really being attempted.

Nonetheless, *Contracting Masculinity* is an important contribution to the study of gender struggles in the trade union and the workplace, and its method of analysis could certainly be applied to structures of race and sexuality. Creese illustrates the importance of peeling back layers of language to explore their original intents. By focusing almost exclusively on collective bargaining processes, she draws our attention to a much-neglected area of study. She reminds us just how insidious privi-

lege is, and how it can become normalized and made invisible over time, to the point that our best-intentioned struggles for equality can actually reinforce and further obscure inequality.

In *Contracting Masculinity*, Gillian Creese has made a significant contribution to the scholarly analysis of gender inequity in labour. Equally important, she has developed a tool with which union activists can begin to peel back their own histories in order to recognize privilege where it is most hidden. If the challenge is taken up, it may be a first critical step in the construction of a new, democratic, and truly equitable labour politics.

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James Rinehart, Christopher Huxley, and David Robertson, *Just Another Car Factory: Lean Production and its Discontents* (Ithaca, NY: ILR Press 1997).

WHILE THE GLOBALIZATION of services captures much attention these days, we must not lose sight of the fact that the auto industry continues to be a lynch-pin of the North American economy. The strength of the auto sector in the 1990s derives from a combination of "innovations" involving all factors of production, but most crucial, an attempt to create a new work system called lean production. In *Just Another Car Factory*, a Canadian team of academic and union researchers provide a fascinating and very readable account of the promise and failure of "working lean."

CAMI is a joint venture between General Motors and Suzuki. The firm built a new factory in Ingersoll, Ontario, carefully recruited a relatively young workforce, and began production of sub-compact vehicles in 1989. The Canadian Autoworkers Union (CAW) represented the workers, making CAMI one of the few North American "transplants" to be unionized. The union figures prominently in this

study. Indeed, the book begins with an account of a five-week strike in 1992 — a strike that was not supposed to happen. What went wrong? Why didn't CAMI live up to the high expectations it created? What are the fundamental problems workers and unions face in lean work systems? The authors' responses to these questions are uniformly insightful, evidence-based, and cogently argued.

Lean production melds Japanese and North American industrial organization and management systems. Viewed historically, it is a potent combination of Taylorist industrial engineering, advanced mass production technology, and human relations management principles. CAMI's competitive advantage was intended to be its emphasis on four core values: *Kaizen* (continuous improvement), team spirit, open communications, and worker empowerment. The book documents the decline of these "CAMI values" and a corresponding rise in worker discontent, injuries (especially repetitive strain, or RIS), grievances, and worker resistance to management. These problems form the basis for the authors' incisive critique of lean production's promise of a "win-win" situation created through high worker commitment and participation.

Because most contemporary workplace studies take a *one-time snap-shot*, they miss the dynamic nature work relations. What sets this study apart is that the researchers tracked CAMI's development over several years before and after the strike. Utilizing a "triangulation" of methods (a panel survey with 4 time-points, semi-structured face-to-face interviews, and in-plant observations) the researchers document the start up and maturation of the factory. This methodological strength puts the authors on solid ground when drawing conclusions about how the evolution of the production system affected workers, and why workers and the union responded as they did.

The authors reject the view that lean production represents a paradigm shift

from old-style mass production to post-Fordism. Rather, CAMI represents a fine-tuning of Fordism. CAMI's production conveyor line, the logic of the plant's industrial engineering, time study, narrowly defined jobs — these features more accurately describe a form of "neo-Fordism." Most problematic for post-Fordist interpretations of lean production, argue the authors, is that the system does not require a highly committed workforce. Nor is team organization a prerequisite, largely because teams function mostly on a social level in complex ways that are as divisive as they are integrative. For workers, the most pressing problem was chronic understaffing, resulting in "overburdened jobs," mainly due to CAMI management's intent to operate very lean from the start. Consequently, work under lean production is "arduous and intense." (204) CAMI jobs were not challenging; most were low-skilled, quickly learned, repetitive and routinized, and had a high risk of injury. CAMI workers were encouraged through sophisticated social engineering adapted from Japan to impart their knowledge into the system. The logic of the system was a relentless push to reduce the labour component of each vehicle — hardly conditions that foster more humane work.

Just Another Car Factory significantly advances our understanding of new work systems, how they affect workers, and how workers and their unions respond. The research team comprised academics, union staff, and rank-and-file activists. The study was funded mainly by the federal government, with supplementary research support from universities. While the CAW initiated the study, it had the cooperation of management (management's rejoinder to the initial CAMI report would have made interesting reading as an Appendix). Thus, the study is an exemplary "partnership" at a time that granting agencies are encouraging this and university researchers are facing the prospects of more industry-funded and therefore directed research. The Appendix describing

the study team's procedures raises important questions about the role of university researchers in such a politically-charged environment. Does the book represent a team consensus, and if not, what were the points of contention? How was the research designed to ensure that the CAW would derive practical insights and, further, how did various branches of the union make use of the study?

With such rich data at their disposal, the researchers have additional avenues of inquiry to pursue. For example, a complement to their enlightening discussion of the gendered impact of lean production would be an assessment of to what extent workers' race/ethnicity and age influenced the operations and impact of the system. Given lofty management rhetoric about teams, quality circles, and employee empowerment, there is room to further explore the implications of this research for management. Related to this, do the authors see any potential common ground here for unions and management to craft a joint workplace change agenda, and if so, what would this look like? Fuelling workers' discontent was the fact that many had been attracted to CAMI's values, which raises issues about effective union responses to these kinds of aspirations in future organizing drives and in collective bargaining. Finally, the book's findings and conclusions re-energize the debate about post-Fordism; while the authors do so on occasion, they could engage in this debate more forcefully. No doubt some readers will take issue with one of the book's sub-themes — that workers under Fordist regimes were able to exercise more discretion and control than the CAMI workers.

Anyone interested in work organization should read this book. Labour historians will find continuities with earlier iterations of production systems, right back to the days of Talyor and the early factory engineers. A broad range of social scientists will appreciate how the authors situate their research findings in the literature on human relations, worker integration

and commitment, industrial organization, technology, the role of unions, and worker resistance. The book could be an effective resource for union educators, especially in combination with the CAW's video, *Working Lean*. Regrettably, the two groups who could derive practical lessons from the book — managers in auto factories and in lean production facilities in other industries, as well as students taking human resource management courses in business schools — are the least likely to read it.

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Toby M. Smith, *The Myth Of Green Marketing: Tending Our Goats At The Edge Of Apocalypse*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1998).

ENVIRONMENTALISTS HIT the labour movement where it hurts. Union activists like to think of themselves as defenders of the underdogs, who would otherwise be powerless, not as protectors of privileged workers, who would be powerless if they lost their environmentally-destructive jobs.

Social unionists get away with their rhetoric in debates about social programs, free trade and foreign policy. But when environmentalists demand clean production, or limits to production that endanger the most splendid of natural systems, they call unions on their claim to speak for the well-being of society-at-large or of future generations.

When push comes to shove, as dramatic clashes between union loggers and defenders of old growth forests in British Columbia showed, unions are just another interest group out to maintain an unsustainable monopoly, in this case a monopoly over the use of natural heritage that rightly belongs to all peoples, all generations and all creatures. That's a sore spot that the more limited critiques of capital-

ism by social unionists and social democrats never exposed.

When push comes to shove, most workers and their unions favour unlimited growth, and prefer jobs that might exploit the environment to jobs that might exploit workers. It doesn't take a PhD in economics to figure out that genuinely value-creating and environmentally-friendly jobs, the nature of capitalism being what it is, don't pay worth a damn. Workers in the conventional workforce know the kind of money that farmers, breastfeeding moms, artists, teaching assistants, servers, and community developers make; many would jump at those kinds of jobs if they didn't pay so badly. Unionized workers put up with their conventional jobs precisely because these jobs answer their central question: where's the money? And their union leaders scoff at the prospect of ever substituting jobs in the tourism sector for jobs in logging, or jobs in home renovation instead of jobs at a nuclear plant.

As understandable as this consciousness of workers and unions may be, it's nevertheless been a real eye-opener on the split personality of workers and their unions. For a generation brought to rebellious political consciousness during the 1990s, it has been a real downer to come into contact with the labour movement when this "greedy" side of its personality was brought to the fore.

If the rebels of this generation make the mistake of going to graduate school to study labour history, they surely won't make the analytical mistakes of rebels from earlier generations, who focused their studies almost exclusively on the emergence of anti-capitalist sentiments among the salt of the earth. Since the questions asked by historians vary according to the sensitivities of their own time as much as the time they are studying, the environmentalist experience is likely to pinpoint some sore spots in labour history that haven't been exposed before. Toby Smith's *The Myth Of Green Marketing: Tending Our Goats At The*

Edge Of Apocalypse, will help the more theoretical re-interpreters find a language and conceptual toolkit for their project.

The first generation of "history from the bottom up" social historians, if I remember right, went beyond accounts of strikes and labour politics and took a fresh look at the rank-and-file experience on the job and in the community. We took a special joy in documenting worker resistance to the "industrial discipline" of early factories and mass production plants, and the way that experience shaped anti-capitalist values.

Thanks to new environmental sensitivities, a new generation of bottom-uppers has the opportunity to explore the relative absence of resistance to the "consumer discipline" of mass production economies. In my opinion, consumer discipline, beginning in the 1920s and full-blown by the 1950s, overwhelmed the radical possibilities of resistance to industrial discipline and the dehumanization of work. Workers and unions went for "more" instead of better.

Of course, many workers, especially during the 1930s and '40s, did earn too little to live decently on, and looked to unions to fix that, without thereby becoming members of the consumer society. But after 1950, workers' demands for more were no longer satiated with one car, one TV, one crewcut lawn with picket fences, or one of any other environmentally-destructive, mind-numbing, unhealthy, or anti-social products. Unions never sponsored internal discussions on "how much is enough." Nor have unions played any role, other than spouting empty rhetoric, in the struggle for shorter hours of work, which would give workers more time to enjoy the best things in life, which are free, and which cannot be bought or consumed for any amount of money. No union or segment of the conventional workforce has challenged the stranglehold of consumer discipline. The "productivist discourse," as Smith terms it, has a monopoly on the best stories and most utopian promises of ever-increasing wealth

and progress through science, technology, and hard work.

Unlike other exposés of marketing and consumer mind control, some of which have become bestsellers, Smith's book has the potential to influence social historians. A student of Ernesto Laclau, Smith knows his hegemony, and provides just the right overdose of arcane language prized by academics when they're trying to frame a thesis before they know what they're talking about.

His take on green marketing is akin to the "pre-emptive reform" school of social policy history, which holds that sophisticated elements of the bourgeoisie eviscerated the radical guts of insurgent movements by granting reforms that undercut the need for militancy and channelled popular energies in bureaucratic ways that could be handled and assimilated by the system. In this vein, Smith argues that green consumerism "functions to appropriate this [deep-going, radical green] challenge and reshape the antagonistic element to reinforce, rather than subvert, productivist discourse." As a result, "the natural right of business to lead is a thread that runs through the myth of green consumerism."

Probing critiques of the ideology of green consumerism are much to be welcomed, alongside probing critiques of military intelligence, academic freedom, undergraduate life, university education, media ethics, and other contradictions in terms. Only in North America, it has been said, could environmentalism ever be presented as another excuse to go shopping. It's always nice to have someone set the theoretical record straight, and Smith is right to note that green purchasing comes nowhere what's needed to escape the effects of an economy that converts all life to commodities subject to capitalist exploitation.

But like most students of hegemony who knock Marxist-inspired reductionism, Smith suffers from what I call deductionism. Of the two evils, reductionism is much the lesser, if only because the most

dogmatic reductionists feel obliged to provide some evidence that led them to their findings. Though most promoters of green marketing and consuming are alive and well, Smith did not appear to interview one of them to find out if his theory jibed with their experience or views. I can only deduce that he simply extrapolated his thesis as follows: the green critique of capitalism could have been very radical and profound; it wasn't; ergo, business elements subverted ecological awareness into green consumerism to save the hide of a threatened mythology of productivism.

Alas for Smith, his argument might have been more timely were he not beholden to a university publisher who didn't take the productivist discourse seriously and brought the book out (on non-recycled paper, and with no reference to non-petroleum inks) ten years after the marketing spins that provoked Smith to write his book. Smith does a nice hatchet job on the simplistic and silly ads produced in the late 1980s, when the green movement was expanding willy-nilly and companies adapted their ads to the flavour of the month. But Smith's analysis has aged badly, always a danger with theories that extrapolate from one all-too-brief moment in time.

The concept of pre-emptive reform has never, to my mind, been of any use in North America, where babbity rules supreme in business circles and accommodation with dissident minorities has rarely been seen as worthwhile or necessary. Thus, labour history has been a struggle every inch of the way. So has women's history. And so has the history of environmentalists.

In the decade since the phony 1989 ads which Smith did a number on, the North American business class has railed against every and any limit on their right to pollute, without any sign of fear that they were creating conditions for an anti-capitalist backlash, let alone any fear that they were destroying the world. What, me worry, is the unofficial slogan of the Na-

tional Council on Business Issues, the *Globe, National Post, Reform, Conservative and Liberal Parties*. With few exceptions, green marketing was restricted to rare bits of advertising copy, and was never meant to carry over to actual business practices or even ongoing dialogue with environmentalists. To suggest that co-option was a thrust of major significance in the treatment of environmentalists is to misread the relationship.

How the promoters of genetic engineering (GE) might wish (there I go deducing myself) that Smith were right, and that green consumers were so easily sold a bill of goods about the sanctity of ever-increasing production and consumption. Instead, GE products have been hit hard by consumer boycotts and demands that GE products be labelled, all the better to boycott them.

Genetic engineering, which Smith makes no mention of, is an almost perfect case study of the productivist mythology that he scorns. It applies science and technology to the last frontier of industrialized agriculture. It is designed to encourage competition and economic growth. It promises the conquest of nature and a happy ending of plenty for all. To boot, it is subsidized and protected by the institutions of state, pimped for by universities, and is virtually unopposed by conventional farm (an honourable exception being the NFU) and labour organizations. Yet green consumers have had a field day dissing it in the marketplace. Green consumers, this experience indicates, didn't get as taken in by the productivist discourse as Smith predicted.

Similar victories have been won as a result of green consumer action against companies logging old growth forests in BC (particularly MacBlo) and around the world (particularly Home Depot).

Someone more trained in the tricky ways of social history, and the ability of emerging movements to turn tiny slivers of contradictions in prevailing ideologies into battering rams against prevailing ideologies, might have anticipated the consumer revolt that has led to massive op-

position to GE products, named "frankenfoods" by someone with a flair for historical novels on the duality of scientific progress.

People have a knack for taking their discourses where they find them. As with so many other nostrums of conventional and respectable wisdom — from the notion of women's separate sphere as used by suffragists, to the notion of disease-free cigars and clothes as used by union label advocates, to the notion of manly independence as used by unions fighting for a living wage, to the notion of self-improvement used by supporters of reduced working hours — ordinary people have known how to give the old wink, wink, nudge, nudge, better than textual analysts who stick too closely to their texts and don't bother to read between the lines.

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Gregor Murray et Pierre Verge, *La Représentation Syndicale. Visage Juridique Actuel et Futur* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval 1999).

AFFUBLÉ D'UN TITRE qui laisse présager un ouvrage à caractère juridique, l'essai des professeurs Murray et Verge de l'Université Laval constitue plutôt une réflexion socio-juridique sur la représentation syndicale dans le contexte particulier du Québec. Dans l'introduction, les auteurs précisent la problématique de l'ouvrage qui s'intéresse à l'impact des transformations économiques et sociales récentes sur le renouvellement des formes de représentation syndicale. La trame qui structure l'ouvrage renvoie à l'évolution des formes juridiques de la représentation syndicale au Québec et au Canada, dans un contexte de mondialisation des marchés, de diffusion rapide des nouvelles technologies, de mutation des modèles productifs et des valeurs sociales.

Les auteurs présentent dans un premier chapitre les principes fondateurs de la

représentation syndicale. La prémisses de la représentation syndicale réside dans la subordination juridique qui caractérise la relation salariale, consacrant un rapport inégalitaire entre le salarié et l'employeur. La représentation syndicale met également en cause la liberté d'association qui comporte une dimension contraignante au Québec puisque les salariés d'une unité d'accréditation sont assujettis à l'obligation légale de payer une cotisation syndicale qu'ils soient membres ou non du syndicat accrédité. Les auteurs brossent ensuite un tableau des aires et des objets de la représentation syndicale à différents niveaux d'intervention: micro (établissement, entreprise), méso (industrie, profession, région), macro (national et international). Ils notent qu'il existe une tension entre la représentation des intérêts généraux des salariés aux niveaux macro et méso et la défense des intérêts de groupes particuliers de salariés au niveau micro. Ils soulignent également la tendance à une représentation élargie des salariés-citoyens au delà de l'entreprise, à travers des instances de concertation sociale associant les syndicats à l'élaboration des politiques étatiques.

Le deuxième chapitre est consacré à l'examen des caractéristiques et de l'évolution des organisations syndicales au Québec. Inspiré du cadre juridique institué par le Wagner Act aux États-Unis, la représentation syndicale au Québec est centrée sur la reconnaissance de droits exclusifs de représentation et de négociation au bénéfice de l'association syndicale emportant l'adhésion majoritaire des membres d'une unité de négociation correspondant généralement à la totalité ou à une partie des salariés d'un établissement. Ce régime de représentation syndicale est décentralisé puisque ce sont les syndicats locaux qui négocient et veillent à l'application des conventions collectives régissant les conditions de travail des salariés représentés. Au cours de la dernière décennie, le Québec et le Canada ont maintenu des taux de syndicalisation relativement stables se situant entre 35 pour cent et 40 pour cent, tandis que la syndicalisation

était à la baisse dans la plupart des pays européens et aux États-Unis. La principale difficulté du syndicalisme québécois, selon les auteurs, réside dans sa faible implantation dans certains secteurs, notamment les services privés et dans les PME.

Le troisième chapitre expose les fondements des régimes juridiques de représentation syndicale au Québec et au niveau fédéral. Le monopole syndical fondé sur l'exclusivité de la représentation au bénéfice d'un syndicat majoritaire au sein de l'unité de négociation pertinente est commun aux deux paliers de juridiction. De même, les deux régimes juridiques privilégient l'exercice des droits syndicaux dans le cadre d'une seule entreprise, bien que la législation fédérale et certaines lois particulières au Québec prévoient dans certains cas que les rapports collectifs du travail peuvent lier plusieurs employeurs. Enfin, les deux régimes juridiques sont fondés sur la reconnaissance de relations du travail conflictuelles au niveau de l'entreprise, tant en ce qui a trait à l'aménagement des droits et obligations de l'employeur et du syndicat en matière de négociation collective qu'aux modalités de recours au droit de grève et de lock-out.

Le quatrième chapitre qui explore les domaines de la représentation syndicale au-delà de l'entreprise apporte plusieurs éléments originaux dans l'analyse de l'action syndicale au Québec. Les auteurs distinguent d'abord deux modèles de concertation sociale, soit l'approche pluraliste qui associe différents groupes socio-économiques à l'élaboration des politiques publiques par voie de consultation, et l'approche corporatiste qui intègre les organisations patronales et syndicales dans la régulation économique et sociale. Le portrait que tracent les auteurs de la représentation syndicale au delà de l'entreprise au Québec et au Canada met en évidence l'existence de multiples structures de concertation au sein desquelles le syndicalisme est reconnu comme représentant légitime des intérêts des

salariés, tant dans certains secteurs (textile, sidérurgie,...) que dans le domaine des normes du travail, de la santé et la sécurité au travail, de la formation professionnelle, des politiques économiques (centres régionaux et locaux de développement économique), et des politiques sociales (santé, éducation, langue). Ils concluent ce tour d'horizon en soulignant que la représentation syndicale à l'extérieur du Québec ne relève pas d'une approche néo-corporatiste, car dans la plupart des cas elle se limite à une consultation et les instances de concertation sociale auxquelles participent les organisations syndicales ne jouent pas un rôle central dans la *régulation économique et sociale*.

Le cinquième et dernier chapitre de l'ouvrage constitue la principale contribution des auteurs car il explore l'impact des transformations économiques et sociales sur le régime juridique de la représentation syndicale. Les auteurs considèrent que dans le sillage de la mondialisation des marchés, deux tendances contradictoires s'affirment, soit l'homogénéisation des normes et des structures productives à l'échelle internationale ainsi que le renforcement des identités culturelles et nationales. La mondialisation de l'économie incite les employeurs à *rechercher une plus grande flexibilité organisationnelle*, tandis que les syndicats se préoccupent principalement de protéger les emplois et de pénétrer les secteurs en croissance afin de maintenir leur représentativité. Quant à l'État, il subit de fortes pressions pour restreindre ses interventions dans la gestion économique et sociale. Les mutations du marché du travail (travailleurs indépendants, emplois précaires,...) ont pour effet de réduire l'importance du travail salarié, bien que la subordination juridique ou économique demeure au cœur de la relation d'emploi. Selon les auteurs, les transformations économiques et sociales en cours mettent en évidence la nécessité d'élargir le cadre de la représentation syndicale au niveau de l'entreprise où la subordination juridique des cadres de pre-

mière ligne et la subordination économique des entrepreneurs dépendants les rapprochent des salariés. Les auteurs envisagent également la mise en place de paliers additionnels de représentation des salariés au niveau des groupes ou des secteurs industriels, car le cadre juridique doit prendre en compte l'interdépendance croissante des entreprises afin d'assurer une véritable représentation des intérêts des salariés. Ils considèrent néanmoins que le régime juridique actuel de monopole de représentation syndical au niveau de l'établissement ou de l'entreprise devrait être maintenu, car il aménage un contrepois au pouvoir de l'employeur en reconnaissant aux salariés le droit à la négociation collective et à la grève. Les auteurs notent également que le cadre juridique actuel ne fait pas obstacle à une implication des salariés et des syndicats dans la gestion de l'entreprise, mais que l'institution d'une obligation légale d'information économique et financière des salariés et de leurs représentants semblable à ce qui existe dans plusieurs pays européens favoriserait une *participation plus active de la part de ceux-ci*. Enfin, la protection des droits des salariés en tant que citoyens implique, selon les auteurs, la reconnaissance du rôle de représentation qui incombe aux *organisations syndicales de travailleurs au sein de structures de concertation sociale à l'échelle nationale et internationale*.

L'ouvrage de Murray et Verge est une contribution majeure à l'analyse de la situation actuelle et des perspectives futures de la représentation syndicale au Québec. Les auteurs manient habilement l'analyse sociologique et juridique pour établir un bilan critique des forces et des faiblesses du régime actuel de représentation syndicale et proposer des scénarios permettant d'adapter ce cadre juridique aux transformations économiques et sociales en cours au Québec et au Canada. Il s'agit là d'un ouvrage original qui intéressera tout autant les universitaires soucieux de mieux saisir les articulations du droit, de l'économie et des relations industrielles que les intervenants sociaux

impliqués dans l'élaboration des politiques publiques ou dans la pratique des relations du travail.

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John M. Coward, *The Newspaper Indian: Native American Identity in the Press, 1820-90* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 1999).

ACCORDING TO John M. Coward, the "Newspaper Indian" — a one-dimensional character stripped by the press of humanity and demonized as a bloodthirsty monster — constituted one of the more influential and pervasive 19th-century white constructions of Native Americans. A creation of increasingly sophisticated newsgathering systems, the Newspaper Indian could be more easily controlled and manipulated by Euro-Americans. (9) Moreover, Coward asserts that the Newspaper Indian, a widely disseminated white construction of Indian identity, exerted a "significant force" in the subsequent "creation and promotion of a powerful set of Indian representations that dominated the nineteenth-century imagination" (11) Combining what might loosely be called a historical systems-analysis approach to the newsgathering industry with a more traditional social and cultural history of Indians, Coward ultimately argues that technological change in the news industry created a set of circumstances in which the systems of newsgathering and dissemination themselves played a direct role in white constructions of Native Americans, creating a standardized Indian "news frame" familiar to most Americans. (16-18, 101-102)

Coward does not attempt to present an exhaustive catalogue of the many Indian images created by the press, an impossible task to say the least. Rather, he analyzes "representative encounters" — captivities, Indian Removal, the Sand Creek

Massacre, the Fetterman Massacre, and others — in order to delineate the assumptions that underlay the Newspaper Indian and the systems that brought it to the public eye, and, in general, the events he catalogues do seem to encompass many of the facets of the Indian-White encounter. (12)

Coward begins with a description of the 19th-century evolution of what Robert Berkhofer, Jr. called "the white man's Indian," well-trod ground to those with familiar with the work of Berkhofer, Roy Harvey Pearce, and Richard Slotkin, among others. The antebellum press tended to report on Indian news in times of crisis or war while remaining relatively silent on Indian issues in the absence of conflict. As a result, the press generally portrayed Indians as ruthless, violent, and bent on the destruction of whites.

While this should come as no surprise to students of Native American history, Coward is careful to note that because of the haphazard and relatively slow methods of pre-wire service newsgathering, *Indian news did not necessarily produce a singular construction of the bloodthirsty savage.* (62) Relying as it did on personal letters, word of mouth, or official government reports and bulletins, antebellum newsgathering efforts tended to allow the dissemination of a wider variety of white views concerning Indians. Indeed, sympathetic and somewhat even-handed news coverage of Indian issues, though rare, at times appeared in the antebellum press. Moreover, given the sometimes random nature of reportage, the antebellum press tended to serve as a sounding board for a more diffuse, generalized "ethnocentric belief system that operated on and through the press" that reinforced rather than created racial differences. (62)

With the formation of the New York Associated Press in 1846, however, the newsgathering machine took on a new role, quickly changing itself from a sounding board to an active participant in the creation of a nationally shared white understanding of Indians. Significantly,

Coward does not rely upon any change in national attitudes toward Indians to explain the emergence of the late 19th century Newspaper Indian. Rather, he points to the transformation of the systems of newsgathering in the telegraph age itself, which generated "a standardized response to Indian violence." (126)

In both the Sand Creek Massacre and the Fetterman Massacre, Coward argues the wire service tended to eclipse the earlier descriptive reports of letter writers and participant observers. Telegraphed Indian news created a "news frame," a set of standardized ways of writing about Indians. The Indian news frame centered on Indian-White conflict, but stripped events of context and did not describe the reasons for conflict. (100-101) Coward suggests a two-step process: initial telegraphic reports from the West appeared under familiar headlines describing "Indian Troubles" or "Indian Treachery." These were followed up by press speculation about possible responses to the provocations. Through this formula the press effectively collapsed the details of Sand Creek and the Fetterman Massacre into one-dimensional, easily grasped caricatures of real events. (100, 139) In subsequent conflicts, according to Coward, the press began to highlight characteristics similar to those reported on in the past, "a framing practice that fostered the development of a standardized series of 'facts.'" (148) Thus a national "Newspaper Indian" dominated Americans' thinking on Indians and Indian policy, reinforcing the image of Indians as hopeless, vanishing savages, and promoting a universal response to the "Indian question."

Those familiar with 19th century Native American history may find Coward's book tends to be overly reminiscent of previous work done on the Indian in American popular culture. For the most part, Coward also fails to consider the consumers of the news and whether or not class, geography, ethnicity, or gender played a role in the creation as well as reception of the Newspaper Indian. In

general, and in spite of many caveats, the *Newspaper Indian* tends to attribute to the press an autonomous, solipsistic role that it may not have played. Native American reactions to and influences on the Newspaper Indian are also notably absent.

But Coward's argument concerning the intersections of systems, in this case, the evolving newsgathering machine, and cultures make this book significant. He correctly points out the undue influence that the press may have been able to exert over the interactions between knowledge and power as they bore on Native American policy in the years after the Civil War, when wire services came to dominate national news. Moreover, Coward makes a relatively strong case that the actual systems of newsgathering, given both new technological opportunities as well as constraints, helped determine the content of the news reported. Though the book ostensibly concerns itself with the press's construction of Native Americans, Coward's argument suggests that the role of the "wired" press in other 19th century struggles could be informed by the Newspaper Indian's example. Had Coward considered the consumers of 19th-century Indian news, specifically the urban immigrant working class, and their influence on the style and content of Indian reportage, certain ironic possibilities arise. Indeed, his argument suggests that Indian influence on newsgathering and reportage may have allowed the press to direct its reductive gaze back on the erstwhile consumers of Indian news — news reports on the crisis years of 1877 and 1886 come readily to mind — with many of the same consequences.

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David Peetz, *Unions In A Contrary World: The Future of the Australian Trade Union Movement* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 1998).

THAT A COUNTRY which has historically had some of the highest trade union density rates in the world has witnessed a decline of 40 per cent in such rates over the last twenty years should be of more than a little interest to union leaders and activists, as well as to students and scholars of the labour movement. The country is Australia and in this work, David Peetz sets out to explain how this could happen. According to Peetz, there are three principle factors behind the shocking decline in trade union membership and power: structural changes in the composition and functioning of the labour market; a paradigm shift in government and business that has witnessed greater hostility to unions; and the responses of the unions themselves to these shifts.

While these culprits have been implicated in union decline in other national jurisdictions, what is novel here is the complex web of interactions which Peetz weaves between them in the context of a highly specific and exceptional system of industrial relations. Since the turn of the century, Australian employment relations have been governed by an arbitral/award system. This reached its highest stage of development in the corporatist years of Accords 1 through 5 (1983-1990). Aspects of this system were responsible for the historically high rates of union membership (over half the workforce in the mid-1970s), but they were also implicated in the Achilles heel of the labour movement which was finally exposed when the conditions were ripe in the 1990s.

Shifts in the structure of employment between industries and occupations as well as the growth of casual labour markets account for a significant decline in union densities, but primarily during the 1980s. By the onset of the present decade the negative impacts of these factors had

largely been registered, and yet the decline accelerated. Radical policy changes that were effected at the start of the 1990s and which continue on to the present, provided a second blow. Particularly important here was the abolition of compulsory union membership, first in individual states and then federally with the Workplace Relations Act of 1996. This measure also outlawed the awarding of employment preference to union members and rendered it more difficult for union officials to enter workplaces. The new strictures against compulsory unionism account for a large measure (half to three-quarters) of declining densities. (112)

But there is more to it than that. Peetz notices an interesting fact. Union densities for workers in "open jobs," that is where membership has been voluntary, have suffered very little. (95) Trade unionism has held its own when membership has been voluntary, but it has entered steep decline when formerly conscripted members are now free to exit. Why should this be the case?

To resolve this riddle Peetz looks at what unions do and don't do in the context of the Australian system. Thus it turns out that "it is the unions themselves — through their relations with employees and employers and their responses to changes ... that have the critical role in whether union membership falls, remains stable or rises The way in which unions relate to employees is the single most important determinant of union propensity." (23) In truth, compulsory unionism fostered what Peetz refers to as a "territory driven" philosophy in which unions spent more time before the courts staking out claims to specific groups of workers, than to "member driven" organizations. (16) As a result, the work place level of organization and activism in many Australian unions leaves much to be desired. For example, more than 30 per cent of unionized workplaces had no shop stewards. Another 76 per cent of unionized workplaces, accounting for 53 per cent of

union members, could be classified as having inactive unions, where the normal practices that we associate with trade unionism (e.g. membership meetings, meetings between stewards and management, etc.) did not take place. (122) At some sites unions did not engage in any type of bargaining with employers whatsoever. As a result, "In many cases where unions are weakly represented and organised members are walking away from unions that are simply seen as doing little or nothing for their members — not least where poor union performance arose from the complacency bred by compulsory unionism." (86) Interestingly, it is not whether unions bargain over wages, or whether they are successful in maintaining real wages that counts, but whether unions engage in any type of bargaining that has a salient effect on membership retention or loss. Similarly, unions need not necessarily fear the new Human Resource Management paradigms that are sometimes viewed as an alternative to union membership. To the extent that HRM schemes are used to intensify the labour process through such programs as Total Quality Management (TQM), Just in Time (JIT), or quality circles, unions themselves become an attractive alternative for hard pressed workers.

Peetz is no fan of compulsory membership. Indeed he holds it mainly responsible for the lethargy which characterizes some unions and which made them ripe for being "knocked off" when the political and legislative climate changed. Corporatism and the Accord, on the other hand, are viewed as important power resources which prevented a repeat of the New Zealand experience in Australia in the years 1984 to 1996. Far from being a betrayal of the labour movement the Accord years offered protection against the development of a widening union/non-union wage differential. Thus corporatism is viewed as a necessary, if insufficient, condition for avoiding union decline. While Australia entered down the road of corporatist experiment, the other

ingredient of trade union strength — a dynamic workplace presence — was, to a significant degree, missing.

I liked the emphasis in this book. Rather than relying upon a uni-variate account, or seeing unions as the hapless victims of global social change, Peetz places responsibility on the labour movement to author its own future. In the process he uses a rich array of survey data sets (e.g. the Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey) to great effect. As a result his analysis provides the reader with a convincing account of what's happened.

Some inter-union comparisons would have added to the analysis by taking it a step further. For instance, what factors account for the successful response on the part of some unions in the greater context of Australian union decline? A full account of different union responses would be useful, although this would necessarily entail a further case study approach.

Unions In A Contrary World also beckons for more cross-national research. Thus, while corporatist regimes also require a strong local union presence if decline is to be avoided, does the opposite necessarily hold? Very few politics indeed have managed to combine a legitimate corporatism with strong workplace bargaining as critics of corporatism have recounted on numerous occasions. Yet even where this aggregation of corporatism plus strong shop floor unionism is missing, trade unionism has not inevitably gone into decline.

But these queries only foreshadow some of the important issues which this valuable contribution invites us to look into further. *Unions In A Contrary World* provides a rigorous, yet highly readable account of union decline in a setting that we would have hardly thought likely. As such it makes for important and highly instructive reading.

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Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press 1997).

ESPECIALLY OVER THE PAST 30 years, scholars of Afro-America have shown themselves remarkably adept at recovering the interior and corporate lives of black Americans from among the ruinous circumstances in which many of them lived. At strength, this approach has given us a collective portrait of African Americans as historical actors and agents, as opposed to simple victims of their times. It must be admitted, however, that this tack has also often resulted in work in which the tragedies concomitant with being black in America are lost in the re-telling of how black people struggled through, and coped with the adversities peculiar to their race. There are more than a few histories of American slavery and ethnographies of ghetto life, for example, in which the poverty and suffering that were no doubt central to both conditions appear in the scholarship as little more than will-o-wisps. With *Scenes of Subjection*, Saidiya Hartman joins a growing number of scholars who have struggled of late to approach topics in African American history and culture by attending to the violence and degradation that have been as definitive of the Afro-American experience as have resourcefulness and resiliency.

Broadly, Hartman tasks herself to shed light on the relative place of agency and subjugation in the shaping of black society and culture in the American South. Temporally, her focus is the long period from the 19th-century height of the South's peculiar institution through the formative years of Jim Crow just before the turn of the century. Her thesis is that violence, terror, and servitude were fundamental to African American society, culture, and identity throughout this period, and that failing to appreciate the ubiquitous constraints and limitations of blackness leads to fundamental misunder-

standings of African American life. Hartman formulates a rather ingenious approach to explicating this point. She does not set about to marshal direct examples of the pervasiveness of terror and constraint in African American life — the awful punishments meted out to slaves or the violence by which white southerners circumscribed black freedom after the Civil War. Rather, the author focuses in the main on moments and institutions that are generally agreed to be clear examples of black agency and/or liberation — slave dance, folklore, and the 13th and 14th Amendments to the United States Constitution, for instance. So central was terror, violence, and servitude to 19th-century African American life, argues Hartman, there are ways in which even the most salient instances of black prerogative were also scenes of subjection.

In the book's first part, comprising three chapters, Hartman brings her thesis and method to bear on issues central to slavery studies. The first chapter examines frivolity and amusement among slaves, and the relationship of both to the will and power of slave owners. Here, relying in the main on manuals of plantation management, the author shows how slave owners cultivated amusements among their bondpeople in order to further their own power. The second chapter is an extended critique of notions of slave community and culture that have come to dominate slavery historiography. In what is perhaps the book's most illuminating chapter, Hartman criticizes histories of slavery whose approach to "slave community" fail to account for the disputes, contests, and failures inherent to societies hemmed in by violence and terror. Her critique of the prevailing approach to slave culture is just as incisive. Here, for instance, Hartman turns the debate on the prevalence and consequence of Africanisms in American slavery on its head. Where others have set out to catalog cultural and social connections between slaves' African homelands and American plantations — by way of demonstrating

the resiliency of Afro-American society — Hartman exhorts us to realize that memory does not necessarily constitute connection. It is, by nature, also an admission of rupture. The third chapter explores contradictions of agency and subjugation, in law and practice, that characterized sexual relations between white southerners and enslaved blacks. Here, Hartman addresses the ways white southerners not only normalized sexual violence against blacks, but put the onus of that violence onto the backs of blacks themselves.

The book's second part calls attention to continuities of subjugation joining African American life after the Civil War to African American life in slavery. As in the first three chapters, part two is particularly concerned with how white dominance found expression in institutions and activities supposedly indicative of African American independence. To these ends, the fourth chapter introduces Hartman's intentions "to discern the ways in which emancipatory discourses of rights, liberty, and equality instigate, transmit, and effect forms of racial domination and [how] liberal narratives of individuality idealize mechanisms of domination and discipline." (116) The book's final two chapters do the heavy lifting on these points. So in chapter five Hartman takes up first how former slave owners and ostensive friends of the Negro cooperated in attempts to replace freed people's former bonds of servitude with internal bonds of discipline and obligation, and second how former slaves responded to those attempts. To address these matters, Hartman explicates the coercive power at the heart of contract law and the various pedagogies of self-improvement peddled among former slaves after emancipation. Chapter six builds to the legal codification of black disenfranchisement and discrimination marked by *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), wherein the Supreme Court reestablished white mastery over black southerners as the law of the land, rooting the majority argument, ironically,

in an interpretation of the 14th amendment to the US constitution (an amendment which ostensibly affords equal protection of the law to all American citizens).

Scenes of Subjection is a smart book, set off by important insights, and some very good analysis of African American life in slavery and freedom. Regrettably, the book is also distinguished by an accretive prose style. Together, a superabundance of rhetorical questions, the continuous intrusion of experts, and a line of analysis characterized by repetition combine to occlude some of the book's most important contributions.

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M.M. Manring, *Slave in a Box: The Strange Career of Aunt Jemima* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press 1998).

UNLIKE C. VANN WOODWARD's *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, there are no surprise conclusions in this history of the symbol of America's most popular pancake mix — racism and sexism were and are rife in the land. It begins with an examination of the many historical and fictional treatments of the mythical slave Mammy, whose characteristics varied widely depending upon who was writing about her. In many of the white ones she symbolized the proper racial, gender, and labour order: that is, white and male supremacy, and white women not having to endure kitchen chores. It was this racist and sexist image, says the author, which originated in the antebellum white South, that the 20th century advertising industry chose to use.

Ironically, the first Aunt Jemima was actually a 19th-century white minstrel show performer, in blackface and drag. His act involved him dressing up like a cook, with bandanna, dress, and apron, and pretending to be "Old Aunt Jemima,"

a mythical figure in the minstrel songs that were popular among blacks and whites in the post-Civil War years. One night in 1889, a Missouri businessman who had just bought a mill that produced self-rising flour walked out of the show and knew he had found what he was looking for: a brand name and symbol that personified "southern hospitality." A few years later, the trade mark and process were sold to a more successful merchant, who added powdered milk to the recipe and, most cleverly, hired a real black woman (and real ex-slave) to pose as Aunt Jemima at the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893. He also invented the myth that she had been the cook at the Louisiana plantation of a Colonel Higbee and had saved his life (or at least his moustache from being ripped off) by distracting the Northern soldiers who were bent on doing this with her marvelous pancakes. They never forgot the taste, it was said, and after the Colonel's death they returned to Louisiana and persuaded her to come North with them and share her recipe with their company, which eventually became part of Quaker Oats.

Manring puts the subsequent spectacular success of the Aunt Jemima campaign in the context of the "servant crisis" and rise of the advertising industry. Mercifully, he does not regard the crisis as something manufactured by advertisers such as the J. Walter Thompson company, which handled Quaker Oats. Nor does he say it was simply an actual shortage of labour. Instead, he follows Ruth Schwartz Cowan and Dan Katzman in regarding it as a labour market problem — the result of the migration of white working class women, mainly Irish, from domestic labour in the early 20th century and the influx of black women into the occupation in the North. Employers' major complaints, with both white and black servants, had not so much been not the shortage itself, but the mobility of the women — their propensity to leave their positions after a short time for ones that looked better. He might have added that the com-

plaints also centred on their inability to meet the bourgeois culinary expectations of the day. In any event, the white middle-class women who were increasingly forced to take complete charge of their families' food preparation were a natural audience for nationally advertised processed foods, particularly ones that promised to save labour. James Young, the man in charge of the Aunt Jemima account at J. Walter Thompson, proved very adept at doing this. The ads he created in the 1920s for a number of products, such as Maxwell House coffee, exploited the prevailing white image of the South as a land of agricultural abundance where whites worked little and were served by devoted blacks. The Aunt Jemima ones developed this fully, creating a whole folkloric collection of stories about the Colonel and the contributions of "the cook whose cabin was more famous than Uncle Tom's" to the happy life on his plantation.

Manring devotes a chapter to examining these and the subsequent Aunt Jemima campaigns in detail, highlighting the racist and sexist stereotypes these played on, and the receptivity of the target white market (blacks were deliberately ignored) to these images. Significantly, the author points out, there was an obvious absentee from the stories of idyllic life on the old plantation: a wife for the Colonel, a mistress for the elegant mansion by the Mississippi. This, says the author, allowed Northern white women who used the pancake mix to imagine themselves in her place in that leisure class. "The ads," he says, "urged white housewives to have Aunt Jemima, not to be Aunt Jemima." (140)

The campaign succeeded fabulously until the early 1960s when, with no less than three Aunt Jemimas touring the country, it began to run into the hostility the humbling image had been stirring for years among African Americans. The NAACP urged a boycott of the product and tried to block the Aunt Jemimas's appearances at various service clubs. In 1968,

Quaker Oats began a reluctant retreat. It slimmed down the picture of Aunt Jemima on the box, made her look younger, and replaced the tell-tale bandanna — symbol of slavery and subservience — with a headband. Personal appearances came to a halt. In 1989, in an attempt to make her look like “a working mom,” her headgear was removed, her hair was greyed, and she was given a pair of earrings. Yet, Manring concludes, “Somewhere, behind the image of Aunt Jemima the working grandmother, lies that same old smiling plantation mammy.” (175) In some respects, little has changed since 1889. “Her blackness still reminds white consumers that they are white, and that whiteness is a good thing. Her sex reminds consumers that black women belong in the kitchen.” (178)

One can disagree here and there with some of this, but certainly the main point is well-taken: That so many of us could have responded so positively to a symbol such as this does indeed say a lot about the images that black people and women have had to contend with over the years.

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Melinda Chateauvert, *Marching Together: Women of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press 1998).

IN MARCHING TOGETHER: Women of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, Melinda Chateauvert addresses an important and understudied aspect of American labour history — the role of race and gender in shaping trade union organizations. She accomplishes this through an examination of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Although much has been written about Pullman porters, their union, and its president, A. Philip Randolph, the limitations of the organization and its leadership

have rarely been highlighted. Through a focus on the role of wives and women railroad workers in the union, Chateauvert shows how patriarchal gender roles shaped the organization and limited its growth. Yet, the author does not view the women of the Brotherhood as victims, but as actors who “implemented their own political agenda by exploiting concepts of black manhood, female respectability, and class consciousness.” (xi)

Chateauvert demonstrates how the role of women in the union changed as definitions of womanhood shifted. The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters was a product of the 1920s and the ideology of the “New Negro.” The Brotherhood promised African Americans “manhood rights” — a combination of just working conditions, a living wage, and an end to second-class political, economic, and social status. In its economic aspect, “manhood rights” asserted the desirability of creating male breadwinners who could support their families unaided and protect them from racial attacks. Many black women prized “respectable domesticity,” something made difficult when the low wages of black men forced wives to work and when racist stereotyping of black women denied them recognition as good wives and mothers. These concepts, manhood rights and respectable domesticity, determined women’s participation in organizing. The union-created Women’s Economic Councils sought to generate support among porters’ families and the local community. Some council leaders also took a more active role in organizing. The ability of wives to go into homes (avoiding company spies at the workplace) and to collect dues was highly prized. This activity was compatible with respectable domesticity as porters and their wives construed it. They saw a wife as a man’s partner who should work with him to build a union to improve his earning capacity. This expectation that women should be dependent on husbands was not shared by all the women in the union, however. Some believed in femi-

nist ideals, and they sought to organize working women and encouraged women's independence.

Through a focus on two women leaders, Halena Wilson and Rosina Tucker, who held these conflicting views of womanhood, Chateauvert traces the shifting influence of respectable domesticity and feminism among the women of the Brotherhood over time. The Brotherhood's male leadership always remained wedded to the ideology of respectable domesticity, and the union ignored the needs of women workers in both the Pullman Company and the railroad industry. Chateauvert shows that this union of black men treated black women no better than unions of white men treated white women. She argues that depression-generated attacks on women's wage earning undermined what support the feminists had. When the union triumphed and achieved its first contract in 1937, the leadership moved to reorganize the women into women's auxiliaries modeled on those of the white railroad unions. The auxiliary had a very limited scope, and President Randolph became their "advisor." The women could say or do nothing without his approval. Yet, according to Chateauvert this was not simply an example of the triumph of male chauvinism. The majority of the members of the Women's Economic Councils voted for the new constitution and chose the title of "Ladies," not "Women's" Auxiliary. Thus the majority revealed their attachment to domesticity and their concern as African American women for respectability — something white society routinely denied them. They did this, Chateauvert notes, although many of them had paid jobs themselves; they chose to self-identify as wives.

With its new name and mandate, the Ladies Auxiliary ceased to play an important role in the union. It maintained however an educational program designed to build support for labour unionism and to assert the respectability of working-class families. Such activity was typical of

white women's auxiliaries too, but these African-American women also remained committed to the cause of racial advancement. With Randolph's encouragement, they participated actively in the Double V campaign and the march on Washington Movement during World War II. Indeed, Chateauvert argues that "politics" became the primary focus of the auxiliary after the war. While maintaining education programs to show housewives how to support the labour movement through consumerism, the auxiliary increasingly focused on organizing to achieve equal civil rights for black Americans.

Chateauvert argues that this division of labour within the union between men and women contributed to political activism, but the commitment to the sexual division of jobs actually circumscribed the future of the union. While both the union and the auxiliary protested racial discrimination that kept black women out of white women's jobs, neither supported women who sought "men's jobs." As the railroads and the airlines hired more women in service positions, the Brotherhood's reluctance to accept women members and to reach out to service workers in other transportation fields limited its potential size; the postwar decline of the railroad industry doomed it.

As Chateauvert shows, however, the auxiliary declined before the union did, and the men dissolved it in 1957. She interprets this decline as a function of the auxiliary's lack of financial resources and its dependence on the union in programmatic terms. This interpretation highlights two of the book's limitations. Although Chateauvert notes that it is often difficult to determine when a position or statement reflects Randolph's thinking and when it reflects the women's perspective, this a critical issue for assessing women's agency. It needs to be addressed more systematically throughout the narrative. Second, Chateauvert does not discuss at any length how gender ideology developed at mid-century among African Americans. In essence she presumes that

the wives of younger porters shared the concern of older wives for respectable domesticity, but the inability of the auxiliary to attract new members might reflect that younger women found "ladyhood" irrelevant. Furthermore, Chateaufort does not consider the implications of the large number of black workers, male and female, who belonged to integrated CIO unions that sought to organize all workers within their jurisdictions. From its uninterest in Pullman's black women laundry workers who sought membership during World War II to its refusal to organize white stewardesses in 1960, the Brotherhood seemed singularly resistant to women workers regardless of the impact on its potential size. Whether the men and women of the Brotherhood still represented the mainstream of the black working class by mid-century needs to be explored.

Despite these limitations, *Marching Together* pioneers a new avenue for labour history. As Chateaufort notes, gender relations in white unions, at least prior to the CIO era, often took the same forms as they did in the Brotherhood. This suggests an approach to understanding gender roles among the white working class through a focus on women's auxiliaries and the concept of respectable domesticity. Auxiliaries bridged the gap between the workplace and the family, and they can be a window into gender relations in the white as well as the black working class.

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Nigel Anthony Sellars, *Oil, Wheat and Wobblies: The IWW in Oklahoma, 1905-1930* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press 1998).

GROWING UP IN RURAL Oklahoma hearing stories of my Wobbly grandfather, I was curious about that exotic organization, the IWW, that no one claimed to

know much about during the Cold War 1950s. How disappointed I was when I began reading radical history, including Big Bill Haywood's autobiography, and countless labour history texts, to find practically nothing about the IWW in Oklahoma. Even Howard Zinn's acclaimed *Peoples History of the United States* does not mention Oklahoma although the IWW is a major topic.

How pleased I was then in the beginning of the 1990s to follow the work of Nigel Anthony Sellars on the IWW in Oklahoma, first published as an article, "Wobblies in the Oil Field: The Repression of the Industrial Workers of the World in Oklahoma," in *An Oklahoma I had Never Seen Before: Alternative Views of Oklahoma History*, edited by Davis D. Joyce, published in 1994 by the University of Oklahoma Press. Sellars's work culminated in a history doctoral dissertation at the University of Oklahoma, and is now available as a book.

Although I am a professional historian and from Oklahoma, I did not specialize in Oklahoma history, or "western," "frontier," "borderlands" history, as it is variously called in US university history departments. The tendency to provincialism in regional US history repels me. But Sellars departs so drastically from the usual provincialism that *Oil, Wheat, and Wobblies* cannot be characterized as regional or US West history. However, it does provide a model for doing better and more universally accessible regional US history. Sellars not only breaks new ground in those respects, but also makes an invaluable contribution to labour history.

Most of my extended family and neighbours are embarrassed or ashamed of my grandfather's Wobbly sympathies. They just don't talk about it. In the same way, most Oklahomans, including Oklahoma historians, and labour historians in general avoid dealing with the IWW in Oklahoma. The topic has become like Ross Perot's "crazy grandmother in the basement."

A big part of the problem is the — mostly negative or romanticized — stereotyping of Oklahoma history and “Okies” in general. Until recently, white settler stories have dominated, from the Oklahoma outlaws to the Dust Bowl migration, although both of those phenomena were multiethnic. Native Americans were represented by Will Rogers, Jr., or the tiny percentage who became oil-rich. African-Americans were invisible. But above all, it is the Depression-era myth that produced and was perpetuated by the book and film, *The Grapes of Wrath* — the myth of Jeffersonian yeoman farmers displaced by greedy land speculators and bankers — that evoked a romantic image of rural Oklahomans as people of the soil.

The American as yeoman farmer ideal, no more than a myth at any period of US history, certainly cannot be squared with the reality of early 20th century Oklahoma that was an industrialized society, run by absentee corporate directors and an urban élite, peopled by a large rural proletariat rather than Jeffersonian *volk*. Why on earth would the Industrial Workers of the World pursue a base in Oklahoma among self-sufficient family farmers when the IWW constitution prohibited private property owners and even farm tenants from joining?

Sellars does not address the myth but he does undermine its premise by methodically describing the Oklahoma industrial economy that existed decades before the creation of Dust Bowl refugees. As the leading producer of oil, the second producer of wheat, and significant in coal mining among the states, Oklahoma was hardly a yeoman farmer setting. In 1905, when the IWW began organizing there, most settlers had not been born in Oklahoma, and a large percentage of the population went to Oklahoma for jobs, and many of those who stayed moved around the state tramping from harvest to oil fields or coal mines. Sellars's vivid descriptions of the low paid, back-breaking, and extremely dangerous work involved in laying pipelines and wheat harvesting

and the wretched living conditions and general misery of life, leave little doubt as to why the workers were attracted to the idea of bettering their conditions.

One of the images of the IWW that has persisted is that they promoted violence in the form of sabotage. Sellars documents the source of this image in the owners and the press they controlled. He explains that the actual meaning of “direct action” and “sabotage” as expressed by the IWW lay in their tactics of short strikes, distribution of literature, stump speaking, consciousness-raising stickers, songs, and intense recruitment drives, not in damaging machinery or burning crops and storage facilities. Sellars makes an airtight case that no Wobbly violence was ever documented in Oklahoma, and only one of the many Wobblies jailed for organizing was ever put on trial for a specific act of violence, and he was acquitted. (122)

Sellars emphasizes the complicity of the press, particularly the *Tulsa World* as key to discrediting the IWW and repressing Wobblies. He could have dug deeper into the actual corporate ties between press and big business, as personified by the Gaylord family (up to the present time), that he mentions only in passing. Furthermore, in his comprehensive discussion of the role of the KKK, Sellars fails to identify its class composition as mainly “pillars of the community.” This is important because of the popular characterization of klansmen as unlettered rednecks.

Sellars points out that most historians deal with the IWW after World War I, if at all, as defeated, or as a radical fellowship rather than a union. His two chapters (seven and eight) on the IWW in the 1920s documents the error of that common assumption. Importantly, even though the veteran leadership was in prison or exile, new leadership emerged. Sellars dates the decline and fall of the IWW in Oklahoma to 1923-30 (Chapter 8). Yet early in the text (Chapter 4), and contradicting his own later chapters in which he shows the

IWW continuing strong, he reiterates the usual historical explanation for the repression that came down like thunder on members of the IWW and Socialist Party, both nationwide and in Oklahoma: The 1917 Green Corn Rebellion.

Inspired by Wobbly ideas and considering World War I a rich man's war to be opposed, poor tenant farmers, barred as such from membership in the IWW, in southeastern Oklahoma formed a poorly armed, ragged army to march to Washington, expecting to pick up throngs of like-minded workers on the way, setting off the general strike and overthrow the government. The uprising was quickly and brutally crushed, and, of course, the press lost no time in implicating the IWW and the Socialist Party, giving another excuse to the US Justice Department and Oklahoma police authorities for destroying the IWW and the Socialist Party, and all labour activity, a plan already in motion.

Not only is this chapter contradictory to Sellars's innovative documentation of IWW strength five years after the rebellion, the account of the rebellion itself is disappointing and derivative. Curiously, Sellars omits completely one of the most interesting, and well-known, aspects of the event — the participation, if not leadership, of African-American and native American farmers.

Without mentioning the 1917 Green Corn Rebellion, in the final chapter Sellars identifies three principle causes, in order of importance; for the decline of the IWW in Oklahoma: revived vigilantism especially by the Ku Klux Klan; technological change that introduced the combine to harvesting and welding to pipe laying making tens of thousands of jobs redundant; and splits within the organization that caused a dramatic flight of members. Although he places organizational problems third, Sellars inexplicably concludes: "While criminal syndicalism laws, vigilantism, and technological change took their toll, the fault was ultimately the IWW's own because the union

had proven less adaptable to change than its leaders had believed." (184)

Downplay of the effects of violent repression by direct state and federal aggression as well as by death squads closely related to police authority makes for a disappointing ending to an otherwise brilliant analysis. If Sellars was looking from the vantage point of a unionized US work force trying to understand a failed, but valiant early attempt at organizing, blaming organizational and factional problems, rather than repression might make sense. But he does not ask why labour is in such a sorry state in the US, the least organized and least politically effective in the industrialized world. Save for the exceptional and brief New Deal era, government blockage, cooptation, and repression of labour initiatives have continued.

It might be that the IWW was on to something that has even more validity today than ever: raising workers' consciousness that "the working class and the employing class have nothing in common" (from the IWW Constitution Preamble), and that the labour contract and the ballot box, that the IWW eschewed, have not produced economic justice, much less political power.

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Richard Juliani, *Building Little Italy: Philadelphia's Italians before Mass Migration* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1998).

MUCH OF THE LITERATURE on incipient immigrant communities in North America has been what many writers have called *filiopietistic*, that is, members of a particular ethnic community, in an attempt to bolster the community or to respond to a perceived self-disesteem of their ethnic group, have emphasized the presence of their "tribe" in a particular locale from the early history of a Euro-

pean presence in that locus. Robert Harney would refer to this practice as *Mayflowerism*. Richard Juliani's *Building Little Italy* is an in-depth study into Philadelphia's early Italian community. Juliani is aware and critical of earlier *filio-pietistic* studies on Philadelphian ethnic groups, yet he also has an appreciation for the enormous amount of information that these studies have accumulated and preserved for the historical record.

Building Little Italy is a straight-forward chronological account of Philadelphia's Italians from the late 18th century to the 1870s. Philadelphia ranked as the second target city in the United States, after New York, for Italian immigration in those years even if the population never rose over a few hundred. The early presence of Italian revolutionists, philosophers, and professional musicians and composers could not be considered a "community" as such but it did evoke in Philadelphia's citizen's a positive image of Italy, one which was largely maintained until the mid-19th century. And it was in mid-century, argues Juliani, that an identifiable community emerged in the city with the arrival of street musicians and vendors and tradesmen from the Ligurian coast, who would change the image of the Italian in the American city. A number of factors gave a sense of fixity and community to these Italian immigrants. One was the presence of women and children. The ratio of Italian immigrant families to male migrant workers was higher in the mid-19th century than in the early 20th century. As well, the first US Italian national parish opened in this city in the 1850s, and a small cohort of businessmen and leaders emerged early on to give leadership to the ethnic group. Mutual aid societies were started and intermediaries became instrumental in having immigrants obtain their citizenship in order to vote, in particular for the Republican party.

Juliani's chapter on Little Italy is particularly useful as a reconstruction of an ethnic neighbourhood. Italians concentrated in the second, third, and fourth

wards in South Philadelphia; the vast majority were from near Genoa and about five-eighths of these immigrants were male. The same percentage of immigrants were concentrated in the age cohort 15-44. What is surprising is that almost one-half of the immigrant family households contained only the stem family with no boarders, while to be sure there were also a few boardinghouses for labourer gangs.

Building Little Italy is the most comprehensive early history of any North American Italian concentration but it is not an easy read. Juliani has done a fine job with the writing but there is also an enormous amount of detail that the reader must digest. This microscopic study has depended a great deal on city directories, assessment rolls, naturalization records, wills, newspapers, church registers, and census records. At times, it seems as if too much of the quantitative material is coming back to us in prose even if it can be culled from the very useful tables in the book. The chapter organization also makes it difficult for the reader to capture the author's point. It might have been useful to have consolidated themes such as labour, neighbourhood, and host country perceptions rather than scattering them through the chapters. These quibbles aside, this monograph crowns years of research on the part of a sociologist who seems very much at home in the discipline of history. The book also certainly brings home its main argument that the flood of the later Italian migration has rendered the significant earlier migration obscure and that this early migration must be studied in order to understand the residential, occupational, and institutional infrastructures of a significant component of American urban society.

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Gerald J. Baldasty, *E.W. Scripps and the Business of Newspapers* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press 1999).

THIS IS A SOLID and tightly-focused monograph on the formation of the first US national newspaper chain that highlights three tactics: market segmentation, low cost, and vertical integration. Baldasty builds a case for adding Edward Wyllis Scripps to the pantheon of US newspaper giants of the late 19th and early 20th centuries — joining Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst — based on his innovations in what might be termed a modern, forward-looking approach to management of the daily newspaper. Choosing relatively small markets with little direct competition for the working-class readers he sought, Scripps developed the three tactics into general guidelines that became hard and fast rules for the profitable running of the newspaper as business. Baldasty devotes successive chapters to each of these business principles: controlling costs, centralizing management, avoiding competition, resisting the influence of advertising, advocating working-class interests, and appealing to working-class readers. Scripps appears to have learned everything he ever would deploy about the newspaper business from his earliest forays into the field, and turned his experience into the pattern that would control his newspapers. Hampered by his older half-brother James, and finally successful in an intra-family battle for control of the expanding chain, Scripps's chief operating principle seems to have been a need for absolute control. He owned fifty-one per cent of each of his chain's newspapers — often secretly, through associates.

Although cost-cutting and its allied principle of vertical integration — Scripps helped to develop services that provided articles, visual materials, and later popular science reporting to each of his papers at a fraction of the cost that each one of the papers would have had to expend itself — was not a new American

business strategy, Scripps's business correspondence reveals the stunning extent to which he practiced it. As a result, the Scripps papers were often shoddily produced and experienced a constant turnover in personnel — something that Scripps actually welcomed, for he felt that younger, inexperienced, underpaid journalist could produce the kind of paper he wanted. Both of these "problems" turned out to be benefits in the world of American business of the 20th century; cheap goods as a way of earning money in a strictly segmented market and the paying of low salaries to keep the firm fresh with new faces. Those who were willing to stick it out often signed agreements to share in the profits of the newspaper and thus were easily converted to Scripps's practice, helping to enrich themselves by adhering as strictly as possible to the business practices of the chain's founder.

The desire to keep advertising and advertisers at bay and to promote working class interests are the two aspects of the Scripps legacy that seem to have the least resonance in the current workings of the US mainstream newspaper landscape, not to mention the mainstream non-print media. It is here that Baldasty's short monograph might have been a bit more forthcoming. This reader would have liked to have seen just how the economics of the individual papers worked in practice: given the fact that they sold for one or two cents, had a limited circulation and were being produced in an era during which advertising revenue was providing more than fifty per cent of the income of most periodicals, the notion that they were profitable seems counter-intuitive. But there is no question that the central services to which the papers had to subscribe were profitable, so the question of whether the chain was some kind of pyramid scheme, providing income for Mr. Scripps at his ranch in California or on his yacht, and only marginally about running successful local newspapers, is just one that comes to mind. The other area that

seems to be less than completely realized in this monograph is the support of the working class. What does this exactly mean in the active period of Scripps's newspaper life? Baldasty gives numerous examples of support for reform measures and for union issues and attacks on anti-labour candidates. He is silent, though, on fights within organized labour and the question of party politics: how did the chain's newspapers deal with the question of the Socialist Party? How did they differ from socialist newspapers in the markets that they served? Or with newspapers devoted to the working class that were not printed in English?

A book entitled *E.W. Scripps and the Business of Newspapers* seems to imply that there will be an integration of the life and times of Scripps with the business of the paper. That is not the case. The strength of this monograph is its focus on the business of the newspaper, with the first extensive use made of the business correspondence, and supported by a grant from the Scripps Howard Foundation. Baldasty has largely limited himself to the tactics of running the papers and has not made the story of Scripps himself play much of a role in this monograph. Neither of the major biographies, one more or less official, *Lusty Scripps* (New York 1932), by friend and confidante, Gilson Gardner and *The Astonishing Mr. Scripps: The Turbulent Life of America's Penny Press Lord* (Ames, Iowa 1992), by Vance Trimble, a newspaperman with a string of popular hagiographies on American "success" stories, like the founders of Wal-Mart and of FedEx, are useful to historians looking to put together the larger story of how the man of business and his pursuit of success work out in an integrated whole. Scripps was apparently a man who lived a colorful and extravagant life that was financed by his commitment to the "common man." Baldasty has given us a strong sense of the mechanics of the story, and Gardner and Trimble have produced good yarns. Weaving these stories together would answer a question asked

by one of his regional editors of every story in a Scripps paper, "Is it interesting?" in the affirmative.

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Amy Bentley, *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 1998).

EATING FOR VICTORY is a cultural history of Americans' eating patterns and attitudes toward food during the 1940s, as World War II disrupted normal life and wartime exigencies prompted the US government to institute rationing policies. Bentley argues that during the war years, most Americans were able to eat better quality food — and in greater quantities — than during the Depression. Still, she maintains, the Roosevelt administration's unprecedented and controversial wartime decision to ration food was a defensible, ethical response to massive food production and distribution needs from 1942 to 1945. As her first chapter title, "Rationing is Good Democracy," implies, the wartime commitment of American leaders to send as much as fifty per cent of foodstuffs abroad to the military and the Allies required unusual measures to insure that citizens on the home front would get their fair share.

The arm of the federal government responsible for rationing during World War II was the Office of Price Administration (OPA). Gradually, this agency implemented the rationing of tires, gasoline, and shoes, as well as sugar, coffee, butter, canned goods, and red meat. Bentley presents the OPA in a positive light, noting that it did its work well enough to ensure that rationing served its intended purpose of allocating limited resources. Despite grumbling, most Americans were supportive of the OPA's work.

This is a well-researched history, with major documentation drawn from the Na-

tional Archives and a special focus on rationing in the city of Baltimore, Maryland. Bentley's primary interest has less to do with the bureaucratic aspects of rationing than cultural responses to wartime changes in food production and allocation, consumerism, gender division of labour in food preparation, and agricultural practices and gardening. Drawing from the work of Mark Leff and Robert Westbrook, Bentley argues that these activities were imbued with messages about patriotic duty, voluntarism, and democratic obligation. The book's primary sources also include public images focusing on food (some of which contradict messages about sacrifice and duty). For example, Bentley discusses Norman Rockwell's popular "Four Freedom" series, a set of illustrations appearing in 1943 in the *Saturday Evening Post*, one of which, *Freedom From Want*, warmly depicted an American family's traditional Thanksgiving meal. Besides Rockwell's painting, some twenty other pieces of visual evidence about American food and culture appear in this book, ranging from cartoons to a "Victory garden pin-up girl" from a 1944 calendar.

The book's contribution to World War II history is strongest in its explanations in how wartime consumers responded to changes in governmental emphases and policies that affected household shopping and eating habits. For example, Bentley explores the close partnership between manufacturers, advertising agencies, and the federal government, and demonstrates how companies benefited from ad campaigns with military morale-building, war-linked content in national magazines and newspapers. "The government," she argues, "encouraged Madison Avenue to link its advertising to US war aims, and, not surprisingly, it defined these aims in private, individualistic terms that dignified and promoted consumption." (3)

Another significant contribution of this book is its discussion of public responses to postwar relief policies in the face of crop failures worldwide. Bentley de-

scribes the leadership of former US President Herbert Hoover in galvanizing American resources to alleviate suffering abroad, and reports that public polls in 1945 indicated that as many as 79 per cent of Americans supported postwar aid to other countries (presumably continuing food rationing as one possibility for offering aid). Yet by 1947, political tensions surrounding the organization responsible for famine relief, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), prompted US officials to withdraw support for the organization. Bentley quotes a frustrated UNRRA Director General Fiorello La Guardia as lamenting the American failure of political will as "bread diplomacy," in which only nations with politics acceptable to the US could receive food aid. Thus, Bentley concludes, "international relief under 'impartial' UN auspices... was among the first casualties of the cold war." (168)

Despite the book's solid contributions to the history of wartime rationing and postwar policies, it has some serious shortcomings. Bentley is interested in the interplay of race and gender as they relate to the 1940s food politics, and although she addresses African-Americans' experience with rationing only sporadically, she includes material that underscores the limits of democratic ideas in wartime. For example, in the city of Baltimore, organizers for "Victory gardening" activities on public school property divided gardening plots between "white" and "coloured" groups of participants. So much for the public unity and harmony that Victory gardening was supposed to symbolize. Bentley's anecdotal material on the limits of democracy, however, does not deter her from an overall positive assessment of American wartime policies — and, unfortunately, from over-generalizing about American unity in support of war aims. Too often her prose sweeps all Americans into a pro-war mindset that does not take in to account critiques of US policy levied throughout the war by conscientious objectors and other dissenters.

Also problematic is Bentley's characterization of gender difference on the American home front. In a lengthy chapter on wartime rationing of meat and sugar, she explores metaphorical linkages with these two commodities, suggesting that in North America and other societies, meat has commonly been identified with men, and sugar with women. Sugar rationing, she suggests, was an especially difficult reality for many women to accept, since cultural messages about females as keepers of the hearth reinforced traditional images of women at home, baking sweets to treat their families and communicating their support of loved ones. But Bentley's speculative work on symbolic representations of sugar and meat is unpersuasive, undermined in part by her own larger argument that Americans in general, whether female or male, supported rationing as a practical measure and dealt as family units (not as gender-conscious individuals) with the inconveniences it posed.

Bentley's penchant for highlighting gender consciousness where it likely did not exist is compounded by another interpretive problem evident in her work. Despite her solid archival research from the 1940s and analyses that help to explain cultural reactions to governmental prescriptions, *Eating for Victory* is peppered with anecdotes drawn from the 1990s that are presumably intended to serve as interesting analogies but, in fact, detract from the book's historical arguments. A rigorous editor would have looked carefully at Bentley's anecdotes (which range from press releases about President George Bush's heart problems to controversies over the breast-feeding of infants in public) and pruned those which are largely irrelevant to her subject. The "politics of domesticity" as lived out by American women, men, and children under the shadow of World War II is, in itself, a compelling topic for study. One need not overreach to make that case.

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Richard Magat, *Unlikely Partners: Philanthropic Foundations and the Labor Movement* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1999).

IF CONVENTIONAL WISDOM maintains that logically no connection exists between two groups, then often that will be enough to ensure historians ignore a certain area completely. This, until recently, certainly held true for historians and the relationship between philanthropic foundations and organized labour. It is not difficult to understand why this state of affairs has existed for so long. Early philanthropic foundations were often established by "robber baron" money and these leaders of industry frequently held antagonistic views of organized labour. Logically then, a connection between the two would appear to fall under the category of oxymoron. While histories of organized labour and, to a lesser degree, philanthropic foundations, have expanded greatly in recent years, studies of the links between the two have not even been attempted.

Some individuals thrive on researching links previously believe to be non-existent and this is certainly the case with the author of *Unlikely Partners*. Richard Magat, a former foundation president, had his interest in the connection between organized labour and philanthropic foundations piqued, after reviewing a book. The book detailed the horrific events of the 1914 Ludlow Massacre and subsequent Rockefeller Foundation investigation. Upon researching this seemingly non-existent area, the author discovered that not only has a strong connection existed between organized labour and philanthropic foundations for much of the 20th century, but the association has also led to some of the most far-reaching social legislation in American history. The fruits of Magat's labour resulted in *Unlikely Partners* and this deeply researched work provides ample evidence for scholars, suggests areas for further study within the field, and is a call-to-arms for

an American labour movement that has been on the defensive for many years. Magat's thesis is supported throughout by the author's extensive use of primary documents, scholarly texts, and interviews. The resulting work chronicles a compelling story of struggle, compromise, and frequent progressive legislation.

Unlikely Partners divides neatly into three distinct sections. The first four chapters chronicle the rise of early philanthropic foundations, focusing especially on the influential Russell Sage Foundation; the development of foundations, main consideration being given to those with a labour movement relationship; Congressional investigations of foundations, and research, especially in labour related endeavors. The central section of Magat's study focuses in detail on various areas where the links between philanthropic foundations and labour organizations have led to considerable gain for a wide range of Americans. Included in this list would be black workers, women and unions, farm workers, general and labour education, health and safety, economic development, and public policy. The study concludes with an investigation of two areas of great interest for the labour movement today, organizing and the union democracy movement. Magat's final chapter chronicles the author's hopes for the future, based largely on his desire to see far greater links between organized labour and philanthropic foundations. The author states clearly in the final chapter that foundations and organized labour have the potential to be far more powerful when united than when working alone, "The most potent response in gaining public regard might be a common effort by organized labor and philanthropic foundations ... a combined effort more productive than either could make alone." (193) The present political climate in the United States finds both organized labour and philanthropic foundations under attack. Although the assaults are for very different reasons, or-

ganized labour being labelled a "special interest" and philanthropic foundations being said to have too much influence on public policy, the results for the two are similar: increased public hostility. If common ground can be found, and Magat's research details that this has been possible throughout the 20th century, then much could be gained by both sides.

The area in which foundations have shown the most interest in organized labour is research and Magat clearly demonstrates in chapter four ample evidence of this concern. Throughout the 20th century a wide range of philanthropic foundations, including the Carnegie Institute, Russell Sage Foundation, Ford Foundation, and the Twentieth Century Fund, have provided millions of dollars for scholars and researchers to study working conditions. Some of the best known labour research of this century has been funded by philanthropic foundations. Included in a short list would be John Commons's *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, funded by the Carnegie Institute of Washington, W.L. Mackenzie King's *Industry and Humanity*, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Twentieth Century Fund's project to guide employers in working within the framework of the Wagner Act. In recent years philanthropic foundations have continued this type of funding. A 1994 research initiative by the Rockefeller and Russell Sage Foundations concentrated on low-skilled labour and the role of unionization. Eric Wanner, president of the Russell Sage Foundation, summed up why they were interested in labour market opportunities in a personal communication to Magat, "both because these play such a dominant role in determining the possibility of escaping poverty and because the evident deterioration in the labor market position of low-skilled workers over the past decades has lengthened the odds of escape for many Americans." (76) Wanner's quote plainly demonstrates that certain foundations are very willing to research work that can be of

enormous benefit both to working-class Americans in general and organized labour more specifically.

The strength of Magat's work lies in its relevance to the present situation in which American organized labour finds itself. Although in recent years the labour movement has been rejuvenated by the leadership of John Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO, union membership remains historically low. As Corporate America shifts more jobs overseas and the World Trade Organization threatens to continue this trend indefinitely, the union movement needs all of the help it can find. Magat provides one possible source of aid in *Unlikely Partners*. In his conclusion the author points to a 1996 mission statement made by the AFL-CIO Executive Council, as a possible beginning site for renewed links. His call-to-arms is clear, "If the union movement follows up by organizing the unorganized and forcefully advocating progressive social and economic policies ... it can profit from the rich store of experience among foundations that address such issues." (192) Magat's work has clearly shown the way and it is now up to organized labour and philanthropic foundations to take advantage of this natural relationship.

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Norman Caulfield, *Mexican Workers and the State: From the Porfiriato to NAFTA* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press 1998).

ANTONIO GRAMSCI in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* argued that the relationship between working-class and élite nationals is often characterized by continuous change. In keeping with Gramsci's analysis, Norman Caulfield's *Mexican Workers and the State* is an insightful study of the dynamic evolution of organized labour in Mexico throughout the past century. Although the relation-

ship between labour and the Mexican state has been addressed by a number of scholars, Caulfield's analysis differs from much of the existing literature in that he focuses on the thesis that the state's upper classes never established complete ideological hegemony. Rather, the working-class nationalism that emerged during the Revolution and was institutionalized in the 1917 Constitution was more rhetoric than reality. Specifically, Caulfield's study centers on the significant ideological division between the reform unionists who sought legislative solutions to working-class problems and the anarchosyndicalists who called for self-management, organizational autonomy, and direct action. Not only does this division mark an ideological split but it also illustrates the importance of non-labour actors in the development of a working-class movement. As Caulfield clearly demonstrates, the divisions existing within Mexico's labour movement were not only based on internal disagreements but were also fostered by the Mexican political élite and US organized labour. The book illustrates through numerous historical case studies and archival documentation that the Mexican state and US organized labour, in particular the American Federation of Labor (AFL), employed various methods to secure their respective goals of social stability and an expanded Mexican market.

The main contribution of this book is the detailed study it provides of the important role of US organized labour in assisting the Mexican state and its labour allies to eradicate radical unionism. Moreover, US labour also played an instrumental role in the consolidation of the *charro* system of institutional labour leadership by acting as a liaison for American corporations and the US government. This intervention was motivated by the desire to create a lucrative Mexican market for goods made by American workers and to sustain a beneficial post-war international division of labour. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of

the AFL in creating the Confederacion Regional Obrera Mexicana (CROM) in which the rhetoric of working-class nationalism was used to facilitate labour's cooperation, and US logistical and financial support to battle against potential communist sympathizers. Although it was at the expense of internal union democracy and labour autonomy, such efforts helped to develop the organizational strength of Mexican labour. The role of external actors in the development of a labour movement is rarely as well-documented and analyzed as in *Mexican Workers and the State*.

A second strength of the book is the extensive investigation into a vast number of labour strikes and the Mexican government's often repressive responses to such uprisings. Caulfield's use of primary data to describe the government's efforts to undermine independent labour movements provide the reader with ample opportunities to better understand the obstacles confronting Mexican unions. Caulfield provides an insightful analysis of a number of government actions that were instrumental to the demise of the anarchosindicalist movement. Among these are the nationalization of and later privatization of industries, the implementation of governmental labour codes, and the use of propaganda offensives against "anti-Mexican" forces. Essentially, the Mexican government is portrayed as continuously renegotiating its relationship with labour to reach its goal of creating a hegemony of ideas regarding how to achieve Mexican economic prosperity.

In addition, the text also contains a noteworthy discussion of the rise and demise of *charro* leadership. Marking this development with the creation of the Confederacion de Trabajadores de Mexico (CTM), Caulfield examines how government officials imposed *charro* leadership in order to enforce shop-floor discipline. This bureaucratization of the trade-union movement signified the virtual termination of ideological leadership to motivate rank-and-file labour. Moreover, Caul-

field provides an interesting analysis of how the economic program of neoliberalism threatens the power base of the *charro* labour bureaucracy.

A few critical remarks on an otherwise well-written and well-documented work are nonetheless warranted. My first criticism pertains to the book's introduction, which is a cursory summary of the following six chapters. Absent in this section is a clear discussion of the central theme and purpose of the study. *Mexican Workers and the State* would benefit tremendously from an introductory chapter that clearly states how this work differs from the existing literature on Mexican labour. This could be accomplished by including a concise discussion of Caulfield's focus on Mexican labour's ideological fragmentation, a survey of the factors that contributed to this division, and an outline of the structure of the text.

A second weakness of the text is Caulfield's inconsistent examination of historical periods. Although the title suggests that the volume will address the period from the Porfiriato to the North American Free Trade Agreement, extensive historical study of the anarchosindicalist movement effectively ends in the second to the last chapter of the text. Unfortunately this last chapter, covering the time period of the 1960s to the contemporary era, fails to discuss the historical legacy of anarchosindicalism throughout this period on both organized and independent labour. Although discussions of grassroots movements is addressed in this chapter, little reference is made to labour's response to particular key events affecting the working class. For example, how did labour respond to the 1966 creation of the Workers' Congress or President Jose Lopez Portillo's top-down implementation of a "social wage?" Was labour's response divided or uniform? If it was divided, did the division indicate an ideological split similar to that between the working-class nationalists and anarchosindicalists, or did another ideological movement emerge? Or,

was this a period when the "hegemony of ruling ideas" clearly dominated labour in Mexico?

The preceding criticisms notwithstanding, Norman Caulfield's study of the evolution of organized labour in Mexico is both interesting and very informative. Scholars of both Mexican labour politics and ideological labour movements in general will find that *Mexican Workers and the State* provides the reader with a wealth of information regarding the obstacles that labour movements face when confronting both internal political élites and foreign economic interests. But at least one major question remains: how has organized labour sought to redefine itself in the contemporary era of economic neoliberalism? Although Caulfield discusses how neoliberalism undermines the bargaining position of labour in Mexico, very little is said regarding how labour can and has reacted to such changes. In particular, analysis of the ideological divisions existing within various labour movements and the possibility of creating international labour solidarity in light of economic globalization remain critical areas for future research.

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Nancy L. Green, ed., *Jewish Workers in the Modern Diaspora* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press 1998).

THE PERIOD from approximately 1880 to the beginning of World War II is crucial for a proper understanding of modern Jewish history. Within that era the most salient single event was the mass migration of millions of Eastern European Jews from their homelands in Russia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Romania, to Western Europe, North America, South America, Palestine, and elsewhere. This migration served to create demographically and culturally significant Jewish

communities in many areas of the world in which Jewish settlement had hitherto been relatively marginal. It also served to create major concentrations of Jewish workers in all these destinations. This had an enormous impact upon the development of a number of major industries, most prominently the needle trades, in several countries. These concentrations of largely immigrant Jewish workers also exerted an important influence upon the development of labour movements and proletarian politics in many countries.

Clearly this significant phenomenon cries out for comparative research. Just as clearly, the barriers facing potential researchers are daunting. Ideally a researcher wishing to deal with this phenomenon globally will have to have at a minimum a good knowledge of Yiddish and, to a somewhat lesser extent, Hebrew, in which the Jewish immigrants expressed themselves; English, French, and Spanish, in which they interacted with their immediate environments; not to speak of the immigration, labour, and general histories of most of the countries of the Western world. It is little wonder, then, that the subject has hitherto been attacked piecemeal, with individual scholars studying the Jewish workers of New York, London, Paris, and Buenos Aires, among others, in separate studies conducted in a not-so-splendid isolation.

This book offers a potential way out of the dilemma. Nancy Green, of the Centre de Recherches Historiques in the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales of Paris, has gathered together a group of collaborators, each of whom has contributed expertise on the experience of Jewish workers in a given location. Daniel Soyer comments on New York; David Cesarani and David Feldman deal with London; Paris is taken up by Nancy Green and Patrick Altman; Buenos Aires is covered by Edgardo Bilsky; Jack Wertheimer reports on Germany; and Amsterdam is analyzed by Selma Leydesdorff. Together they have come up with a volume of documents in English translation which speaks

to both the commonalities and the differences in the experiences of the Jewish working class in the different localities.

The similarities in social life and cultural expression of these communities are not at all surprising. However despite the similarities there are very real differences among the communities represented. Thus the Jewish working class of Amsterdam was mostly not of immediate Eastern European immigrant origin. In Germany, the legal structure in which Jewish immigrants existed meant that great centres of immigrant Jewish population did not develop as they did in Paris, London, or New York. Also, in Germany alone of all the places dealt with in the book, there was a significant, albeit brief participation by Jewish workers from Eastern Europe in the mining industry. The documents presented are translated clearly and grouped according to location. This allows the reader to focus on similarities and differences. The collaborators' short and to-the-point commentary allows the reader to place the documents in their local and international contexts. One is thus able to follow and compare the fortunes of the immigrant Jewish workers in the following areas: "daily life and work," "societies, organizations and schools," "politics and ideology," and "culture and identities."

It is clear from the preceding table of contents that the authors have made an important strategic decision. They have understood that in a very real sense it is not possible to present the experience of the Jewish workers in isolation from that of their wider communities. Therefore, they state "we use the term *worker* in its widest sense, encompassing the various lower strata of the Jewish communities ... and stretching to the 'entrepreneurial proletariat' engaged in the ubiquitous subcontracting system." (2) This decision may possibly disappoint some potential readers who were looking for a more narrowly conceived comparative account of Jewish labour. However that same decision makes the book much more useful to

those interested in social history. It can thus readily and usefully be utilized as a supplementary reader for courses in modern Jewish history.

This book represents a first step rather than the last word on the subject, which takes nothing away from its very real contribution. One would hope, however, that subsequent efforts, whether by the team that brought us this book or by others, would redress the geographical disparity inherent in this presentation. Thus, while the vast majority of Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe ended up in the Western Hemisphere, most prominently in the United States, four of the six areas sampled in the book are in Western Europe. Without at all diminishing the importance of Western Europe in the larger picture of the Jewish working class, one needs as well to understand and appreciate the nuances of the lives of Jewish workers in places like Chicago and Montréal, which were significantly different from those in the other centres.

This book has served to reorient scholarship with respect to the analysis of the mass Eastern European Jewish migration of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It will be interesting to see the effects of this reorientation in subsequent studies.

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Andrew Gordon, *The Wages of Influence: Labor and Management in Postwar Japan* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1998).

SOME YEARS AGO I met a young employee of a major Japanese electronics firm who had been sent overseas to represent his company. It did not take long for many of his acquaintances to privately refer to him as "Mr. Toshiba," a title comparable to "Mr. General Electric." The name stuck because the employee enthusiastically put his company first in everything. Family, play, daily schedule, and

distant plans — he arranged these to conform to Toshiba's convenience. The company came up so often in his conversation that no one could doubt his total commitment to the firm.

Andrew Gordon's splendid study of labour and management in postwar Japan explains the creation of what might be called a Mr. Toshiba generation. Covering the period from the mid-1940s to the mid-1990s, he traces the rapid rise and even faster fall of militant unionism at Nippon Kōkan (NKK), Japan's second largest steelmaker. The story is not unrelieved tragedy because, as the title *Wages of Affluence* suggests, taming belligerent unions has been accepted by the Japanese public as a trade-off that helped create general prosperity.

Nor is the tale finished. As Gordon makes clear, the managers governing the Japanese employment system continue to possess the capacity to change it to overcome challenges to what he calls an existing "corporate-centered hegemony." Gordon's presentation of the history of postwar labour as not bound by some fabled set of essential cultural factors, his persuasive demonstration that there is no Japanese gene for group harmony and cooperation, is one of his work's most important contributions. His consideration of the incidents, policies, and even chance occurrences that shaped today's employment system deflates past theories about the secrets of Japanese corporate success and more recent but equally sweeping predictions of Japan's looming economic collapse.

Gordon's account covers the decades beginning with the rise of militant unionism soon after World War II. Japanese government suppression of labour organization ceased abruptly in 1945 and in the 16 months following the surrender mass organizing campaigns brought 40 per cent of the Japanese workforce into unions. (39) The US occupying force supported an unfettered labour movement until Cold War strategy contributed to reversing the policy in the late 1940s. The revocation

of American support and the resurgence of many of Japan's prewar political leaders and management methods in major industries and companies slowed the unionization movement. Labour organizations, however, continued to struggle for political autonomy and workers' rights until the late 1950s. But as management reforms began to take hold and after two divisive walkouts in 1957 and 1959, steel plant unions abandoned striking for higher wages.

After the watershed years of the late fifties, steelmakers and unions peacefully bargained over wages and other terms of employment. The outcome benefited companies whose profits and productivity usually grew far faster than workers' wages. Management also gained ever greater control over the workplace. NKK and similar enterprises used company standards, made without extensive consultation with union or worker representatives, to define employee merit and calculate wages. Company managers also tightened regulation of where and when workers would work. By appealing to the greater good of the firm and the nation, managers pushed rationalization and efficiency programs that pressed workers to fit the job and demanded more and more overtime. To internalize the corporate vision within workers and expand it to embrace their families, firms also implemented extensive in-house education and recreation programs while carrying out a "New Life Movement" to make wives supportive of their husbands' workplace function. By the 1960s, these efforts had created a US-style business unionism that permitted peaceful negotiations over wages but kept management authority off the bargaining table.

Gordon explains how the system became immovable as the "hegemony of corporate values took hold in the workplace and wider society." (131) He demonstrates that the struggle was waged on many fronts, including within the unions themselves. On the international level, the Cold War and US subsidization of

non-political unions helped define the limits of labour protest. Meanwhile, the home front saw carefully orchestrated mass movements sponsored by companies and the state produce a gendered division of labour. The Ministry of Education assisted the creation of the emerging corporate-centered hegemony by devising a hellishly competitive educational system whose widely accepted crowning standard of success became admission to a brand-name university followed by a job in one of Japan's foremost companies.

According to Gordon's analysis, labour unions were ill suited for the postwar contest with major corporations and their allies in industrial federations and government ministries. Business leaders could meet privately on the golf course or at exclusive restaurants to plan strike-busting tactics or long term strategy. They could also draw upon sizeable war chests to stop worker protests and provide incentives for compliance with company goals. But unions, comparatively democratic and transparent organizations, lacked the means to maintain their importance in workers' lives. Gordon illustrates this by noting that even victory in courts of law could unintentionally weaken unions. As the courts forced companies to retain workers, albeit at jobs and locations determined by management, they usurped the union's function of defending the employee's right to work.

As Japan's consumer society flourished, sclerotic labour organizations became increasingly irrelevant to securing the worker's economic success. By the 1970s, around the time I first met Mr. Toshiba, a NKK text on labour relations could state without qualification that "[o]ur labour, livelihood, and social contributions only exist via the organization called a corporation." (133)

Gordon convincingly argues that Japan's corporate-centered society remains solidly established today. The greatest threat to this order is not labour activism but employee apathy toward and alienation from both company and union offi-

cial. Although Gordon recognizes that these attitudes have caused new tensions in the workplace during the economic slowdown of the 1990s, he sees no resurgence of worker support for a union solution to their woes. He also appears convinced that the existing corporate-centered hegemony, believed in and supported by the very people it oppresses, is fully capable of mutating its way to survival however hostile the present environment.

Using workers' accounts, company records and handbooks, government reports, and interviews with NKK managers and labour activists, Gordon makes a well supported and persuasive case for his interpretation of Japan's postwar labour history. I disagree less with his explanation than with his emphasis on the elements that produced it. Many of the factors he cites as postwar developments actually have their roots in the history of prewar labour. An example of this is the company-supported mutual aid societies, the forerunners of postwar cooperative unions, that emerged in the coal mining industry after World War I. Bearing names such as Mitsui's "Mutual Love Association," these organizations aimed at creating the industrial peace and corporate profitability realized fully during the period covered in *Wages of Affluence*. Gordon, the author of major studies on prewar labour, is undoubtedly aware of prewar-postwar continuities. His emphasis on labour's lost opportunity, the road not taken, is a dramatic presentation of postwar events, but seems a bit disingenuous. Although he may be right in noting that the postwar labour system was "re-made," it certainly wasn't made from scratch.

This work's representativeness poses another small problem. As a study of the history of postwar urban Japan's industrial workforce, Gordon's analysis is perhaps the finest study presently available. But despite the book's subtitle, "Labor and Management in Postwar Japan," and the author's use of NKK to generalize about the Japanese workforce, the vast

majority of Japanese workers do not labour in immense enterprises. Nor do they receive the perquisites such as lifetime employment or union representation offered (or once offered) by the minority of firms at the top of Japan's economic "dual structure." Although aspects of Gordon's analysis certainly apply to general management-worker relations throughout Japan, it is concerned first with industrial workers and not "salarymen," "office ladies," people on the lower tier of Japan's economic "dual structure," or the workforce in regional enterprises.

Similarly, one can question the totality of corporate-centered hegemony. I recall that many of the people who mocked Mr. Toshiba's devotion to the firm were themselves Japanese company employees. Their ironic detachment suggests something less than an unequivocal belief in the goodness of a corporate-centered life. More recently, popular challenges to industrial polluters and protests opposing nuclear power plans have captured the

public's attention. Japan's newspapers, magazines, and academic journals have also been awash in articles critical of the missing Japanese father and the disintegration of the family caused by the "salaryman's" demanding marriage to the corporation. These developments suggest a public no longer convinced that what is good for NKK is good for Japan.

Although readers may disagree with Gordon's interpretation on minor points, there is no denying that this work is a major accomplishment that reshapes our understanding of postwar Japan's labour history. His analysis is not only fresh and persuasive, it is also well written. This makes his interpretation accessible to a wide audience who will be rewarded with a rich, subtle, and informed understanding of contemporary Japanese society by reading this book.

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