

## BOOK NOTES / RÉFÉRENCES BIBLIOGRAPHIQUES

**Chris Raible with John C. Carter and Darryl Withrow**, *From Hands Now Striving to Be Free: Boxes Crafted by 1837 Rebellion Prisoners* (Toronto: York Pioneer and Historical Society 2009)

SHORT BUT fascinating. That's the best way to describe this booklet that features pictures and inscriptions from box carvings produced by Toronto and Kingston rebels during their prison stays. The booklet provides an inventory of 94 prisoners' boxes and lists the inscriptions upon them. Many mourned the executions of Samuel Lount and Peter Matthews, while others polemicized against tyrants and called for liberty for Canada. There is a brief article discussing the circumstances under which the boxes were produced and the sources of the various inscriptions.

**Max Foran, ed.**, *Icon, Brand, Myth: The Calgary Stampede* (Edmonton: AU Press 2008)

COWBOYS PLAY an important role in the historical imagination of Calgary and southern Alberta. The Calgary Stampede was created as the ranching era came to a close before World War One. After the war, it became an annual exhibition meant to use a mythology of Calgary's past to create a commercial extravaganza. This book explores many facets of the Stampede, including the lives of different sets of workers from cowboys to carnies to parade organizers to artists.

**Sharon Halfyard, Carmelita McGrath, and Marion Cheeks**, *To Be My Father's Daughter* (St. John's: Educational Resource Development Co-operative 2008)

CAMILLA COAKER was the daughter of Fishermen's Protective Union founder William Coaker. While she kept scrapbooks and photographs, they did not survive her. Nonetheless, Sharon Halfyard and Carmelita McGrath (with Marion Cheeks as their editor) set out to imaginatively reconstruct Camilla's life, trying in the process to also view how William Coaker's achievements might have been seen by his daughter.

**Christopher Howard**, *The Welfare State Nobody Knows: Debunking Myths About U.S. Social Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2007)

HOWARD DISCUSSES the evolution of a variety of social programs and tax benefits in the United States to debunk any notion that the United States lacks programs for dealing with social problems. I am not sure that such a notion is that widespread, in any case, since the more common view is that the Europeans have universal programs and the Americans have residual or targeted programs. He does a very good job of demonstrating why and how most of the legislation in the US that is supposedly meant to deal with social issues actually benefits the better off and disadvantages or at least ignores the poor.

**Michael D. Yates**, *In and Out of the Working Class* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring 2009)

MICHAEL YATES grew up in a fairly typical working-class community in post-war Pennsylvania, his dad working at the glass factory where many of his classmates also worked after high school. Yates however had the opportunity to go to college and chose to become an economist, fascinated by the discipline's apparent ability to explain people's actions. By graduate school, however, he had become disillusioned with the conservatism of the discipline. He became a radical political economist, who tried to merge his teaching and political activism, for example, using a sabbatical to serve as research director for the United Farm Workers Union. This book is a mixture of fiction and non-fiction chapters meant to demonstrate both how class conflict works in capitalist societies and what an intellectual can do to help fight the good fight with the workers.

**Michael D. Yates, ed.**, *More Unequal: Aspects of Class in the United States* (New York: Monthly Review Press 2007)

THESE FOURTEEN essays are meant to be accessible to a broad audience and to touch on a broad pallet of issues of class, race, and gender in the US. While one of the essays is the account of his youth that Michael Yates also uses in *In and Out of the Working Class*, the other essays, all by other authors, range from an interesting account of the complexities of the lives of the black middle class, to a well-documented essay on the super-exploitation of undocumented workers.

**Greg J. Bamber, Jody Hoffer Gittel, Thomas A. Kochan, and Andrew von Nordenflycht**, *Up in the Air: How Airlines Can Improve Performance by Engaging Their Employees* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press 2009)

THIS IS A HUMAN resources management book, not a piece of labour studies. The assumption throughout is that management and labour have common interests, and that it is up to management to figure those out and lead the workers in a team effort. Workers are to be consulted and there is to be long-term planning in everyone's interests. The authors' attitudes to unions are supportive enough for several union leaders to have provided endorsements of the book on the book jacket. The book provides a good overview of the economic problems that the American airline industry has faced since the 1970s. But its coverage of the issues confronting the industry's workers seems rather shallow, since the real target of the book's semi-liberal message is airline management.

**Amparo Serrano Pascual and Lars Magnusson, eds.**, *Reshaping Welfare States and Activation Regimes in Europe* (Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang 2007)

THIS COLLECTION of densely-written pieces details the various policies being pursued by European governments in the post-Fordist world in which employers regularly toss out workers who don't have the latest in-demand skills. The state is expected to pick up the tab to retrain these workers and to look after them financially until they are ready for new employment challenges. While this book studies carefully and critically the degree of success that various governments have had in reintegrating workers into

the labour force and/or keeping former workers from starving, it is remarkably uncritical about the political economy arrangements that treat workers like pawns on a profit-making chessboard.

**Mark LeVine**, *Impossible Peace: Israel/Palestine Since 1989* (Halifax: Fernwood and London: Zed 2009)

THE CONTINUED Israeli occupation of Palestine is usually presented in terms of Israeli expansionism and unwillingness to countenance a free Palestinian state, along with American support for Israel because of the strength of the Israeli lobby in Washington and/or because of Israel's ability to act as a guarantor for American interests in the Middle East. Mark LeVine broadens that account to place Israeli capital within the international capitalist globalization movement, and suggests that Oslo was an effort to turn Palestine into Israel's *maquiladora* area. He tries to assess both the strategies of various Israeli and Palestinian actors in terms of their positions within the global capitalist order, and presents a relatively sympathetic, if ambivalent, assessment of Hamas. LeVine is however unclear as to whether a two-state or binational state solution makes more sense or how either can be achieved in the face of Israeli intransigence.

**Paul Farmer**, *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2005)

PAUL FARMER is trained as both a physician and a medical anthropologist, and is second to no one in dealing with the social determinants of health, and applying those concepts in a culturally

sensitive manner on a global basis. In this collection of essays, Farmer discusses forcefully and accessibly the ways in which imperialism crushes human rights while imposing a fraudulent language of human rights in which the basic right to live in dignity and without want is simply ignored for most of the world's citizens.

**G.A. Cohen**, *Why Not Socialism?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2009)

HERE'S A TINY book that shows that size does not matter. Cohen, an emeritus political philosopher at Oxford University, follows Albert Einstein in arguing that the purpose of socialism is "to overcome and advance beyond the predatory phase of human development." (82) He is quite explicit about what is wrong in moral terms not only with capitalism but with most proposed forms of socialism. His starting point is the principles learned from a camping trip that could be applied to the organization of society as a whole.

A.F.

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