

Book Notes / Références Bibliographiques

Volume 23, 1989

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/llt23bn01>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Canadian Committee on Labour History

ISSN

0700-3862 (print)

1911-4842 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

(1989). Book Notes / Références Bibliographiques. *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 23, 395–400.

BOOK NOTES/ RÉFÉRENCES BIBLIOGRAPHIQUES

Leo Panitch and Donald Swartz, *The Assault on Trade Union Freedoms: From Consent to Coercion Revisited* (Toronto: Garamond 1988).

THIS NEW EDITION of Panitch and Swartz is expanded considerably, although the argument remains the same. The major addition is an assessment of post-1984 developments, focusing on the Supreme Court's ruling that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms does not protect the right to strike, and evaluating the labour movement's place in the new era of coercion.

Paul Kellogg, *Downturn: The Origins of the Employers' Offensive and the Tasks for Socialists* (Toronto: International Socialists 1988).

THIS PAMPHLET CAN be usefully read alongside of Panitch's and Swartz's *The Assault on Trade Union Freedoms*. From a different perspective -- far more critical of the trade union bureaucracy and social democracy -- it too explores the emergence of the employers' offensive in the mid-1970s. The lessons it draws from this contemporary history are, likewise, much different, being oriented not so much to making the trade union movement political, but in stressing the need for the left to be political.

Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press 1988).

THIS SOCIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION of the Chinese in Canada stresses early institutional racism and the ways in which it structured the possibilities for generations of Chinese. It closes with a celebration of the achievements of Chinese upward mobility, albeit one that recognizes the persistence of racism. Insistent that racism has been a product of material conditions and conflicts at the point where "interest" is produced and sustained, Li perhaps understates the ways in which culture can act upon material life and feed into its determining project in ways that are not negligible.

Roxana Ng, *The Politics of Community Services: Immigrant Women, Class and State* (Toronto: Garamond 1988).

IN EXPLORING THE interaction of employment counsellors, state funding, and employers, and the ways in which these forces exercise an impact on women in the labour market, Ng argues that we are in fact looking at one aspect of the social construction of immigrant women. The result is the organization of immigrant women into an ethnic and gender bound labour force, one central feature in the making of contemporary Canadian class society.

Peter Baskerville, *The Bank of Upper Canada* (Toronto: Champlain Society/Carleton University Press 1987).

THIS TEXT IS both a monograph and a documentary collection. It will prove invaluable to those interested in Canadian business and economic history, as well as to those concerned with the development of Upper Canada or Old Ontario. Baskerville's lengthy introduction situates the Bank's development, its personnel, principles, and practice, and accounts for its changing fortunes in the years of pronounced socio-economic and political transformation from the mid-1830s to the late 1860s. Insisting that the Bank rose and fell within the context of its role as a colonial institution, Baskerville correctly plays off the contradictory and complex structures determining the Bank's possibilities and purposes. The 300 pages of documents that follow this analysis are organized to parallel the chapter themes of Baskerville's introduction.

Mary Biggar Peck, *Red Moon Over Spain: Canadian Media Reaction to the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939* (Ottawa: Steel Rail 1988).

PROFUSELY ILLUSTRATED, this volume, authored by a woman who grew up in the Montreal of the 1930s when the cause of Spain gripped many youth, draws on Canadian newspapers published in Toronto, Winnipeg, Montreal, and Vancouver, sampling political and mainstream, pro-Franco and pro-Loyalist presses. For those interested in the complex range of political, economic, and social issues that linked the Spanish Civil War and domestic developments in Canada this will prove an invaluable volume.

Laurie Bell, ed., *Good Girls Bad Girls: Sex Trade Workers and Feminists Face to Face* (Toronto: The Women's Press 1987).

THIS COLLECTION OF essays grew out of the conference, "Challenging Our Images: The Politics of Prostitution and Pornography." There are a lot more than images involved as essential political positions and diametrically opposed ways of living get contrasted in the give and take of debate between women who walk different sides of the street in quite different ways. Mariana Valverde introduces the volume with a sensible argument about the two-sidedness of sexuality -- its liberating and oppressive characters. But from there on the sides harden, with feminists often laying stress on the patriarchal content of sex as practices, and sex trade workers demanding acknowledgement that they are not merely structured by patriarchy into roles of acute subordination. The organization of the book and, one suspects, the conference, is not unproblematic. Feminists speak *first*; sex trade workers *second*; and then a dialogue closes the volume. The dialogue, however, comes too late and the positions have hardened predictably.

Stephen Innes, *Work and Labor in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1988).

THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF early America has hardly turned on questions of work, wages, and making a living. This collection brings together some of the best work on these themes to provide a reassessment of the material lives of Americans from 1620-1820. Farm labour is treated by Daniel Vickers's study of Essex County, Massachusetts in the seventeenth century and Paul G.E. Clemens's and Lucy Simler's examination of Chester County, Pennsylvania after 1750. Plantation labour and urban working-class men are handled in essays by Philip D. Morgan

and Billy G. Smith, while Marcus Rediker provides a depiction of the Anglo-American seaman as collective worker. The diversity of market conditions and highly differentiated regional economies dictated that in early America no single pattern of work and labour developed, although the intensification of labour and the importance of family stand out in all of the treatments.

Robert E. Cray, Jr., *Paupers and Poor Relief in New York City and Its Rural Environs, 1700-1830* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press 1988).

CRAY EXAMINES PUBLIC welfare in early America, focusing on New York City and three rural counties. Attentive to the response of the poor, whom he sees as active agents in the construction of relief systems, he charts the flexibility of the country forms of assistance and the straightforward march to institutionalization that took place in the city. What emerges from this study is not the overarching importance of the ideology of reform, but the genesis of relief within local communities.

Brian C. Mitchell, *The Paddy Camps: The Irish of Lowell, 1821-1861* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 1988).

LOWELL HAS LONG been studied as the crucible of nineteenth-century industrial capitalism. Mitchell uses this laboratory to highlight the experience of the Irish, orchestrating his text around a series of rigidly-developed chronological chapters. The early Paddy Camps of the pre-1840 years existed on the margins of the planned Yankee mill village, allowing a modicum of assimilation as well as the preservation of customs and traditions. In the post-1840 years this settled social structure of compromise fractured in job competition, new famine-induced migra-

tions, know-nothingism, and the challenges posed by Irish institutions, politics, and adaptations.

Hartmut Keil and John B. Jentz, eds., *German Workers in Chicago: A Documentary History of Working-Class Culture from 1850 to World War I* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 1988).

THE DOCUMENTS in this collection reveal the critical role of the German immigrant community in Chicago's formative years. Organized in sections that chronicle the arrival of the immigrants, expose the nature of work and living conditions, and allow us entry into neighbourhood, social life, and the culture of the labour movement. This volume is an unprecedented documentary history of the relationship of ethnicity and class in an American city.

Dennis C. Dickerson, *Out of the Crucible: Black Steelworkers in Western Pennsylvania, 1875-1980* (Albany: State University of New York Press 1986).

ARGUING THAT RACE, not class, "has fixed the status of contemporary black workers and has created the poverty and unemployment which perennially affects them" (1) this book explores the history of black steelworkers in Pennsylvania over the course of the last century. With its chapters organized chronologically, the study touches on the major themes of race and class in this region and industry: early organization in the Sons of Vulcan; the war and post-war migrations from the South; the 1919 strike; welfare capitalism in the 1920s; the impact of the depression and the New Deal; the post-war period of industrial legality, illusion of advancement, and pyrrhic victories.

Daphne Patai, ed., *Looking Backward, 1888-1888; Essays on Edward Bellamy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press 1988).

BELLAMY'S INFLUENCE in radical circles in North America in the 1880s and 1890s has long been known. He influenced a generation of eclectic dissidents that found in his "utopianism" a useful pole of attraction distinct from the capitalist "materialism" of the age. Few of the essays in this volume actually address this historical context, Milton Cantor's discussion of Bellamyite socialism's 'backward look' and Sylvia Strauss's analysis of gender, class, and race in utopia being exceptions, but historians can learn from these often critical theory-inspired readings of Bellamy.

Kay Sloan, *The Loud Silents: Origins of the Social Problem Film* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 1988).

THIS STUDY OF silent films in the early 1900s explores the way in which cinema emerged as contested terrain, pitting woman suffragists, labour advocates, reformers, and anarchists against their conservative counterparts. Silent movies oscillated between condemnation and celebration of social struggle. But in their pervasive quest to exercise an uplifting effect, Sloan argues, they turned habitually to sentimentality and covered strikes, revolts, and corruption in a thick layer of romance.

Charlotte Nekola and Paula Rabinowitz, eds., *Writing Red: An Anthology of American Women Writers, 1930-1940* (New York: The Feminist Press 1987).

THIS EXTENSIVE COLLECTION of women's writings from the 1930s provides examples of fiction, poetry, and reportage, theory, and analysis. It introduces figures

such as Agnes Smedley, Meridel Le Sueur, Ruth McKenney, Tillie Olsen, and Anna Louise Strong, among many others. Most wrote in more than one medium. A foreword by Toni Morrison and an introduction by Paula Rabinowitz on "Women and U.S. Literary Radicalism" provide a useful point of departure.

Jane Rendall, ed., *Equal or Different: Women's Politics, 1800-1914* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1987).

IMPORTANT DISCUSSIONS OF women's political activism in the years 1800-1914 are found in the essays of this collection. The individual chapters are divided into two sections, the first concerned with women's nineteenth-century efforts to involve themselves in matters of citizenship and conscience, the second with turn-of-the-century politics (class, party, and sexual). Among the more important contributions are Dorothy Thompson's exploration of women, work, and authority, and Lucy Bland's analysis of the feminist concern with marriage and sex in the 1890s.

Gerry R. Rubin, *War, Law, and Labour: The Munitions Acts, State Regulation, and the Unions, 1915-1921* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1987).

STUDENTS OF INDUSTRIAL legality will find this study of the British World War I experience illuminating. It details the drift from voluntarism to wartime corporatism and connects itself to concerns such as time and work discipline and skill dilution and legalism.

Tony Cliff and Donny Gluckstein, *Marxism and Trade Union Struggle: The General Strike of 1926* (London: Bookmarks 1986).

THIS PUBLICATION USES the 1926 General Strike to pose key questions for Marxists, arguing that the lessons from the bureaucratic catastrophe of 1926 are central in any attempt to forge a conception of how a revolutionary party should relate to trade unionism in a non-revolutionary period. While the research is hardly innovative or detailed, the sharpness with which certain questions are posed makes the book a useful test for those interested in the intersection of past and present.

Steven Laurence Kaplan and Cynthia J. Koepp, eds., *Work in France: Representations, Meaning, Organization, and Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1986).

THIS WEIGHTY VOLUME — approaching 600 pages — brings together many of the best practitioners of the “new” social history of French labour. The articles move from treatments of eighteenth-century fellowship and journeymen’s migrations (by Daniel Roche and Michael Sonenscher respectively) through the ways in which work is depicted (or, in the language of critical theory, representation) in Diderot’s *Encyclopedie* (which merits two essays, one by editor Koepp and another by William Sewell), to a wide range of nineteenth and twentieth-century concerns. Jacques Ranciere’s much-debated “The Myth of the Artisan,” is included here, as are synthetic statements by Ronald Aminzade, Michael Hanagan, and Patrick Fridenson. Christopher Johnson closes the book with an attempt to link the essays by positing their universal concern with the fundamental question of whether work and its relationships and meanings are structured by the impersonalities of the market or if they are not also forged through struggles and accommodations that take

place around and through work.

Morris Slavin, *The Making of an Insurrection: Parisian Sections and the Gironde* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1986).

THIS EXPLORATION OF the clash between Montagnards and Girondins argues that “an intra-class struggle can be as deadly as one between contending classes.” (1) But in its exploration of the role of the sans-culottes and recognition of class in the making of the Revolution, Slavin casts his lot with the older materialistically-inspired historiography and differentiates himself from the discourse-oriented opponents of class such as Furet.

Daniel H. Kaiser, ed., *The Workers’ Revolution in Russia, 1917: The View from Below* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1987).

THE SIX ESSAYS in this collection seek to resituate our understanding of the Russian Revolution, proposing new ways of appreciating working-class discontent and the appeal and staying power of the Bolsheviks. Convinced that too much has been made of the influence of figures such as Lenin and Trotsky, the authors attempt to revive an appreciation of the central role of working-class activity and the process of radicalization from below. They then argue that the Bolsheviks came to power precisely because they were the party that grasped the realities of social and political polarization most acutely. This revisionist view would perhaps be regarded as less than innovative had not academic circles been so infected with a conception of Bolshevism as Machiavellian manipulation.

Rosalind E. Boyd, Robin Cohen, and Peter C.W. Gutkind, eds., *International Labour and the Third World: The Making of a New Working Class* (Aldershot: Gower 1987).

THIS WIDE-RANGING collection of essays addresses a theme of central importance in an epoch of global class formation and economic restructuring. Central and Latin America, South Africa, and the implications of the new international division of labour for women and children receive specific treatment. Introducing the articles is a section on theoretical perspectives which contains useful essays on how to conceptualize internationalization, development, the world market, and the class struggle. The book closes with two bibliographic essays.

Alex Pravda, Blair A. Ruble, eds., *Trade Unions in Communist States* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1986).

TEN ESSAYS SURVEY the experience of communist trade unions in the countries

of actually existing socialism. Poland, interestingly enough, merits two essays. The first casts the 1970s in terms of "dual functioning trade unionism under pressure," while the second examines Solidarnosc in the 1980s as an "anti-trade union." Craig Littler and Gill Palmer close the volume with an essay comparing trade unionism in its capitalist and communist forms.

Murray Knuttila, *State Theories: From Liberalism to the Challenge of Feminism* (Toronto: Garamond 1987).

THIS OVERVIEW OF THEORIES of the state outlines classical liberalism, sociological structural functionalism, elite theory, pluralism, marxism and neo-Marxism, and feminism. It could be usefully employed in a social theory course, where the orchestration of the text around key authors could complement other readings.

BDP