too far in reading later developments back into Atanasoff's designs. For example, they see Atanasoff's rotating banks of capacitors as influencing all later generations of regenerative memory devices. This connection would hold only if all later regenerative memory depended on Mauchly's transmission of Atanasoff's ideas. This claims too great a role for either Mauchly or Atanasoff. The history of computer design is a complex web of events, far too varied to represent as a linear causal chain or as a struggle between brilliant innovators and opportunistic rogues.

Labor in Illinois: The Affluent Years, 1945–1980, by Milton Derber et al. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989. vii, 455 pp. Appendix, index, bibliographical notes. $47.50 cloth.

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As teachers, most of us like to tell our students that history is "everything right up to yesterday." As researchers, those of us who dare to venture onto the terrain of the recent past often find a minefield. Two years ago, when I was at work on a study of a just concluded strike—and struggling with it—a colleague commented, "Isn't it easier dealing with a topic when everyone concerned is dead?" Professor Milton Derber and his graduate student associates deserve considerable credit for the chance they have taken here.

In their effort to do justice to a diverse and complex topic, they have assembled a very interesting book that addresses experiences relevant well beyond the borders of Illinois. The authors point out that Illinois is a useful microcosm for the nation's workforce and labor movement, and its trends—while explained in places by largely local factors—followed national patterns quite closely.

The diversity of the authors' approaches provides multiple windows and enhances this book's value for readers with no particular interest in Illinois. The text is divided into five parts. Part one, "The Working People of Illinois," provides a demographic and economic picture of the lives of Illinois workers (nonunion as well as union) since World War II. Part two, "The Organizational Picture," includes case studies of seven very different unions. Part three, "Labor, Politics, and the Law," looks at electoral and lobbying activity, as well as the changing stance of the political and legal system towards labor. Part four, "Labor in the Community," includes case studies of six cities, as well as a consideration of community service and labor education. The final section, "Social Forces," examines themes that cut across particular unions and specific communities: "The Decline of Labor

Radicalism"; "Corruption and Organized Crime"; "Blacks, Hispanics, and Fair Employment"; "More Voices for Working Women"; and "Quality of Working Life." Through these various windows, an interesting picture emerges.

There is something in this book for everyone. Students of labor and politics at the local level will find a fascinating study of the relationship between the Chicago Building Trades Council and Mayor Richard Daley's "machine." Students of "social unionism" will be especially interested in the detailed examinations of UAW Local 6 and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers in Chicago. Students of internal union conflict will enjoy the presentations on the rebellions within USWA District 31 and the conflicts between the radical Farm Equipment Workers, on the one hand, and the increasingly anticommunist UAW, on the other. The community studies offer new perspectives on labor's ability—or inability—to maintain an influence outside of the major metropolitan areas. The efforts to include discussions of women and racial minorities, not just at the end of the book, but in several of the case studies of unions (such as the Hospital Employees Labor Program) and communities (such as Chicago and East St. Louis) reflect both the diversity of the labor movement and its problems in relating to the special needs of workers with a long history of suffering discrimination.

There are also some significant general impressions that come through the text as a whole. For instance, gains won by the labor movement—in wages and benefits and in government-provided benefits and services—translated into gains for all wage-workers. Against the backdrop of an expanding economy in the 1950s and 1960s, workers' living standards reached unprecedented heights throughout the state of Illinois (although these improvements were slower to reach workers of color).

Was the post–World War II era then indeed the "affluent years" for labor? This book provides substantial evidence that "affluence" came to a halt *not* in 1980 (as their overall framework suggests) but in the early 1970s (if not even earlier for some manufacturing workers). Union membership began to stagnate, if not fall. New union organizing drives met with few successes. Real wages and benefits fell behind the cost of living. Labor's political influence was on the wane. Was this a temporary disruption or the beginning of a new period in labor history?

The real value of examining recent history, it seems to me, is to get a handle on what future might be evolving out of the present. *Labor in Illinois: The Affluent Years* would have been a more useful book if the authors had concluded it with the *end* of "affluence" in the early 1970s, or if they had divided the postwar period into *two* periods, one of "affluence" and one of "decline." In some of their footnotes and tables, data from as late as 1985 are included, which show unquestionably that the stagnation of the early 1970s has indeed turned into a prolonged decline in the fortunes of *all* working people, organized and unorganized alike. Such a change in the book's framework would have given readers more of the tools they need to understand not just what the recent past has been for labor, but what the future might hold.