

the custodians, and of our obligation to preserve and bequeath it unimpaired to future generations. It is a work of impeccable scholarship, gracefully written, that should appeal to both art scholars and students of Iowa's history.

Our Daily Bread: Wages, Workers, and the Political Economy of the American West, by Geoff Mann. Cultural Studies of the United States. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007. xviii, 245 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$59.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer Gregory R. Zieren is professor of history at Austin Peay State University. His writing includes "German Contemporary Studies of American Labor, 1865-1914" (*Labor History*, 1995) and "Cedar Rapids Packinghouse Workers in the CIO" (*Palimpsest*, 1995).

This slender volume is an ambitious exercise in crafting a new definition of wages based on the Marxian-Hegelian dialectic and insights gained from the work of economic geographers. The author, a Marxist professor of economic geography, employs three case studies from western labor history in the twentieth century to illuminate his theoretical constructs. He divides the book into two theoretical chapters, three historical ones, a sixth chapter demonstrating the fit between theory and practice, and a conclusion. The case studies, of hitherto little-known unions on the West Coast, are the heart of the book and offer a welcome addition to the literature on labor history. Readers may admire the erudition, even elegance, of the author's theoretical work, but it will not persuade many beyond those already steeped in the Marxian tradition.

In his introduction and first chapter Mann clarifies why the Far West inspired his work. The West of popular mythology is always white and masculine, so race and gender issues become an overlay on the landscape. The West first industrialized through natural resource exploitation, and high wages were a reflection of the region's labor scarcity. At the same time, exploitation, whether in mining or lumber camps, often took place in isolated places and company towns where the contradictions between capitalists and workers were at their starkest. The West, furthermore, had more than its share of labor radicalism, from the days of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the early years of the twentieth century to the San Francisco longshoremen in the great strike of 1934 and beyond. How to make sense of this complex set of influences on wages is Mann's objective.

In chapter two he dissects, and rejects, alternative economic interpretations of the wage. The focus of neoclassical economics on supply

and demand and equilibrium renders it inadequate to capture historical change, while the Keynesian version relegates wages to a column under aggregate demand. The institutional school came closer to the truth, in Mann's view, and complemented the work of Italian economist Piero Sraffa, a friend and collaborator of Antonio Gramsci's. Mann calls for a "cultural politics of the wage" (47) and labels his specific approach "the politics of measure, a struggle over the social meaning of capitalism's obsession with quantity" (148).

Mann's case studies examine in detail the Oil Well Workers International Union strike in Los Angeles in 1945, African American timber workers in northern California in the early 1920s, and the International Fishermen and Allied Workers of America on the West Coast in the 1940s and 1950s. The Los Angeles union contended with the loss of wages caused by the end of wartime production and overtime pay. In addition, companies chafed against the price constraints of the Office of Price Administration and eagerly sought a return to ordinary business conditions. In Mann's view, the strike was not merely the quest for "More," in Samuel Gompers's classic formulation. Instead, the strike revolved around the threat of women in the workplace and "the recovery of the patriarchal private sphere" (65). Mann's interpretation suggests a deeper reading of the reconversion turmoil in 1945–46 that featured the greatest strike wave in American history. Most labor historians have found good and sufficient reasons for the postwar strikes, reasons Mann barely acknowledges in his quest to fashion his own interpretation. The omission simply raises more questions than he answers.

Mann's case study of African American workers near Weed, California, brought from the South to work in the timber industry is his most intriguing. A company based in the Louisiana timber country bought land and imported labor in northern California during World War I. He details the patterns of residential segregation, systematic job discrimination, social ostracism, and scapegoating by white workers that African Americans suffered. He analyzes technological change and wide price swings in the market for lumber and their impact on workers, black and white.

Mann's final case study is both the most complicated and least analytically satisfying. Between a quarter and a third of the fishermen, including fishing boat owners, joined the International Fishermen and Allied Workers of America in the 1940s. Were they petty commodity producers because each owned a share of the catch, or were they simple wage earners? The ambiguity caught the union in a legal web of anti-trust prosecutions and McCarthyite pressure against its left-wing leadership in the 1950s until the union's demise in 1959.

Mann's final chapters attempt to link theory and practice in not entirely convincing fashion. He concedes that more conventional economic and historical interpretations could explain the effects of working-class behavior on wages in his three examples. In his quest for a deeper reading of the evidence and use of theory to enliven historical scholarship from a radical or Marxian perspective, there is much to admire. At the same time, readers have to cope with jargon and stale theoretical debates. For those who believe there is still life in the limbs of the body of theory Mann invokes, his study will be provocative and stimulating. For the rest there are still three good case studies in labor history to appreciate.

Union-Free America: Workers and Antiunion Culture, by Lawrence Richards. The Working Class in American History Series. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008. x, 245 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliographic references, index. \$40.00 cloth.

Reviewer Martin Halpern is professor of history at Henderson State University. He is the author of *Unions, Radicals, and Democratic Presidents: Seeking Social Change in the Twentieth Century* (2003).

Lawrence Richards argues that labor historians, fascinated by struggles for unionization, have neglected the large number of workers who have been hostile to unions. Richards's focus is the 1970s and 1980s, a period when the unionized percentage of the labor force was declining rapidly. His goal is to explain why workers told pollsters in that period that they would vote against a union at their workplace in a secret ballot election. He acknowledges the roles of employer hostility and an unfavorable labor law environment in contributing to labor's difficulties but argues that workers' anti-unionism, derived from an anti-union culture, was an important factor, too.

Richards's introduction and the book's cover illustration highlight Nissan workers' rejection of the United Auto Workers union in Smyrna, Tennessee, in 1989. The workers cheered their anti-union vote as a victory for "Americanism," as they waved American flags and held aloft a "Union Free and Proud" sign. Although Richards asks, "Why were these workers so opposed to organized labor?" (2), the book includes no analysis of the Nissan episode but addresses the question only in a general way and through other case studies.

Documenting evidence of anti-unionism in American culture from the late nineteenth century onward, Richards spends nearly half of the book treading familiar ground. As other scholars have, Richards notes that unions gained support as representatives of low-paid workers