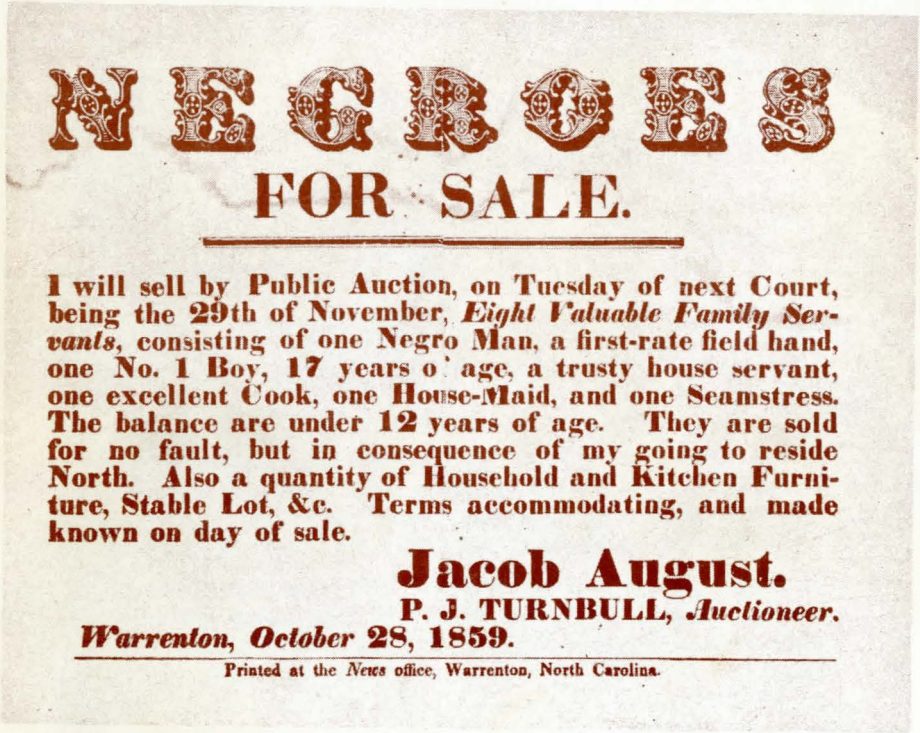
AMERICAN LABOR HISTORY:

50¢

Race and Ethnicity in the Working Class



NEGROES

FOR SALE.

I will sell by Public Auction, on Tuesday of next Court, being the 29th of November, *Eight Valuable Family Servants*, consisting of one Negro Man, a first-rate field hand, one No. 1 Boy, 17 years o' age, a trusty house servant, one excellent Cook, one House-Maid, and one Seamstress. The balance are under 12 years of age. They are sold for no fault, but in consequence of my going to reside North. Also a quantity of Household and Kitchen Furniture, Stable Lot, &c. Terms accommodating, and made known on day of sale.

Jacob August.

P. J. TURNBULL, *Auctioneer.*

Warrenton, October 28, 1859.

Printed at the *News* office, Warrenton, North Carolina.

A RADICAL AMERICA PAMPHLET

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This is one of four topical booklets on American working class history growing indirectly out of an informal graduate seminar at the University of Wisconsin in 1970. The basic idea behind these reviews, most of which were originally written for the Wisconsin seminar, is that they will enable people to get a fairly good idea of what is contained in a particular book or article without having to read it themselves.

One of the other booklets, **Women in the Working Class,** is being published at the same time as this one; the two others, **Working Class Radicalism** and **Workers' Lives,** will be published later in 1973.

Another booklet which should be read in connection with this one is Harold Baron, **The Demand for Black Labor,** an analytical history of the use of black labor in U.S. history. It is also available from Radical America for 50 cents.

Winthrop Jordan, **White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro 1550-1812,** Chapel Hill, 1968.

In what is supposed to be some kind of modern classic, Jordan sets himself "a simple question: what were the attitudes of white men toward Negroes during the first two centuries of European and African settlement in what became the United States of America?" (p. vii) As everyone knows, he does an excellent job of tracking down all sorts of documentation: Shakespeare, travel accounts, diaries, letters, laws, "the literature of conversion" to Christ, abolitionist records and similar items. The book is undoubtedly essential to understanding racism in Amerika.

With this said, one must also point out the serious flaw in the study which stems from the initial formulation of the question and from Jordan's sources. Although he does differentiate among the practices of the different groups of colonies, Jordan does tend to lump all white men together (at least all white men in a given colony). His sources obviously have an elite bias and he does nothing to correct for this. In his "Essay on Sources" he does say that people who wrote about blacks probably

tended to feel more strongly about them than those who did not. He tries to compensate for this, but this hardly seems adequate in a stratified and divided (white) society.

With these limitations in mind, it seems to me that the book is useful for the following information:

First Impressions. Contact between Englishmen and black people was extremely sudden. This was much more true for England than for the Spanish or Portuguese. The color black was also very value-laden (again, more so than for other European cultures). Africans were seen as heathen and uncivilized and both attributes were seen as major defects. By the time the English got to the Coast of Africa, the Portuguese had already enslaved some Africans. According to Jordan, the simultaneous discovery of anthropoid apes and black savages in the same place made a big impact on Englishmen. Jordan also stresses the point that the Protestant Reformation was deeply upsetting English society at the time. He interprets this to mean that Englishmen were highly self-conscious and that there was a great desire for order and some stability in a rapidly changing and upsetting society.

Development of Slavery. In sixteenth century England various forms of coercion had been tried in attempts to regulate the behavior of the lowest classes and criminals. Even convict slavery was tried for a very short time, but was rejected. The English felt slavery was unfit for Englishmen, but it is clear that they did "possess a **concept** of slavery, formed by the clustering of several rough but no illogical equation." The slave was treated like a beast. Slavery was inseparable from the evil in man; it was God's punishment upon Ham's prurient disobedience. Enslavement was captivity, the loser's lot in a contest of power. Slaves were "infidels or heathens." (p. 36) Among Englishmen slavery first developed in the West Indies where climate kept Englishmen from plantation work, the economy demanded cheap, regular unskilled labor and the Spanish provided an immediate example. Then in New England "the need for labor, the example set in the West Indies, the condition of Negroes as 'strangers,' and their initial connection with captive Indians combined to override any hesitation about introducing Negro bond slavery into New England." (p. 71) In the middle colonies an external model was not so immediate, although it obviously was provided by both the West Indies and New England. Here Black slavery developed from a combination of need for plantation labor, prejudice against blacks (which made them appear as defective

men), external models and extrapolation from the status of indentured servant. Jordan stresses the point that prejudice and slavery appeared to develop simultaneously.

Development of White Supremacy. The establishment of slavery established the danger of slave revolts. It consequently became a matter of highest priority to unite all whites to meet this potential threat. To this effect colonial legislatures passed slave codes directed at controlling **white** behavior—the social order required that all white men be made to act in opposition to the blacks who were the property of the rich. Jordan says that this was easy, not only because of the anti-black prejudice crystallized by first impressions, but also because the colonists had a tremendous compulsion to see themselves as Englishmen. The New World was terribly traumatic and many traditional constraints on behavior were gone. The need for order and identity made the colonists define themselves most staunchly as Englishmen as distinctly opposed to any new or amalgamated society.

In what is far and away the heaviest part of the book, Jordan argues that European colonists had a great need to define somebody as the reverse image of what they wanted themselves to be. "It seems almost as if the negro had become a counter image for the European, a vivid reminder of the dangers facing transplanted Europeans, the living embodiment of what they must never allow themselves to become. 'Disorders, rapines and inhumanities' were precisely those qualities which seemed to emerge all to readily when Europeans failed to discipline themselves in America. Application of a distinctly different law to barbarous negroes in itself afforded reassurance that Englishmen in America had not themselves lapsed into barbarism and had not lost their grip on the old standards." (p. (p. 110)

The New Nation. The status of black slaves was well established by the 18th century. Throughout that century (and as far as Jordan takes the book) he sees the problem of identity as crucial in maintaining and elaborating black-white relations. As free blacks became numerous enough to constitute a distinct social category they were seen as more black than free. It was popularly assumed that their main preoccupation was freeing their slave brothers and sisters, and they were regulated accordingly. Jordan completely discounts job competition between white and black as any kind of significant phenomenon. He claims that labor was so scarce in early America that no one had trouble getting jobs.

The first questioning of slavery as an institution came with the Revolution. Apparently the Declaration of Independence in a slave society troubled some people. Three factors, however, kept this questioning from becoming serious. One was that abolition was out of the question economically and militarily for the South, and national unity was seen as essential for survival. Another was self-definition—with independence. Americans defined themselves as modified Englishmen rather than fused European or European and new. Finally, the ideology of the new liberty was ambiguous. The "Revolution" was carried out in the name of Lockeian democracy which stressed the negative freedom of private property ("free" from interference with it). Since slaves were property, liberty was seen as more for their owners than for them. And then of course, there was plain prejudice.

The result of this process was defining the U.S. as a white man's country, which was symbolized by the growth of colonization societies to send the blacks back to Africa. (Litwack says that the ideology of colonization was characteristic of Northern thinking at the beginning of the century).

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS:

1. The most important observation is that the question of identity—who are we as a social group, what gives our lives meaning?—was very important in early America and that it was answered in national and racial, rather than by class lines.

2. In this respect Jordan's early observation that the introduction of black slaves quickly quelled servant rebelliousness is very interesting, but it is made in passing and not elaborated.

3. Jordan discounts economic competition as a determining force in race relations, but he does not support this assumption and does not provide explanations for the black-Irish riots in several Northern cities in the early 1800's.

4. Jordan's emphasis on the negative rights of Lockeian democracy as a guiding ideology seems an important insight.

——Rob McBride

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Leon Litwack, **North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860,** U. of Chicago Press, 1961.

Although this book relegates the question of jobs to the fifth chapter (out of eight), it has some useful information on the subject. (In general, incidentally, it is a fine and comprehensive work, with a lot of material on subjects such as voting rights, segregation, and the attempts of blacks—who numbered 226,000 in the North by 1860—to organize for the extension of their rights.)

In contrast to the situation in the slave states, where black artisans were numerous, almost all northern blacks who had jobs were in menial or unskilled positions. Men worked as laborers, mariners, servants, waiters, coachmen, bootblacks, porters, second-hand clothing dealers, and hod carriers; women as washerwomen, dressmakers, seamstresses, and cooks. In New York City in 1855, eighty-seven per cent of blacks with jobs were employed in menial or unskilled work.

The nascent unions of the pre-Civil War period were hostile, and in some cases blacks worked as strikebreakers, such as in the New York longshoremen's strike of 1855. **Frederick Douglass' Paper,** criticizing this strike, said, "Of course, colored men can feel under no obligation to hold out in a 'strike' with the whites, as the latter have never recognized them." Race prejudice and fear of low-paid competition were both factors in the unions' exclusion of blacks.

While German and Scandinavian immigrants generally moved west and became farmers, the Irish were much more likely to stay in the eastern cities.They were thrown into economic competition with blacks and there was an often intense hostility.

——Jim O'Brien

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Stanley Elkins, **Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life** (U. of Chicago Press, 1959), Part II, "Institutions and the Law of Slavery."

Elkins compares slavery in the U.S. and in Latin America and finds that, while in the U.S. slavery was looked upon as the "right" way of or-

ganizing society, in Latin America it was only a necessary expedient. That is, it was a **labor** system not a **social** system. This was brought about by a conflict between the interests of the crown, the church, and the planter. In the U.S. the planter's interests were unopposed to, and even identical with, those of church and state.

The following table shows some of the differences in status and treatment which resulted.

	U.S.	L.A.
Marriage	no legal recognition	church wedding, legal protection, couples could not be separated by sale.
Punishment	owner's discretion	tried in court for crimes limited to 25 strokes for misbehavior, could be set free for excessive punishment.
Property rights	none	could buy freedom, land, could sell garden produce, 85 days to self.
Manumission	discouraged, in places illegal.	encouraged.
Food, clothing, Physical brutality	probably better in U.S. checked by economic interests & social pressures	also checked by law.
Education	forbidden	provided by Church
Means of protection	none	an official protector of slaves to whom priests were required to report: he also conducted 3 annual inspections.
Intermarriage	forbidden	allowed
Upward mobility	none	some
Free Negroes' rights	few	same as whites

Free Negroes' rights few same as whites

Elkins overpaints the lot of both groups by relying solely on legal standards, but his argument is nonetheless convincing. Apart from minor quibbles (e.g. many white servants also came involuntarily) it is fairly well done. In fact it almost seems commonplace. Of course, capitalism (or anything) will be different if unimpaired than if impaired. The questions that seem really important are why does capitalism develop slavery at all not how different types of capitalism differ in their treatment of slaves.

——Gayle Southworth

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Robert Starobin, **Industrial Slavery in the Old South,** Oxford U. Press, 1970.

This is an important book based on extremely thorough research. Although the number of industrial slaves was not great (Starobin estimates between 160,000 and 200,000 in the 1850's, or about 5% of the total slave population) a study of their working conditions can tell us a great deal about the institution of slavery itself.

The sheer variety of industries which employed slave labor gives us a sense of the versatility of slavery. Starobin describes the use of slaves in textiles, iron, tobacco, hemp, sugar- and rice-processing, gristmills, cotton-ginning and pressing, coal and gold mining, saltworks, lumber, turpentine, fisheries, railroads, and canals. He argues that industry did not weaken the slave system, and that instances in which employers switched from slave to free labor were balanced by instances in which slave labor replaced free. Industrial slavery was reasonably profitable and slave labor was probably as efficient as the available white labor, at an annual cost to the employer of about $100 per slave as compared to about $300 for white workers. The failure of southern industry to expand more rapidly than it did, Starobin says, was not due to the use of slave labor but to other reasons, mainly the ability of agriculture to outbid industry for investment capital.

A six-day week and a 12- to 16-hour day, with only a short lunch break, seem to have been the general pattern for industrial slaves. An

extreme case was a railroad in Louisiana which worked its men 365 days a year. Most industrial slaves seem to have had about the same standard of living as most agricultural field hands, not as high as house servants. Starobin quotes a rice-mill owner as expressing a common philosophy of the men who employed industrial slaves: "The practice... of giving the Negro everything he may want or desire is one which must prevent the growth of any industrious habits. I have therefore, as has been seen, only supplied, what I consider absolutely necessary for his health and endurance." Whipping was a common means of discipline.

A chapter on "Patterns of Resistance and Repression" discusses mainly the tendency of industrial slaves to run away when they had the opporopportunity, and at other times to engage in passive resistance. Starobin argues that, despite this constant struggle between slaves and masters, such devices as the payment of incentive bonuses and the use of trusted slaves as managers, together with harsh repression, maintained the profitability of slave-employing industries.

While detailing the brutality of industrial slavery, the author uses his own moral judgement to clarify and document, rather than to obscure, the nature of the system. He also avoids the trap of drawing too sharp a contrast between industrial slavery and the "free labor" system of northern factories. As he notes, "Employers everywhere seem to have regarded their workers as capable of enduring even the worst working conditions. Negro slaves merely formed a special case within the general pattern, and the slave system merely compounded what would in any event have been a disagreeable process of industrialization for industrial workers.

——Jim O'Brien

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Oscar Handlin, **Boston's Immigrants: A Study in Acculturation**, New York: Athaneum, 1970.

One of the most substantial works on immigrants in America is Oscar Handlin's **Boston's Immigrants.** The study might be more accurately entitled the Impact of the Irish on Boston, 1790-1865 or perhaps the Serpent in the Garden of Eden. Handlin was profoundly impressed

by the way Boston changed in the two decades after 1840. For Handlin, Boston before 1840 was a tranquil, clean, sober and uncongested community with a fairly homogeneous population of merchants, shopkeepers and artisans. With the coming of thousands of starving peasants in the 1840's, Boston became a dirty, desease-ridden, crowded industrial city marked by intense group conflict between Irish Catholics and native-born Protestants. This antagonism colored nearly every facet of urban life and left a bitter legacy that endured for decades.

Yet one wishes Handlin had avoided the pitfalls of ethnic determinism. In his eagerness to dramatize changes in Boston he misrepresents conditions in the city before 1840. Life was not at all pleasant or comfortable for that half of Boston's population that discovered living near destitution in the late 18th century—before the Irish arrived. And how sober were the pre-Irish Bostonians? Roger Lane, in his study of the Boston police estimated there were hundreds of grog shops scattered throughout the city in 1830, a full decade or more before the heavy influx of Irish. Brawling, gambling and hard drinking were an integral part of the social scene in the commercial ports, and the participants were native born Americans.

Handlin also exaggerates the enlightened tolerance and liberalism of native Bostonians. On the question of slavery, for example, he assumed the Irish were the chief opponents of nigger-loving abolitionists. But it was primarily native born townies who dragged Garrison through the streets and harassed the opponents of racial segregation. And it was the sons of the upper class who booed and heckled Horace Mann during his antislavery speech at Harvard University. In short, there were numerous natives whose views on slavery, temperance, the revolutions of 1848, the place of women, and respect for authority were like rather than unlike those of the Irish. Furthermore, the poverty, crime and suffering he describes in detail can be found in hundreds of cities in America and Europe during the Industrial Revolution, regardless of the ethnic or religious background of the population.

Despite these limitations, Handlin's argument is persuasive. Social evils and heavy Irish immigration grew simultaneously. As a result, many native born blamed the Irish rather than the competitive system for their troubles. The ethnic and religious line, rather than class, thus became the great divider within the community. Each group clustered in its own neighborhoods, with its own churches, charitable societies, newspapers, fire and militia companies, political parties and schools, and viewed the other with suspicion and fear. By the mid-1860's, Handlin reports, there was more intermarriage between whites and blacks than be-

tween Irish and non-Irish, a powerful comment indeed on the intensity of the antagonism.

——Paul Faler

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Robert Ernst, **Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825-1863,** King's Crown Press, 1949.

The heart of this book is three chapters and a statistical appendix analyzing the manuscript census returns of occupations of the 1855 New York census, which provides an excellent picture of the place of the immigrant in the labor force at that point. In 1825, less than 20,000 (about 11%) of Manhattan's 166,000 residents were aliens; in 1855, 322,000 (51%) of the population of 629,000 were foreign born. Of the 156,000 gainfully employed immigrants in 1855, 56% were Irish, 29% German, 9% from Great Britain, and the rest from more than a dozen other countries. When one speaks of "labor" in N.Y. after the great influx of immigration in the late 1840's and early 50's, then, one is speaking in large part of Irish and German workers.

A summary table of some of the occupational distribution data follows. The share of foreign born in the total labor force is especially unreliable. The figures in parentheses at the top of the table are the number of gainfully employed. The number over the "/" is the national group as a percent of all foreign born in the occupation; the number under the "/" is the national group in that occupation as a percent of the total nationality labor force. Thus, the Irish made up 80% of foreign-born domestic servants; and 32% of the Irish labor force was employed in domestic service. (Negroes are computed as a percent of foreign born, though not included in that total.)

Occupation	For. born / Total LF	For. born	Irish	German	Negro
All Gainfully employed:		(155,963)	(88,480)	(45,764)	(3688)

Domestic Serv. (incl. cooks, waiters)	90+	100/22	80/32	15/9	6/56
Laborers & Porters	90+	100/14	87/21	10/5	3/33
Building trades	70	100/9	56/9	24/8	.2/.8
Clothing	80	100/8	46/10	42/18	.7/4
Leather, shoe	90	100/7	34/3	55/9	.2/.4
Peddlers, food dealers, shop keepers	70	100/7	40/5	43/11	.5/1.6
Clerical	40	100/4	36/2	38/5	.3/.5

While Ernst doesn't include enough information on the native labor force to compare the occupational distribution, it is clear from this data that immigrants, particularly the Irish, performed the city's unskilled tasks. Many of these were clearly women, to whom should be added many scarcely skilled dressmakers included in the clothing trades. The unskilled occupations were even more overwhelmingly the only opportunity for employment for most of the city's relatively small black population. Ernst notes a few cases of competition between blacks and Irish at the bottom of the job ladder—for instance an ad for a "Woman wanted. . . any country or color except Irish," blacks apparently being preferred in some cases for their supposed greater docility as well as Protestantism—but he states that such explicit evidence is scant.

The greater skill level of the German population is also evident, and Germans also dominated such smaller crafts as instrument making. The figures for the clothing industry, however, do not speak for themselves. Besides unskilled women seamstresses at one extreme and skilled tailors or cutters at the other, there were a variety of different types of industrial organization in between. The ready-made clothing industry, according to Ernst, was one in which the factory system was most advanced, and Irishmen in particular worked as operatives in clothing shops of various sizes. The domestic sweatshop system, on the other hand, was more developed among the Germans, with a division of labor being established within the family.

Even for a relatively secure craft such as shoemaking (the sewing machine for uppers displaced women, and mass production was restricted to New England in this period), the competition of the influx of immigrants meant that many "shoemakers" operated only tiny repair shops out of their basement dwellings.

The relation of immigrants to labor organizations depended both on their skill level and on their European traditions, as Ernst points out somewhat sketchily. Economic nativism, which developed in the depressed 1840's, focused on the pressure of immigrants in undercutting

wages and breaking down the apprenticeship system for controlling the supply of skilled labor; on occasions strikebreaking (by Negroes as well) was also a grievance. Ernst emphasizes, however, that in skilled trades new immigrants were more likely to side with the workers, who often included older immigrants.

A significant number of German artisans and intellectuals, especially after 1848, had a tradition of radical organization, in contrast to the Irish. Such ideas as Fourierism, Marxism, and producer coops were influential in German labor circles. On the other hand, Ernst says that in the course of making links with English-speaking unions in the crafts, German workers tended to emphasize economic over political issues, and straight job issues over producer cooperation. (He relies heavily on Commons et. al. for his interpretations, though).

Ernst also gives a good deal of attention to the community institutions of the immigrants. Such a large, rapid influx of population inevitably put enormous pressure on housing, and Ernst cites some statistical support such as population density and the number of cellar dwellings (which quadrupled in the 1840's, but, interestingly, had already declined by nearly half by the early 1860's). He mentions at least one meeting of tenants in 1848, which demanded legislative rent control and proposed that a permanent lodgers' league be organized.

Many of the social institutions of the immigrants were basically American forms with immigrant membership—militia and volunteer fire companies, building and loan societies (often fraudulent), mutual aid and burial societies—which thus served to assimilate as well as to maintain group consciousness. Public schools were poorly attended (about 50% of school age children were enrolled, and less than half of those were in attendance on an average day), by immigrant and native alike apparently. Public evening schools for adults were authorized in 1848. The Germans were the main group with a language barrier at this point, but apparently had little success in setting up their own schools in this period.

For the Irish, the main interest in education was religious. The Catholic Church was a key institution in the Irish community, and fought with the Protestant-dominated public school board until it was replaced with an elected board in 1842. The Irish press, while sympathetic to workers' strikes and wage problems, reflected the Church's hostility to socialism, feminism, and abolitionism (for its Protestantism and defiance of law and order as well as its implications that blacks were equal to white Christians).

——Evan Metcalf

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Charlotte Erickson, **American Industry and the European Immigrant, 1860-1885,** Harvard University Press, 1957.

Charlotte Erickson sums up the thesis of her book in the Preface: Contract labor in America was rare during the years after the Civil War, and never reached the proportions claimed by the advocates of a law against its importation. When, on rare occasions, American industrialists did resort to importations it was to bring in highly skilled workers for particular jobs. No mass importations of unskilled workers were made by mine operators and railroad contractors. The bulk of the immigration from Italy and Hungary in the eighties was as voluntary as the exodus from Sweden in the sixties and Ireland and Germany in the fifties had been. American industry in fact concerned itself very little with the process of immigration, although it was glad enough to employ those who found their way to American shores.

Contract labor is defined by Erickson as ". . . the system of signing up workers for a period of service during which transportation advances were to be repaid." It was a form of the old indenture system of the colonial period.

In 1863 the Boston Foreign Emigrant Society and the Foreign Emigrant Aid Society, centered in Hartford, Conn., were founded to recruit foreign skilled laborers for American industry. These organizations were influential in the passing of the Act to Encourage Immigration by Congress in July of 1864. This law however received little financial support from Congress and thus these societies largely had to depend on their own means. The efforts of the emigrant recruitment societies, as documented by Erickson, were fairly fruitless. Not only did they fail to recruit skilled contract labor in Europe, but even if they had, few American industrialists were interested in their services. Obtaining skilled labor in this fashion was just too costly and once the laborer had come over there was no legal means to enforce his contract. Many of them only stayed to make some cash and then went back to their homelands. Also, American and European trade unions eventually formalized agreements to prevent the movement of recruited contract labor for the purpose of strikebreaking. In the long run, the American employer chose not to recruit foreign contract laborers to meet the scarcity of skilled labor, but rather turned to increased mechanization.

While the recruitment of skilled contract labor failed, there were groups which sought the recruitment of unskilled labor on a non-contract basis. Among these were agents from western and southern state governments which continued to support the search for new blood to de-

velop their industry and agriculture; railroad land companies eager to settle prospective customers and land purchasers along the lines of their roads; steamship companies determined to carry full cargoes of immigrants on each trip to America; and independent commission agents who helped them to fill those ships. The two main centers which received these immigrant laborers were New York and Chicago and the only means of procuring jobs was through a public municipal labor bureau, philanthropic societies, but most usually through private labor bureaus. These latter institutions were most successful as they not only collected the men, but transported them to the job, fed and housed them on the way, and "disciplined" them.

The private labor bureaus in the major cities also served the function of providing employers with unlimited quantities of unskilled scab labor. Erickson attributes the undermining of many locals of the Knights of Labor to the strikebreakers provided by these private labor bureaus. Where union members could speak to these immigrants as they were brought in, the latter usually joined the strike effort as did the Jewish and Italian immigrants in the Jersey City strike of the freight-handlers in 1882. In the same year, however, a more general pattern is seen in Consolidated Coal's use of Pinkerton agents to prevent striking miners in western Maryland from talking to recruited immigrants and thereby breaking the strike.

In this period employers were using greater mechanization and more unskilled labor to replace expensive skilled labor. The constant use of immigrants to break strikes, however, caused trade unionists to focus their attention on the immigrant as the problem rather than the machine. The common and false notion among workers was that these immigrants were being contracted in Europe. By 1885, when the demand for labor had somewhat diminished, the Window Glass Workers Union provided much of the impetus in getting Congress to pass the Foran Act which forbade the importation of contract labor. The knights of Labor and some of the larger trade unions had, moreover, involved the whole trade union movement in the campaign for the Foran Act which basically was a false issue as contract labor was not at all at the heart of the problem. Meanwhile political hacks jumped on the bandwagon in support of the Foran Act and thus falsely identified themselves as friends of labor. The real problem of the distribution of unskilled labor was never realistically confronted by the Labor movement. The Foran Act was never effectively enforced and when the Federal Government established a public labor bureau, lack of funding rendered it useless. The eventual response of Labor to immigration was massive restriction: a policy supported by the AFL.

This study focuses on one aspect of the problem of immigration and provides a thorough research job. Erickson has effectively revealed the failure of the American Labor Movement to cope with the problem of immigration by getting involved with false issues such as contract labor and ignoring the real problem of the distribution of unskilled immigrant labor.

——Allen Binstock

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Alexander Saxton, **The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California** (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1971).

This is a fine study of the way in which the labor movement used the anti-Chinese issue in California during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Saxton shows that from the time of the Gold Rush, the labor force contained thousands of Chinese laborers and that by the early 1880's Asians comprised one-quarter to one-fifth of those working for wages in California. They worked largely in the menial service trades (domestic and laundry), a few trades like cigar-making in which there was a competitive national market and in mining, agriculture and heavy construction (especially railroads). Unfortunately, Saxton does not tell us very much about these Chinese workers. This may be the result of the fact that there are very few printed sources in English that relate to these people. He does suggest, however, that class differences in the Chinese community were muted by the necessity of putting up a common defense against white racism.

Saxton's fascinating book is really an examination of how certain white labor leaders and "labor politicians" used the anti-Chinese issue to recruit constituencies. The author argues that California's culturally diverse white work force was united during the late 19th century by a sense of frustration and despair which its leaders blamed on the monopolists and exploiters above and the "cheap" Chinese laborers below. When white workers struck back at these twin enemies, however, they generally attacked the Chinese.

The campaign to deport and exclude Chinese labor benefited the Democrats especially. The Democrats had an issue to replace the anti-

black crusade they used in the East and an issue to split the Republican Party which still contained egalitarian Abolitionists who thought Chinese exclusion was wrong in principle and capitalist employers who thought it was wrong in terms of business practice. It also proved valuable to "labor politicians" like Dennis Kearney of the Workingman's Party and Boss Reuf of the Union Labor Party who used the exclusion movement to gain power in San Francisco and get their share of the spoils through the capitalist "System" dominated by the Southern Pacific. Finally, trade unionists used the threat of cheap Chinese labor (bolstered with racist attacks on Asians) as a way of organizing California labor under the dominance of the skilled trades. "Anti-Orientalism," Saxton writes, "could serve the needs of political organizers or of craft union leaders who wished to secure the support of unskilled workingmen without assuming trade union responsibilities to them." The combined efforts of these forces, with important leadership from certain businessmen, succeeded in winning federal exclusion legislation in 1882.

The California socialists, who enjoyed considerable influence in the labor movement after the Civil War, went along with the trade unionists in exploiting the anti-Chinese issue as an organizing tool. According to Saxton, California "Socialists took their ideology seriously" and for many years they struggled with the issue of excluding Chinese wage earners from the organized working class. "They strained mightily over the problem and ended by agreeing with [their leader] Frank Roney, to 'sail under the flag' of anti-coolieism. This was to serve merely as a tactic, a means of uniting and educating the working class." However, Saxton sensibly notes, "tactics have a way of becoming habits." And so at a crucial turning point in 1885, when there was a chance to haul down the "tactical flag" of anti-coolieism and raise instead "a strategic flag of working class unity," the socialists stuck to the well-worn path of exclusionary trade unionsim; they could summon only a "gesture" by allowing a principled Marxist named Sigismund Danielewicz to make a statement on behalf of labor unity across race lines. But when Danielewicz was shouted down by assembled trade unionists, his socialist comrades remained silent. Appropriately, Saxton makes this Polish Jew who organized the sailors of San Francisco the hero of his book. The author concludes: "Danielewicz reminds us there was (and perhaps still is) a tradition of humane and humanist radicalism in America. No star is lost." This is a nice touch which shows that Saxton is a politically engaged historian; he is a socialist sympathizer who can, however, write critical history that shows how seriously racism handicapped labor and radical movements in U.S. history. Saxton makes no apologies for racism in these movements. He does indicate, however, that anti-Asian crusades were useful to some political demagogues and trade union bureaucrats (not to mention capi-

talist employers) without being useful to the unskilled working people of California.

——Jim Green

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Spero, Sterling and Abram Harris, **The Black Worker,** Atheneum, 1968, (originally published, 1931).

This book traces the lot of black workers from slavery to about 1930. Competition created racial hostility from the time of slavery when black artisans, slaves, monopolized the southern trades. After the war, the fear of competition from free black labor made white workers racist. Anticipating this challenge they had been anti-abolitionist, e.g., unions in Pennsylvania demanded that the state pass pro-slavery legislation. In these early days only the socialist German workers supported the black cause. Draft riots in N.Y. opposed a war in the interest of blacks who had already been used as strikebreakers on the docks.

The development of craft unionism after the war was the key factor in the history of black/white relations according to the authors. These unions were organized not so much to fight management as to resist competition from other workers. A policy of excluding less skilled white helpers operated to the further restriction of unskilled blacks, an otherwise competitive labor force. Early attempts of progressive white workers to come to terms with black labor foundered when the populist politics of the former faced the Republican allegiances of the latter. The Knights of Labor, with an ideology of labor solidarity, was the first group to seriously approach black workers and had organized 60,00 by 1886.

The development of the AFL, despite an official policy of opposition to discrimination, tended to reinforce the special oppression of black workers. The decentralist nature of this federation rendered it incapable of influencing the racial policies of member unions, many of which excluded blacks by statute, others by custom. When unions did admit blacks, it was as separate locals subject to white domination which often sought to force the blacks out of the trade. Thus between 1890 and 1920

there was no real increase of blacks in the trades.

By 1926 there were 56,000 black trade unionists. Only 4.2% of black workers were organized, as compared with 20% of whites. The AFL refused to enforce anti-discriminatory resolutions passed at national conventions against such offending unions as the Intl. Assn. of Machinists. Nor did it make any effort to organize blacks. In the face of unions' resistance to admitting blacks it issued charters to unaffiliated black locals which remained powerless in the face of white hostility. The authors blame the negligence of the AFL for the strikebreaking and race riots which occurred when blacks moved north in droves during and after W.W.I.

Despite AFL policy there was little success in the organizing of independent black unions. Socialists associated with the **Messenger** dabbled in organizing with little effect. Only in trades with predominantly black workers was there any success, such as the postal workers and A. Philip Randolph's porters union. Meanwhile, the attitude of most black leaders to trade unionism was openly hostile. Booker T. Washington and his followers urged blacks to follow a petty bourgeois philosophy of reliance upon employers, thrift, and eventual independence through small business. Negro churchmen not only encourage individualism and respect for white masters but often recruited black strikebreakers. Marcus Garvey denounced the "communist" philosophy of labor solidarity for militant nationalism. Black legislators in Illinois threatened to oppose an anti-injunction law, and, in general, black leaders encouraged workers to scab on unions as a means of breaking into restrictive trades. Many of these leaders, however, were equally hostile to unions which did not discriminate such as the IWW and the ILGWU, and even to black unions.

Between 1915 and 1924 about one million blacks moved north, doubling their numbers in such industrial cities as Detroit. Population figures of blacks for 1890 showed 80.6% rural, 19.4% urban; in 1920 it was only 66% rural, 34% urban. These workers moved into unskilled jobs in auto, steel, packing, and such undesirable jobs as in hot metal foundries. Blacks increased from a fraction to almost 30% of the Chicago packing industry, from 6.35% to 17% of the steel workers. This movement followed the job openings created by a wartime economy, but blacks were also directly imported by labor agents and railroads. Whites were enraged by black strikebreakers who the authors claim were used in every industry in the country, effectively destroying many unions. White workers struck against the employment of blacks in such trades as railroad work and violence was frequent. Many blacks actually broke into restricted jobs as scabs, gaining a foothold in the mining, packing and garment industries where white unions then had to begin to relate to them. The presence of this industrial reserve continuously floating out of the rural South tended to depress white wages after the war.

Of all the industries into which blacks were organized they were strongest among dockworkers where they established their own unions after the Civil War. They were later incorporated into the Intl. Longshoremen's Assn. which struck against discrimination on the New Orleans docks in the 1880's. Whites and blacks organized into separate locals cooperated on joint committees and enforced a 50-50 division of work. Much of this official cooperation was undermined by a refusal to work side by side on the job, however. In 1923, although blacks and whites struck together the union was smashed by use of scabs. The IWW had some success organizing the docks in Philadelphia and Baltimore and Virginia where blacks led black and white. The IWW was finally broken by the opposition of government and anti-labor black leaders.

Similarly in the mines the large numbers of black workers, originally brought in as strikebreakers in the 1880's forced union consideration. Moreover the expansion of coal mining to W. Va. and Alabama forced the United Mine Workers to organize blacks in order to fight price cutting competition. The mine operators played a ruthless game of exploiting racial hostilities. During a general strike in W. Va. they imported 60,000 blacks in a year as scabs, resulting in much white violence. The union, already divided by ethnic groups, was pretty much destroyed by racism. Nevertheless, the UMW was one of the few unions to organize to oppose racial discrimination. It waged a 30-year battle to organize miners in Alabama, employing black organizers and pushing blacks into leadership positions. Blacks are 65% organized by 1902 and support the 1908 strike en masse. Middle class whites, terrified by the violent struggle waged by blacks and whites, together began to pressure government to close down the integrated mining camps and to lure whites out of the union. Whites began to leave the union and the national guard was able to break a largely black strike in 1919. Nevertheless, during that national strike blacks and whites united for the "armed march" in W. Va. to free union miners held in jail. Despite real efforts of the union, racism continued to undermine the struggle forcing the union to outlaw the Klan's racism, buying blacks off with welfare programs. Blacks scabbed on the 1927 strike, fragmenting the union, and Communists stepped in and organized the National Mine Workers along a program of interracial solidarity.

Of the unions which did try to organize blacks the Meat Cutters were among the most successful. Faced with the influx of blacks into the packing houses they pragmatically began to stress inclusion of black workers in unions and fought for a no-discrimination clause in their contracts. Special attention was paid to black grievances, and blacks and whites were able to march in unity against the owners despite police attempts to incite racial feuds. Finally the importation of black strikebreakers in 1921 destroyed this solidarity and with it the packing unions.

Unions with good records on black workers also include the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Amal. Food Workers, Amal. Metal Workers, Brewery Workers and especially the ILGWU. The latter union, with a socialist ideology and a largely non-prejudiced immigrant base was principedly committed to organizing blacks even where they were only a fragment of the trade, as in the N.Y. garment industry. The worst record probably belongs to the Railroad Brotherhoods which fought for years to deny blacks positions as engineers, conductors, firemen or trainmen. Their refusal to admit blacks actually created a cheap labor force which always threatened their jobs but they finally did succeed in forcing most blacks off the trains. Blacks advanced on the railroads only during the brief period of federal control when governmental decisions overrode union policy.

The authors make short shrift of black radicalism. They brand in the case of 1920's socialists, such as those around the **Messenger**, as dilletantish; the Socialist Party as economic determinists whose internationalism led to an indifference to blacks; and the Communists, whose attempts to make the "national question" a revolutionary banner and to take over black organizations they suggest was opportunist at worst, irrelevant at best.

There is certainly a wealth of material in this volume. The general impression conveyed is that it was the privilege of a labor aristocracy and the racism of white workers which served both to oppress black workers and in most cases to destroy the workers movement. Black middle class leaders were certainly accomplices: whether they were militant nationalists or Toms, they were anti-labor. Union leaders seem to be at fault by failure to raise the consciousness of white workers. And the businessmen themselves—the impression is that while they exploited, rather than created the racism inherited from slavery, they learned to divide and conquer in the search for a cheap labor reserve.

——Jackie DiSalvo

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Milton Cantor, ed., **Black Labor in America**, Greenwood Pub., 1971.

This is an eclectic collection of essays on black workers that appeared in the 1969 volume of **Labor History** (No. 3). It is comparable to the anthology edited by Julius Jacobson that appeared in 1968, except that it contains nothing about the condition of black labor after World War II.

The Cantor collection opens with an interesting article by Thomas Wagstaff entitled "Call Your Old Master—'Master'," that explains how southern political leaders arranged to regain control of black labor for the planters during the presidential Reconstruction of Andrew Johnson's regime. Unfortunately, it is top-down analysis that gives us no sense of how the Freedmen wanted to exercise the "labor power" southern property owners coveted. A lot of work has to be done on black labor in the crucial Reconstruction period of the sort that Robert Starobin did on industrial slavery before the War.

Kenneth Porter's colorful article on black "cowboys" shows that Afro-Americans comprised one-quarter of the total number of trail drivers who brought cattle north from Texas to the Kansas railheads after the Civil War. This article illustrates in an unusual way how important black labor was to the growing American economy, and it argues that in primitive conditions, where blacks were required to do the most dangerous, difficult work, race relations were surprisingly good. However, Porter's contention that black cowhands were treated better than their brothers and sisters in other occupations is not very impressive, because the author cites countless examples of white racism on the frontier.

The two best articles are by Paul B. Worthman and William M. Tuttle on black workers in Birmingham and Chicago respectively in the crucial period between 1890 and 1920 when Afro-Americans first entered heavy industry. Worthman shows how the industrial unionism of the UMW brought black and white workers together in Alabama's coal and steel districts around the turn of the century, a time when Jim Crowism was on the rise. Labor organizers had to overcome black hostility to unionism, inculcated by Booker T. Washington, as well as white racism, exacerbated by Southern industrialists. The Union could not overcome racism or segregation completely, but it did make class solidarity and racial cooperation possible, partly because militant black leaders insisted on their rights. However, the UMW was not strong enough to stand up against powerful employers who used repressive tactics and thousands of black strikebreakers. Between 1904 and 1908, industrial unionism was crushed in Alabama and the industrialists could continue to exploit a racially divided working class until the CIO period in the late 1930's.

William Tuttle's article shows conclusively that the terrible Chicago "race riot" of 1919 was the direct result of labor competition between black and white workers, a factor that earlier historians have minimized. The use of black scabs in strikes during the early 1900's resulted in open conflicts that increased white race-hatred and turned blacks off on the unions.

Afro-Americans were hired by Chicago industries in large numbers during the war-time labor shortage. After the Armistace thousands were laid off and the black unemployed people of Chicago (including

many veterans) became a pool of strikebreakers. When white workers began to strike in the great labor revolt of 1919, these "blacklegs" were brought in to replace them and this precipitated the bloody "race riot" (actually a pogrom) of that year. The factors that retarded unionization of blacks before and during the war also caused the "race riot," according to Tuttle. These factors were:"Negro distrust of unions and white workers," which resulted from racism on the shop floor as well as in the AFL hierarchy, "the economic advantages" that accrued to "non-union workers," "the manipulation of black workers by management, and, above all, the hatred of black workers by whites arising from racial antipathy and conditioned by strikebreaking." Tuttle's article clearly shows how much racism blocked class conscious labor action in a crucial period of capitalist development.

The contributions on black labor in the 1930's are less interesting. For example, Raymond Wolters' article on the influence of section 7a is written from the top down and tells us very little about the condition of black labor in the pre-CIO period of the 30's. James Olson's short essay on the black leadership's response to the CIO also ignores the workers. Although it is a bit disorganized, the best piece on CIO efforts at organizing black workers is a contribution by Sumner Rosen in the Jacobsen anthology.

In short, there is little of interest or importance in this volume outside of the articles by Worthman and Tuttle which illustrate the full complexity of racist obstacles to class conscious unionism.

——Jim Green

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F. Ray Marshall, **Labor in the South**, Harvard University Press, 1967.

This book seeks to analyze the factors influencing the growth of organized labor in the South. The issue pertinent to our discussion is the effect that racism had and still has on organizing labor in the South and in turn whether or not racism was undercut by unions. At the outset, however, some differences between the South and non-South should be repeated. The South was considered an economically underdeveloped region after the Civil War and many felt that the key to increasing the standard of living was industrialization. The argument was given that unions would retard development. There was a racial and ethnic homogeneity of southern white workers and managers which had been but-

tressed by the Civil War and Reconstruction. Besides this, many saw industrialists (at least in the beginning) as benefactors who would increase the standard of living for the whites. Industry in the South, unlike the North, did not employ many immigrants. The distinctions were between white and black and certain jobs were seen as for whites or for blacks. Marshall argues that industrialization has slowly integrated the South and non-South and that as a consequence some of these unique aspects were broken down as South and North became more alike.

The book is filled with tales of organizing efforts in a host of industries all over the South beginning after the Civil War. While Marshall brings in the racial issue in many of his examples, he never treats it in a systematic way and so the reader has to make his own generalizations.

Quite a few instances are cited where there was cooperation between white and black workers. Longshoremen in New Orleans, for example, worked out a quota system for dividing the work in the early 1890's. Prior to this there had been bloody race riots on the docks beginning in the depression of 1873 when white workers took over a majority of the jobs. They did so at the expense of lower pay, equivalent to what a black was paid. Other race riots took place in the 1880's but by 1892 the quota system was worked out and black and white, skilled and unskilled all cooperated in a general strike in 1892.

However, racial problems came to a head whenever the number of blacks increased to the point where they could effectively be used to undercut the position of white workers. It was apparent to some that the work had to be shared and in 1914 white longshoremen at Mobile quit work in order to support a strike by black longshoremen for higher wages. In Port of Houston in 1917, the black local of the ILA consented to the formation of a white local and entered into a 99-year compact with them to divide all work equally. This was later. Earlier, there were many instances like that of the railroad employees who responded to black competition by striking to prevent the use of blacks on the railroad and sought to remove them from the railroad by contract provisions limiting their employment.

Most building trade locals including the plumbers, electricians, sheetmetal workers, elevator constructors, and iron workers barred blacks by control of licensing, control of apprenticeship training, striking against the use of blacks on traditionally unionized projects. However, Marshall argues that the blacks were not forced out of the crafts, though they were forced out of good jobs.

Below are some general summarizing points:

1. While there are instances of black and white solidarity, the question is why and what did it mean and not mean. A distinction must be

made between economic equality and the issue of social equality. The UMW and other unions had elected black officials, in a few instances even presidents of locals. Occasionally there were integrated meetings but this policy did not go unchallenged. The Alabama State Federation of Labor commented about the UMW policies on the racial issue: "Organized labor in Alabama will not tolerate social equality between the whites and blacks as advocated by the Communists or by any others.... The Communist papers praise the UMW very highly...." Samuel Gompers: "In making the declaration for the complete organization of all workers (the AFL) does not necessarily proclaim that the social barriers which exist between the whites and Negroes could or should be obliterated." "The antipathy that we know some union workers have against the colored man is not because of his color, but because of the fact generally he is a 'cheap man.'"

2. Unionization and the survival of the union itself had priority in the crunch. Gompers: "We have all sorts of people to deal with.... We must maintain our Federation and we cannot always do that which we would like to do and yet maintain our Federation, which as you have said has grown into power and influence." The AFL, their declaration to treat black and white equally notwithstanding, had a particularly bad record for not trying to organize blacks, and for allowing segregated or separate locals. The CIO was somewhat better and made the point of trying to organize blacks who of course in some industries constituted the overwhelming majority. The CP also had the policy of equality and considered the blacks as constituting a nationality consistent with the minority question in Russia. While they expelled some party members for allowing separate locals, necessity dictated that they be allowed in the South but not in the North. In organizing the lumber workers the IWW, or at least Bill Haywood, took the issue head on. Coming into a meeting in which blacks had been excluded, he argued for the admittance of blacks and that since it was against the law to have integrated meetings, the law should be broken. The blacks were admitted.

3. From Marshall's examples, it is difficult to distinguish between what he calls a hostile community response and the response of the white workers. It is clear from many of the examples that the white workers were hostile but this varied from industry to industry. It is also clear that it was easier in the South for the manufacturing associations, the local community leaders, the KKK and others to use the racial issue to split black from white and thus weaken union efforts. The conscious effort was to link black organizing with Communism and Communism with atheism. There was no greater taboo than to be associated with black communist atheist unionist or with any who advocated such heresy.

4. Unlike the North, many southern industries were not located in

the larger urban areas and so workers were subject to greater pressures. Where blacks and whites lived and worked together in isolation as in company mining towns, the tactic of splitting blacks and whites was less effective, as with the UMW. But even here, it is not clear how far equality was meant to be extended.

5. It is also unclear what the black response was. In some cases there was a move for separate unions either because the existing unions showed no interest in organizing blacks, or in cases where they did, would allow separate locals. In addition, many blacks did not want to be a minority in a predominantly white union. The CIO had a much better image among the blacks than did the AFL, but on the other hand, the AFL did not lose significant black membership to the CIO organizing drives.

6. Marx and Engels felt the Civil War was a positive step in that it was impossible for labor to free itself in its white skin. It is clear from what we know of both the South and North that this is true, but also that the end of slavery and the objective equality of blacks and whites as wage laborers did not make them equal. The racism hurt the unionizing efforts especially before WWII. Marshall concludes that the racial question will no longer be a hindrance to organizing in the South. But again, as long as a distinction is made between economic equality and social equality the split between black and white will continue.

——Alan Kaufman

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W.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, **The Polish Peasant in Europe and America,** Dover Edition: New York, 1958. Volume One, pp. 1-1114.

This work, published first during the years 1918-1920, is best described by the authors:

"The work consists of five volumes, largely documentary in their character. Volumes I and II comprise a study of the organization of the peasant primary groups (family and community), and of the partial evolution of this system of organization under the influence of the new industrial system and of immigration to America and Germany. Volume III is the autobiography (with critical treatment) of an immigrant of peasant origin but belonging by occupation to the lower city class, and illustrates the tendency to disorganization

of the individual under the conditions involved in a rapid transition from one type of social organization to another. Volume IV treats the dissolution of the primary group and the social and political reorganization and unification of peasant communities in Poland on the new ground of rational cooperatives. Volume V is based on studies of the Polish immigrant in America and shows the degrees and forms of disorganization associated with too rapid and inadequately mediated individualization, with a sketch of the beginnings of reorganization." (I. viii)

With their usual brevity the authors initiate this study with a 90 page note on the state of the social sciences in which it is made clear that the work "was not, in fact, undertaken exclusively or even primarily as an expression of interest in the Polish peasant. . . but the Polish peasant was selected rather as a convenient object for the exemplification of a standpoint and method." Any reader approaching this work should bear in mind that its primary interest is in developing and outlining a methodology for the study of social life, thus it is not merely a monograph on the Polish peasant. For at least the sociologist, its long-lived fame results from its pioneering discussion of methodology and its innovative data collecting techniques. It is perhaps necessary to briefly sketch their position here to understand the organization and development of this work. The authors state the 'attitudes' and 'values' are the basic data of social life and the task of research is to discover the interactions and causal relations between these. An attitude changes only as a result of an outside value acting upon it; and a value changes only as a result of an attitude acting upon it. This leads them to an obtuse formulation of social theory, of little relevance here, but more importantly it places them in the position of viewing social research as having to first discover attitudes individuals hold and then to trace out how individuals act in reference to these attitudes. The end effect of this position is to root social change more in the individual psyche than in the social structure and to place extreme emphasis on the gathering of subjective experiences.

Throughout this work 'human documents' are found in semi-organized abundance—letters, life histories, newspaper accounts, records of social agencies, court transcripts—with little commentary but with the aim of indicating the changes that individuals' attitudes and values have undergone. The bulk of this first volume consists of 764 letters between members of fifty family groups—letters mostly to emigrants in America—and gathered from them by advertising a cash payment for such series. These letters comment on a wide variety of problems in Polish life, and from them the authors attempt to analyse and interpret Polish peasant society. In the 200 page introduction to the letters, Thomas & Znaniecki present their view of the dynamics of change in Poland and

imply that the following evolution took place: emancipation of peasants from community social opinion; 'individualization;' disintegration of family life; marriage groups becoming central units in place of the larger family; departure from tradition; the emergence of a new concept of family responsibilities and of personal relationships. Their description of peasant society and its transition is scantily documented or related to the letters and its main interest lies in showing how land hunger, family tensions, economic problems and a desire for a better life drove peasants out of their closely knit communities to immigrating to America. The letters themselves indicate that many of these immigrants aimed, even when in America, to return to Poland.

The letters themselves are at times moving and lyrical and throughout display a high degree of literary ability. Through them we watch marriages disintegrate, larger families crumble, wives beg for money for food, old norms of conduct change and some dreams of success in America being shattered. The task of systematizing the letters and extracting significant comments from them is well-nigh impossible, for they present glimpses of issues and give passing comments about individual reactions rather than develop any analysis (which could hardly be expected). For our purpose it is perhaps most relevant to note the importance of tradition in guiding peasants' lives and in giving them a framework by which to judge economic and social change. The triteness of this statement should encourage you to scan these letters and thus to realize the accuracy and importance of this assertion.

Thomas and Znaniecki, **The Polish Peasant in Europe and America,** Volume V, "Disorganization in America."

The dominant reality about the early Polish immigrants is that they saw themselves first and foremost as a Polish sub-culture, not as workers; hence it was not a question of individuals being assimilated into American society but of assimilating the whole Polish-American community. Of equal importance is that the immigrants carried their conservative peasant values with them. These two factors plus the professed intention of most to return to Poland would indicate obvious obstacles for attracting Polish workers to a class conscious American labor movement.

Thomas & Znaniecki also argue that from the interests of their own communities they had problems. Few educated people emigrated and those who were to become leaders of the immigrant subculture had left because they were failures.

The authors conclude that economic conditions alone are not adequate for such an explanation. While it was true that times were bad in Poland, they were not that bad: there was enough work for everyone and there was always the opportunity for seasonal migration to Germany where wages were significantly higher. Rather, the economic motive was seen as the final straw which provided the needed justification for a peasant who psychologically wanted to leave because of the confusion arising in the collapse of his community. It was a difficult decision because emigration was not looked upon favorably, either in the small peasant villages for obvious reasons, or from the point of view of national ideals of constructing an industrial society free from Russian domination.

Thus the peasants who did leave tended to come from small villages where the disorganizing effects of an increasingly national economy were becoming strong and where the displaced traditional values had not yet been replaced by national ideals.

Propositionally, who chose not to emigrate can be stated as:

1. The greater the proportion of small farms in an area where peasants tend to receive low wages as hired daily labor, the greater the tendency for seasonal migration to Germany to supplement income rather than America. Rationale: In these areas peasant life and values had not yet been disrupted. Thus the peasant who needed to supplement his income tended to choose to emigrate seasonally to Germany rather than completely buck the values of his community by going to America.

2. The greater the proportion of tenant-type farms in an area where the peasant received a yearly income, the less the likelihood to emigrate. Rationale: In many cases tenant farm agreements were for twelve year periods; hence the peasant was relatively securely tied to the land.

3. The greater the industrialization of an area, the less the likelihood of seasonal or American emigration. Rationale: In these areas traditional values had been successfully supplanted by national ideals.

The Polish-American Community

In 1914, there were about three million Poles in the U.S.; virtually all of them lived in the East and Midwest. Chicago in that year was the third largest Polish center in the world.

The most important institution around which immigrants oriented their social lives was the Polish-American parish. They became the center of social life because: (1) everyone could belong, (2) there was less

likelihood for competition or friction among members than within an economic or political organization, (3) Polish could be freely spoken, and (4) its physical plant provided an adequate and convenient meeting place. Typically, when a large number of Poles would begin to settle in a city, a parish would be established in an inexpensive workingman's neighborhood. The parish would then draw a concentration of Poles, other nationalities would leave, and the area would become solidly Polish (this obviously could be a source of later intra-class hostilities).

The parish represented an attempt to transplant the old primary group relations within the peasant community into the new American setting. Hence any group which wanted to organize the Poles had to contend with the reality of the church's power over social organization.

There were attempts of various groups to bring the Poles into an organization which transcended the scattered neighborhood parishes. But in the height of their successes they never involved more than a small minority. The three largest were: (1) The National Alliance [130,000 members]—a nationalist organization which opposed the clergy and sought to enlist support for Poland's struggle against Russian domination. But most peasants were not particularly interested in these national ideals before they had left. (2) The Roman Catholic Union [100,000 members]—simply tried to tie the parishes together. (3) The Alliance of Polish Socialists [1-2000 members]—more interested in socialism in Poland than in America though it nominally cooperated with American socialists. These organizations were unsuccessful because: (1) their subordination of interests to Polish national ideals and most important, (2) the peasants were better off economically here, beginning to acquire small property such as homes, and had high expectations for the economic success of the next generation.

Thomas & Znaniecki assert that the immigrant groups, rather than becoming comfortably assimilated into the American value system, were becoming increasingly socially disorganized. But their evidence is more theoretical and hypothetical than empirical. For example, they argue that family disorganization was increasing because there was no longer a stable milieu within which to settle small problems nor the pressure of community sanctions to keep families together: hence there was more opportunity for desertion and infidelity. In a related sense, delinquency of minors was more probable since the youth did not have strong and stable role models. Murder rates were high because of the lack of sanctions from a weak family or loyalty to American societal mores and legal codes. Also, upon arriving here the immigrant tended to see himself in a wilderness setting where he had to survive thrugh his own physical power.

The monograph concludes by reiterating four points which Thomas &Znaniecki contend are essential for understanding the conduct of the peasant: (1) In Poland, he was adapted to an agricultural community which changed only very slowly through the centuries, hence adaptation to change was easy. Here, on the other hand, he was not accustomed to adapting to the rapid change of values and conduct necessary, and hence there were disorganizing strains. (2) In the life of the typical peasant abrupt changes were not usual but if they did come, he could adapt to and interpret them through the solidarity of his community. Here though, no such strong primary group community existed. (3) In Poland, all social stimulations which he was unaccustomed to handle, came from many diverse sources; hence there was additional pressure toward disorganization. (4) in Poland he was traditionally the member of a politically and culturally passive class which did not participate in the impersonal institutions of the wider society. Hence, here he would have a difficult time adapting to (not to mention actively seeking to change) the institutional structure.

Thus this last volume presents a very general treatment. As such it has some theoretical value for sensitizing us to some of the obstacles for labor organizers. But, for our purposes the book does not address the specific experiences of trying to bring the Poles into the labor movement, their on-the-job experiences, how they were perceived by employers, etc. There are also drawbacks because, though its conclusions are more hypothetical than empirical, as a monograph it makes no claims for being able to generalize its conclusions to other immigrant groups.

——Jim Russell

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Victor R. Greene, **The Slavic Community on Strike**, University of Notre Dame Press, 1968.

The traditional view of the relationship between immigration and Labor organizing in the United States is that the existence of a multinational proletariat made difficult and retarded unionization. This is thought to be especially true of the late nineteenth century immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe. Greene sets out to destroy this view by examining the role of Slavic immigrants in the Pennsylvania anthracite fields. His thesis is that "far from weakening labor organization, the Polish, Lithuanian, Slovak and Ukrainian mineworkers, their families

and their communities supported labor protest more enthusiastically than many other groups and were essential to the establishment of unionism permanently in the coal fields." If the early labor organizers had been more sensitive to the potential of the Slavic community they could have had more initial success than they did. It was the UMW's eventual recognition of Slavic militancy and cohesion which brought permanent unionization to the coal industry.

The majority of the Slavic mineworkers were either Polish or Lithuanian. Statistics for the period 1899-1904 indicate that the typical Polish or Lithuanian immigrant was unaccompanied male (¾ of all Polish and Lithuanian immigrants were males), between 14 and 45 years old, able to read and write his own language (71% of Poles and 64% of Lithuanians were literate), and a peasant with quite limited experience with urban areas and industrial life. He most probably came to America in hopes of saving enough money to return to Europe and buy a plot of land and establish himself in the peasant village. Although many lost the dream of returning to Europe once they had been a few years in Pennsylvania, the dream of acquiring property remained and many Slavs did acquire enough savings to purchase a house or a piece of land. Almost all of the Slavic workers worked for a contractor who hired and paid them and provided labor for the mine owners. By 1900 the population of the anthracite area of Pennsylvania included 52% English speaking groups and 40% Slavs.

The history of union organizing in the anthracite fields in the 1870's and 1880's is one of continual failure to establish a union, but the blame for this failure cannot be placed on the Slavs. Greene locates this failure in hard times, the power of the operators, defective and conservative labor leadership, and organizational rivalry. Slavs were evident in several strikes during this period and demonstrated their ability to stick together.

In 1894 the United Mine Workers sent three organizers into the anthracite region to begin the long process of organizing that culminated in the 1902 strike. On several occasions during this period Slavs showed themselves capable of engaging on their own in militant strikes and demonstrations. The most publicized of these was in response to the Lattimer Massacre in 1897 where 11 men were killed when a sheriff's posse fired into an unarmed crowd of demonstrating strikers.

Striking Slavs were often extremely violent, astonishing their Anglo Saxon neighbors with their tactics. When Slavic miners went on strike it was a community affair. The community forced compliance from all its members and any Slav who attempted to work was risking a certain beating and sometimes even his life. Likewise police used against strikers found themselves facing hostile crowds of strikers, armed with clubs and pipes and totally convinced of the justice of their cause and of

the right to pursue it with militancy. Such displays of violence on the part of the Slavic community were always met with disavowel on the part of the UMW leadership. Certain characteristics of the Slavic miners made them particularly solid and militant strikers. For one thing they were used to extremely frugal living. They expected no more than subsistence and lived on a food budget that was about half that of the Anglo Saxon workers. This frugality was related to an amazing ability to save and some Slaves were reported to acquire properties from savings even during strike periods. The Slavs were a very mobile group, and those who were single men could simply leave the area during a strike and look for a job elsewhere. Those who had families could often put their children to work and thus add to their family income. The tightness of the Slavic family and community structure contributed heavily to their unity in strike situations. The Slavic women were militant in keeping scabs away from the mines and often were ringleaders in violent attacks on nonconformers. The police expressed dismay at being confronted with these "Amazons."

Greene sees the Slavic workers characterized by a powerful drive to accumulate wealth but also a strong sense of dignity which was enforced by his ethnic community. He could not maintain his standing in his own community if he allowed himself to be trampled on by the mine operators or if he went against community standards of solidarity. His solidarity with his own ethnic group had an importance outside the group as well, creating a powerful pro-strike attitude. Through marches, attacks and threats the Slavs generated a pressure on all miners to be disciplined strikers.

This book is particularly interesting in its description of Slavic violence, militancy and community action. It does tend to ignore the other workers in the mines and see them only as foils for the activities of the Slavs. Green's evidence seems clear, however, that the Slavs did not allow themselves to be used as strikebreakers and that the campaign to limit immigration and legislate against Slavs in the coal fields because they were a threat to organized labor was not rooted in reality.

——Joyce Peterson

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Herbert Gutman, "The Negro and the United Mine Workers of America: The Career and Letters of Richard L. Davis and Something of Their Meaning: 1890-1900," Julius Jacobson, ed., **The Negro and the American Labor Movement,** 1968.

The subtitle is the correct indication of what the article is. I can only infer that the point Gutman is making throughout is that we need much more very concrete study of the lives of working men and women than we have before we can write history. I realize, of course, that this may come as quite a shock to some of the members of the seminar—I can only apologize for having to be the bearer of such unexpected desolation.

Davis was a black coal miner in the Hocking Valley field of Ohio from 1882 to 1900. (Before that he was a miner in W. Va.) He was an exceptionally dedicated union organizer and in the 1890's was on the National Executive Board of the UMW. Gutman devotes about 80 pages to the letters Davis wrote to the UMW paper. The information in the article is obviously very specialized—Gutman presents it as an example and a beginning of the vast work to be done. It is a good example. The main point appears to be that race relations in coal mining were very complicated—Gutman is persuasive on this question.

Before proceeding to the central questions of race, let me point out a couple of general observations. One is that although Davis was for a long time an important UMW organizer and for almost 10 years on the Executive Board, he was at all times a miner himself. He was barely paid expenses on his trips and when he had trouble finding work in the late 1890's the union did not provide any means of support. This seemed to be accepted practice. As with most observations in the article, however, this only raises the **question** of rank and file leadership. The fact that the UMW was a young, industrial union with a reformist ideology makes it impossible to generalize from its history.

The most important substantive point about unions and workers which comes out is that the existence of racial prejudice and of black strikebreaking on a significant scale made for problems, but they distinctly did **not** make it impossible to build a tough interracial union. The 1890's supposedly marked the nadir of Afro-American history. It is clear from coal mining that severe and increasing economic and social pressure in the South drove many blacks out. Their rural backgrounds combined with white worker prejudice and a general situation of labor unrest in the mines to generate widespread black strikebreaking. This process is epitomized in the Virden and Pana (Ohio) "wars" of 1898-99. These coal towns were solidly organized and struck by the UMW for better wages. The miners were mainly white (ethnic origin unidentified) with a significant minority of black workers. They were organized without serious problems into the same unions. White prejudice and privilege

did exist within the union but it was strongly fought by local and national leadership and enough equality was practiced that the black members were quite loyal. When the union struck, black strikebreakers were brought up from the rural South. The operators had not told them that a strike was in progress and a number left the train before arriving at the mines when they learned of the situation. The trains were heavily guarded, however, and the strikebreakers were threatened with being shot by the company. The National Guard allowed the Pana mines to operate with scabs, but in Virden the train was met by a small army of strikers. Five guards and seven miners were killed, none of the strikebreakers trapped in the train were killed although some were wounded and the train was forced away without unloading. The black recruits, who didn't even know a strike was in progress, all left at the next stop or so and the strike was won. Later the Pana operators were forced to concede as well, but the whole thing really strained black/white relations in the union. The white miners became more anti-black because of the attempted use of black (unwilling) scabs, while the black unionists became (apparently) more critical of discrimination in certain union mines. Davis and other black union organizers stressed the necessity for solidarity and kept the black members in the union, while the white leadership did try to enforce its anti-discrimination rules, with some effect.

In addition to the tactics described above, employers tried to create all-black and all-white mines, financed anti-union black community "leaders," especially in the South, and would release scabs after they had been used to break a strike, thus preventing them from entering the industry (and thus the union) permanently.

Throughout this period, the UMW looks amazingly good. Its officers and publications were extremely up front in discussing black (and other) strikebreaking, stressing the fact that most strikebreakers did not know what they were doing and that many quit, at considerable risk, when they did find out. They always stressed the need to organize these workers and opposed tendencies to label them as the enemy. This was in drastic contrast to Gompers and some AFL unions, who used the same incidents to "prove" the necessity of excluding blacks entirely.

Gutman poses a hard question at the end: was the UMW exceptional? He answers that the evidence is not available to decide. He does, however, offer examples of interracial solidarity in the International Longshoremen's Association, the Chicago Federation of Labor and building trades, the Carpenters, and certain southern cities, even in this period. The moral: don't trust anybody's orthodox history, it has to be written from the bottom up. There is tragedy and hope in labor history, not determinism.

——Rob McBride

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Allan H. Spear, **Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920,** U. of Chicago Press, 1963.

This book is hampered by a top-down focus on the Negro "leadership class" and by a tendency toward superficiality (ultimately relying on a vaguely defined "white racism" as a causal factor) but it does have some useful information which I will try to summarize.

In the 1840's the small black population was thoroughly proscribed socially and politically (no vote, can't testify, etc.). Churches, the center of black community life, were separate. Spear skips the 1840-1870 period. From 1870 to 1890, the legal restrictions on black citizenship were reduced, there was no physical ghetto, virtually all blacks were servants or service workers. Spear quotes approvingly Drake and Cayton's description of the period: "a small, compact, but rapidly growing community divided into three broad social groups. The 'respectables'—church-going, poor or moderately prosperous, and often unrestrained in their worship—were looked down upon somewhat by the 'refined' people, who, because of their education and breeding, could not sanction the less decorous behavior of their racial brothers. Both of these groups were censorious of the 'riffraff,' the 'sinners'—unchurched and undisciplined." In 1890, blacks in Chicago numbered 15,000 and were neither part of the political and social institutions and life of any part of the city nor a threat to it. Ignored by reformers and politicians, they were not a part of the industrial labor force and thus out of the defining economic changes of the time.

By 1915, however, there were 50,000 or more black residents of Chicago and many more passing through on their way out of the South. 70-80% of the black population were migrants from the South. Housing segregation increased fantastically, as shown both by census data and by reports of activities of "neighborhood improvement associations" and discriminatory real estate groups. The new ghetto become almost instantly a slum as landlords refused to make repairs and the city provided few services. Half the black male workers and ¾ of all female workers were in domestic and personal service occupations in 1910, a sharp drop from 1890, but virtually all blacks were in unskilled, servile, dead-end jobs. In fact, the more lucrative service occupations were closed to blacks in this period, largely by the Irish (barbers, restauranteurs, head-waiters, etc.).

The 1904 meatpacking strike marked the entry of blacks into the industry as many blacks were brought up from the South to scab. Some quit when they found out they were scabbing, but many never understood even what a strike was, even when it was explained to them.

Although the importation of southern black scabs created considerable (but unspecified by Spear) sympathy for the strikers on the part of "the public," the strike was broken. All the scabs were then fired. The outcome of the strike was contradictory. It generated a lot of hate for blacks, but the Amalgamated Meat Cutters responded by admitting black workers. In 1905 the Teamsters struck city-wide, black scabs were again used and this time there was a near riot (the scabs were driving all through the city). Four persons were killed. Again, after the strike was broken the blacks were fired. By 1915 blacks were seen as a special group in the city, a threat to workers and to the "orderly" running of the city.

The Great Migration of 1916-1919 more than doubled the black population, but made no significant change in the institutional structure of the ghetto. By 1920 only 28% of black men worked in domestic and personal services, slightly more in manufacturing, where they were c. 4% of the labor force, roughly proportionate to their percentage of the total population. They were, however, restricted to the lowest unskilled jobs. The situation of black women changed some but less. 15% (3000) of all black women workers worked in factories. The dubious relation of change to improvement in employment was demonstrated by the recession of 1919, which threw many black workers out of jobs, in far greater proportion than white workers.

The stockyards strike of 1921 saw little change from 1904. Employers financed some black churches and a black company union, imported black strikebreakers and this time hired many locally. The coalition of stockyard unions admitted black workers, but to a Jim Crow "federal" type of local. The employers won again with black scabs, despite the opposition to strikebreaking taken by the "New Negro" intellectuals and, surprisingly, the Urban League.

Implications for Labor History—Questions

It was during this period that blacks did leave domestic and personal service for other occupations—mainly unskilled, dead-end industrial jobs. This change accompanied a dramatic rise in the black population through migration. The migration caused severe housing competition and an uncertain amount of job competition, and it excited widespread comment over the unruliness, "low morals," etc. of the migrants. The occasional swing power of the black machine vote also led to much protest and comment over the "undue power" this would give blacks—since this fear is absurd, it is hard to evaluate its genuineness or implications. Black and white relations on the job remain unexplored. The question raised in the seminar about the relation of ethnic community con-

sciousness to class consciousness is not even raised by Spear. Equally opague is the role of black culture. Spear suggests that the rural background of the migrants was important in their continued strikebreaking, but that's a pretty peripheral observation. Spear also notes that large employers financed the YMCA and the Urban League in a class-conscious way, but he explores neither this nor their refusal to keep black strikebreakers on the job nor the garment producers' refusal to hire black women if they joined a union. Spear implies strongly that all unions were discriminatory, most of them with a vengeance. However, he does not investigate the Meat Cutters' limited but significant anti-discrimination practice. At the end of the book Spear mentions that the Hod-carriers, the Flat Janitors Union and the ILGWU organized black workers in a serious way. But the comment is glossed over.

——Rob McBride

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Marc Karson, Chapter 9 "The Roman Catholic Church and American Labor Unions," **American Labor Unions and Politics 1900-1918.** Southern Illinois Press, 1958.

In this chapter Karson attempts to refute a point of Philip Taft's book, **The A.F. of L. in the Time of Gompers,** that "religious influence was a negligible factor in the AFL's opposition to independent political action and socialism." Karson documents from Catholic sources the impressive anti-Socialist activity among workers undertaken by the Roman Catholic Church.

The problem is that Karson does not prove that the Church's ideological opposition to Socialism, strenuous though it was, exerted real influence on any but the trade union leaders of the AFL, most of whom were probably already as anti-Socialist as the Church. Perhaps it is because there are no surviving records that Karson does not offer any documentation of the responses of the Catholic workers themselves to the propaganda onslaught of the Catholic Hierarchy. We must, therefore, continue to speculate on what would have been the effect of the Church's condemnation of class struggle upon workers who were both deeply religious and greatly exploited. Only one slight indication is given in this chapter of the degree of success of the Church among the workers: the Militia of Christ for Social Service was formed by a Father

Dietz in 1910 with the blessings of all the top trade union leaders of the AFL including Gompers. Its purpose was to recruit AFL workers into the organization and therby gain support for the Church's anti-Socialist position among the workers. After four years of organizing it numbered well under the two thousand members necessary for survival and in 1914 it died.

The Church warred against radicalism in a number of ways: pronouncements of the bishops and clerics both to church-goers and to the unions and their members, relatively unsuccessful attempts to organize Catholic workingmen's associations, propagandizing through the newly established Catholic press, and finally the threat to create dual unions as in Belgium and Germany should the AFL take a bad line. Since the Irish Catholics were the largest nationalist group in the AFL and the most under the influence of the (Irish) Church Hierarchy, this last was no idle threat. It is generally estimated that more than 50% of the members of the AFL were Catholic. In addition the AFL was, according to Ware, controlled by predominantly Irish leadership of the national unions during this period. On the other hand, Catholics were not represented in any appreciable numbers in the unskilled trades that composed the IWW. This might indicate a relationship between the religious composition and politics of the two organizations.

The most sustained attack came from the pulpit itself, with the encyclical "Rerum Novarum" of Leo XIII as the taking off point. The encyclical is an extraordinary document; it favors trade unions and just wages, i.e. subsistence wages, and that's about it. For the rest, it explicitly defends the established order, states that inequality of condition and fortune is a part of the natural human order, condemns class struggle and insists on harmony between rich and poor, maintains that private property is a right founded in the laws of nature and sanctioned by Divine Law and identifies Socialism as the prime enemy. "Thus it is clear that the main tenet of Socialism, the community of goods, must be utterly rejected.... Our first and most fundamental principle, therefore, when we undertake the alleviation of the condition of the people must be the inviolability of private property." ("Rerum Novarum") Catholic workingmen are permitted to belong to trade unions only when those unions adhere to Catholic social principles; otherwise they must form their own Catholic unions.

It is interesting that in the quotes given in the Book no mention is made of the Godlessness of Socialism. This opposition to Socialism is clearly based on a defense of private property and the class structure. All the American bishops took up the fight and apparently the emphasis was upon the evils of the Heresy of Socialism and the necessity for Catholic workers to avoid contamination at all costs.

The Catholic Church identified itself with the principles of conservative trade unionism. Karson states that the political philosophy advocated for labor by the R.C. Church was quite similar to the philosophy followed by the AFL and suggests that Gompers was dependent upon the Catholic workers' support against the Socialist elements and could not afford an exodus of Catholic membership from the Federation.

Karson credits the Church for the weakness of socialist consciousness within the AFL rank and file and the consequent failure of a labor party to emerge as the political expression of this consciousness. His evidence, however, does not justify this conclusion since we do not know whether the propaganda directed at the workers was in fact the decisive factor in shaping their consciousness. It seems that the conservatism, rather than coming from rank and file, was instead imposed upon the Federation from the top through the collusion of the leadership and bishops. it is difficult to ascertain who used whom. The conservative leadership may have found the pressure of the Church useful in dividing the rank and file from the Socialists. Among the totally Catholic working classes of France and Italy the Church certainly didn't have the same success. The answer may lie in the peculiar nature of the Irish Catholic's relationship to his Church which may have made him more susceptible than the European workers to this clerical terrorism.

——Connie Pohl

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Elliott M. Rudwick, **Race Riot at East St. Louis: July 2, 1917,** Southern Illinois U. Press, 1964.

The race riot that occurred in East St. Louis in 1917 took more lives than any other "major interracial disturbance" during this century. At a minimum, 39 blacks and 8 whites died, while the NAACP put the number of black deaths at somewhere between 100 and 200. Rudwick calls the riot an "interracial disturbance," because while the militia and police were certainly not impartial to say the least, the violence against black people was largely committed by blue-collar workers. What is more, the only major group that condemned the violence was the businessmen's Committee of 100.

In order to make sense of what happened, it is necessary to look at the position of unskilled workers in East St. Louis both prior to and during the war. Before the war, there existed "an employers' market... with a surplus of Negro and white labor creating cut throat competition... common laborers earned 17 to 20 cents an hour. Every day, large numbers of men stood outside factory gates 'waiting and begging' for work. Some with jobs paid foremen 25 cents in tribute each day for the privilege of working. Earning such low wages, even those with steady employment found themselves only two or three weeks out of the poorhouse and most common laborers were 'right at the back door of the poorhouse.'" (143) The outbreak of the war significantly altered the picture by both increasing the demand for labor and decreasing its supply (by cutting off the European immigrant flow). The improvement in the bargaining situation of workers is reflected for instance in the increase of wages between 1916 and 1917 from 17 to about 27 cents (although even larger increases in the cost of living these gains). By 1917, the only whites not employed were old men—and union men.

The relative strengthening of the position of workers made possible the successful strike at the Aluminum Ore Company of East St. Louis in the autumn of 1916. In response the company began replacing the union men with black workers: in a plant of approximately 1900 workers, the number of black workers rose quickly from 280 in November of 1916 to 410 in December to 470 in February of 1917. Recognizing the threat posed by the black workers, the union began organizing among them. At that time the company began to hire only black workers newly arrived from the South, which blunted the union drive. The company then continued firing union leaders, which led to a strike in April of 1917. Using a host of repressive tactics, the strike and union were broken. Rudwick suggests that while the scabs do not seem to have been disproportionately black, nevertheless what remained in the minds of the union men was only that blacks had taken their jobs.

Elsewhere in East St. Louis, employers used the threat of black workers to prevent strikes. White resentment grew too out of the 1916 political campaign when Democrats claimed that Republicans were "colonizing" large numbers of black people in the North to win the election. Local newspapers warned of tens of thousands of black people being "colonized" in the North. It was in this framework of white resentment and fear that the May and then the larger July riots occurred.

Rudwick then roots the East St. Louis riot largely in job competition created by and used by employers. He fails, though, to deal with a number of key relations. For instance, he simply claims without showing his evidence that Southern blacks were hostile to labor unions, not merely as a response to union racism, but also because Southern blacks

traditionally relied upon "employer paternalism. . . against the hostility of lower-class whites." Similarly he never really deals with the relations of union to black workers: he refers to the racism of the AF of L craft unions, but presumably the union of unskilled workers at the Aluminum Company would not be a craft union. Rudwick also does not distinguish between native- and foreign-born whites, who (like black people) in 1917 comprised about 18% of the total population of the city. This is particularly unfortunate, because on the one hand advertisements for the meeting that led directly to the May riot warned of the importing of "Negro and cheap foreign labor. . . to tear down the standard of living of our citizens." Still, the book is worth reading.

One thing the book shows without ever saying it: the complete inability of a reformist union to deal with the situation. The most that it can/could come up with is: (a) unionization of present workers and (b) curbs on the migration of both black people and Eastern Europeans.

——Richard Kronish

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William M. Tuttle, Jr., **Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919,** Atheneum, 1970.

This is partly a detailed account of the Chicago riot of 1919. Tuttle also summarizes the history of blacks in the city and relates the riots to previous (and later) urban mass violence and to the generally eruptive conditions of the nation in 1919. He argues that blacks and whites in Chicago met head on over a number of issues: housing, jobs, politics. All these conflicts were exacerbated by wartime conditions and by the mass influx of blacks after 1916 (Chicago's black population nearly doubled to 100,000 in four years). He argues that it is in the wards, on the killing floor in the stock yards and in the crowded street cars that the "truly bitter and functional racial animosities" were generated. These, he concludes, must be understood to understand the fury of the riot—38 dead, 537 injured in 14 days.

By 1919 blacks increasingly refused to accept the accomodative system of race relations. Instead they insisted on jobs, voted as a bloc, moved into new housing and met threats of violence with armed self protection. This new militance was a product of wartime service and democratic rhetoric, growing numbers, and a black cultural resurgence.

Unlike the 1960's riots, black violence was against white mauraders, not primarily against white property.

This book makes interesting use of a wide variety of sources in an effort to get at racial relations at the grass roots level: transcripts of testimonies, interviews (he talked with John Harris who was with the black youth stoned to death by a white mob on a Chicago beach touching off the riot), obscure local newspapers, mediator's notes, and other materials. There are a number of excellent photographs. Curiously the black side of the encounter comes across much more clearly. There is little direct material on white sentiment although his chapter on housing does discuss the white home owner's associations which bombed blacks who spilled out of the ghetto into Hyde Park and Kenwood. Tuttle has practically nothing on the white youth gangs to which he assigns so much responsibility for continuing the riots. He does little with differences in class and ethnicity among whites and their relationship to the riot.

Tuttle does have good material on black migration to the north—the push of southern conditions and the growing attractions of the north. He is sensitive to the cultural gaps which this created. He relates the ever worsening conditions for blacks in Chicago as they literally were trapped in a ghetto.

Some weaknesses which appeared to me: The connection with the Red Scare is not clear—except that it was another cause/manifestation of the turbulent times. Tuttle mentions the stock yard magnates' use of black workers as strikebreakers and union busters but this is lost among a host of other 'causes' of the riot. He suggests the exploitation of black votes by Mayor Thompson but deals with it strictly in terms of personal politics. He does not discuss slum lords and other exploiters of the black population. Above all he does not tie these together preferring to rest his analysis on the generalization that "the heightened problems of housing, politics and labor created such inflexible racial attitudes that the door to mutual understanding in Chicago was closed and violence was bound to result."

——John Fleckner

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Horace R. Cayton & George S. Mitchell, **Black Workers and the New Unions,** U. of North Carolina Press, 1939.

As the title indicates, this book deals with the relations between black workers and the new (largely CIO) unions of the 1930's. Although the book does discuss the relations in meat-packing, railroad car shops and in the mines and shops of Birmingham, the main focus is on the steel industry and the attempt of a progressive steelworkers' union to break down the "intense chauvinism among white workers and race consciousness among black workers."

The basis of antagonism and distrust between white and black workers was the historical competition between the two groups. Indeed it was as strikebreakers that black workers first entered the steel mills of the North. Cayton & Mitchell note though that the early black strikebreakers were largely skilled workers, coming from southern—especially Alabama—plants. In time, however, with the labor shortage during World War I and the strikes of the immediate postwar period, unskilled black labor entered the (Northern) mills: during the strike of 1919 it is estimated that 30,000 black strikebreakers were recruited, some of whom did remain in the mills after the strike. By 1933, black workers comprised 10.1% of all workers in iron and steel, while native whites accounted for 53.3%, foreign-born whites 34.2% and "other races," (largely Mexican) only 2.2%. 70.3% of the black workers were concentrated in the unskilled category which overall accounted for only 46.5% of the iron and steel labor force.

During the period up to 1933, the "dominant" union in iron and steel was the Amalgamated Assn. of Iron and Steel Workers. The Amalg., which in the 1880's was perhaps the most powerful American union, had declined to the point where in 1932 it represented less than 1% of all workers in iron and steel. Although as Brody shows, the nature of E. European immigration did present a difficult problem, the primary reason for the decline of the Amalg. was it identification with native-born, white skilled workers. While the union finally did organize foreign-born unskilled workers beginning in 1911, in its 53 years of existence it "had not made a single serious attempt to include Negroes in its ranks in a position of full equality with white union members." At first, the Amalg., following the tradition of the three unions that formed it, barred black workers entirely (regardless of skill of course). In 1881, black workers were admitted to the union but were kept out of white lodges "whenever possible," while white union men often simply refused work with black men at all. Similarly, during the major organizing drive of 1919, not only did the Amalg. continue to affiliate itself with the Machin-

ists and Electrical Workers which barred black workers, but made no special effort to organize black workers.

While the union used racism as a means for limiting the supply of labor, the bosses too used racism and ethnic antagonisms in a "rational and conscious manner." The authors quote John R. Commons who, finding only Swedish applicants at the employment office of a large plant, was told "it is only for this week. Last week we employed Slovaks. We change among different nationalities and languages. It prevents them from getting together." The authors argue too that the racism of the union opened up a further chance for the bosses to split the workers, for it enables the bosses to appear in paternal ways and duplicate the alleged southern pattern. While it is difficult to assess the extent to which black workers, especially newly arrived ones from the South, saw their bosses in a paternal way, still the company unions (which appeared at US Steel in 1934) at least "welcomed" the black worker on an equal basis which was quite different from the Amalg. (A majority of the black workers interviewed by the authors during the researching of the book, "were convinced that an outside union organization was preferable to the company plan but were deterred from joining by fear of prejudice on the part of white workers.")

The companies were also supported by the middle class leadership of the black community. The Church in particular tended to support the companies—recruiting strikebreakers, for instance—while black social workers often served as both anti-union propagandists and spies. In Chicago a nationalist labor organization founded by R.E. Parker proclaimed: "This union does not believe in strikes."

This then in a rough way was the situation when Section 7a of the NIRA was passed which permitted collective bargaining and forbade company coercion and repression of union members. In 1933, the Amalg. began a new recruiting drive and in spite of very poor organization, its membership jumped significantly, with a number of new lodges forming. These new lodges formed the basis of a Rank and File Committee that differed considerably with the old national office on the question of black participation in the union. On the one hand, the national office continued to favor the existence of separate black locals ("whenever possible"), opposed the inclusion of black members in social activities—Secty. Shorty Leonard said, "We don't care anything about social equality"—and generally made no special effort to organize black workers. On the other hand, the new lodges grouped around the Rank and File Cmte. brought black workers in "on terms of full equality." The new lodges recognized the role that the exclusive social activities had played in creating antagonism and resentment and consequently "were diligent in insisting that Negroes be included in all social activities." In time 13 of these new

lodges were expelled from the Amalg. by the national office.

In spite of the initial jumps in membership, the inability of the AFL to successfully organize steel (and auto) was becoming apparent and the "industrial bloc" of the AFL under Lewis' leadership bolted and formed the CIO. Lewis then offered $500,000 to the Amalg. to fund a national organizing drive, which the membership, over the opposition of the national office, accepted: the Steel Worker's Organizing Committee (SWOC) was born. The union grew rapidly, so that by 1937, there were 150,000 members in 280 lodges. A real attempt to organize black workers was made. Black organizers—largely from the UMW—were used; also, black workers were encouraged to seek union offices and membership on union committees. The union tried to fight racism wherever it occurred in the union. Although SWOC was much more successful in organizing black workers than any of the earlier drives, nevertheless a smaller percentage of black workers were organized than native-born whites. As one organizer put it, the black workers were quite cynical of the union, feeling that the union was being opened to them only because of practical necessity, and that if black workers were not critical to any organizing drive they would continue to be excluded. This feeling was undoubtedly intensified by the racist practices of some Ohio locals. Union organizers there, believing perhaps that the relatively few blacks in the area (compared to Pittsburgh) were not critical to the union, showed little interest in organizing black workers at all. Interestingly enough, the organizers miscalculated, for as the defeat of SWOC by "little steel" showed, black workers were in fact critical to any organizing drive including those in Ohio.

The authors themselves, writing in the late 1930's are unsure of the meaning of the overtures to black workers by SWOC: whether they represent fundamental changes or opportunistic devices to insure black participation. The main question the book raises is: just what happened to SWOC? Perhaps the answer is in the purges which began in 1937 of left-wing staff members.

——Richard Kronish

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Herbert Gans, **The Urban Villagers,** The Free Press, 1962.

"Urban villagers" describes the Italian community which inhabited the West End of Boston, a low rent inner city district. Herbert Gans studied and lived in this community during the year of 1957-58 shortly

before it was destroyed by urban renewal. His general purpose was to understand the people who lived in such an area, poor but not a slum. In doing so he was able to separate out three distinct subcultures, lower class, working class and middle class. A byproduct of this analysis was a concern that the interaction between middle class individuals (in social agencies, government agencies, private charities, etc.) and individuals from the first two subcultures was based on profound misunderstanding and real culture conflict.

Some of the most interesting sections of the book are attempts to describe a culture than can be identified as working class culture and not subsumed completely under ethnic or racial or religious identity. Although Gans bases his study on Italian families, he tries through a comparison with other studies based on different nationalities, to demonstrate that there are sufficient similarities between working class families in various countries to justify using such a construct. Such characteristics as the large importance of the peer group, the person-oriented psychology, the place of relatives in social life, the kind of fatalism and distrust toward the outside world or any strangers he sees as carrying over from nationality to nationality. While Gans argues very strongly against the middle class attitude that these characteristics are deviant and pathological, and thus amenable to simple manipulation and change, he himself cannot grant their perceptions as being as objective (or nonobjective) as his own. In a fine example of his unwillingness to draw obvious conclusions from his own evidence he presents a picture of a working class district being destroyed to make way for the more profitable middle and upper class housing, but then finds something strange about the distrust and expectation of exploitation which characterized the people he studied. He feels that they just don't understand bureaucratic organization and the principle of efficiency.

Gans also falls into the typical trap of most sociologists who try to capture people's attitudes in static and noncontradictory constructs. If working class culture has a very individualistic and fatalistic cast to it, it does not hamper workers from engaging in collective action with spirit and persistance. In many things behavior contradicts attitudes, and attitudes in struggle contradict attitudes spoken in peaceful family groups. These static and noncontradictory cultural constructs repress all these complications and thus eliminate many possible insights.

One suggestion of interest that he does make is that the structure of life in Italy for the landless workers who later migrated to the United States had many parallels with that that the immigrants faced in the United States causing a reinforcement of cultural characteristics that were born in Italian society. Thus while certain characteristics changed due to changed circumstances in America (child labor laws, urban living, etc.) other characteristics were retained because they were reinforced, for instance the pattern of close and continuing ties with relatives born

out of the insecurity and competition for survival existing in Italy and carried on in the United States.

——Lynn Galazan Levine

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Herbert Hill, "The Racial Practices of Organized Labor: The Contemporary Record," and Gus Tyler, "Contemporary Labor's Attitude Toward the Negro," both in Julius Jacobson, ed., **The Negro and the American Labor Movement,** 1968.

Herbert Hill presents a truly bleak picture of the treatment that black workers have received at the hands of the AFL-CIO. He traces the history of discrimination in AFL-CIO unions from the merger in 1955 until 1966 and finds no significant change in the "pattern of racial discrimination in the major AFL-CIO affiliates, especially in those that have a long history of anti-Negro practices." This in spite of much verbal support for the civil rights movement and declarations of principles of equality.

Hill examines in detail the building and construction trades unions (considered conservative) and the ILGWU (considered progressive) and finds no room to praise either. Some of his findings would be laughable if they weren't so serious. Local officials of the Electrical Workers have explained away the absence of blacks in their union with, "Nigres' are all afraid of electricity." The plumbers union is white because "colored folks don't want to do plumbing work because it is too hard." In the summer of 1963 when New York City blacks demonstrated for jobs at construction sites, Peter Brennan, a building trades union official, protested, "We won't stand for blackmail. . . we had it from the gangsters and Communists in the 1930's and we fought it. . . and if we have to fight integration by blackmail today, fine, we'll fight it." Because most building craft locals control hiring through de facto closed shop arrangements they can keep blacks from being hired by refusing to let them into the unions. In New York a contractor hired one black and three Puerto Rican plumbers who had previously tried to join the union and been refused membership. The union plumbers walked off the job refusing to work with "scab" labor and talking of "white men's jobs."

These examples of racist practices of construction unions are only what we have come to expect of older craft unions. But what of the industrial unions founded during the rise of the CIO? Hill comments that some of these continued non-discriminatory practices and also specifically praises the AFT for expelling its segregated locals in the South and the AFSCME for organizing a significant number of black workers employed in the public sector. In New York he also has some praise for District 65

and for the Hospital Workers Local 1199.

Looking at the New York City labor scene Hill examines the racial practices of the ILGWU and documents its failure to engage in serious organizing of black and Puerto Rican workers and its unfair treatment of those that are in the union. One of Hill's most significant observations is the direct connection between the lack of union internal democracy and the depressed status of black workers in the union and the industry. Members of the ILGWU are denied the right to have clubs or caucuses and therefore cannot organize to push policy contrary to that of the leadership. Because of the rules setting longterm membership qualifications for offices and convention delegates, less than % of 1% of the ILGWU membership are eligible to run for the GEB and less that 1/20 of 1% for the presidency and secretary-treasurership. No more than 4 or 5 nonwhite persons (out of 145,000) currently in the union are eligible for the General Executive Board. To make matters worse, Hill explains how "the union has used its extensive power to regulate the industry in solving the problems of the employers rather than in advancing the interests of the great mass of workers. . . . The union attempts to keep the garment industry in New York City by maintaining low wages and minimal standards for the majority of workers, who do not have an opportunity to vote upon this matter and are not consulted on this and related policy decisions directly affecting their immediate welfare, but form the large dues-paying membership that constitutes the base of the union's extensive political and financial operations." Since shortly after WW II the ILGWU has maintained a policy of "wage restraint" over a period that a large number of nonwhites have entered the garment industry. The union even opposed various political campaigns to achieve a $1.50 minimum wage for the city. Needless to say the people most affected by the union's low wage policy are nonwhites, concentrated in the lowest skilled and lowest paying jobs. A 1962 Bureau of Labor Statistics study of the wages in New York City indicated that the wage rates of unskilled and semi-skilled garment workers were below subsistence levels. The union has also opposed federal job training programs.

Hill's article is extremely depressing and very important. Gus Tyler's reply is worth almost no comment (Tyler is Assistant President of the ILGWU). He basically says that it's true there might be a little discrimination but after all if there's not enough to go around, don't expect us to share. Thus: "A massive explosion in post-1964 America may arise from expanded rights for Negroes in a society of diminished opportunity for all." Tyler sees the hope for blacks in an expansion of employment but he doesn't see much role for the unions. He denies massive discrimination but only in general terms. Reading his article only makes Hill's case more secure.

——Joyce Peterson

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