

lynching was a by-product of deep-rooted tensions and class conflict. From 1917, the Wilson administration was determined not just to wage war on Germany; it was also committed to a “war for the hearts and minds of Americans” (29). In order to “line up the people with the government,” the administration whipped up pro-war sentiment and curbed the anti-war movement. Through the Committee of Public Information, a wide range of propaganda was employed to generate the “white-hot mass instinct” of the masses against external enemies as well as internal enemies, whether pro-German, pro-labour, or pro-socialist (112). This was followed by the passing of the Sedition Act in 1918, partly in response to the spy hysteria that swept through the US at this time, which not only generated further fear, but may have actually encouraged the formation of bands of vigilantes, such as the one that hanged Prager.

Weinberg’s book is informative and persuasive. But it is also disturbing. The explicit parallels he draws between events of the First World War and the post-9-11 Orwellian ‘war on terror’ are more than just hints of the power of the state to manipulate the masses in the name of the ruling classes’ economic and political interests. The stigmatization of aliens as internal enemies, government propaganda and the “pro-war righteous path,” the Sedition Act and the struggle to maintain civil liberties in a climate of conflict and alleged threat to national security, reveal a deep-seated pattern of violence and repression. It is no wonder that Weinberg, in this new climate of fear, is concerned about how “new generations of working people living in a declining empire [will] struggle with how much they can continue to sacrifice for the powers that be” (201).

John R. Hinde—Malaspina University College

Ruth Frager and Carmela Patrias, *Discounted Labour Women Workers in Canada, 1870-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

Nancy MacLean, *Freedom is Not Enough: The Opening of the American Workplace* (Cambridge, Mass Harvard University Press, 2006).

Although these books look at different countries, Canada and the USA, and different time periods, 1870-1939 and the 1950s-2000s, both examine systemic discriminations in the workplace and the struggles both of those fighting to win equality and of their opposition. They offer detailed analyses of the complex interactions of the shifting politics of class, gender, and race, as they have played out in structural changes in the labour market, in political organising by both capitalists and workers and supporters of both, and in the subsistence strategies of working people.

Frager and Patrias note that in 2002, “the earnings of women employed full time, year round were just 71 per cent of those of their male counterparts” (3). They ask three questions: “How and why did women become confined to low-

wage jobs? Why has their work been considered less valuable and therefore deserving of less remuneration than men's work? Why have many women lacked the training, job experience, or union membership that would have enabled them to earn higher wages?" (3-4). Focussing on a key period in the development of industrialisation and urbanisation in Canada, from 1870-1939, they examine the situation of employed women, both wage-earners and salaried and present an analysis of women's discounted labour.

MacLean notes that during the last half of the twentieth century, a "veritable revolution in thinking about race and gender and work" has occurred in the United States and that at its heart is a change in patterns of employment. She asks "How did a society that for centuries took for granted the exclusion from full participation and citizenship of the majority of its members (namely, Americans of colour and all women) become one that values diversity and sees as an achievement the representation of once excluded groups in prominent positions?"(3). She examines the struggles of African Americans, women, and Mexican Americans to get access to better employment opportunities as part of initiatives to challenge their subordination and become fully included and respected citizens of the USA. Simultaneously, she traces the mobilisation of white conservatives in opposition to struggles for equality and the growth of neoconservatism and the right, a discussion that challenges her starting assertion that US society values diversity.

Together the authors offer a compelling analysis of the importance of paid employment for any understanding of the dynamics of class, race or gender and of their interconnections. They also demonstrate convincingly that inequalities of wealth are at the core of all inequalities and that those whose vested interests are to defend their wealth against demands for redistribution are the most dangerous opponents of social and political movements for greater equality and justice. They also offer important insights into the importance of coalition politics. In example after example, both books show that the stronger and more broadly based a political movement, the greater its victories. At the same time, the books show how difficult such alliances are to build and sustain. Deeply entrenched assumptions about superiority and inferiority, and the social structures that maintain them, play out over and over again. Too often, white male trade unionists, defending their own fragile privileges and expressing racism and sexism, failed to support the efforts of women, workers of colour, lesbians and gays, to the detriment of all. Black men and white feminists undermined black women's struggles. But more important than such divisiveness, these books reveal the powerful opposition of rich, elite, mostly white men and some women as individuals, and through their businesses, their control of government and their organisations.

Although neither explicitly sets out to do so, both reveal the centrality of communist and socialist political organising to the successes there have been in improving the situation of workers, people of colour, women and immigrants.

They also show how the deliberate destruction of the left, particularly in the United States, defeated progressive initiatives for decades and continues to undermine struggles for greater equality. Frager and Patrias deal explicitly with the Communist Party and the broader socialist movement, tracing their important role in working-class struggles. MacLean is more cautious and sometimes loses her own overview when dealing with specifics. While in the Prologue she acknowledges the role of “the left” in the period before the 1950s, noting that “the left had led in advancing black interests on the job” (29) and notes that the anti-communist movement in the US “devastated organising for economic inclusion” (29), she tends to lose sight of that history in her efforts to credit the leadership of the black civil rights movement. Similarly, when discussing the role of Jewish activists, she acknowledges their central role in antiracist struggles for Blacks and in women’s struggles. However, in her discussion of the leading role of conservative Jews and conservative Jewish organisations in opposing affirmative action, she tends to present the conservatives as if they were the dominant spokespeople for Jewish communities. In fact, MacLean’s study raises troubling questions about identity politics both for its practitioners and for historians. MacLean focuses on identity groups and their politics, looking first at the Black civil rights movement, then at their influence on women and Mexican Americans, then at how Jews and conservatives reacted to the equality demands of those groups. Her argument would have looked quite different, for example, had she looked at different political currents and how they understood, were part of, and engaged with the anti-racist, feminist and labour movements, distinguishing the various debates within and among Communists, socialists, social democrats, liberals and conservatives.

Both books illustrate the strength and value of historical research for understanding social relations and organisation. They document how the Canadian and American labour markets changed over periods of about sixty years. They show the ways in which specific individuals, particular organisations, and various social and political movements took positions, acted and altered the political, social, and economic environment. This detail offers important comparative insights. What struck me most vividly was that while there are of course many similarities between Canada and the United States reading these books together revealed how significant the differences are and how important it is to recognise that studies of struggles and movements in one country cannot be generalised to the other. What also struck me is that while neoconservative and right wing politics in the US readily inspire and actively support right wing developments in Canada, left wing, labour, feminist and anti-racist movements in the US offer few models for the Canadian movements which tend to have retained stronger socialist and progressive practices.

In Part I “Image versus Reality,” Frager and Patrias contrast the late-nineteenth century prevailing ideologies about women as “fundamentally domestic beings” (53) with the experiences of women seeking employment as industrial

workers and professionals. The idealised woman was white, Anglo-Celtic and Christian and what was widely assumed about such women was in stark contrast to the harsh realities facing most working-class women, especially Aboriginal and immigrant women. By documenting who had access to what kinds of employment and how as one group moved into better jobs, other groups of women were drawn into specific job ghettos, they reveal the actual operations of systemic discrimination.

In Part II “Confronting the Disjuncture,” they examine the efforts of the middle class social reform movement to “soften some of the harshest blows of industrial capitalism for the weakest and most vulnerable” (112-113). They show how ineffectual such efforts actually were, both because most middle class reformers were blinded to the actual circumstances of working class women by their own stereotyped notions of womanhood and by their refusal to challenge the workings of capitalism. In contrast, they analyse the forces that fostered or hindered organising and militancy on the part of working class women. Despite widely held ideals of women’s domesticity and respectability; racism that by excluding non-white, non-Anglo-Celtic women inhibited broad alliances; sexism in male dominated unions and the demands of day to day survival, working class women resisted their oppressive conditions and fought to improve their working and living conditions. They provide sobering evidence that by the early twenty-first century, over one hundred years of struggle has won an end to explicit discrimination against women workers but has not led to widespread improvements for women, particularly working class women and women of colour, immigrants, and Aboriginal women.

MacLean argues that the “veritable revolution” in thinking in American society came about largely because of the “black freedom movement’s fight for jobs and justice” (4). Her book provides a new interpretation of the Civil Rights movement and its reverberations. Specifically she says that when the Civil Rights movement won a federal ban on employment discrimination, Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, it created a resource for African Americans, and then for white women, Mexican American men, and others. In fighting for legal employment rights, these movements engaged in broader social actions that “altered ideas and institutions” (4).

She begins by documenting the situation in the 1950s when white superiority dominated US society, showing the terrible circumstances most Blacks faced in all aspects of their lives, but particularly in their efforts to improve their employment. She traces the successes of the Civil Rights movement, especially in winning legal prohibitions against discrimination in employment.

Then she examines the impact of the Civil Rights movement gains on other significant groups. She shows how women and Mexican Americans learned from the successes of the black freedom movement and gained from the commitment of that movement to alliances. She also documents the rise and development of

opposition to the opening up of the American workplace, and more generally, to all equality movements. Meticulously she traces the emergence of neoconservatives and the growth of right wing movements, their deliberate attack on affirmative action and the insidious penetration of their ideas and values into most aspects of US life.

Her book offers a wealth of detail, about workplace struggles, legal cases, political campaigns, and debates about government policy. She follows debates about specific legislation or about particular policy implementations in great detail. This may be a useful resource for those interested in such specific information. At times, however, I lost track of her main argument and wanted her to summarise the details for me and to develop her main argument more succinctly. In contrast, while the Frager and Patrias book is lovely, full of lively accounts, and shocking examples, it is deeply flawed by its startling lack of citations. Page after page of examples, including direct quotations from, for example, an anonymous teacher (3), a union publication (117) and the Communist Party of Canada (143) are unreferences! I wonder if this was imposed by a publisher concerned to shorten the text. If so, it was a poor decision.

Both books thoroughly discredit the prevailing beliefs of neoliberalism that individuals are responsible for their own situations. Despite the insistence of many that patterns of inequality reflect differences in individual ambition, interests, or talents, these authors offer compelling evidence of enduring systemic discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, and class. And those systemic inequalities are maintained and perpetrated by the elites who benefit from them. Their conclusions are sobering. Despite over a century of struggles, and despite some important gains, the labour markets in Canada and the US are largely controlled by employers and shareholders at the expense of workers and the state policies of the last thirty years are increasingly designed to maintain the power and privilege of the elites. Disparities are increasing and the struggle to change that trend will be long and hard. *Discounted Labour* and *Freedom is Not Enough* are valuable contributions. Separately and together they add to our collective knowledge and provoke further questions.

Meg Luxton—York University

Craig Heron and Steve Penfold, *The Worker's Festival: A History of Labour Day in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

Labour Day was proclaimed as a statutory holiday in Canada in 1894, but according to *The Worker's Festival: A History of Labour Day in Canada*, its roots can be traced to earlier spectacles organized by the country's skilled workers in the 1880s-1890s. The book begins by outlining the respectable and burlesque processions with which the craftsmen would have been familiar. In their tightest chapter, "The Craftsmen's Spectacle," the authors analyze the performance of Labour Day