

power allow Gilley grudgingly to accept Jiang's undemocratic political practices on the promise of economic reform. This acceptance is the cost accrued by locating Jiang Zemin within a development trajectory that denies socialist China anything but an aberrant role. While *Tiger on the Brink* offers a detailed narrative of Jiang's political career, a more critically engaged analysis of Chinese politics and Jiang Zemin demands critique of the cult of developmentalism – not to embrace the cult of Mao but to explain further the intimate links between developmentalism and Jiang's success in China and internationally.

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Gerald Friedman, *State-Making and Labor Movements: France and the United States, 1876-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

The value of comparative history and the rationale underlying it, writes historian Colleen Dunlavy, is its “ability to expose otherwise invisible paradigms that become second-nature in the historiography of every nation.”<sup>1</sup> However, in using the comparative method Gerald Friedman is less concerned with illuminating lacunae in nationally-oriented history than in criticizing history written from an Orthodox Marxist (“OM,” in his shorthand) perspective. In *State-Making and Labor Movements*, Friedman argues that labour historians, trapped by their Marxist orientation, have failed to explain either the United States’ “exceptionally” conservative labour movement and absence of significant socialist movements or European, that is, French, labour radicalism.

The problem lies in labour history's focus on the agency of working people to the exclusion of the views and actions of other classes — especially those classes that stood as allies to labour or possessed the power to restrain labour's choices and fields of action. In Friedman's view, the constraints working people have faced and the help they have received from allies is more important to successful labour movements than labour activism itself. To the not-so-new labour historians this may be heresy, but Friedman steadfastly insists that in a world of unequal power relations, labour needed (and presumably still needs) allies among sympathetic members of the bourgeoisie and state elite to succeed. Drawing upon the social movement theory of Sidney Tarrow, Friedman argues that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries organized labour sought alliances and grew more radical to press opportunities when state politics was friendly and retreated into conservative postures in self-defense when employers counterattacked. These “cycles of contention” form the substance of Friedman's comparison between France and

the United States. In so doing Friedman seeks to explain why alliances that fostered friendly state politics toward labour developed in France at the end of the nineteenth century and why the opposite happened in the United States. Based upon traditional “qualitative” sources such as newspapers, pamphlets, and the like as well as a mass of empirical evidence extensively, but for the most part clearly, presented in tables, charts, and graphs, his explanation is straightforward: labour movements in these two countries faced different opportunities and constraints.

In France, Friedman argues, the combination of opportunities and constraints favoured the development of syndicalist-style unionism. After the establishment of the Third Republic in the mid-1870s, republican elites’ tenuous hold on office in the face of opposition from the monarchist right and employers prompted them to centralize state power and forced them to seek working-class support. Pursuing a policy of labour reform that promoted collective bargaining and arbitration, these elites hoped to produce a stable, “mature,” union movement embodying republican principles while providing support at the ballot box. However, these policies instead created a context favourable to revolutionary syndicalism. In a nation governed by a unitary state, French unions discovered that class-wide appeals to workers made sense over localized issues and that by broadening strikes they could prompt quick state intervention on their side. French employers, unable to mount any effective, organized response before 1914, were unable to break the front forged between radical and centrist republicans and their working-class supporters. The result was a radical, inclusive labour movement by the first decade of the twentieth century.

By contrast, in the last decades of the nineteenth century in the United States the national state was unlikely to assist unions in any comparable way. With no threat to the state from reactionaries, argues Friedman, excepting southern slaveholders, who were put down during the Civil War, state elites had no reason to build alliances with labour. To explain the one period in which political leaders courted the labour vote and delivered favourable legislation on the state level, the 1870s and 1880s, Friedman points to the incredibly close margins of victory in state and national elections between Democrats and Republicans. As long as labour could tip the balance, it exercised some real power, encouraging political action, inclusive unionism, and militancy. This also explains the period of tremendous union growth and strike activity of the 1870s and 1880s. However, according to Friedman, labour’s very success in the United States proved its undoing. Frightened by industrial conflict and threats to property, judges — upper class men of property, operating in a branch of the government free from democratic restraints — overturned labour reform legislation in defense of property rights and cleared the path for employer and state repression of organized labour by concluding that collective action was illegal. At the same time, declining voter turnout and the political

realignment of the 1890s, which broke the balance between the two parties, eroded any ability labour had to influence national politics. Wholesale repression of inclusive unions by employers and the state, buttressed with welfare capitalism (which, Friedman tells us, American workers preferred to paternalism) followed. American labour leaders prudently concluded that narrow, apolitical trade unionism was the safest way to go in the new century.

Friedman's approach and argument have much to recommend it. To begin with, I think his criticism of Orthodox Marxism is healthy and well-intentioned. Friedman's emphasis on history made by people — from the state policymaker to the union activist — rather than immutable forces restores agency and contingency to our understanding of labour movements. Similarly, his handling of republicanism as the ideology driving both the development of liberal states and labour movements helps to ground them in their historical contexts as well as illuminate the motivations of the historical actors behind them in a way that Marxism is unable to. The common republican heritage of labour activists, middle-class reformers, and certain state elites helps to explain why these people could and did form sympathetic bonds and alliances in the middle and late nineteenth century. The same is true when he links the contrasting French and U.S. uses of republicanism with state formation and the building of political alliances and parties to show how employers in the United States successfully mobilized and those in France did not. Lastly, by paying attention to classes and actors other than labour Friedman draws attention to those in society who exercised power and to what ends. Since it is difficult to see when labour ever exercised a preponderance of power, except for brief moments, this orientation makes sense if we are to understand why labour movements succeed or fail. For Friedman, this approach holds the key to explaining American exceptionalism because employers do not respond to unionization in the same ways and the ability of employers to respond to unions is conditioned by the state. His comparative framework makes this apparent.

Indeed, the comparative framework highlights what was distinctive about France and the United States and in so doing shows how the institutional environment and actors in other classes crucially affected organized labour. But is Friedman's comparison of these two countries valid and does it bear out his analysis? On the one hand, I think he makes a good case for comparing France and the United States. However, I am left with the feeling that for all of comparative history's expository value, Friedman sometimes slides over matters of specificity in need of explanation or that are contrary to the larger argument. In other words, is the argument *too* neat? For example, I wonder about Friedman's characterization of U.S. southern slaveholders. While they may have led the South out of the Union, it seems a bit much to equate them with reactionary French monarchists — were they really such an *antirepublican* elite? Similarly, it seems a something of an overstatement to

say that welfare capitalism in the United States succeeded in legitimizing employer authority in the workplace. Yes, welfare capitalism did fit the U.S. better than paternalism by purporting to treat workers as individuals and as equals, welfare capitalists did take pains to conceal their paternalism, and many workers did enjoy the material benefits accruing to them from welfarist programs. But Friedman tends to assert this point more than he demonstrates it. After all, there have been numerous examples of American workers seeing the paternalism underneath the welfare patina and questioning employers' workplace authority. These imperfections make the comparative framework a little less tidy.

*State-Making and Labor Movements* is sure to garner attention and provoke some controversy. If Friedman's comparison seems a bit strained at points and if lurking in his argument is the Marxist point that workers and employers *do* have opposing, conflicting interests it nevertheless makes a thought-provoking argument and stands as a model of what a broader kind labour history can be.

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<sup>1</sup> Colleen Dunlavy, *Politics and Industrialization: Early Railroads in the United States and Prussia* (Princeton 1994), 13.

Shani D'Cruze, *Crimes of Outrage: Sex, Violence and Victorian Working Women* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1998).

In *Crimes of Outrage*, Shani D'Cruze speaks of violence, of violence in the streets and the home and the factory, of brawls and beatings and barbarity in the lives of working women in Victorian England. Most of all, D'Cruze speaks of sexual violence, of horrific physical attacks by men and women's, at times, successful resistance. D'Cruze concludes, "violence or its possibility was an ongoing component in nineteenth-century working women's lives" (20).

Spatial analysis ("space and place") is a critical aspect of her argument, as D'Cruze moves with remarkable agility through village life, from assaults in the home to sexual dangers at work — "reinforced," she notes, "by the patriarchal/familial structures of authority in the workplace" (3) — to frightful aspects of courtship and leisure to public neighborhood spaces and, finally, to the courtroom. The author is particularly skilled at mapping the byways of typical English villages. By the end of the book, readers will have a much greater appreciation for the relationships between the built environment and human interaction.