

As a text, the work provides a timely case study for courses on the legal system of the U.S. The strong point of the book is thoroughness. While examining the legal issues in depth, Fletcher pays considerable attention to the reason why the Goetz case captured the American imagination. And his insight into the trial process, including errors of law by Justice Crane and opportunities lost by the prosecutor Gregory Waples, presents a fascinating view of legal maneuvering and the emotional factors that served to persuade the jurors on all but one count. Fletcher's discussion of the capable defense led by Barry Slotnick is particularly enlightening, and his explanation of the power of juries to effectively disregard many of the arguments so carefully constructed by the attorneys in reaching verdicts may strike a nerve in those students cynical enough to believe that the law, so carefully guarded by the legal profession, is beyond the reach of the average citizen.

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Gary Gerstle, *Working-Class Americanism: The Politics of Labor in a Textile City, 1914-1960*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp. 356, \$ 39.50 (cloth).

The conspicuous absence of socialism from American political life has captured the attention of scholars and activists alike for almost a century. Indeed, the perennial question of "why no socialism in America?" has elicited a dizzying array of "answers," touching upon very conceivable feature of our nation's past, from the absence of feudalism to the tactical blunders of radical insurgents. About the only point of agreement seems to be that socialism was, at the very least, ill-suited to the American experience. It is a line of argument stretching back into our intellectual history at least as far as Alexis de Tocqueville and extending into the present through the writings of such diverse theorists as Antonio Gramsci and Louis Hartz—all of whom agree that socialism was fundamentally incompatible with an Americanism defined by "equality," "Fordism," or "Lockean liberalism."

Challenging this incompatibility thesis, Gary Gerstle argues that Americanism represented a complex and sometimes contradictory blend of political values. As a mode of popular discourse, Americanism was more than the familiar jingoistic nationalism and parochial traditionalism that have regularly confounded the American left. Alongside flag-waving and xenophobia was a competing set of democratic and progressive values embodied in such concepts as liberty, freedom, equality, rationality and efficiency—values which could be pressed into the service of socialism every bit as easily as capitalism. Gerstle's objective is to show how the language of Americanism, as it evolved during the first half of the twentieth century, promoted and later undermined a socialist vision among textile workers in Woonsocket, Rhode Island.

The analysis focuses on the political trajectory of the Independent Textile Union, which represented most of Woonsocket's 13,000 textile operatives from World War I through the Cold War. Drawing on rare archival sources and supplemented by over forty oral histories from former union activists, Gerstle reconstructs the protracted ideological struggle that developed between radicalized Franco-Belgian workers and more conservative French-Canadians over the discourse of Americanism. For Franco-

Belgians, who founded the ITU in 1931, Americanism lent itself to the struggle for socialism. Radical union leaders such as Joseph Schmetz, for example, self-consciously sought to “Americanize” his European socialist vision by quoting freely from the founding fathers to justify his social democratic project of building a politically active and militant industrial union. While in office, Schmetz’s brand of Americanism—defined by its progressive and democratic elements—held the more conservative French-Canadians in check.

The left’s hegemonic discourse was subsequently transformed from within by World War II. The federal government, intent on eradicating discriminatory practices that impeded the war effort, launched an intensive propaganda campaign for “cultural pluralism,” in which “hate-mongering” in any form was denounced as treasonous. With racism, sexism and nativism redefined as anti-American, criticism of capital came to be seen as another form of bigotry and hence unpatriotic. As the wartime celebration of cultural pluralism continued into the postwar period, the democratic and progressive components of Americanism that had earlier sustained the struggle against capital were gradually displaced by anti-communist nationalism and Catholic traditionalism. Capitalizing on this discursive shift, French-Canadian conservatives captured the ITU, doing so—as the radicals had before them—in the name of Americanism.

The argument here is fresh and, for the most part, convincing. Gerstle has produced a first-rate social history, rich in theoretical insight and interpretive possibilities. While clearly intended as a work of history, *Working-Class Americanism* raises important questions that are still with us about our political system, language and the continuing marginality of that other “L word,” the left.

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Nathan Glazer, *The Limits of Social Policy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988, pp. 215.

Nathan Glazer, professor of sociology and education at Harvard, has given us an insightful collection of essays on poverty and welfare with a trenchant analysis of government policies aimed at the amelioration of the social problems which beset the underclass.

The opening chapter develops Glazer’s view of social policy. As an academic who joined the Kennedy administration, Glazer had high hopes for the programs which social scientists had designed to bring the poor into the mainstream of society. Now, sifting through extensive evaluations of these programs, he finds that despite the more generous provision of food, housing and medical care for the poor over the last three decades, there have been only modest gains or even negative effects in terms of such basic indicators as educational attainment, labor force participation, welfare dependency and family stability. The tens of billions of dollars spent on educational programs such as Head Start, and the myriad job training programs (Glazer lists a mind-numbing 17 of them) have had at best minimal results and at worst were a dismal failure.

However, this is not the main theme of Glazer’s book. Rather, his particular insight “derived entirely from my experiences with social policy ... was that we