

Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919–1939.

By Lizabeth Cohen. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1990. Pp. xviii, 526. Illustrations, tables, maps, notes, index. \$27.95.)

Making a New Deal is an important book that makes a major contribution to labor and modern American history. Its principal achievement is its richly detailed and persuasive presentation of working people as actors rather than as mere reactors or victims. By endowing Chicago's workers with agency, Lizabeth Cohen effectively challenges scholars who have studied the 1920s and 1930s from the top down or the outside in and who have attributed the events of those two crucial and turbulent decades to everyone and everything except working people themselves.

One of the few social histories of workers in the twentieth century, *Making a New Deal* examines aspects of working-class life in the 1920s and 1930s heretofore largely ignored. The book has new and important things to say about class relations within ethnic communities, the relationship of working people to mass culture, and workers' response to welfare capitalism. It also uses social history to reassess the emergence of mass production unionism in the 1930s. Arguing that workers advocated a form of political economy that she labels "moral capitalism," Cohen offers a fresh examination of their relationship to politics and the state. In so doing she reminds readers of the importance of the New Deal to the working class, challenges the corporate liberal thesis for the origins and character of the New Deal, and compels consideration of the distinctiveness of working-class politics in the 1930s. Cohen moves beyond conventional, workplace-oriented accounts to offer a social history of the union drives of the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Describing the CIO's efforts to construct and defend a culture of unity, Cohen establishes, for example, the importance of radio broadcasts, baseball and bowling leagues, union buttons, and women's auxiliaries, aspects of the 1930s that have been overlooked, dismissed, or trivialized. By resisting the tendency to view the events of the 1930s in light of what happened after 1940 and by placing those events in historical and social context, Cohen effectively renders the CIO a social movement and demonstrates how important the CIO was to working people themselves.

The book is not without problems. The meanings of gender at work and their significance for the CIO and the working class merited greater consideration. Cohen is not blind to the problem of gender. Indeed the integration of women and women's experience into the narrative and the analysis is one of the contributions she makes to the literature on labor in the 1920s and 1930s. But gender was more problematic, more significant, and more central than

Making a New Deal would suggest. Cohen, for example, overlooks the ways in which the concept of moral capitalism was gendered and the extent to which the CIO's endorsement of conventional gender ideology undermined the ability of all workers—male and female—to challenge employers. By paying the subject insufficient attention, Cohen misses an opportunity to strengthen the book's larger argument. This weakness, however, does not seriously detract from the book's great merit. Extensively researched, provocatively and compellingly argued, *Making a New Deal* is an impressive achievement.

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Capital on the Kentucky: A Two Hundred Year History of Frankfort & Franklin County. By Carl E. Kramer. (Frankfort, Ky.: Historic Frankfort, Inc., 1986. Pp. [viii], 414. Illustrations, maps, index. \$29.95, plus \$2.00 shipping.)

Carl E. Kramer's *Capital on the Kentucky: A Two Hundred Year History of Frankfort & Franklin County* is an excellent book. It joins a growing list of community and county histories written by professional historians and intended for a general audience. Kramer's up-to-date knowledge of the history and the historiography of Kentucky and the United States shows on every page. In fact his book could easily serve as a primer on Kentucky and United States history for he artfully weaves the history of Franklin County into great events of the Bluegrass state such as the Tollgate Wars of the 1890s and the mileposts of United States history such as the Civil War, the industrial revolution, and the Great Depression. *Capital on the Kentucky* is well written and beautifully produced with numerous black-and-white and color photographs and illustrations. Kramer offers no over-arching thesis, and he breaks no new ground; but there are several reasons why historians and lay persons will want to read this book. First, while Kramer does not equate community development with "progress," he points out that community success in the United States is now and always has been economic success. Second, Kramer argues convincingly that the key to economic success has never been a mystery. It was and is a function of available natural resources, transportation, capital, and imaginative leadership. Franklin County possessed all of these, and it flourished. Also, it did not hurt that Frankfort was the state capital.

Some town and county histories are little more than tributes to great families and records of entrepreneurial activity. Leading families and entrepreneurs can be found in *Capital on the Kentucky*, but, when defining "leadership," Kramer emphasizes neither