

# Capsule Reviews

*reviewed by* Book Review Editor

MARK BRAVERMAN, *PREVENTING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS AND PRACTITIONERS* (Sage Publications, 1999. 158 pp. Paper: \$17.95).

Using actual cases to illustrate effective, ineffective, and harmful methods, this book provides a summary of recent research and policy in the area of workplace violence prevention. The author begins by outlining a comprehensive concept of violence in the workplace, as well as the sources of such behavior, that goes far beyond the high-profile "revenge-killing" scenario so prominent in the news. The merits, limits, and risks of profiling and psychological testing are explored, as are the issues of employer duty, domestic violence and the workplace, and the role of collective bargaining. Many of the methods commonly and unthinkingly used by employers (e.g., total reliance on profiling, employee isolation, refusal to use outside expertise) are criticized as harmful to productivity, ineffective in discovering threats, and even contributory in sparking violence. Cases include an analysis of the U.S. Postal Service's history of workplace violence, an example of a workplace "witch hunt," a case exhibiting management neglect, and another case that provides an example of a measured, decisive, and successful management response to workplace threats. Material on how to prepare an organization to respond in times of crisis, with advice on management communication, work teams, training, counseling, and clear policies, is also included. A sample zero tolerance policy and research references are provided as appendices.

WILLIAM F. DOLSON & JANICE M. THERLOT, EDS., *ELEVENTH ANNUAL CARL A. WARNS, JR. LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT LAW INSTITUTE* (William S. Hein & Co., 1999. 189 pp. Hardcover: \$79.95).

This volume compiles the talks given at the Eleventh Annual Labor and Employment Law Institute at the University of Louisville School of Law in 1994. The primary theme of the Eleventh Annual Institute was violence in the workplace. Talks on this theme included an analysis of

crisis management and labor relations at the Royal Oak Post Office, at which five people, including the gunman, were killed and four others injured by gunfire in 1991. Talks were also given on the use of trauma response teams following violence at a workplace (particularly at the Royal Oak Post Office), and the potential use of collective bargaining and OSHA to formulate and implement effective violence intervention strategies. William B. Gould, IV, who at the time had recently been appointed chairman of the NLRB, spoke briefly on the NLRB's rulemaking process, and the role of ALJs and advisory panels in the NLRB. Other themes and talks included the appropriateness of alternative dispute resolution in employment law, the new trend of employees' domestic partners receiving employment benefits, the anti-contact rule in legal ethics, and a review of recent Supreme Court decisions in the area of employment law.

STEVEN FRASER & JOSHUA B. FREEMAN, EDS., *AUDACIOUS DEMOCRACY: LABOR, INTELLECTUALS, AND THE SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION OF AMERICA* (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997. 273 pp. Paper: \$12.00).

This collection of essays resulted from the "Teach-In with the Labor Movement" held at Columbia University in October 1996. The overarching theme of the compilation is how the American labor movement can restore its vitality, regain parity with management, and forge a coherent alliance with academics and social activists. Leading off the collection is the well-known essay "America Needs a Raise" by John J. Sweeney. Second is "History's Geiger Counter," an essay by Betty Friedan on the need for a general movement for social justice, that includes women, minorities, and the labor movement, in order to counter the newly rising tide of social and distributive inequality. Other essays explore the psychology of working class families, the historical relationship between intellectuals and the labor movement, the challenges posed by globalization for workers, and the effect of welfare reform on labor in general. Richard Rorty writes on the fierce and bloody, but largely forgotten, history of labor's struggle for amenities now taken for granted by the American public. Finally, several participants state the case for a broader labor movement that actively courts women, minorities, immigrants, and intellectuals, which could serve as the vehicle for a new and independent movement for social justice. Overall, the book is an excellent survey of contemporary thought and strategic thinking among social and labor activists in the United States.

GERALD W. LEWIS & NANCY C. ZARE, *WORKPLACE HOSTILITY: MYTH AND REALITY* (Taylor and Francis, 1999. 171 pp. Paper: \$17.95).

The authors seek to dispel common misconceptions regarding violence in workplace and advocate measured and sensitive approaches to the issue. The impression that the American workplace is becoming more prone to violence than it has in the past is called into question by putting the most surprising statistics on workplace violence into their proper context; American society is fairly violent in general, and the workplace is in fact as safe or safer than it has ever been. The focus here is on risk assessment and training. Profiling is discussed, with emphasis placed on the role of shame and humiliation in sparking violent behavior, along with characteristics such as a history of violence or substance abuse and the use of denial or projection. The chapter on at-risk assessments includes sample personal history forms and survey questions. Warning signs including work performance, verbal/non-verbal behavior, and denial are discussed, with checklists at the end of the chapter. Management training and employee education are also covered, as are employee assistance programs. Objectivity is stressed throughout. The book closes with chapters on evaluating a workplace's potential for violence (based upon its industry, geographic location, hours of operation, public accessibility, technological security measures, and history) and forming crisis response teams to speed recovery from any incidents that do take place.

THOMAS D. SCHNEID, *OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH GUIDE TO VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE* (CRC Press, 1999. 483 pp. Hardcover: \$64.95).

Writing from a "safety/health professional's viewpoint," the author shifts the focus in the study of workplace violence from psychological profiling to physical security and relevant legal standards. A short history and statistical overview of workplace violence, with reproduced news articles, appears in the book's first chapter, but the emphasis is on legal liability and responses to violent incidents. Chapters cover OSHA and workers' compensation liability, wrongful death actions, and advice on formulating a workplace response/compliance program (with suggested employee handouts regarding how to respond to violent behavior). Five chapters are individually devoted to causes of action for negligent hiring, retention, supervision, training, and security. Each chapter contains an excerpted court opinion involving the area of law just covered. Sixteen OPM case studies are included in the final chapter. Appendices include OSHA guidelines on workplace violence, selected employee workplace rights, OPM guidelines, and a list of pertinent web sites.