

Selected Labor & Employment Law Capsule Reviews

compiled by the Book Review/Casenote Editor

TIMOTHY J. MINCHIN, *FIGHTING AGAINST THE ODDS: A HISTORY OF SOUTHERN LABOR SINCE WORLD WAR II* (University Press of Florida, Feb. 2006, 240 pp., \$59.95).

From the publisher:

“This is a concise yet wide-ranging and accessible synthesis of the experience of southern workers between World War II and the present. Linking his discussion to important debates in the field of southern history today, Timothy Minchin brings the story of southern labor up to date and places the workers’ own experiences in the forefront.” Drawing on a broad knowledge of primary sources and his own extensive archive of more than two hundred interviews with southern workers, Minchin offers an overview of the past seventy years of southern labor history in combination with a lively and intimate sense of the human experience. His oral histories include men and women, both black and white, who offer their insights not just on the workplace but also on their living conditions, political activities, and race relations.

JAMES B. JACOBS, *MOBSTERS, UNIONS AND FEDS: THE MAFIA AND THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT* (New York University Press, Jan. 2006, 352 pp., \$32.95).

From the publisher:

Mobsters, Unions, and Feds is the first book to tell the full story of the relationship between organized crime and organized labor, as well as recent federal efforts to clean up unions. One of America’s leading experts on the mafia, James B. Jacobs explains how the Cosa Nostra families first gained a foothold in labor during violent struggles between workers and employers in the early twentieth century, then after Prohibition’s repeal, made

labor racketeering its top priority. Jacobs also outlines the failure of law enforcement to address the problem, especially the inaction of the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover. Jacobs places the federal efforts to liberate the unions in the context of this larger war, which has sent hundreds of organized crime members and bosses to prison. The only book to investigate how the mob has distorted American labor history, *Mobsters, Unions, and Feds* sheds new light on the influence of the mafia in American unions and the extraordinary efforts of law enforcement to erase the shadow that the mob has left on the labor movement.

STEVE WILLIAMS AND DEREK ADAM-SMITH, *CONTEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS: A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION* (Oxford University Press, Jan. 2006, 450 pp., \$59.95).

From the publisher:

A Critical Introduction offers an original, accessible, and critical approach to understanding employment relations. Based on up-to-date research studies, it considers recent developments in employment relations, defined as the way in which employment relationships are regulated, experienced and contested. A thematic approach to the subject helps to demonstrate the contemporary relevance of employment relations, enabling student to develop an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding of this key area of economic, social and political life. Among the topics covered by the book are: the implications of globalization for employment relations; the role of the European Union; the significance of 'family-friendly' and 'work-life balance' policies; the nature of employment relations in non-union firms; the dynamics of workplace partnership; the impact of minimum wage and working time legislation; and the causes and effects of work intensification.

NANCY MACLEAN, *FREEDOM IS NOT ENOUGH: THE OPENING OF THE AMERICAN WORKPLACE* (Harvard University Press, Jan. 2006, 452 pp., \$35.00).

From the publisher:

In this bold and groundbreaking work, Nancy MacLean shows how African-American and later Mexican-American civil rights activists and feminists concluded that freedom alone would not suffice: access to jobs at all levels is a requisite of full citizenship. Tracing the struggle to open the American workplace to all, MacLean chronicles the cultural and political advances that have irrevocably changed our nation over the past fifty years. *Freedom Is Not Enough* reveals the fundamental role jobs play in the struggle for equality. We meet the grassroots activists—rank-and-file workers, community leaders, trade unionists, advocates, lawyers—and their allies in government who fight for fair treatment, as we also witness the conservative forces that assembled to resist their demands. Weaving a powerful and memorable narrative, MacLean demonstrates the life-altering impact of the Civil Rights Act and the movement for economic advancement that it fostered.

PHILIP MARTIN AND MANOLO ABELLA, *MANAGING LABOR MIGRATION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY*, (Yale University Press, Jan. 2006, 240 pp. \$35.00).

From the publisher:

This groundbreaking book presents the most comprehensive analysis of the causes and effects of labor migration available, and it recommends sensible, sustainable migration policies that are fair to migrants and to the countries that open their doors to them. The authors survey recent trends in international migration for employment and demonstrate that the flow of authorized and illegal workers over borders presents a formidable challenge in countries and regions throughout the world. They note that not all migration is from undeveloped to developed countries and discuss the murky relations between immigration policies and politics. The book concludes with specific recommendations for justly managing the world's growing migrant workforce.

ANGUS WRIGHT, *DEATH OF RAMON GONZALEZ: THE MODERN AGRICULTURAL DILEMMA* (University of Texas Press, Sep. 2005, 416 pp. \$19.95).

From the publisher:

Gonzalez was one of the thousands of farm workers worldwide who die each year due to acute pesticide poisoning, and his death provides the starting place for this study of the medical, environmental, economic, and political consequences of massive pesticide use in Mexico.

KATHERINE PRIOR, *WORKERS' RIGHTS* (Sea to Sea Publications, Aug. 2005, 46 pp., \$29.95).

From the publisher:

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone has the right to work and have equal pay for equal work. Katherine Prior explores these aspects, as well as the right to join trade unions and how poorly paid work can become a form of slavery.

IMMANUEL NESS, *IMMIGRANTS, UNIONS AND THE NEW U.S. LABOR MARKET* (Temple University Press, June 2005, 240 pp., \$21.95).

From the publisher:

Businesses in New York and the nation had changed and were now dependent upon low-paid immigrants to fill the entry-level jobs that few native-born Americans would take. *Immigrants, Unions, and the New U.S. Labor Market* tells the story of these workers' struggle for living wages, humane working conditions, and the respect due to all people. It describes how they found the courage to organize labor actions at a time when most laborers have become quiescent and while most labor unions were ignoring them. Showing how unions can learn from the example of these laborers, and demonstrating the importance of solidarity beyond the workplace, Immanuel Ness offers a telling look into the lives of some of America's newest immigrants.

WILLIAM ENGLISH WALLING, *AMERICAN LABOR & AMERICAN DEMOCRACY* (Transaction Publishers, May 2005, 224 pp., \$34.95).

From the publisher:

In *American Labor and American Democracy*, William English Walling drew on his close association with Samuel Gompers and other leaders of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) to write the authoritative history of the labor movement in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Social reform activist Walling (1877-1936) helped found the National Women's Trade Union League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Here, drawing on his close ties with the American Federation of Labor, he presents a history of the labor movement in the first quarter of the 20th century.

TONY HUZARD, DENIS GREGORY, AND REGAN SCOTT, *STRATEGIC UNIONISM AND PARTNERSHIP: BOXING OR DANCING?* (Palgrave Macmillan, March 2005, 384 pp., \$80.00).

From the publisher:

How do we understand 'social partnership'? How does partnership vary across Europe and beyond? What are the implications of partnership for union renewal? This book addresses these questions by exploring the relationship between union renewal and partnership in an international context. It focuses in particular on experiences of co-operative industrial relations, normally understood as 'social partnership', in eight countries. The authors introduce and develop the terms 'boxing' and 'dancing' as metaphors for adversarial and co-operative industrial relations, and then offer an in-depth investigation of 'dancing' as a trade union strategy. It is argued that effective unions will need to skillfully combine both boxing and dancing activities which are interdependent and not a trade-off.