

cooperation" is built upon the remains of patterns of collective bargaining which failed to meet the challenges of new economic, social, and political conditions. In other words, patterns of collective bargaining in certain industries laid the groundwork for the emergence of the patterns of "formal cooperation."

According to the editor, the past experience of labor disputes has played a significant role in the emergence of "formal cooperation." It has led workers and employers to recognize that "formal cooperation" is the best way to solve such macroeconomic problems as foreign competition and decreasing competitiveness of American goods, a falling U.S. share in the world market, plant shutdowns, and rising unemployment.

In the end, Cornfield fails to present a convincing argument to explain why this significant change in the labor-management relationships took place. He ignores the concept of class and class struggle, and does not adequately explain how workers and employers solved their historical conflicts.

The emergence of "formal cooperation" in some companies is likely due to the fact that the balance of power between labor and management in many of the traditionally unionized firms has shifted to favor management. Since the mid-1950s unions have faced many obstacles, and the percentage of all nonagricultural wage and salary workers belonging to unions declined from its postwar peak of 34.7 percent in 1954 to 19.1 percent in 1984 (Edwards, Garonna, and Todtling, 1986:16). Influenced by a series of social, economic and political events, unions suffered

a sharp decline in their collective bargaining power and have accepted many concessions in their contracts with employers. Cornfield overlooks the possibility that some previously strong unions might have been forced to choose "cooperation" over "confrontation" due to the current specificities of the labor movement.

If "formal cooperation" is a result of the decline of the bargaining power of unions (226), or is manipulated by managerial control strategies in the shop or office (332), I suggest that "formal cooperation" may equally be termed "formal domination."

Cornfield's discussion of "formal cooperation" is, at best, a simplistic description of what appears to be the dominant pattern of labor-management relationships in some industries. The editor simply fails to unpack the implicit and explicit facts embodied in the existing relationships in U.S. workplaces.

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Sar A. Levitan and Isaac Shapiro, *Working But Poor*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987, 160 Pp., \$7.95 (paper), \$22.50 (cloth)

Perhaps no social problem in American society has provoked so much continuing dialogue since the 1960s as the issue of poverty and related topics such as welfare programs. Dozens of books and hundreds of articles have been written (a large percentage in the 1980s) from various perspectives and ideologies analyzing the consequences, causes, and solutions to poverty in America. Moreover, everyone seems to have a position or opinion, often expressed with emotional fervor, on poverty, the poor, and welfare programs. The success of politicians and political parties is often highly related to their ability to sense the electorate's current views on the poor and social service expenditures and to build on (or pander to) these views for political gain. Ronald Reagan in the 1980s related to a different public than Lyndon Johnson in the 1960s on the issue of the poor and what responsibility the government had in reducing poverty. Over the years, however, public opinion polls measuring attitudes toward poverty and the poor suggest that the American populace consistently divides itself toward opposite ends of a continuum in explaining "causes" of poverty. At one end, the majority of those polled sees poverty as mainly resulting from the unwillingness of the poor to work ("lazy," "rather live off welfare") while at the other end of the continuum a significant number of Americans sees poverty as mostly due to circumstances beyond the individual's control, that is, there is a lack of jobs for the poor because of such factors as continuing automation, relocation of unskilled/semiskilled jobs to Third World countries, or because of discrimination in the labor market. What these polls indicate, moreover, is that almost all Americans, no matter what their political or ideological orientation, view poverty from an economic perspective: the poor are poor because, for various reasons, they are unemployed.

In *Working But Poor*, Levitan and Shapiro challenge the prevailing belief that poverty is the result of indolence or lack of employment opportunities. They examine the experiences and hardships encountered by the working poor, some 2 million Americans who work full-time year round and another 7 million who work full-time part of the year or in year round part-time jobs. In addition, millions of other Americans live in families just above the official poverty lines, i.e. the "near poor," where the combined incomes of both husband and wife place them a few thousand dollars over the poverty threshold (\$9,690 for a family of three in 1987). The authors show how the sharp cuts in federal anti-poverty programs under the Reagan Administration have contributed to an increase in the number of working poor -- a growth of some forty percent between 1980 and 1987. Levitan and Shapiro raise serious questions about the fairness of the rules that regulate the distribution of economic rewards in American society, and they are especially critical of current federal efforts to deal with the poor.

They believe that the existence of such a large number of working poor undermines a core American belief: that a commitment to the work ethic will provide a road out of poverty. For individuals who believe in the American ethos that hard work will lead to material rewards and upward mobility, *Working But Poor* could arouse dissonance and a debate about why this malady exists and how the government has failed to address or has contributed to the problem. However,

like many books that expose the contradictions and injustices of the "free enterprise" system, the individuals who should read it (i.e. those who see poverty as a result of indolence) will probably ignore it.

The book is divided into eight chapters. In Chapters One and Two, Levitan and Shapiro look at the contradictions and problems of the working poor amidst what they see as national affluence and an expanding economy. A thorough profile of the working poor is offered, including characteristics of the "new" working poor, changing federal policies, the job market for low-wage workers, and the future outlook for the working poor.

In Chapter Three, the authors examine the jobs of the current working poor, technological changes in the work structure, the new service economy, and the loss of traditional low-wage jobs to international competition. A section on the problems of women and youth in poverty is also presented.

The remaining five chapters of the book discuss various federal policies and programs enacted from the liberal 1960s through the neoconservative 1980s. Chapter Four is a critical evaluation of the minimum wage, demonstrating its fall relative to purchasing power during the 1980s. The effects of the 1986 tax reform legislation and its impact on the working poor is also analyzed.

In Chapter Five, "Removing Employment Obstacles," the authors discuss the relationship of low-wage jobs to education, the problem of illiteracy, and the disproportionately high number of working poor who have chronic health disabilities. A strong section analyzes various "second chance programs" for the poor, such as the Job Corps, C.E.T.A., and the Federal Adult Education Act programs, emerging from the 1960s and early 1970s.

The current "Targeted Jobs Tax Credit" (IJTC) program is advanced in Chapter Six as an important program if properly "modified" to assist the working poor. Levitan and Shapiro discuss the failure of employee participation in this program since its enactment in 1978 and why the federal government has failed to correct the problem.

Chapter Seven shows how the mounting interest in work incentive programs for welfare recipients and the Reagan Administration's promotion of mandatory "workfare" has diverted attention away from the working poor. The authors discuss why the working poor should receive welfare support and social insurance assistance as a necessary complement to their meager earnings. Massachusetts Employment and Training program (E.T.) is offered as a viable model of what can be done by government to reduce the welfare roles. Levitan and Shapiro believe that programs like E.T. could be constructed to specifically help the working poor.

The final chapter includes a call for a "positive and active role" for the federal government in addressing the problems of the working poor. Reviewing the antipoverty programs of the past decades, Levitan and Shapiro believe that a new system of dealing with the poor need not be constructed: the old system needs to be "repaired" and expanded. They observe that expenditures of time, talent, and money for a restoration of the programs of the 1960s and early 1970s will undoubtedly clash with the "free market" ideology prevalent today. However, recent polls are cited demonstrating the American public's willingness to support antipoverty programs, especially in the areas of education, training, and job creation. Recommendations are offered for a modified federal budget of some \$10 billion annually to assist the working poor, half of which would be spent on

employment and training programs.

Levitan and Shapiro present a succinct, liberal overview of the problems confronted by the working poor and indirectly the larger number of non-working poor in the contemporary America. For the most part, suggestions for "repairing and expanding" the more cost-efficient antipoverty programs of the 1960s and early 1970s, while certainly a benign attempt to address the problems of the working poor, fail to address and critically examine the underlying structural causes of poverty in America. A supporter of the original policies and programs of the War on Poverty during Johnson's era would find reading *Working But Poor* a strong affirmation. If, on the other hand, one views the intent or "positive" results of the War on Poverty as simply a bandaid approach to deeper structural problems within the political and economic system, than this book will offer little understanding of underlying causes and long-term, fundamental solutions to poverty in America.

The authors take the fundamentals of the capitalistic structure as a given; they understand it as basically just and only in need of minor adjustments here and there to correct such problems as poverty. The book mentions nothing about the persistent and growing unequal distribution of wealth and income in American society, the justification (rationalization) for it, nor how the wealthy and powerful and even the middle class have a vested interest in maintaining a poor and malleable work force at the bottom of the economic order (Marx's "reserve industrial army"). Levitan and Shapiro never address the voluminous literature published over the years about how discrimination in public education works against and perpetuates a lower class or how and why the poor are locked out of the political decision-making process. Other fundamental issues, such as the existence and persistence of extensive discrimination against the poor in health care provisions, the job market, and the legal system are not discussed.

In a nation with a seemingly high current priority on encouraging self-aggrandizement and personal privatization for the more advantaged, and where government continues to espouse "free enterprise" as its most important pursuit, the needs of millions of individuals who are the victims of this type of society will continue to not be met. Perhaps some of the programs offered by Levitan and Shapiro to ameliorate the problems of the working poor, though limited and short-term as they may be, are the best that can be realistically hoped for in the current social and political climate. However, only twice in the 20th century has the federal government responded substantially with programs and funding to address the problems of the poor: the Depression era of the 1930s and the War on Poverty during the 1960s. In both cases the government's reaction was more a response to a threat of political unrest and violence than an attempt to fundamentally redress the inequities of the economic/political system. As Piven and Cloward (1978) contend, federal programs dealing with poverty over the years can be described as efforts to determine the minimal level of subsistence necessary in order to prevent chaos. Unfortunately, as long as the poor and working class remain docile and politically impotent the government has little incentive to respond with "corrective" measures to reduce poverty and, more significantly, inequality in American society.

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