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Why Is There No Labor Party in the United States?

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interviewing) and secure good working conditions for temps. But it is questionable to what extent agencies must do this. After all, even at the agency they observed, "Routine were telephone calls from individuals who were 'desperate' to find temporary jobs" (p. 71). Do desperate workers have much choice or the labor market savvy to be picky about agencies? Do desperate workers need much incentive to be good-enough workers?

The balanced tone of the book is welcome. And Smith and Neuwirth do explicitly link the THS industry to the dissolution of the standard employment model with implicit guarantees for security and routes for advancement. But they seem to have a tendency to be overly optimistic in their general analysis. For example, is the fact that blacks and Hispanics are over-represented in the contingent work force really support for the idea that temporary employment is "a valuable backup option for workers who experience racial discrimination" (p. 152), or is it rather evidence of a larger problem in the American labor market that is unlikely to be addressed by for-profit intermediaries? Despite these drawbacks, however, *The Good Temp* is an excellent piece of scholarship and a necessary read for anyone interested in temporary work.

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Why Is There No Labor Party in the United States?
By Robin Archer. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007. 348 pp. ISBN 978-0-691-12701-9, \$35.00 (cloth).

In this comparison of labor politics in Australia and the United States, the left-hand-side variable takes a value of one when a country adopts a labor party, zero otherwise. On the right-hand side, Archer includes many of the protagonists in the timeworn debates on U.S. exceptionalism: levels of prosperity, liberalism, federalism, religion, the courts, state repression, immigration, and the like. He concludes that Australia established a labor party because its adherents were able to separate religion from politics and because its leaders were less ideologically driven and less prone to sectarianism than their American counterparts. In the United States, in the face of the authorities'

demonstrated willingness to use force to weaken organized labor, the American Federation of Labor was more cautious. It feared that a new labor party would accentuate existing religious divisions and ideological bickering among its potential supporters and, as a result, undermine workers' hard-earned achievements in collective bargaining.

The question Archer poses is distinct from, and more tractable than, the larger puzzle about the absence of socialism in the United States, although readers may need to remind themselves of this since the right-hand-side variables are suspiciously similar. The time-frame of study is the decades before 1914, when Australia and the United States diverged. At first blush, the comparison between these two European offshoots might seem farfetched, but Archer makes the valid claim that the traditional U.S.-Canada study is biased because these close neighbors shared a common union movement, the so-called internationals. Although there are two countries in his subsample, the larger population actually consists of the many sub-national jurisdictions. Archer is aware of this. Among the book's many strong points is its detailed study of labor politics at the state level, specifically for New South Wales and Illinois. The book is exhaustively researched and well organized. Because it avoids jargon, it will be read across the social sciences.

Claims to the contrary notwithstanding, Archer's approach is in many ways conventional. Like most histories of this sort, Archer's juxtaposes one country's experience on another, as if each labor party developed in isolation. Archer does make reference to the possibility of interdependence—the Australian Labor Party chose American spelling in honor of its U.S. brothers, and Henry George made considerable inroads across the Pacific—but he largely ignores the global movements of trade, capital, and labor. Consider workers' attitudes to commercial policy as a factor in mobilizing support for a labor party. In New South Wales, the labor party gained in strength when it sought to marshal support on the trade question; in the United States, workers and farmers chose either of the established political parties to represent their trade interests.

Archer eschews formal analysis of the problem he seeks to address, but the organization of the book fits comfortably in the basic regression framework. Separate chapters are each devoted to one of eight determinants—regressors—in the baseline model. Archer is interested in the causal mechanism as well as the size of the estimated coefficients. He rejects the electoral system as a

potential cause because if workers and organizers had had the will, he argues, they would have found the means to overcome the inherent biases of the system and would have established a third party. Similarly, the federal structure of the two countries was not an obstacle to the creation of a labor party. In fact, it provided a field of experimentation and was a springboard to success at the national level. Archer's rejection of race and immigration, state repression, the courts, and prosperity as factors in the creation of the Australian Labor Party is based on their relative importance. Here Archer is on less certain ground, since he does not provide a metric with which to sort through alternatives. A case in point is his rejection of U.S. prosperity as a possible determinant. The assertion is that while wage levels were the same on the two continents, American workers were more dissatisfied with their earnings relative to internal (within-country) reference points than were Australians. The analysis does not move beyond this stage. Are we interested in levels or rates of change of wages? How large does the gap between expectations and take-home pay have to be to make workers dissatisfied? Does the degree of satisfaction rise with take-home pay or is the relation non-linear? Are the reference points stable over time?

The overarching line of reasoning has two main drawbacks. First, it treats each determinant separately. One can easily picture immigration interacting with religion, and state repression with the legal system, as common causes in the establishment or not of the third party. Archer also sidesteps the likelihood of endogeneity. How did the adoption of the labor party in Australia affect court decisions and state repression? If the relation was bi-causal, there may be a bias in Archer's reading of the evidence.

That said, the virtues of the book override the drawbacks, and the depth and scope of argument are impressive. The richness of the approach is exemplified in Archer's nuanced discussion of the many dimensions of liberalism. In both countries, liberal values were about equally prevalent across three groups of interest—the middle classes, union leaders, and intellectuals—although Archer is hard-pressed to explain why these values would have mattered to workers in either country.

The book makes a valuable contribution to debates on U.S. exceptionalism. More generally, it demonstrates the strengths of comparative history.

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Black and Blue: African Americans, the Labor Movement, and the Decline of the Democratic Party. By Paul Frymer. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007. 224 pp. ISBN 978-0-691-13081-1, \$50.00 (cloth); 978-0-691-13465-9, \$24.95 (paper).

Black and Blue: African Americans, the Labor Movement, and the Decline of the Democratic Party is an important contribution to the interdisciplinary literature on race and the U.S. labor movement. Its evidence is fresh and stimulating, its arguments original and compelling, and its conclusions matter. This is a book not only scholars but also activists should read. The first part of the title—*Black and Blue*—captures the explanatory challenge: how to explain the bruising beatings that the struggle for racial justice, the labor movement, and black workers in particular have taken in recent decades, with 400,000 African American union jobs lost since 2000 alone. Frymer comes to this project with a rare skill set. He brings academic training in both law and political science and practical experience in the trenches of labor litigation, a combination that yields new insight and significant findings.

First, the book is a timely reminder that the labor movement, notwithstanding its historic failings and current limitations on racial matters, is *the* most effective voice for wage-earning Americans, including African Americans. That helps explain why, even after the hemorrhaging of union jobs in recent years, more blacks belong to trade unions than to civil rights organizations. And it helps explain why polls find African Americans to be more pro-union than any other section of the U.S. population. Because the labor movement is also the most integrated major institution in American life, with the possible exception of the military, the daunting obstacles it now faces in organizing should concern those interested in racial justice. Its weakening receives too little attention as a source of the rise of concentrated poverty, the worsening of overall inequality, and the decline of social mobility in the United States.

Frymer's most original contribution, however, is a structural and situational analysis of how American political institutions perpetuate racial inequality in the workplace. In particular, he shows how the Wagner Act and National Labor Relations Board excluded questions of racial injustice from their purview. When finally the vacuum was filled by the 1964 Civil Rights Act, it channeled matters of racial discrimination to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the courts. And where the NLRB had compounded racial inequity, Frymer shows, the EEOC and courts have compounded class inequity. His