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*The Long Deep Grudge: A Story of Big Capital, Radical Labor and Class War in the American Heartland*, By Toni Gilpin (2020) Chicago: Haymarket Press, 422 pages. ISBN: 978-1-64259-181-1

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to explain what made America unique. This is a major issue with the book. The British developed many concepts that the Americans would take and use on a wider scale. Thirdly, the book is overly sanguine on China. The Chinese have many advantages, including a talented and larger population. They also have numerous issues, including very unfavourable demographics and a government unwilling and unable to handle uncertainty, which has largely been the comparative advantage of America.

The most glaring weakness is the modern section of the book. It should not be surprising that this would be the case. Greenspan has much to answer for. For example, it seems strange to me that the Chair of the Federal Reserve does not understand how the budget works. They point out that deficits rose under the Reagan administration because of tax cuts. It is true that deficits rose, but so did tax revenue. The budget cuts promised to Reagan never occurred. Likewise, the United States was spending more money on entitlement programs than had been budgeted. In fact, neither Congress nor the President can touch whole sections of the budget. The programs of Social Security and Medicare have the long-term potential to bankrupt the country and there seems to be little in the way of reforming them. The praise offered to Clinton is also surprising. Clinton was effectively blocked from opposing dangerous interventions in the economy. He did not create the market cycle that Reagan did. Likewise, the book is silent, unsurprisingly, about Fed's role in the financial crisis of 2008, nor Greenspan's role in the crisis, although Greenspan took blame elsewhere. Lastly, the book says very little about how a large part of the US economy is driven by crony capitalism—the never-ending parade of Treasury Secretaries from investment banks to government positions goes unmentioned.

Before we lament the end of the United States prosperity, remember, there is a "lot

of ruin in a nation." America bounced back from several depressions and a Civil War. Perhaps, in 400 years' time, authors will write a similar story.

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**The Long Deep Grudge:  
A Story of Big Capital,  
Radical Labor and Class War  
in the American Heartland**

By Toni Gilpin (2020) Chicago: Haymarket Press, 422 pages. ISBN: 978-1-64259-181-1.

Toni Gilpin completed a PhD entitled *Left by Themselves: A History of the United Farm Equipment and Metal Workers Union, 1938-1955* at Yale University in 1992. It is probably worth mentioning that her father, Dewitt Gilpin, worked for the Farm Equipment Workers (FE) from 1941. From the late 1930s, he wrote for the Communist newspapers' *Daily Worker* and the Chicago-based *Midwest Daily Worker* (p. 5-6). Early in the 2010s, two Louisville long-time labour activists, Walter and Kay Tillow, tracked her down and convinced her to publish her PhD as "the FE's story is exactly what those endeavoring to revitalize the labor movement need to know". She contacted her thesis supervisor, Steve Rosswurm, who persuaded her not to tinker with the thesis and "start from scratch to create something with scholarly integrity and broad appeal" (p. 321).

*The Long Deep Grudge* examines the history of FE, its successes and failures, in its battles against (mainly) International Harvester (IH), various arms of the state, the press, 'respectable opinion' and other unions in pursuing workplace justice for farm equipment workers. Much of the narrative is organized around industrial relations developments at IH, beginning in the 1830s. IH sought to assert complete managerial control over its workforce. Differ-

ent generations of workers resisted these attempts and turned to unionism as a means to improve their lot. The unions they formed not only had to work out ways to counter IH, but also rival unions seeking to recruit farm workers, whether they be American Federation of Labor (AFL) (traditional craft unions) or the United Auto Workers (UAW) under the leadership of Walter Reuther, from the latter part of the 1930s.

Gilpin divides her account into four periods. The first examines the establishment of IH, its success in wresting control on the labour process from skilled artisans, the introduction of technological change and Taylorism to work out ways to extract increasing profit from workers, wage cuts and retaliatory strikes by the workforce. It includes an account of the bombing at Haymarket Square in Chicago, on 4 May 1886, and the subsequent trial and hanging of radical labour spokesmen such as Albert Parsons and August Spies—Haymarket Martyrs<sup>1</sup>. Material is also provided on IH's use of a Works Council, beginning in the 1920s, to "consult" workers. Gilpin's examination of the minutes of these meetings reveals how IH used these councils to keep unions at bay, ignore issues raised or requests of worker representatives who were constantly regaled with the needs of management to increase efficiency, profits and revenue.

IH used piecework (both individual and group) as a means to control and "speed up" workers in enhancing profits. Piecework systems operate on the basis of a rate being set for a particular job/task with bonuses when the rate is exceeded. On the surface, this looks "fair enough". Piecework, however, was a continuing source of conflict at IH plants. First, supervisors could decide if the work was of a high enough standard for workers to qualify for whatever payment the system ostensibly held out. Second, supervisors and engineers were constantly revising rates and using bullying to speed up the work process, push workers for more effort and reducing the "reward" for such effort.

In the second section, Gilpin examines how Works Councils morphed into nascent unions. Those elected to them began to organize fellow workers in one-on-one meetings away from the workplace. Once they believed they had enough committed followers they sought registration as a union under the 1935 *Wagner Act*. IH strenuously opposed this. Intervention by the federal government, prior to and during World War II, forced IH to accept a deal. Gilpin documents how during the "no strike and wage freeze years" of World War II the rank and file used walkouts/wildcat strikes to resist attempts by IH to speed up work and/or obtain higher payments. Another major dispute occurred in 1946 where the federal government again persuaded IH to agree to a deal due to problems associated with the lack of farm equipment for farmers.

The third section mainly focuses on developments at a plant in Louisville, Kentucky. IH decided to move South to take advantage of the opening up of new markets. It hoped that it would be able to employ more passive workers than it had in the North. From its formation FE had a policy of emphasizing the importance of solidarity between African American and white workers, to stop IH from playing off different cohorts of workers against each as a means to keep the wages of all workers down. FE also advocated equality of promotion for all workers, appointed African Americans to shop steward positions, its executive and full-time employment within the union. FE again employed an underground recruitment strategy to organize the workforce. IH was taken by surprise by these developments. The Louisville workforce voted overwhelmingly to be represented by FE and challenged IH hegemony at the point of production with walkouts/wildcat strikes. And prior to the activities of Dr Martin Luther King, FE workers moved into the broader community and experienced success in helping to break down Jim Crow in Louisville. This is one of

the more interesting contributions of *The Long Deep Grudge*.

IH was unhappy with the way in which it had lost control to FE. In the last section, Gilpin documents how IH decided to take on FE and reduce its role on the shop floor. It won a long strike in 1952 which forced the FE to agree to reduce the power of shop stewards and the ability of workers to use wildcats. A number of FE leaders retired or moved on and numerous rank and file activists were dismissed by IH. FE was weakened and, in 1955, agreed to merge with the UAW, and accept the UAW's policy of not challenging managerial prerogatives.

A major strength of *The Long Deep Grudge* is how Gilpin relates the history of FE with interventions by local police forces, the courts, legislative changes such as the *1935 Wagner* and *1947 Taft-Hartley Acts*—especially the latter's requirement for union officials to sign an affidavit that they were not a member of the Communist Party, red scares and red baiting—, the House Un-American Activities Committee, the role of the press and never ending struggles with other unions seeking to poach its members. Gilpin takes readers onto the shop floor, union meetings, picket lines and the dynamics of these tumultuous times. She combines this with more than interesting asides to broader American culture and her presentation is enlivened with a wealth of contemporary photos, pamphlets and FE memorabilia.

The United Farm Equipment Workers of America provides a supreme example of a democratic union which was led by and responded to the needs of its members. Its heyday was from the latter part of the 1930s to the early 1950s. Toni Gilpin has succeeded in providing a gripping and accessible account of a radical, progressive rank and file led union which successfully challenged the hegemony of one of America's largest and financially successful corporations.

### **Braham Dabscheck**

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### **Note**

- 1 Much has been written on the Haymarket bombing. For an engaging account, see James Green (2006) *Death in the Haymarket: A Story of Chicago. The First Labor Movement and the Bombing that Divided Gilded Age America*, New York: Pantheon Books.

### **American Labour's Cold War Abroad: From Deep Freeze to Détente, 1945-1970**

By Anthony Carew (2018) Edmonton: AUPress/Athabaska Press, 510 pages. ISBN: 978-1-77199-211-4.

The Cold War remains a focal point in intellectual discourse. This is rather remarkable considering the Cold War ended about 30 years ago. Few remember the various incidents in 1962 and 1983 that nearly turned the war hot; the original participants have been dead for years; and we are at about the last members of a generation who were alive when the Soviet Union and the United States were allies and the hope during the Second World War that this friendship would remain a permanent arrangement in promoting world peace. Many of the later participants of the Cold War are now gone, including Reagan, Thatcher, Bush and Yeltsin. It appears that George Shultz and Mikhail Gorbachev remain the last men standing, but for who knows how much longer. There are now two generations that were too young or were not even alive.

Yet, the Cold War continues to define our politics. The emergence of the Soviet Union transformed world politics, a fact that friend and foe of that regime recognize and agree with. Despite the various amount of literature, there are still more areas to research. One important area of work done has been on unions and the Cold War. Anthony Carew has written an exhaustive account of the