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## Hardman & Neufeld: THE HOUSE OF LABOR

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## RECENT BOOKS

This department undertakes to note or review briefly current books on law and materials closely related thereto. Periodicals, court reports, and other publications that appear at frequent intervals are not included. The information given in the notes is derived from inspection of the books, publishers' literature, and the ordinary library sources.

## BRIEF REVIEWS

**THE HOUSE OF LABOR.** By J. B. S. *Hardman* and *Maurice F. Neufeld*. New York: Prentice-Hall. 1951. Pp. xviii, 555. \$5.75.

A volume like *The House of Labor* has been long overdue, but not primarily for reasons of objectivity, for "a position of neutrality toward labor is [today] politically impossible." (p. 55) Since unionists dominate the forty-nine contributors of the forty-five chapters, the last of which is termed a "bull session" (p. vi), and officials and staff members of most of the major unions are so represented, those who desire labor's inner views and workings will find here a treasure-chest of union lore. For once a jacket's blurb speaks somewhat truthfully when it describes the contents as answering the question, "What makes unionism tick?" The labor specialist and the uninitiated practitioner have never been in a position where so much overall practical internal knowledge could be theirs for the price of but a few hours' reading, and if but solely for this purpose the present volume must be highly recommended.

Unionism is no longer a minor phase of industrial economic life; today it affects our nation's well-being and is not alone part of, but *the* life of more than the fifteen millions of Americans who hold union cards, one estimate being that 31.3% of the total population over 21 are involved in unionism either directly as members or through close relatives (p. 48; see also p. 61 giving 36%). When such an interdependent economy finds that a strike in Kokomo ripples onward to the coasts and has repercussions overseas, then life among the locals becomes of national concern. But what is this life? Why is it built? How and for what? And what are its workings? *The House of Labor* has many rooms and each is explored with a down-to-earthness that bodes well for labor's future public relations.

There are seven main floors or "parts" to labor's House, with a final eighth being the attic or bull session previously mentioned; to a degree they tend to spring from or depend upon the first, which in the words of co-editor J. B. S. Hardman, is "a general, coordinated view of the [labor] movement as a whole. . . ." (p. vi) The four rooms or chapters making up this first story or part discuss "the broad, overall sense or motivation of unionism," (p. 3) the organizational features and anatomy of the larger groupings, especially the leaders and the membership composition, and a final "State of the Movement." If the House can be said to have a foundation then such last dominating Hardman analysis, presenting labor's philosophy and upsurge "from a static force to a dynamic power," (p. 52) must be so denominated. He well discloses

how "a conscious orientation on the 'labor issue' is becoming essential to any citizen's intellectual equipment," (p. 55) particularly in view of Elmo Roper's 1945 analysis "that the public is getting a little fed up hearing labor union people just talk about their *rights*. The public would like to hear a little talk about the *responsibilities* of labor unions." (quoted at p. 57)

To an extent the House attempts to open its doors and invite Mr. John Q. American in for a look-see, but at the door he is greeted by Professor Hardman who informs him that the House is not built around the kitchen, as in olden days, but that now a living-room, with all that it implies, links Mr. John Q. Unionist with Mr. J. Q. A. "[U]nions are invariably spoken of as a 'bread-'n'-butter proposition.' Unions surely are economic organizations. However, to the extent that the definition aims at asserting that wages, hours, and other work conditions constitute the only proper course of unionism, and that nothing else, no 'pursuit of visionary goals' is in order, it falls wide of the mark, and no unionist worthy of his salt takes it seriously. Unions are no longer that 'pure and simple,' if they ever were. They cannot be, and endure." (p. 58) This reviewer agrees with such general view, albeit a slight re-phrasing might be necessary, but looks in vain for any contrary opinion.<sup>1</sup> That disagreement there exists is underscored by Professor Hardman's own penetrating comments to a reappraisal of the labor movement's theory at the December 1950 Third Annual Meeting of the Industrial Relations Research Association [*Proceedings*, pp. 146-157 (1951)] when he took issue with Professors Selig Perlman and Philip Taft<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An exception might be found in the excellent section by William M. Leiserson at pp. 493-498 entitled "To Raise Questions; Not to Run the Union," where he derides blind union following of intellectualism and espouses the doctrine that "The point of view of the labor movement must come from common people, ill-informed people, perhaps." (p. 494) "The professionally-trained intellectual clearly has a place and a job to do in the labor movement. But there ought to be a clear understanding of the nature of the job he is to do and of the place he can occupy. . . ." (p. 495) Professor Leiserson is not a complete Wisconsin advocate and feels that "There is one function the intellectual can usefully perform, and that is to ask questions." (p. 497) That is why his section is so titled. For another discussion of the intellectual's place see Professor C. Wright Mills' section at pp. 515-520. Lawyers will find of particular interest the observation concerning their role in the settlement of union policy. "Shall he, in the way he argues cases, commit the labor movement to a philosophy that might get into court decisions?" (p. 494)

<sup>2</sup> See also the latter's discussion in the October 1950 issue of the *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, pp. 70-77; also, Professor Adolf Sturmthal's excellent "Comment" on such article in the July 1951 issue, pp. 483-496 in which the conclusion is reached that while job-control is "the central core of union action" for the American scene, "it is an inadequate or at least incomplete tool of analysis on the world scale." (p. 496) Whether or not confirmatory of this approach is a *New York Times* editorial of July 17, 1951 entitled "New Trends in Europe" which speaks of "two interesting developments" which have occurred in the world labor movement recently. One is a drawing-away from Marxian tenets and an acceptance of "gradualism" in industrial socialization. "The other is the growing independence of the European labor unions from the domination of both doctrinaire socialism and the Socialist parties, and their trend toward a new realism that looks forward to better wages and higher living standards rather than to Socialist political control." This, concludes the editorial, is "greatly influenced" by the American scene so that, if true, the anomalous situation prevails of European labor circling into the old American approach which is seemingly giving way to the European concepts.

over their adherence to the "job-conscious" unionism of the Wisconsin and Gompers school. To such dissidents the present House is built upon quicksand and some reference to their views might thus well have been made, if space and other considerations precluded extended presentation, so that Mr. J.Q.A. would realize that labor's House is built under a closed-shop contract between the worker-contributors and the employer-editors.

Realizing the basis for all that follows, and understanding the enveloping international nature of unionism thus envisaged (at p. 84 Professor Hardman hints at American labor's influence upon the world stage), Mr. J.Q.A. can easily see how the upper stories will be laid out. The second floor presents eight rooms in which labor's political activities over the past century and into the present international sphere are carefully developed; the third floor has five rooms devoted to labor's means of disseminating information to its members and the public in general; the fourth floor devotes four rooms to labor's research facilities and methods, with lawyers undoubtedly tarrying awhile at Chapter 19 where Solomon Barkin discloses how an actual 1944 Textile Workers Union case was field-researched and prepared for submission to the War Labor Board; the fifth story details welfare, insurance, and health programs, as well as credit unions, housing, and general community services, with the chapter by Emanuel Muravchik, an I.L.G.W.U. organizer, condensing excellently the union combatting of minority discrimination and the effect of the very few state FEPC laws in such field; union internal administration, nationally and locally, with union dues and other types of accounting, and administration of welfare funds, occupies the next story, with one room devoted to "The Union and Problems of Law" and "The Labor Lawyer," two short sections which might well have been expanded; and the last story details the varied union educational activities engaged in, from member and worker overall education through the general labor institutes to a particular (I.L.G.W.U.) Officers' Training methods. The bull session in the attic is much freer in pros and cons than any other part and presents views which undoubtedly will crop up in the future.

Basically the House gives a series of concise and related views to the inquiring wanderer who has paid his price of admission and is now taken in tow by the co-editing guides. Since description abounds there can be little of dissonance, even aside from the closed shop contract previously mentioned, and the internal processes laid before the questioner's eyes do portray fairly well the union in its functionings as a union. But the book is much more than that and this reviewer therefore disagrees with the publisher's advertising blurb which speaks of "this great book for trade unionists by trade unionists."

Every household has its internal schisms, disagreements, and actual fights, all of which are here sugared to an extent, but every trade unionist reading the House will easily see through such facade and every non-unionist will understand that one's best foot is put forward in these circumstances. The lawyer, especially, will be exceedingly well pleased in learning what makes a union

member different from the non-member, and in this respect some of the sections and Appendices are most revealing, for his practice will undoubtedly bring him in contact with both types every day of his career. It is in this respect that the House is highly recommended to the active legal practitioner, for within its walls much can be found which will redound to his financial, as well as general educational, benefit.

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