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Review of *Unionizing the Jungles: Labor and Community in the Twentieth-Century Meatpacking Industry* Edited by Shelton Stromquist and Marvin Bergman

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addressing twentieth-century Midwestern unionization and its impact on industrial and social relations within and beyond factory walls.

The work details the historical struggles inherent to the meatpacking labor movement. Racial, gender, and ideological differences, compounded by guarantees that all workers benefit equally from union membership, have been the most serious traditional obstacles to uniting employees. Wilson Warren's essay, for instance, argues that whites in the United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA) declined initiating antidiscrimination programs after World War II intentionally to limit African American advancement.

Emerging alongside the book's main theme is another: the notion that groups outside packinghouse unions, primarily management, have habitually disturbed organizational efforts further through deception, misunderstanding, and rigidity. In this regard, Paul Street's examination of Chicago's Swift meatpacking plant corrects established opinion about the supposed complacency of the company's labor force toward local union efforts during the First World War. Management, he writes, bribed its workers with misrepresented benefits packages, dramatically undercutting labor's appeal.

This second theme highlights the meatpacking industry's move towards using lesser-skilled workers and mass production. The book traces the impact of these changes on union membership, working conditions, employee equality, and local rural economies. Looking at changing labor force demographics and women workers' treatment at the hands of male labor officials, Dennis Deslippe argues that meatpacking unions have chalked up a long record of failures to consider gender equality seriously, overlooking it systematically when allocating factory positions or addressing grievances.

Unionizing the Jungles depicts with clarity the human element involved in organizing packinghouse workers. By probing the major players (labor organizers, minorities, women), it penetrates the realities of those most closely associated with the day-to-day struggles to

Unionizing the Jungles: Labor and Community in the Twentieth-Century Meatpacking Industry. Edited by Shelton Stromquist and Marvin Bergman. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997. Notes, index. vi + 272 pp. \$32.95.

Hacking through meatpacking's mass production jungle, historians Shelton Stromquist and Marvin Bergman gather nine essays ad-

improve conditions, benefits, and worker representation. Paying attention to often overlooked participants, especially minorities and women, and including their sharp personal recollections makes the work engrossing social history.

The editors, however, fail to integrate the essays into the history of Midwestern meatpacking labor movements the volume would seem to promise. Articles examine different organizations, localities, and periods, without offering the reader a sense of a particular section's significance to overall union developments in the twentieth century, thereby lessening the narrative's impact.

Nevertheless, Stromquist and Bergman have assembled a well-written, thought provoking collection tracing significant themes in the evolution of the meatpacking labor movement.

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