

between the political humours will result in one of the three forms of government mentioned. It is indeed significant therefore, the critic adds, that the Secretary's three major works—*The Prince*, the *Discourses*, and the *Florentine Histories*, focus respectively upon these three political configurations.

The Machiavellian Cosmos provides the reader with a wealth of information on the two "ancient sciences" of medicine and physics. The sheer number of texts and thinkers referred to, for example, in the first chapter ("The Astrological Debate") is of great use to anyone interested in pursuing the subject first-hand. Indeed this book, because of the questions it raises and the perspective it presents, can be considered a vehicle with which to depart on many other "paths yet untravelled."

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Salvatore Salerno. *Red November, Black November: Culture and Community in the Industrial Workers of the World*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1989.

In this book, Salvatore Salerno critically reviews the immense literature produced on the International Workers of the World, which is generally not available to the public. His research covers material from private collections, much of which is unpublished: doctoral theses, manuscripts, pamphlets, flyers, and posters. Beyond this he presents new materials and first-hand interviews. The author offers us, based on solid historical research, a new perspective on the Industrial Workers of the World. Beyond the polemics and political expressions generally associated with this organization's militants, the Wobblies created a sense of culture among its workers and organizers. This comes through most clearly with the creation of local culture centers where people could have access to books of philosophy, economics, poetry, and international politics. These centers also fostered the strengthening of a sense of solidarity and belonging which enabled the IWW to have a voice that transcended ideological differences.

While these local cultural centers were of vital importance to the development of a collective identity in the movement, and alongside these strikers' organizations, demonstrations, and other forms of political activity, the IWW built informal, unstructured areas through-

out the country called "jungles." These areas, populated by some permanent inhabitants, others only over the course of a year, welcomed everyone: area workers, migrant workers, proletarians in search of work, and seasonal workers of every ethnic or national group. These centers became intersections, in the south as on the west coast, where information on "shark bosses," employment conditions, and politics was exchanged. Here the strategies of proletariat self defense found their first expression. Only a few of these jungles limited access to IWW militants—those who could present as a sign of recognition, the red membership card. The majority of them were open to "nomad workers," as they were called in an article in *Solidarity* magazine: "The nomadic worker of the West embodies the very spirit of the IWW. His cheerful cynicism, his frank and outspoken contempt for most of the conventions of bourgeois society . . . make him an admirable example of the iconoclastic doctrine of revolutionary unionism" (9). This element of the working class became the avant-garde of the labor army, the "guerrillas of the revolution."

Salerno points out that, in the West—the area that previous scholars point to as the birthplace of the IWW—forty-two percent of the IWW members was foreign-born. Prior to this study, few have bothered to analyze the radical materials that resulted from the politics and the intentional sensibility of this worker's organization. Many historians do not take into account the influence of the immigrants and their backgrounds as farm workers which helped to form the experience of the IWW. Others overestimated the significance and the specific impact of French syndicalism, or of other political hypotheses. Others, have yet to open the door to the hypotheses of conspiracy directed by outsiders, in the context of a perception of the European influence as a threat to a national identity.

Salerno introduces the thesis that the IWW can not be considered as an experience that is totally American born. Neither was it just a spontaneous response blossoming in the development of class struggle. The IWW emerges as a product of fifty years of struggle between capital and labor in the USA, but the conscience of the workers who participated in the movement, as the author states, takes that specific form, "not only in relation to the political and economic conditions, but also in relation to the rich cultural milieu" from which it could enjoy the community of workers. We cannot ignore the culture created by the workers, nor the level of their abilities to do more than work, because, the message of the Wobblies had the power to speak to ev-

eryone. The presence of artists, poets, painters, cartoonists, and singers/composers surfaced in corners throughout the country in a variety of expressions that sprung from the movement.

The use of metaphors, images and slogans, (some in languages other than English) signal the presence of European syndicalist traditions—they bring together the workers of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The emphasis on direct action through the tactics of sabotage and inefficient work and reference to unity in diversity, are recurrent themes in the collection of posters and cartoons that Salerno includes.

An important element that emerges from this excellent contribution is clear sense of the development of the roots of the IWW. In a prime moment, synthesizing in a schematic way, some members, the agitators joined together to create an organic unity by looking for the elements on which they could build worker discontent and create actions that would disrupt the workers until they resigned. The task of the agitators, not having organizational representatives, was to suffer the consequences. Following these agitators came the "pioneer organizers," those who began to build an IWW local and to sensitize the workers to the need for organization. Sooner or later came those who had been fired and after them came other organizers—of different types—those who brought everything together which their predecessors had dismissed as a hopeless situation determined by terms of class antagonism. These militants worked specifically to organize the workers. They conducted their activities covertly. The boss perhaps sniffing something, could only prove their existence the moment the workers began forming precise demands.

The author concludes his analysis by explaining how the specific cultural objects that emerged were the products of an "interaction between urban and rural experiences which created a particular form of praxis." Some practices enabled the IWW to create "a dynamic synthesis" on the level of political ideology, giving the IWW the ability to carry forth its message of worker solidarity beyond the confines of the factory gates. Because of this, the IWW created a unique experience that challenges the definition of "American life" diffused by the economic and political elite. A challenge, Salerno concludes, that from its origins as a new conception was revolutionary and dynamic in workers' culture.

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GRAFFITI



Not much to say this time! Well, actually, there could be quite a bit. But we have been long-winded here before; and we have decided to catch our breath until the next time. In the meantime, however, our readers are welcome to write in and let us know what's on their mind, be it in regard to the contents of the journal, the state of affairs of Italian/American studies, or, simply, "what's up."



Another reason for taking a break is not to take advantage of this space—i.e., possibly abuse its potential power in criticizing other people's discourse as opposed to engaging in critical discourse. But, then again, . . . Oh! We'll just keep quiet for now.



Finally, we remind our readers of the forthcoming annual AIHA—AMERICAN ITALIAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION—conference, 10-12 November 1994, Chicago, IL. For further information, contact Dr. Fred L. Gardaphé, of Columbia College/Chicago, at the address at the beginning of this volume. You may write ✉, telephone ☎, or use your electronic mail 📧, the latter being the swiftest.

