

**American Labour's Cold War Abroad: From Deep Freeze to
Détente, 1945-1970, By Anthony Carew (2018) Edmonton:
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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.

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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.

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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

interplay between various American Union officials and international unions, noting how both the Cold War and American power played key roles in shaping the destiny of international trade unionism. His newest research is a capstone of this work. The level of research conducted for this book is staggering. He conducted archival research in 12 different libraries; in four different countries, interviewed (sometimes more than once) 39 different participants and used six previously conducted interviews. This is clearly a product of a mature and talented scholar.

Perhaps the largest measure of Carew's ability as a mature scholar is that it is difficult to determine his politics. When most scholars write about the Cold War, it is clear where their sympathies lie. This is not the case for Carew. He avoids mostly the politics and the passions of the past, writing mostly in a detached manner. That is not to say that from time to time that his passions rise, for example using terms such as "hardliners" and "obsessive" to describe some of the anti-communists. However, one could forgive him noting that Carew is a lifelong British trade unionist who probably did not admire the Americans getting involved in limiting the solidarity of the movement. Carew also notes when the AFL-CIO had a sterling record of promoting anti-colonialism revealing him to be very even-handed.

The basic thesis of the book is to note how trade unions shaped and were shaped by the ongoing Cold War starting around 1945. The level of animosity between "anti-communist" and "anti-anti-communists" was already apparent. What makes this even more remarkable was that this was before the Stuttgart speech and the Iron Curtain speech. The reason was that the anti-communists were already concerned with this movement and they used money and contacts provided by the Central Intelligence Agency and America unions. The nature of this work was undemocratic, but I believe it would have been supported by the rank and file. The interplay and dynamics between

Jay Lovestone, Irving Brown, George Meany and Walter Reuther forms a major portion of the book. The decision guided by American influence and money to form the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and to promote the concept of "free trade unionism". The intersection between the CIA, anti-colonial movements and the power of the United States takes what should be a basic concept of "free trade unionism," and produces a very complex portrait of a legitimate concept.

There are certain issues I found with the book that limits its value, despite my regard of it as a masterpiece of History. The book simply is not a page turner. The author either lacks story telling ability or the story of union politics is a bit boring. Both maybe true, even an Arthur Schlesinger Jr would have found it difficult to make the story truly interesting. The lack of readability is not the largest issue. The largest issue is that perspective is at times lost. This is a common issue with writing about the Cold War. Carew never considers why the CIA was so involved. As Harvey Klehr and John E. Haynes have demonstrated, American communism was under the complete control of Moscow as were communists in other countries such as France. The idea that there could be a dialogue and any meeting between these groups is naïve. One of the reasons why union leaders were so anti-communist regarding Soviet Russia was their dealings with communists in a national setting. Another issue that Carew has and which constitutes a limitation to his work is that he does not recognize how conservative American labour was in comparison with that of other countries. Most American union members were highly patriotic, relatively pro-market and more in favour of centrist politics. They were also strongly anti-communist. While the anti-communist politics were the actions of a few, I believe the American unions leaders acted with the tacit consent of their followers, rather than actual consent, given the secretive nature of the project.

Mostly, the Cold War's importance remains an issue because it details and provides examples of the difficulty in dealing with a movement that is totalitarian one in a free society. While European unions were pragmatic in dealing with communists, it is also possible that they were naïve. The crimes of the Soviet Union are now apparent, but the crimes and bad behaviour that the United States had to take to stop communism have been, and continue to be, documented. As Derek Leebaert argued: the struggle to stop communism created a fifty-year wound and the true costs of it are revealed in the current state of politics. The support of awful regimes and the damage done to unionism are still apparent. Carew's work is an important addition to this debate and is highly recommended.

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Touched with Fire: Morris B. Abram and the Battle against Racial and Religious Discrimination

By David E. Lowe (2019) Lincoln: Potomac Books, 287 pages. ISBN: 978-1-64012-096-9.

Justice John Marshall Harlan, in his famous dissent in *Plessy v Ferguson*, (that decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, which enunciated the "separate but equal" doctrine that gave a legal imprimatur to Jim Crow) said: "Our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes amongst citizens."¹ This is a precept that the lawyer Morris Berthold Abram (1918-2000) steadfastly held to throughout his life.

Abram is most famous for a long campaign he waged in establishing the principle of "one man, one vote" in overthrowing Georgia's county unit voting system. His commitment to the Constitution being colour-blind also resulted in

him clashing with those that supported quotas and affirmative action to enhance the position and status of African Americans, beginning in the latter part of the 1960s. Abram encountered the incongruity of having once been hailed as a champion of civil rights being denounced as a villain because of his stance on quotas and affirmative action.

David Lowe provides an account of the life of Morris Abram. He employs a traditional chronological account. He only has one "thematic" chapter where he explores Abram's family life, interactions with others, his intellectual curiosity and gentlemanly Southern style (p. 135-145). Those who worked with Abram praised him for his collegiality and ability to develop consensus. Abram was born of Jewish parents in Fitzgerald, a small town in Georgia, in 1918. His parents were not religious and did not mix with the small Jewish community in Fitzgerald. He did not have a bar mitzvah. He was an exceptional student with his family funding his tuition at the University of Georgia. He won a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford University, which was cancelled because of World War II. The University of Chicago's Law School offered to provide scholarships to would-be Rhodes scholars. He accepted the offer but was short of income for living expenses, which was picked up by the father of a schoolboy friend. After graduating, he enlisted in the armed forces, serving his time in America.

Lowe refers to a key moment that Abram experienced when he was helping out at his father's store on a break from college. He was looking at a group of white and black sharecroppers and field hands—"ragged, dirty and illiterate"—and asked himself how many of the blacks would he invite home. "The answer was none, but he realized that it was the same for whites". He then asked himself, "did he require that all blacks be acceptable before any could be, a stan-