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Books of Interest

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BOOKS OF INTEREST

An Injury to All: The Decline of American Unionism

by Kim Moody

New York, London: Verso, 1988

Without deference to those who are trying to convince themselves that the Reagan years were just a bad dream, Kim Moody offers a painfully sober look at the devastation of the American labor movement over the past decade. Loyal to Marxist ideology throughout, Moody depicts a step-by-step abandonment by corporations, unions, and even the workers themselves of the working class and the theory that held a promise for achieving economic prosperity.

As one might expect, there are no "employers" in Moody's America, only "Capital." But *An Injury to All* is not a wild diatribe against the sinister corporate managers: it is the large, lumbering unions who wear the black hats here. After carefully detailing the rise of post-war business unionism in the economic expansion of the 1950s, Moody shows how unionism then proceeded to distance itself in the next decade from the very forces that built it up, only to snuggle close to Capital to hide from the approaching chill of economic conservatism. Growing fat and watching the Business Roundtable gain strength in the 1970s, business unionism had no focus and no formula for protecting workers when Reaganomics descended on the nation. Capital, acting as Capital could be expected to act under such favorable conditions, faced little resistance as it exacted concession after concession from the working class.

This approach is a winning formula and Moody's thoroughness of research and detail is educational, admirable, and at times baffling: one occasionally flounders in a vortex of acronyms, names, and statistics. Moody's sound writing compensates for this, allowing a smooth reading overall. The Marxist framework also gives one an insight and a guide to Moody's approach, without overwhelming the reader with some manic insistence on the need for a good, bloody revolution. *An Injury to All* does not charge at

mythic windmills; it just tries to explain why they have disappeared.

Moody does not leave his readers completely without hope. He takes the time to recreate the inspiring story of the strike of Local P-9 against the Austin, Minnesota Hormel meat-packing plant to show how powerful unions still have the potential to be.¹ In addition to a few other tales of union success, Moody gives some lengthy suggestions for organizers to help unions return to a powerful bargaining position.² Most of these ideas involve widescale restructuring of union bureaucracy, no small feat for one author to tackle.

The book suffers from a neglect of the more visibly oppressed minorities in our society: women, African-Americans, Hispanics, etc. One gets a sense that Moody is aware of this problem; he tries to compensate with a section on the wartime roles of women and blacks³ and with a chapter on the civil rights movement as a missed opportunity for unions.⁴ Nevertheless, he throws in only a short section on the women's movement with a chapter on "Other Social Movements,"⁵ and overall he fails to integrate the experiences of these groups with the development and decline of business unionism. Then again, Marx was never prolific when it came to women and blacks.

Despite these omissions, Moody presents a cohesive, compelling view of American unionism over the past fifty years in one manageable volume. If nothing else, Moody convinces his reader that the Reagan years were not just a dream.

Eric T. Cooperstein

1. Kim Moody, *An Injury to All: The Decline of American Unionism* 314-27 (1988).

2. *Id.* at 331-50.

3. *Id.* at 21-24.

4. *Id.* at 72-83.

5. *Id.* at 272-81.

Free Expression and Censorship: Public Policy and the Law

by Ralph D. Mawdsley and Alice L. Mawdsley

Topeka: NOLPE, 1988

The purpose of *Free Expression and Censorship* is admirable. Its authors explore the tension in the public schools between free expression and the ability of school authorities to limit that expression. Regrettably, the dense prose of the authors obscures their capable work. Despite this barrier, the monograph serves the reader well by including an analytic framework for assessing reasons for limits on free expression in the public school setting and by providing a summary of the current status of law after *Kuhlmeier v. Hazelwood School District*.⁶ In addition, the authors suggest some major questions hovering on the litigation horizon.

Volatile forces are at play in this area of law. The authors touch briefly on the recognized authority of school boards to prohibit certain established categories of expression in public schools, though that authority is intertwined with considerations about public schools as limited public fora and the extent of acceptable prior restraints on expression. But the most pressing dilemma for schools lies in the tension between schools as marketplaces of ideas and schools as inculcators of basic values.

The authors suggest that the "interests school administrators and school boards have in restricting free expression are often difficult to determine."⁷ An analytic framework for assessing these interests includes three categories of reasons for restricting free expression. Pedagogical reasons for censorship tend to emphasize broad discretion by school authorities based on internal judgment of "psychological and emotional, as well as mental needs of students."⁸ Sociological reasons focus on "image and role of the public school in the community."⁹ Political reasons emphasize the "role and perceived image of board members as elected officials and school administrators as employees of the board."¹⁰

The most interesting argument in the monograph involves the possibility that the Supreme Court, through the *Kuhlmeier* de-

6. *Kuhlmeier v. Hazelwood School Dist.*, 484 U.S. 260 (1988).

7. Ralph D. Mawdsley & Alice L. Mawdsley, *Free Expression and Censorship: Public Policy and the Law* 10 (1988).

8. *Id.* at 11.

9. *Id.*

10. *Id.*

cision, has shifted from primary reliance on pedagogical to sociological reasons for restrictions on freedom of expression. Nevertheless, while some questions remain unanswered, the authors conclude "the U.S. Supreme Court has moved in a noticeably perceptible fashion toward permitting greater control"¹¹ by school boards and school administrators over freedom of expression in public schools.

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11. *Id.* at 44.