Twenty Best Labor Books – First Cut

Posted on June 8, 2015 by James Green

On September 7, I'll be presenting a reading from my new book on the West Virginia mine wars, *The Devil Is Here in These Hills*, at Porter Square Books in Cambridge, MA. The store events manager has asked me to compile a Labor Day list of the twenty best books on workers and unions, books that would appeal to the general reader. This list will be available to customers on line and in the store during the month of September.

In this first cut, I've combined books on current, ongoing issues and struggles with history books, and have listed a few of local interest, but the list is not rank ordered by merit.

I'd like LAWCHA members to nominate their favorites and then see what's turns up on our website; it should be interesting, and it will help me make the final list of 20.

1. Bill Fletcher, Jr., *They're Bankrupting Us! And 20 other Myths about Unions* (Beacon Press)
2. Nelson Lichtenstein, *The State of the Union: Century of American Labor Politics*. Princeton, University Press, 2013).
3. Thomas Geoghegan, *The Only Thing that Can Save Us: Why America Needs a New Kind of Labor Movement* (New Press, 2015)
4. Fernando Gapasian and Bill Fletcher, Jr., *Solidarity Divided: The Crisis of Organized Labor and a New Path Toward Social Justice* (University of California Press, 2008)
5. Janice Fine, *Workers' Centers: Organizing Communities on the Edge of the American Dream* (Cornell University, 2006)
6. William M. Adler, *Mollie's Job: Life on the Global Assembly Line* (Scribner's 2001)
7. Philip Dray, *There is Power in Union: The Epic Story of Labor in America* (Doubleday, 2010)
8. Joseph A. McCartin, *Collision Course: Ronald Reagan, the Air Traffic Controllers and the Strike that Changed America* (Oxford University Press, 2013)

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9. William P. Jones, *The March on Washington: Jobs, Freedom and the Forgotten History of Civil Rights* (W.W. Norton, 2013)
10. Robert F. Burk, *Marvin Miller, Baseball Revolutionary* (University of Illinois Press)
11. Matthew Garcia, *From the Jaws of Victory: The Triumph and Tragedy of Cesar Chavez and Farm Worker Movement* (University of California Press, 2014)
12. Michael K. Honey, *Going Down Jericho Road: The Memphis Strike, Martin Luther King's Last Campaign* (W.W. Norton, 2008).
13. Julie Greene, *The Canal Builders: Making America's Empire at the Panama Canal* (Penguin, 2010)
14. Robert Michael Bussel, *From Harvard to the Ranks of Labor: Powers Hapgood and the American Working Class* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999)
15. David Von Drehle, *Triangle: The Fire That Changed America* (Grove Atlantic)
16. Bruce Watson, *Bread and Roses: Mills, Migrants and the Struggle for the American Dream* (Penguin Books, 2006)
17. Annelise Orleck, *Common Sense and Little Fire: Women and Working Class Politics in the United States, 1900-1965* (University of North Carolina Press, 1995)
18. Frances Russell, *A City in Terror: Calvin Coolidge and the 1919 Boston Police Strike* (Beacon Press, 2005)
19. William H. Adler, *The Man Who Never Died: The Life, Times and Legacy of Joe Hill, American Icon* (Bloomsbury, 2011)
20. Kevin Kenney, *Making Sense of the Molly Maguires* (Oxford University Press, 1998)

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