Katz concludes with a brief and understated but compelling observation, drawing from each chapter, that a more compassionate and well-directed system can effectively eliminate human suffering in this country. At issue is a determined policy rather than poverty's intractability.

This underwriting, a comprehensively documented social history of the American welfare system, is enormous both in magnitude and concept. Most other analyses partialize the system, explaining some of its seemingly unrelated parts rather than attempting to develop an overall conceptual framework. Katz does both tasks admirably. His documentation includes a rich cache of evidence for each historical period (31 pages of 6-point-type footnotes) and his theoretical model, applied consistently and rigorously, appears to explain the system more effectively than previous frameworks.

Each chapter includes narratives of the social struggles of women, organized labor and other groups, for both historical perspective and application of the theoretical framework. The book also contains many illustrative, well-documented case studies.

There are some important omissions. The Statute of Laborers (England, 1349), President Pierce's veto of Dorothea Dix's mental hospitals land grant bill (1858) and, most surprisingly, Affirmative Action (1964) are central to the welfare system and the book's theme. None of these appears. Also, Katz's treatment of some groups, notably the National Welfare Rights Organization, appears less critical than most of his other discussions.

These exceptions underscore the rule: This book will join the select few that stand as classics in the field of social welfare.

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Moral Rights in the Workplace. Edited by Gertrude Ezorsky. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1987. 312 pp. $10.95, paper.

Very few current books take up philosophical issues with regard to work. Gertrude Ezorsky's anthology, had it been more judiciously edited, might have provided a corrective, because it does contain some worthwhile essays. But in its present form it is an unbelievably mangled re-

sponse to a publisher's page limitations; and, as a result, its usefulness is undermined.

As the editor notes, these articles focus on the values of freedom, fairness, and the general good—usually from the viewpoint of the worker (as interpreted philosophically). The topics considered range from such standards as the right to organize (even for health care employees) and affirmative action to such current issues as comparable worth, sexual harrassment, and industrial flight. Few of the authors will convey new factual information to a labor studies scholar. But some merit a reading just to get a feel for how today's philosophical community is dealing with conceptual disputes as old as the labor movement itself.

The spirit of Herbert Spencer lingers on in the views of Robert Nozick, Milton Friedman, and Tibor R. Machan, whose abstract libertarian principles make sense so long as no concrete situation is introduced to test whether they are fair and workable. The best rejoinders to such capitalist pap are G. A. Cohen's Marxist-oriented article (which, however, expends too much energy earning the right to speak to language analysts) and Kurt Nutting, who rebuffs libertarian appeals to freedom of contract by arguing that management actually values efficiency more than liberty. Mary Gibson's defense of public workers' right to strike is so knowledgeably constructed that it invites the reader to her book on *Workers' Rights* from which this excerpt was taken. Similarly helpful are Judith Lichtenberg's worker-oriented arguments for restricting a corporation's plant closing freedom (her announced intention to consider also the rights of a community is not carried out). Robert A. Dahl's abbreviated "Kantian" defense of workplace democracy defuses John Plamenatz's elitist putdown of the idea; and it also makes one want to read in its entirety R. M. Hare's "Kantian utilitarian approach" to undercutting the so-called right to work.

Not all contributors are philosophers. In fact, non-philosopher Michael Harrington is my nominee for the best-in-book award for his insightful survey of recent developments in "Trade Unions, Past and Future."

As intimated, this book does not serve the serious scholar well, because of the way it severs articles from footnotes. An article with numerous citations might have no notes; and an article with numerous notes may have been cut so much that only one note is cited in the text. Which notes have survived, and with what numbers, seems to depend only on a need to limit the total number of pages. The possibility that a reader might want to locate cited material is ignored. Nor is there any easy way

around this problem, because there are no biographical notes; and in some cases the source of a selection is not revealed. SUNY Press could have done a better job!

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Barons of Labor: The San Francisco Building Trades and Union Power in the Progressive Era. By Michael Kazin. Urbana and Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1987. 296 pp. $24.95, cloth.

Studies of the history of local area labor movements in the United States are rare, contributing to the tendency to overgeneralize about the policies and practices of American labor unions. In particular, building trades unions have from their earliest days been decentralized in structure with diverse experiences at the local level, defying the stereotypes chronicled in conventional labor histories; for example, the notion that "business unionism" has dominated all sectors of the AFL. Michael Kazin's brilliantly researched *Barons of Labor*, which deals with the San Francisco building trades unions from the 1890s through World War I, helps to fill this void by illustrating the variety and vitality of union action in relation to changing economic, social and political developments at the local level and the crucial role of leadership in shaping union policies. He traces the rise and decline of the San Francisco Building Trades Council (BTC). At its peak, the BTC "pressed at the unwritten boundaries of union power in America," enforcing a closed shop which brought high wages, an eight-hour day, and work rules strictly enforced under a system policed by the all powerful Council which summoned deviating employers for trial and punishment. The BTC was also a major political force in organizing and dominating the Union Labor Party which elected the BTC President to be Mayor. BTC growth and power stemmed from the shortage of skilled craftsmen in a city which was expanding and division among employers, contrasting with cohesion on the labor side made possible, in part, by ethnic homogeneity. Its leaders were an "odd couple"—P.H. McCarthy, an Irish pragmatist with a flair for high living, and Oleg Tveitmoe, a Norwegian radical. Its political program was an amalgam of populist ideas, including public ownership and such reactionary concepts as Asian exclusionism. At its peak BTC dominated the San Francisco economic and political scene. Its decline came about after World War I; a drop in