



Taking Care of Business: Samuel Gompers, George Meany, Lane Kirkland, and the Tragedy of American Labor

Paul Buhle

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In this original, colorful history of "business unionism," Paul Buhle explains how trade union leaders in the United States became remote from the workers they claimed to represent as they allied with the very corporate executives and government officials who persistently opposed labor's interests.

At the center of the tale are three of the most powerful labor leaders of the past century: Samuel Gompers, George Meany, and Lane Kirkland, successive presidents of the American Federation of Labor and its descendent, the AFL-CIO. Many other labor leaders, from John L. Lewis to Walter Reuther, receive in-depth treatment.

Taking Care of Business demonstrates how a union hierarchy heavily populated by former radicals thwarted women and people of color from joining unions, suppressed shop floor militance, and colluded with business and government at home and abroad. Buhle shows how these leaders defeated generations of radical union members who sought a more democratic, class-based approach for the movement.

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