

his subjects, domestic political movements, and Occupation reforms. Large states that the overriding priority of the Emperor and the Japanese government during the Occupation was the preservation of the monarchy and notes that, although unsuccessful, Hirohito opposed the complete abolition of the peerage and constitutional changes permitting the Diet to amend the imperial house law (pp. 192, 151). Large's examination of the postwar career of Hirohito is a welcome contribution. His book examines an individual whose actions and attitudes are and may always be open to interpretation and debate, and I would recommend it to students along with the other works mentioned here.

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Linda Niemann and Lina Bertucci — *Railroad Voices*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998. Pp. ix, 158.

This fascinating coffee-table book intertwines the photographs and "narratives" of two of the few women who worked in the railway running trades in the United States. Lina Bertucci, who teaches photography in New York, worked as a brakewoman on the Milwaukee Central in the 1970s. She presents 58 photographs documenting railway workers and yards. Accompanying the photographs are 23 vignettes of railway life, written by Linda Niemann. She was the last brakewoman or brakeman hired by the Southern Pacific Railroad, in 1979. Niemann already has written an interesting memoir of her experiences, well worth the attention of social and labour historians, entitled *Boomer*.

For anyone familiar with most historical railway photographs, Bertucci's images are striking. Workers, not locomotives, machines, or buildings, provide the central focus. The black-and-white portraits are mainly of workers at rest, men and a few women enjoying a break or waiting in aging shelters. The poses, which frequently appear self-conscious, as well as the faces, clothes, and settings provide revealing glimpses into the masculine culture of railway work. In addition, there are unromantic photographs of busy and clearly dangerous engine yards. The bleak realism and professional composition of these photographs capture the harsh conditions of this work, mostly as it is etched on the faces or expressed in the body language of workers. A few, such as "Carman with cigar", reminded me of the portrait photographs of Yousuf Karsh in their treatment of light and subject.

Are these pictures worth a thousand words? For social and labour historians, they document the conditions of railway work and attitudes of railway workers. Future historians may well be frustrated, however, by the often vague captions and the absence of any further documentation. The reader has to guess that the photographs were taken around 1974, while Bertucci was working. In the end, I was left wanting to know more about the men and women in these photographs. Portraits of the rich and powerful would undoubtedly be accompanied by names and brief biographies of their careers and accomplishments; why do we refuse to do the same for workers?

Perhaps that is why Bertucci approached Niemann to provide the thousand words. Niemann's narratives are compelling, providing insights into the work culture of the railways in the late twentieth century. Some of the stories work well with the photographs. The opening vignette, "The Walls Have Ears", brilliantly evokes the kinds of conversations one might expect of the men in these photographs. This story also leaves the reader grateful for, and scrambling to, the glossary of railway work language Niemann provides. Similarly, "Women in the Yards" supports the images of the workplace that feature "centerfolds of spread genitals" and "misspelled graffiti" (p. 42) and underlines the fact that a woman confronted and photographed this men's world.

Women in the masculine world of railroading provides one of the main themes of Niemann's narratives, one that complements the photographs reasonably well. In "Baby on Board" and a number of other stories, Niemann explains how many women workers were affected by the downsizing of the railways. Just as railway companies began hiring women in the 1970s, they stopped hiring altogether. For the women who were hired, this meant that the disruption and instability involved in following jobs across the country became a permanent feature, rather than being restricted to the first four or five years, of their careers. With each move, women often faced a new set of suspicious or even hostile male colleagues. Even once they had been accepted, Niemann and others recall the awkwardness of being women in this work force, made to feel like "alien invaders" (p. 42).

While some narratives and photographs work well together, at other times I sense an intriguing tension. Some vignettes offer a striking and disconcerting counterpoint to the 1970s photographs, for the railway of the 1980s and 1990s has been transformed. Bertucci photographed men resting in cabooses; Niemann can only offer the best caboose story she ever heard. There are no cabooses in her workplace. One also suspects there would be far fewer photographs of men socializing on the trains or in the shanties. In "The Modern Railroad", Niemann explains why. Many trains are run only by one conductor and one engineer. Stations are little more than empty rooms with computers, fax machines, copiers, and printers. There are no switchmen or yardworkers. The dispatchers who regulate train movements do so from a long distance and have trouble keeping up with a workload double what it once was. In "Conductors Only" and "Ghost Yards", Niemann poignantly evokes the emotional strain of working in such isolation, as a woman and as a worker. Social historians can and will learn a great deal about the human meaning and the safety implications of "downsizing" from Niemann's memoirs. Far more than any of the photographs, the images that remained with me were Niemann's compelling images of this barren, inhuman workplace. The massive yards photographed by Bertucci are now more occupied by the homeless than by railroad workers.

Even when the photographs and narratives do not blend, individually they still succeed in evoking the world of the railroader. For social and labour historians interested in gender and the nature of work in the late twentieth century, *Railroad Voices* is an entertaining and insightful treat.

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