racy, the strengthening of unionism and the arrival of socialist in the government modified the political situation.

In the 1970s, workers and industrialists were the more ready to bargain but the juncture was becoming difficult: the former were afraid of unemployment and the latter not willing to lose too many hours of work. And yet it was during that period that the number of strikes in industry reached its peak. There are therefore many factors, political, economic, and organizational which are involved in the process of walk out. But strikes have to be seen, first and foremost, as confrontations, as struggles between opposed forces whose interests are fundamentally divergent. There are no general explanations for conflicts, battles are provoked by the strategical expectations of the antagonist camps at a given time. Roberto Franzosi's conclusion sounds strange when it is found in a sociological book but it is likely to fully satisfy historians.

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“This project originated in Pittsburgh,” Lewis Siegelbaum and Daniel Walkowitz write, “where a laid-off steel worker, Larry Evans, had produced a series of programs for local cable television based on interviews with his former workmates, many of whom had been prematurely ‘retired’ by mill closing” (3). Tagging along on a trip to Pittsburgh’s new “sister city” Donetsk, in the coal basin (Donbass) of eastern Ukraine, the authors set about interviewing workers for a parallel film, but with a differently anticipated theme: socialist renewal. By coincidence, they arrived in the summer of 1989, the time of the great union-wide miners’ strike and the heady slogan of “perestroika from below,” which they helped propagate. When, two years later, they returned, both their thinking and that of the miners had drastically changed. Unity and euphoria were long gone, replaced by the uncertainties of an incipient market economy and a newly independent country run by former Communists turned nationalists.

Seven interviews of miners who came of age under Stalin comprise part I of the book. In the elder miners’ stories, the war and postwar reconstruction loom large. We hear often that prices were low and periodically lowered (vodka cost a mere three rubles per bottle). It is noted that work in the mines used to be even more dangerous, injuries even more numerous. But there was pride. Enormous sacrifices were made. Obstacles overcome. The Nazi war machine defeated. Most miners admit crying when Stalin died. “The victory over the Germans was connected with his name,” one explains. “People connected his name with the annual [sic] reduction of prices for food and industrial goods. He meant a lot to us. We knew that when he said something, it would be done. . . . He was very powerful, and very much respected” (38). Some oldtimers seem bitter, one suggesting that his decades of labor were “absorbed” by others (51). The rest appear resigned.

Part II opens with a probing essay by Stephen Crowley and Siegelbaum analyzing the rise and fall of the “miners’ movement” of 1989–1993 in which three mines are lucidly compared. Having helped bring down the Communist system, the authors conclude, miners found themselves con-
fronting the “bitter fruits of their victory” (86). These observations are followed by 10 group and individual interviews with miner activists, who detail their tribulations and survival strategies with scarcely a hint of nostalgia. Hard-fought autonomy from Moscow has resulted in domination by Kiev. The market menaces. “We would agree to close down the lines,” one miner representative allows, “but the people who work there should have the opportunity to be retrained so that they could work in some other industry” (145). No one is yet offering such a choice. Instead, it’s continued work in aging, infernal mines, or for the unlucky, unemployment. The 1989 strike seems a long time past.

Accompanying the third and final section is an essay by Walkowitz, who reacts to the prevalence of positive images from America encountered among the miners of Ukraine, and highlights the “tragic irony” that the experience of America, particularly the “wrongly” celebrated de-industrialization of Pittsburgh, betokens doom for workers in Ukraine (174–80). Six more group interviews among a highly Russified population sound a note of incomprehension and dismay over the separation of Ukraine from Russia. Disadvantageous standard-of-living comparisons now involve not the United States or western Europe but Turkey. One former youth league organizer on a mine speculates that “there will be a revolution in the immediate future,” since “we are growing poorer just like in the period before 1917” (209). Others strive to start businesses, and recount their frustrations. Not even the new trade unions born of the miners’ movement enjoy much success, since the old state unions still distribute vacation vouchers and scarce commodities.

An entire industry appears to be slowly dying. Siegelbaum and Walkowitz express much sympathy, and a stronger sense of betrayal—directed at history itself—than their struggling proletarian subjects. “There can be no conclusions to the conversations,” the authors avow, “except to say that [the] borscht was delicious! A toast, then, to Ukrainian borsch and the people who prepare it” (155). If socialism with a human face has faltered, humanity may still triumph, in gestures big and small. The workers of the Donbass speak.

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Ethnicity at Work is a historical and ethnographic study of the way in which the United Fruit Company (Chiquita Brands as of 1987) created and maintained an ethnically divided labor force in their Bocas del Toro banana plantation: 6,800 hectares on the portion of Central America’s Atlantic Coast spanning Costa Rica and Panama. The book details how the plantation operated as an enterprise (changing both its land usage and labor control methods) from its inception around 1880 through its high point in land holding (more than 3.6 million acres in the region in the mid-1930s) to the present when the company’s net sales represented more than twice the GNP of Costa Rica and Panama. But the main focus of the book is on the intersection of occupational and ethnic power structures on the current plantation in which “The almost six thousand day laborers (various groups of blacks, Hispanics, and Amerindians) and seven hundred (white) management em-