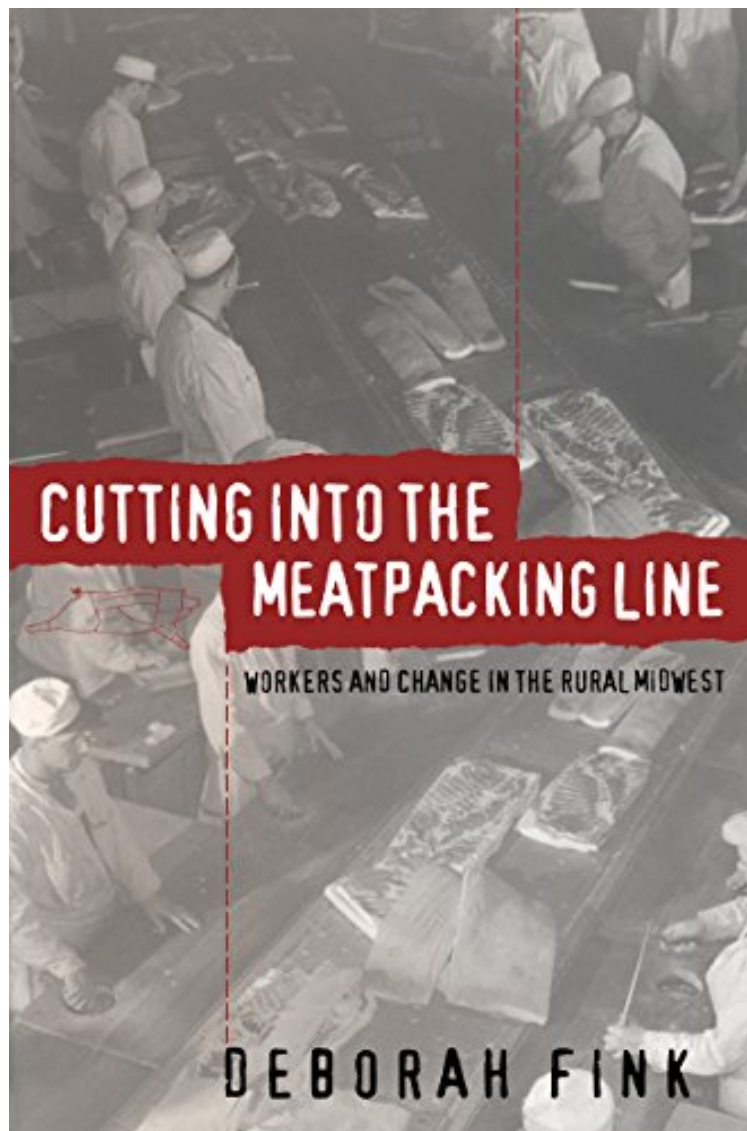


[Download ebook] Cutting Into the Meatpacking Line: Workers and Change in the Rural Midwest (Studies in Rural Culture)

Cutting Into the Meatpacking Line: Workers and Change in the Rural Midwest (Studies in Rural Culture)

Deborah Fink

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Deborah Fink : Cutting Into the Meatpacking Line: Workers and Change in the Rural Midwest (Studies in Rural Culture) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cutting Into the Meatpacking Line: Workers and Change in the Rural Midwest (Studies in Rural Culture):

1 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Worst. Book. Ever. By Colt
First off, let me say that you're not supposed to make everything in anthropology revolve around politics and bureaucratic garbage. This book was intended to study the anthropological aspects of the early American meatpacking industry and the diverse ethnic backgrounds of the workers involved in the industry and instead all it did was utilize reverse racism and political ploys to try and convince the reader that the reverse racism and extreme feminism are justifiable. In addition it is written by a feminist who states throughout the book that it's acceptable for women to do less work than men and still demand equal salary because men are the ones to blame for women being incapable of equivalent work productivity. I would never recommend this book to anyone. It has no real substance, it's all biased political banter and it's horribly written.

4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Meatpacking Line is Dramatic, Eye-Opening and Wake-up Call
By Grace Walters
If you're not already aware of the heroic struggle immigrants undergo as they pursue the American dream, this book will clue you in. We've all heard xenophobes rant about immigrants taking jobs away from American workers. Now meet the immigrants who sign on to jobs Americans won't touch -- the ones with no safety nets -- low wages and no benefits, i.e., no paid vacations, no profit-sharing, no health insurance (despite dangerous working conditions), no compensation for loss of limbs, no pension plan, no social security contributions. One's perspective is changed with the realization that these new Americans are proud to be working at a place where the hourly wage is a whopping \$7-8/hr. If this is the American dream, imagine what life must be like at home!

Fink goes to work in a meatpacking plant in Iowa for an up-close look at the conditions and environment in which immigrants (mostly from Mexico and Central America) toil to support families both here and in their homelands. Her sensitivity to the workers' pride and plight, and her empathy with their every-day existence is remarkable for an American. She is to be commended for her courage in wading into a stark and noisy reality -- one not altogether known by many U.S. citizens -- while retaining her writer's objectivity. This book is highly recommended.

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. It's not just for illegal immigrants
By LeeLee
While I do not disagree with the previous review, I felt the need to point out that illegal immigrants are certainly NOT the only ones forming the backbone of the workforce at these rural meatpacking plants. Indeed, in the small Midwestern town in which I grew up, meatpacking is just about the only job that pays something resembling a living wage for those who choose to stay in the rural Midwest. And from observing the people I knew who worked there, believe me, it's not exactly living high on the hog. In my opinion, these blue collar workers are being squeezed just about as hard as they can be, and not enough light is shed on that fact. But for many people who choose to live in the place of their birth (or a place they've come to call home), they don't have much choice when it comes to where to work.

The nostalgic vision of a rural Midwest populated by independent family farmers hides the reality that rural wage labor has been integral to the region's development, says Deborah Fink. Focusing on the porkpacking industry in Iowa, Fink investigates the experience of the rural working class and highlights its significance in shaping the state's economic, political, and social contours. Fink draws both on interviews and on her own firsthand experience working on the production floor of a pork-processing plant. She weaves a fascinating account of the meatpacking industry's history in Iowa--a history, she notes, that has been experienced differently by male and female, immigrant and native-born, white and black workers. Indeed, argues Fink, these differences are a key factor in the ongoing creation of the rural working class. Other writers have denounced the new meatpacking companies for their ruthless destruction of both workers and communities. Fink sustains this criticism, which she augments with a discussion of union action, but also goes beyond it. She looks within rural midwestern culture itself to examine the class, gender, and ethnic contradictions that allowed--indeed welcomed--the meatpacking industry's development.

A model of American social and labor history."Choice"
Forceful, visual, evocative, and well-placed . "Nebraska History"
[H]er important study of working people in Perry, Iowa, evokes the horror, grimness, and humor of rural working-class life. Nancy Gabin, Purdue University
"A chilling portrait of how economic restructuring reshapes everyday life and exacerbates longstanding oppressions of class, race, and gender." Journal of American History
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This admirable book melds history, anthropology, and a strong sense of social justice. . . . A chilling portrait of how economic restructuring reshapes everyday life and exacerbates longstanding oppressions of class, race, and gender.--Journal of American History
Forceful, visual, evocative, and well-placed . . . The oral histories, along with the other sources, provide an excellent historical context and comparison for what was happening in contemporary meatpacking plants in the Midwest.--Nebraska History
A model of American social and labor history.--Choice
Deploying the methodological skills of the anthropologist and the historian, Deborah Fink makes visible working-class wage earners, women and men whose historical agency and experience have been denied or effaced in the rural Midwest. Fink demonstrates the

central but overlooked significance of wage labor for rural midwestern economic growth and offers an original and compelling analysis of class development and class relations. Deeply moving, her important study of working people in Perry, Iowa, evokes the horror, grimness, and humor of rural working-class life over the course of the twentieth century.--Nancy Gabin, Purdue University

From the Inside Flap Drawing on firsthand experience working in an Iowa pork-processing plant, Fink looks at the differing experience of male and female, immigrant and native-born, black and white workers in the meatpacking industry.