

one way for us all, armed with the general knowledge summarized in Johnson and Schene's book, to contribute to a better understanding of ethnic and minority heritages in the United States. By identifying historic buildings and sites associated with ethnic and minority groups, assisting to place these resources on the National Register, and advising on sensitive interpretive programs, we can further the goals toward which the National Association for Ethnic Studies strives.

—David M. Gradwohl
Iowa State University

Jacqueline Jones. *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work and the Family, from Slavery to the Present.* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985) xi, 432 pp., \$10.95 paper.

Jacqueline Jones' *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow* examines the struggle of African-American women to protect their household and community based "labor of love" while controlling their wage-earning "labor of sorrow." Illustrated by a rich collection of photographs, extensively referenced and supplemented by appendices, Jones' study relates changes in the structure and management of black households to changes in the kinds of work African-American women have done.

Post-emancipation, agrarian, African-American women were fiercely independent in their political-economic thinking, Jones explains. In cooperation with their menfolk—and before urbanization—they managed to spend less of their labor energy on productive endeavors that were not their own.

Unfortunately, economic constraints have been severe. As punitive as sharecropping had been, Jones shows that it freed the labor of black women more than urban living did. Whereas a modicum of self-sufficiency had been possible under that rural agrarian system, sustaining it was almost impossible under urban, wage-based consumerism. As selling their labor became increasingly politicized, economic parity eluded black women and their households.

Systemic control of urban black labor in general, and of black women's labor in particular, undermined the African American "quest for household and group autonomy." Exposing the racial and gender bias of American labor policy as a sword castrating the ability of most black men to reliably contribute to family life is an outstanding feature of Jones' historiography.

Regrettably, Jones isolates African-Americans as having a peculiar experience, thereby obscuring the proper global context of her work. Next time, she might strive to describe this global pattern: as people find it

increasingly difficult to labor in their own interest, they are likely to acquire the self-defeating habits she mentions, e.g., domestic violence, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy. In other words, among any marginalized people, constrained opportunity impedes adaptive abilities by undermining social integrity.

Jones might cite how white dominance of Hispanicized African-American women imposed similar constraints on their household “labor of love” as Whitten did. Very similar to Anglicized American blacks, the struggle of Colombian blacks to maintain autonomy was undermined, mainly through the invalidation and cooptation of female labor. Colombian blacks recognized that working for white owners in exchange for wages would entrap them in a new economic relationship, free of overt bondage, but labor enslaving nevertheless. However—and despite centuries of effective resistance—Hispanicized black women have found themselves recently urbanized as domestic servants as well. Their urban “labor of sorrow” is likely to disturb their “labor of love” just as it is now doing among the poorest American blacks.

Jones will find that her data does not reflect an African-American problem only. It can be validated cross-culturally, and certainly in the black diaspora. As chronic unemployment (in any country) pressures the male/female relationship, the frustration of failing to meet hopeful female expectations repulses many men from home-life. The result is the same as Jones describes: growing numbers of female-headed households are surviving either on sub-standard wages or welfare. Thus, the experiences of African-American women must be compared with those of other oppressed women everywhere.

—Helan E. Page
University of Missouri, St. Louis

Jenna Weissman Joselit. *Our Gang: Jewish Crime and the New York Jewish Community, 1900-1940*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983) xii, 209 pp., \$9.95 paper.

A book-length study of Jewish crime in the United States ventures into uncharted territory, because rarely have Jews been associated with crime; in fact, Jewish life and criminal activity have been considered antithetical categories. This historical injunction against violence and illegal acts is the very myth with which Joselit opens her well-documented study of criminal involvement among New York Jews, beginning with its immigrant origins and concluding with the rise of the Jewish middle class in the interwar years. The dominant socio-cultural imperatives against malfeasance among the Jewish population provides the struc-