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978-1-107-03317-7 - From Slavery to the Cooperative Commonwealth: Labor and Republican Liberty in the Nineteenth Century

Alex Gourevitch

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From Slavery to the Cooperative Commonwealth

This book reconstructs how a group of nineteenth-century labor reformers appropriated and radicalized the republican tradition. These “labor republicans” derived their definition of freedom from a long tradition of political theory dating back to the classical republics. In this tradition, to be free is to be independent of anyone else’s will; to be dependent is to be a slave. Borrowing these ideas, labor republicans argued that wage laborers were unfree because of their abject dependence on their employers. Workers in a cooperative, on the other hand, were considered free because they equally and collectively controlled their work. Although these labor republicans are relatively unknown, this book details their unique, contemporary, and valuable perspective on both American history and the organization of the economy.

Alex Gourevitch is an assistant professor of political science at Brown University. He has previously served as an assistant professor at McMaster University, a postdoctoral research associate for Brown University’s Political Theory Project, and a College Fellow at Harvard University. Gourevitch is the coeditor of *Politics Without Sovereignty: A Critique of Contemporary International Relations* (2007). His work has been published in *Political Theory*, *Modern Intellectual History*, *Constellations*, *Public Culture*, *Philosophical Topics*, and the *Journal of Human Rights*. He has also written for magazines such as *Jacobin*, *Dissent*, *Salon*, *The Chronicle Review*, *N+1*, *The American Prospect*, and *Washington Monthly*, and he is coauthor of the blog *The Current Moment*.

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In dedication to my father, Peter Gourevitch, and in memory of my mother, Lisa Hirschman.

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