



Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago 1919-1939*, 2nd Edition, ACLS Humanities E-Book. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press*

Caner AYDEYER**

Makale Bilgisi/Article Info: Geliş/Received: 17/05/2022 Düzeltme/Revised: 10/06/2022 Kabul/Accepted: 11/06/2022

Kitap İncelemesi/ Book Review

Atf / Cite as: Aydeyer, C. (2022). Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago 1919-1939*, 2nd Edition, ACLS Humanities E-Book. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. *Bellek Uluslararası Tarih ve Kültür Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 4(1), 92-96.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.52735/bellek.1117937>

ÖZ

Lizabeth Cohen tarafından yazılan “*Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939*” adlı kitabın ilk baskısı 1990 yılında yapılmıştır. 2008 yılında kitabın ikinci baskısı yapılmıştır. Kitap; “Giriş” ve “Sonuç” bölümleri dahil 8 ana kısımdan oluşmaktadır. Bu ana bölümler de kendi içinde alt başlıklara sahiptir. Kitabın ana bölümleri şunlardır: Living and working in Chicago in 1919, Ethnicity in the new era, encountering mass culture, Contested Loyalty at the Workplace, Adrift in the Great Depression, Workers Make a New Deal, Becoming a Union and Rank Files, Workers’ Common Ground. Kitap Lizabet Cohen’in University of Chicago’da okurken yazmış olduğu tezden üretilmiştir. Cohen kitabında 1919 yılından 1939 yılına kadar olan dönemde Chicago’ya gelen farklı etnik kökenden ve dinden işçilerin bu farklılıklarının onların siyasi görüşlerini nasıl etkilediğine ve görüşlerinde değişim olanların hangi etmenlerden etkilendiğine yer vermiştir. Ayrıca Cohen kitabında Chicago hakkında bilgiler vermesinin yanında buraya gelen işçilerin yaşam ve çalışma koşullarına da kitabında yer vermiştir. Cohen, Chicago’yu beş endüstri bölgesine ayırmış ve bu bölgelerde baskın olan sanayi kuruluşlarına ve bu kuruluşlarda çalışan işçilerin daha çok hangi etnik gruba veya dine mensup olduklarına değinmiştir. Kitap 1919-1939 yılları arasında Chicago özelinde Amerika’da oluşan işçi sınıfı hakkında bilgiler vermesi açısından önemli bir eserdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kitap İncelemesi, İşçi, Endüstri, Chicago, Tarih

The name of the book is “*Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939*” published by Lizabeth Cohen in 2008 in New York Cambridge University Press. The first book was published in 1990 and the second edition was published in 2008. Except for the introduction

* Bu araştırma sürecinde; TR Dizin 2020 kuralları kapsamında “*Yükseköğretim Kurumları Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Yönergesinde*” yer alan tüm kurallara uyulmuş ve yönergenin ikinci bölümünde yer alan “Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiğine Aykırı Eylemlerden” hiçbiri gerçekleştirilmemiştir. Ayrıca bu araştırma “*Etik Kurul İzni*” gerektirmeyen bir çalışmadır. Ayrıca bu çalışma, Leicester Üniversitesi Tarih Bölümü’nde sözlü olarak sunulmuş metnin yeniden gözden geçirilmiş halidir.

** Arş. Gör., Hatay Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü, Hatay/Türkiye, caneraydeyer@gmail.com, **ORCID: 0000-0002-9130-1997**

and conclusion, the book has eight main chapters. The chapters of the book are; Living and working in Chicago in 1919, Ethnicity in the new era, Encountering mass culture, Contested loyalty at the workplace, Adrift in the great depression, Workers make a new deal, Becoming a union rank and file, Worker's common ground. These chapters are also divided into subchapters. This book is 526 pages with notes and an index. This book was part of her dissertation at the University of Chicago, Berkeley. Lizabeth Cohen is Howard Mumford Jones Professor of American Studies and Dean of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study and winner of the Bancroft Prize and a finalist for the Pulitzer. She is interested in social, cultural, and political history in the twentieth century, and she focuses on the effect of people's culture, social experience, and the effect of their identities on their political choices.¹ In this book, Lizabeth Cohen has focus on Chicagoan workers who came from different ethnicity and religion, and races and how those factors shaped their political aspects between 1919 and 1939 also she illustrated in this book how and when these differences had been changed and what kind of elements or conditions caused these changes.

In this book, she talks about Chicagoan workers' living conditions and works conditions and she gives some information about Chicago. She divides it into five areas like southeast Chicago; steelworkers, west and near northwest sides; garments trade and light industry, consisting of the back of yard; packing town, southwest side; Mc Cormick work (harvest installation) and Hawthorne works of western electric, south side; black belt. For each area, she explains the features of people and work. For example, steel town, southeast Chicago, was the strategic location of the steelmaking center and mostly unskilled polish laborers work and live there. She tries to introduce each area according to ethnicity because each area has different ethnic groups, races, and religions and which country and when they come to Chicago and their percentages. For example, the earliest packing workers had come from Ireland, Germany, and a little Bohemia.

She gives information about the great strike against the company to have a good wage and work hours, and how the ethnic groups gave reaction to this strike. For example, in 1919, the time of the great strike wave in America, more than four million workers launched a strike against the company and government. Boston Police officers, New England telephone operators, textile workers, coal miners, and steelworkers attended that strike to have good rights as ideological and material. Chicago was the second largest industrial area in the nation at the beginning of the 1920s. In Chicago industrial workers were foreign-born they came from Germany, Sweden, Ireland, and others from European countries and Mexican. Only a small percentage of industrial workers were native-born, and it was a good opportunity to use these ethnic groups as strike-breakers like Black people. Cohen says that during the 1920s, the new immigrant group came from eastern and southern Europe. Ethnic communities have their social system to keep their identity safe although they work together in the same company.

Cohen also says that due to the lack of a national charity system and social security, many welfare assistance services were dependent on ethnics like ethnic charity systems and healthy systems. They supplied their needs in their groups. This book is a useful source to show how this local ethnic system became a national system. Cohen gives a good example of this extension the American- Jewish community established a local welfare agency in Chicago, and other Jewish communities began to establish welfare agencies. With these welfare agencies, the American Jewish welfare network system was founded. Cohen in this book argues how ethnic groups have made a banking system from their ethnic community bank to a national commercial banking system. It is the best study to show how changed banking habits for ethnic groups

¹<https://history.fas.harvard.edu/people/lizabeth-cohen>, E.T. 15.05.2022

because from year to year the Chicago ethnic groups were changing in being more American and more communicating with others.

It can be said that in this book one of the most important parts is mass culture because, in this chapter, Cohen argues that Chicagoan people began to change their lives through a new generation and increasing wages. Because in Chicago, the middle class has begun, and while people want to protect their culture, they want to be more American, and consumption increased. These, challenges between chain stores and local ethnic stores can show as a good example. People have had an opportunity to choose which one they go shopping for. At the beginning of the 1920s people usually preferred to go to a local store for shopping because each ethnic group had its store, and it was easy for them to find traditional food and talk to other people who were from the same country. She explains that changing from a local store to a chain store and from the local movie theatre to the national and ethnic radio station to the national radio station affects people's culture and causes people to take place in mass consumption. It can be clearly said that these changes not only made people feel like a part of American culture but also, made people part of mass consumption. It is the lack of Cohen to not express this condition in this book. But she explains how welfare capitalism affects workers at the workplace. Many workers who came from different ethnic groups or racial groups or religions did not want to work together. But with welfare capitalism, ethnic diversity was breaking down in the workplace and they learned how they solve their problem together

Lizabeth Cohen argues in this book how the great depression affected people and other social-economic conditions, and what kind of things was changed with the great depression. For example, people had difficulties meeting their simple needs like food. Because companies in Chicago shut down and people lost their jobs. This economic depression wage spread from company to company and people to person. Many people run to ethnic welfare agencies and churches loan association agencies to get help and they lost their homes to not being able to pay their mortgages those welfare agencies had no facility to meet people's needs and many ethnics and even national banks failed people lost their money with those banks and many local stores ended. These problems came with the great depression and made some changes in people's life. This book is the most useful to recognize how welfare capitalism changed and declined during the great depression.

She argues that among people who live in Chicago, just 65 percent of them can vote in elections and others cannot because they are not American citizens and which political party is supported by which ethnics group, and if they change their political choices with great depression or with their changing life and with their social and economic conditions that were changed how their ethnic community affected people's political identity. For example, Cohen gives some statistics and information about Chicagoan people's political aspect; 1920s Black people and Yugoslavs were strongly republican however, Poles, Czechs, Lithuanians, and Eastern European Jews were democrats. This shows that many immigrant voters were democrats and Cohen explains in this book why it is so that the ethnics community and other ethnic and religious societies encourage their members to vote for the party that is closer to them than others.

She also talks about the industrial union that was made by Chicago's workers in the mid-1930s and until the end of the 1930s, one in three workers had become a member of the union. Cohen states that being a member of a union made it possible for people who were from different ethnicities, races, and religions to join the same union. With the unions, people who lived and worked in Chicago learned how they had the good right and how to struggle to gain that right together. Because in the 1930s in Chicago workers together established unions like the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations), although they had differences. She gives the main point between government and workers and unions and how workers recognized that

should be in communication with government and unions and politicians did understand that they should give more importance to workers who are from different ethnicity and race and religion.

Lizabetn Cohen's book address Chicagoan people's life sociologically and historically. It can be seen in this book that from 1919s to 1939 many things have been changed dramatically; especially ethnicity, race, and religion played a significant role in people's life like their shopping habits and political aspects of social life were depending on these factors in the 1920s, but some developments or problems made it for people necessary to change their life. With these changes, people became more American and more common in Chicago this book is useful to examine this change in Chicago ad on people because it includes many examples and explanations about those times.

It makes it easy to get some social-economic information about life in Chicago between 1919 and 1939 we can know what kind of difficulties people had how their relationships with each other what is their political choices and also how the welfare capitalist system was found and banking system and unions, we can say that according to this book ethnicities and race were the main point in Chicago despite it change in ten years. Because all structures are based on these factors everything was created by them. However, Cohen would explain more political issues and ethnic communities and their living conditions, and their role in the political system because, as it is now, ethnic communities and people's living conditions are decisive points in the elections. And also it can be said that just illustrating Chicago does not show all American political and social life because at that time each American state and even city might have had different in different conditions Cohen' this book might be enough to know and make a prediction about a small area not enough to explain whole American people's life and political aspects because of American's big geography, conditions and social and political and economic and most importantly ethnicity can change from city to city and state to state.

CONCLUSION

Lizabeth Cohen puts people's differences such as ethnicity, race, and religion, in the middle of the life and impact of people on politics and consumption and it is the best explanation to understand changes in Chicago and make a prediction about American society and American lifestyle from 1919 and 1939. It might be said that Cohen shows us how the American political system and economic system were shaped by different people. How and according to what did people make their choices were highlighted by Cohen. It is helpful to understand how ethnicity differs in life and all governmental systems and how they become one in differences.

Appendix 1: Book cover

