

Powers in World War I. Downes is forgiving if civilian deaths were caused unintentionally, for example by the sanctions imposed on Iraq in the 1990s. Though he does not acknowledge it, many of the consequences of Britain's blockade were also indirect and unanticipated. Downes attributes the fall in German food production solely to the effects of the blockade, overlooking the role the Germans themselves played in diverting agricultural labor to wartime mobilization efforts, mismanaging food distribution, and failing to understand the market. He ascribes all German excess civilian deaths, due especially to tuberculosis, to malnutrition. Finally, Downes concludes that the blockade contributed to the German decision to seek an armistice in 1918, though the choice was made by the German high command in response to the military situation.

Fortunately, most will read this book not for what it has to say about Germany, but for its argument that, at least until 1970, a democracy was as likely to target civilians as was any other type of regime (including the Nazis'), particularly in protracted wars. Downes is on surer ground when he examines the U.S. bombing of Japan during 1944–45 and the wars fought in 1947–49 during Israel's founding, both of which buttress his conclusion that domestic norms against the killing of civilians are, at best, secondary considerations in explaining how democracies choose to fight.

But there is a case for saying that—at least in the two world wars—regime type was a more important factor than Downes allows. British propaganda in World War I drew a distinction between the German people and the Kaiser. The logic of the blockade was that starvation might provoke revolution, and so effect a change in government. Believing that this was what had happened in 1918, the Allies hoped for the same effects when they bombed Germany in 1944. Hitler proved them wrong. Nonetheless, similar arguments were voiced in advance of the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Democracies have targeted civilians at least in part because they believe in the power of the people to overthrow tyrannical governments.

Finally, Downes needs to consider what makes a democracy fight a protracted war. As he rightly observes, no sensible democratic leader will knowingly undertake a long, bloody, and indecisive conflict. In the first half of the 20th century, democracies fought long wars because they saw themselves as defending core values, and so both military and moral imperatives justified breaching the principle of noncombatant immunity.

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## Labors of Love

*Reviewed by Darcy Courteau*

ASK ANYONE WHO HAS DONE much volunteering and you are bound to hear—along with heartwarming stories of teaching a kid to read or saving a church slated for demolition—tales of abuse. A friend recalls the Saturday she sacrificed to help build a playground at a New Orleans community center. She arrived to find the well-heeled volunteers who had donated the space standing around complaining into their cell phones about the heat; she was handed a shovel. Six palm-blistering hours later, she “accidentally” tossed mulch on a slacker and left. “I just thought if we’re all in this together, let’s be in this together,” she said.

But it is our very self-reliance (and a distrust of government), sociologists Marc A. Musick and John Wilson write in *Volunteers*, that spurs Americans to donate their time. Bootstraps firmly in hand, we have the highest volunteer rate in the world—one study estimates that nearly two-thirds of Americans volunteer. Because such labor is motivated by ideals rather than cash, tapping this resource can be a delicate challenge. In a giant compendium—of other social scientists’ studies as well as analyses of survey data collected over two decades—Musick and Wilson set

### **VOLUNTEERS:** A Social Profile.

*By Marc A. Musick and  
John Wilson.  
Indiana Univ. Press.  
663 pp. \$39.95*

out to paint an exhaustive portrait of modern volunteers, and “help practitioners better recruit, train, motivate, and retain volunteers.”

The book examines volunteers’ motivations and backgrounds—including race, gender, and socioeconomic resources—and addresses subjects such as recruitment and types of service various groups favor. But the authors’ sweeping approach encounters a not-uncommon problem: Many of the studies mentioned contradict one another. So we are left with forehead slappers such as “In the opinion of many scholars, organizations will recruit volunteers only if they appeal to their values and beliefs” and “There is quite convincing evidence that volunteers are more empathic people than non-volunteers.” You don’t say.

Many recruiters won’t be surprised to learn that their best volunteer prospects are affluent, white, churchgoing women. (While women do not contribute more hours than men, they volunteer at a higher rate.) To be fair, people in each of these categories are the most likely to be asked—41 percent of white Americans, for instance, have been asked to volunteer, compared with 33 percent of blacks, and nearly two-thirds of Americans with household incomes over \$75,000 are asked compared with one-third of those earning less than \$25,000. Being asked is a strong predictor of who volunteers.

From amid the obvious conclusions and the sociological jargon, however, an engaging narrative begins to emerge, of Americans’—especially American women’s—relationship to labor. “In capitalist societies,” the authors write, “volunteers are often admired as people, but their work is devalued. We tend to assume that if a job is really worth doing, it will be paid for.” Often, the volunteer work that women do is “society’s ‘dirty work,’” similar to household duties—caring for children and the elderly, preparing meals, book-keeping. Men tend to have “more desirable” leadership roles in the public domain: coach, firefighter, board member. This imbalance led many in the feminist movement of the 1970s to resist volunteering. Activist Doris Gold put it

bluntly: “Voluntarism is clearly exploitative—in its implication that social justice for all classes can be achieved through the moral ‘service’ of some who are expendable, albeit out of choice.” From this perspective, our nation of do-it-yourselfers is a place where we are emphatically *not* all in this together.

Reading *Volunteers*, I wondered what would happen if Americans stopped being quite so gung-ho about signing up to help out. What if women took a break from the “dirty work,” and instead people were paid to do it? The warm-fuzzies sector might shrink, but the resulting jobs would allow those who couldn’t afford to volunteer to have a bigger role in helping others, even as—per the American way—they helped themselves.

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## Spouse Hunt

*Reviewed by Renuka Rayasam*

RECENTLY, I DESCRIBED WESTERN dating to an uncle in India who is trying to arrange marriages for his two daughters. After sharing his own troubles finding suitable young men, he ruefully concluded, “Getting married here is one type of hell, but getting married there is another.”

Anita Jain has suffered the worst of both worlds. Fed up with the “emotionally excruciating uphill battle” of dating in New York City, Jain, a world-traveled financial journalist, returned to the country of her parents’ upbringing and her own birth. *Marrying Anita* chronicles her search for a husband when she moved to Delhi at the age of 32.

Jain, who grew up in the United States, figured that focusing her search for a year in India, where she believed men were more marriage oriented, would improve her odds of finding a husband. Besides meeting potential husbands in flashy Delhi bars and on Indian dating websites, Jain took a second stab at arranging a marriage

**MARRYING ANITA:**  
A Quest for Love in  
the New India.

By Anita Jain. Bloomsbury. 307 pp. \$24.99