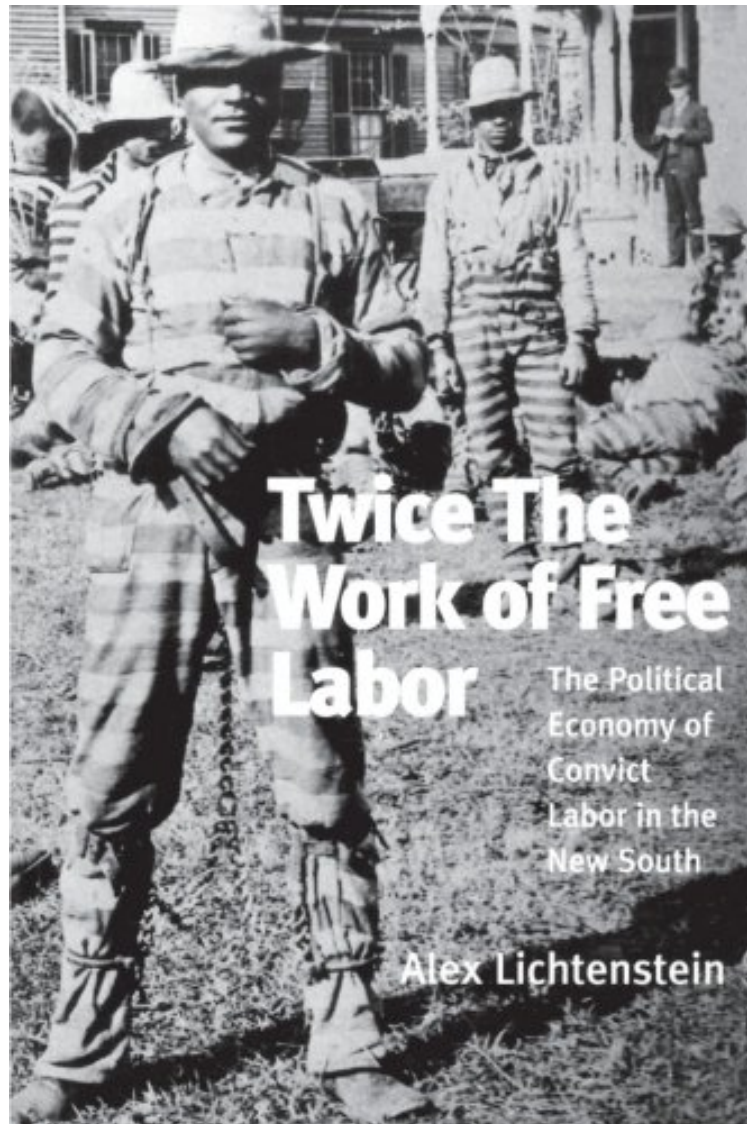


(Download free ebook) Twice the Work of Free Labor: The Political Economy of Convict Labor in the New South (Haymarket Series)

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Alex Lichtenstein

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Alex Lichtenstein : Twice the Work of Free Labor: The Political Economy of Convict Labor in the New South (Haymarket Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Twice the Work of Free Labor: The Political Economy of Convict Labor in the New South (Haymarket Series):

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. The 13th Amendment: Malicious, Mendacious and DuplicitousBy

Nubian Queen
In researching the origin of the wording in the 13th Amendment, I was totally frustrated by the silence on the issue in what is called Black History; so I moved over to Civil War history; same silence. Eventually I realized that the meat and potatoes history of the African American experience with this country is hidden in the law and the American penal system. The old surveys of slave ships, and plantation life, though important and of course an integral part of this experience, is only the very tip of the iceberg. And while the sociologists cut their teeth on formulating theories touting Black inferiority, for the masses, the law was busy creating a framework that continues to entrap African Americans to this day, in forms of slavery that are constantly tweaked for mass consumption. In addition to, Esposito and Woods excellent book, *Prison Slavery, Twice the Work Of Free Labor*, point blank, reveals the monstrous duplicity of the 13th Amendment. You can read book after book, about slavery, the Civil War and Jim Crow and nobody will point out the elephant in the room, the Emperor wearing no clothes, the obvious. The first sentence frees, while the second sentence re-enslaves under conditions that were put in place through American law, and still exist to this day. People take it for granted it makes sense that there is an "exception" there. When nothing could be further from the truth. Senator Charles Sumner saw it before it was ratified and Congressman John Adam Kasson saw it two years after ratification. Lichtenstein does an admirable job of exposing the underbelly of the American experiment, gone rogue on an unsuspecting and vulnerable people.

For the first time in a generation chain gangs have reappeared on the roads of the American South. Associated in the past with racial terrorism, this cruel and unusual punishment should invoke strong memories. But, in the rush to embrace ever-harsher sanctions, the American public has ignored the troubling history of Southern punishment. *Twice the Work of Free Labor* is the first book-length study of the history of the Southern convict-lease system and its successor, the chain gang. For nearly a century after the abolition of slavery, convicts labored in the Souths mines, railroad camps, brickyards, turpentine farms and then road gangs, under abject conditions. The vast majority of these prisoners were African Americans. In this timely book, Alex Lichtenstein reveals the origins of this vicious penal slavery, explains its persistent and widespread popularity among whites, and charts its unhappy contribution to the rebirth of the South in the decades following the Civil War. The book also offers an original analysis of the post-Civil War Souths political economy. Lichtenstein suggests that, after emancipation, forced black labor was exploited not by those who yearned for the social order of the slave South, but by the regions most ardent advocates of progress. The convict-lease and chain gang allowed a New South to rise while preserving white supremacy.

Powerful, painstakingly researched, gracefully written, *Twice the Work of Free Labor* is a must read for anyone seeking an historical perspective on the current expansion of the US prison industry and the states reliance on incarceration to deal with the poor. Robin D.G. Kelley
About the Author Alex Lichtenstein is Associate Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania.