

The older central controversy about the influence of the Communist League on the elementary worker movement is also not really investigated, as Lattek excludes the core problem of the extent to which the mere affiliation of an individual member tells us anything about his or her theoretical-ideological conceptions (see p. 42–43). While the anti-intellectualism of the workers' movement is mentioned repeatedly (pp. 37, 68, 74–75, 77, 79, 113, 119, and 280 n. 50), the underlying reasons for this are never really examined. And when the author uses the example of the break in the Communist League to illustrate the impossibility of tracing the establishment of fronts solely back to theoretical differences *or* purely personal motives (this is the preferred explanatory model) given the complex constellation of theoretical differentiations, moral positions, and personal ambitions, because this is not realistic and is therefore inaccurate, it is more than regrettable that the respective socio-economic milieu has not been sufficiently included.

At the beginning of the review I mentioned the advantage of approaching this subject unencumbered by the old ideological-political trench warfare. There is, however, an obverse side to this, namely, a clearly recognizable *substantive* disinterest in questions of “proletariat theory”, that is, in an *evaluation* of the ideological debates. It was not only Marxist historians who evaluated the discussions in the Communist Workers' Educational Society or between the factions in the Communist League in terms of their substantive validity. Lattek is quite reserved in this regard. Critical statements, that is, statements commenting on the positions she presents in detail, are rare. Instead Lattek presents, describes, and reconstructs. The theoretical or ideological tendencies of the organizations are summarized merely schematically (as democratic, revolutionary, or communist), since the author is not interested in a theoretical discussion of radical and socialist theses or concepts. Disputes with other scholarly interpretations are quite brief and have been relegated exclusively to the footnotes.

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DAHLÉN, MARIANNE. *The Negotiable Child. The ILO Child Labour Campaign 1919–1973*. Uppsala Universitet, Uppsala 2007. 352 pp. (<http://publications.uu.se/theses>) DOI: 10.1017/S0020859008043460

In recent decades, child labour has been a much-debated issue, both in the political and the academic arenas. Remarkably, the involvement of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in combating child labour internationally, an involvement that dates from as early as 1919, has never been historically analysed. This dissertation by Marianne Dahlén is an admirable attempt to put the ILO Child Labour Campaign into the historiographical spotlight. It consists of five parts, Part 1 (chapters 1–4) containing the problems, methodology, and historiographical background to the study; Part 2 (chapters 5–8) describing the Minimum-Age Campaign 1919–1933; Part 3 (chapters 9–10) dealing with the period 1936–1965; Part 4 (chapter 11) on the General Minimum-Age Convention (No. 138) of 1973, and Part 5 (chapter 12), which provides a general conclusion. In my view, Part 1, which takes up about one-third of the entire text, is particularly long, rendering a rather unbalanced emphasis on the methodological part of the book.

Dahlén's dissertation aims to present a juridical-historical analysis of the ILO's Minimum-Age Campaign from its beginnings (1919) to the last Minimum Age Convention (No. 138) (1973), which is still in force. At various points in her dissertation, the

author emphasizes three main assumptions: firstly, that childhood is a historical construction, which influences its legislation; secondly, that the Minimum-Age Campaign was determined by a “hangover from history”, as Dahlén calls it, meaning that Western industrialization formed the basis for legislation; and thirdly, that children had virtually no bargaining position in the minimum-age campaign. Interesting as these assumptions are, it would perhaps have been more refreshing to problematize them and present them as conclusions of her own research, as they obviously are (see pp. 323–324).

In chapters 5–11 Dahlén describes in great detail the debates on and the outcomes of the ILO conventions and recommendations concerning the minimum age of working children. It is very interesting to learn that the debates were sometimes full of very prejudiced and even racist statements by Western representatives, on for instance the supposed early maturity of “native” children, or on the causes of the economic backwardness of non-Western countries. However, there were also very frank and even non-diplomatic accounts by non-Western representatives, including N.M. Joshi, a representative from India, who openly criticized the role of the British colonizer and its failure to provide adequately for the public education of the native population (see p. 176).

Dahlén’s study is very thorough – perhaps too thorough in parts, judged by the rather long introductory part (comprising four chapters), and the manifold details and repetitions. As a result, the “core” of the book, Parts 2–4, is highly descriptive and would have benefited from being less detailed and more focused. Some phrases recur once or twice in almost exactly the same wording. Frequently, the author describes in her own words what an ILO representative said and then goes on to quote the representative literally. Another example is the conclusions of Part 2 being repeated in chapter 10.

In contrast, the conclusions to each chapter are very much to the point and contain a lot of useful analysis. These conclusions also include important statements about what was *not* discussed in the ILO reports, either deliberately or otherwise. The dissertation would have been more persuasive, less detailed, and less repetitive if the analysis in the rest of the chapters had been more like these interesting subconclusions.

Dahlén concludes that the ILO’s Minimum-Age Campaign, which began in 1919, was modelled on the need to tackle the problem of child labour in the Western industrialized world, and that this did not change fundamentally until 1973. Its content and grammar, she argues, remained largely unaffected by the significant changes in the world, such as the decline of child labour in the West and decolonization. This is reflected in the fact that, despite the growing number of “developing countries”, European countries continued to dominate the ILO. She also concludes that the protection of children was never its sole purpose, nor sometimes its most important. Instead, according to Dahlén, the question of global economic competitiveness and the global division of labour, often coloured by racial bias, were more important in determining ILO strategies on child labour.

Although Dahlén is certainly right that until 1973, and most probably beyond, the West had a dominant position in the ILO, as it did in the world more generally, I am unconvinced by her criticism of the ILO’s motives as an institution. Of course, the ILO’s unique tripartite system of representation, with two votes for the government, one for the employers and one for the workers, may have led to an overemphasis on the economic consequences of its international child labour policy. However, in my view, and Dahlén’s material seems to suggest this at various points, this was less to do with improper motives on the part of the ILO itself than the result of diverging interests among its members and of the inability of an organization like the ILO to implement and monitor the effectiveness of

its policy. I think one needs to carry out a more elaborate study of the implementation and monitoring of the measures adopted in the individual member states before one can satisfactorily comment on the ineffectiveness of the ILO's policy.

In this respect, the study might have been enriched by the inclusion of additional source material. Dahlén has based her study primarily on ILO reports and on the texts of its conventions and recommendations. This represents a great deal of archival material, and Dahlén has obviously performed a huge task in studying it all. Nonetheless, I wonder why she did not do more to summarize this material. And why she did not try to present a couple of case studies of the reception and implementation of ILO policy in individual member states (for instance, one "colonizer" and one "colony"). This might have shed more light on the actual impact of ILO policy and of discussions of that policy and its enforcement in practice. Conversely, it might also have served to explain the attitudes and motives of representatives of some important countries in the ILO debates, which are apt to remain implicit or unclear if one studies only the minutes of those debates.

Finally, there are two more practical points that would have enhanced this dissertation. Firstly, it lacks an index, and although the table of contents is rather detailed, an alphabetical keyword appendix would have served the reader better. Secondly, an appendix containing a chronological list of ILO member states, and perhaps also of when the conventions described were ratified, would have been convenient, making it easier to follow schematically the adoption of the minimum age conventions over time and by region.

One real asset of this study is that it highlights the diverging interests in relation to child-labour policy between member states, and between the different representatives of governments, employers, and workers. Another valuable observation made by Dahlén is that in the period 1919–1973 nobody actually represented working children themselves. Today, when the agency of individuals is said to be crucial, organizations such as the ILO would do well to draw important lessons from the past – another point made in this dissertation.

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KEN FONES-WOLF. *Glass Towns. Industry, Labor, and Political Economy in Appalachia, 1890–1930s.* [The Working Class in American History.] University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago. 2007. xxvii, 236 pp. DOI: 10.1017/S0020859008053467

In this important book, Ken Fones-Wolf explores two major American social and economic transformations that were closely interconnected in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One was the industrial restructuring of glass-making as manufacturers sought to lower production costs and expand profits through a variety of means including mergers and trusts, new technologies and relations of production, and geographical relocation. The other was the transformation of the political economy of Appalachia as that region underwent a rapid makeover, shifting from agriculture (much of it subsistence-based) to industry. Northern West Virginia, in particular, was the locale where this drama unfolded most fully, and with the farthest reaching consequences. In short order, northern West Virginia became one of the nation's leading glass producers, and glass production, in turn, became a crucial component of that section's leap toward economic modernity.