

les Police's Red Squad raid on publishers of the radical Japanese newspaper *Rodo Shim-bun*, the Japanese Proletarian Cultural League, the International Labor Defense at the John Reed Club in Hollywood organized by the Bloc of Mural Painters, and African American women's community organizing in South Los Angeles through community theater. In a final remarkable chapter on jazz in Round Valley, Sine documents the "oppositional culture" in which Round Valley Indians "fostered a multiracialist politics of working-class autonomy" (200). It was through this cultural form of expression that they subverted repression: "At the same time that multiethnic organizing in more formal coalitions prompted fierce crackdowns from government officials and business leaders, popular culture enabled forms of collaboration, social organization, dialogue, and inter-subjectivity that often flew under the radar of elites" (176).

The rich cultural production of photographs and fiction depicting California during the Great Depression shaped some of the most enduring popular memories of the era. Elizabeth Sine digs far deeper in *Rebel Imaginaries*, a startling original history that captures the grassroots energy, organizing, and resistance during this crisis of capitalism in which lines of race, class, and belonging were redrawn. The book deserves a wide readership among undergraduate and graduate students.

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Workers before the Court: Conflicts and Labor Justice in the Context of the 1964 Coup d'Etat in Brazil

Fernando Teixeira da Silva

Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019

xxviii + 263 pp.; \$108.99 (cloth); \$102.99 (PDF)

The rise of labor courts is perhaps the most significant event in twentieth-century Latin American legal history. It is also an important episode in the labor history of the region, decisively transforming workers' experiences with the law and state institutions. Labor courts' importance contrasts sharply with the scant attention that, until recently, they had received from Latin American historians. *Workers before the Courts* is an excellent example of this new attention to labor courts, and it is not by chance that its author is a Brazilian historian from the University of Campinas, where historians have pioneered the study of these courts and reconstructed the social history of workers in the second half of the twentieth century.

Fernando Teixeira's book is not one but many. Most of its chapters are adaptations of previous articles that have been assembled here around the theme of Brazilian labor courts and workers' experience with them. This approach has the virtue of displaying the author's many valuable contributions to this subject in recent years; at the same

time, it causes a certain lack of unity. Rather than sustaining a homogeneous interpretative line, the book supports multiple theses, each argued separately in different essays and not always contributing to a central argument, running instead along parallel paths.

The book is organized into two parts. The first contains theoretical and historiographical essays, aimed at challenging ideas about the labor courts that are deeply rooted in Brazilian historiography and in its legal, political, and trade union worlds. Thus, along with an exhaustive description of the history of Brazil's labor courts, from their formation through the twentieth century, the first essay disputes the widely held idea that they were an invention of Gétúlio Vargas, and instead traces the history of both workers' struggle and the state's attempts to tackle the labor question in the last two decades of the First Republic. Another essay examines the false dichotomy between two models of labor dispute resolution: one corporatist, often related to fascism, and the other contractualist, related to liberal-democratic systems. This essay brings up the experiences of nineteenth-century European and Australasian countries with tripartite tribunals with corporate representation of employees, employers, and the state whose primary function was conciliation. These systems were the inspiration for many of the Brazilian legislators and officials who designed the Brazilian labor courts. On the other hand, Teixeira also provides a third essay on the deep-rooted idea that Brazilian courts were a copy of the Italian Magistratura del Lavoro. Those early antecedents of corporatist or "class" justice, together with notable differences with the Brazilian courts, contradicts any direct affiliation with the labor justice of Italian fascism.

The second part of the book concentrates on labor conflicts in the São Paulo region in the "long year 1963"—January 1963 to March 1964—which preceded the overthrow of President Joao Goulart by a military coup. The analysis of those months of explosive social conflict—marked by unleashed inflation and a radicalized political environment—is based on a complete series of five hundred legal cases brought before the Regional Labor Court of São Paulo. These documents come from a database team led by the author himself.

The book uses this database to do what other historians have been unable to: use quantitative methodology to work with trial records. Indeed, this source allows the author to draw valuable conclusions about workers' strategies to make the best possible use of labor tribunals. Thus, he finds that workers chose to enter into private agreements with their employers (which, to the Brazilian historian's good fortune, had to be approved by the labor courts) almost as often as they chose to file a lawsuit directly, proving that, in practice, the system combined contractual and corporate traits. The exercise also reveals that decisions on key issues such as what to sue for or whether to appeal first-instance decisions to the superior court were the result of careful strategies by workers with varying backgrounds (chapter 4). One of these strategies—going on strike—proved particularly effective for workers because simultaneously suing and striking tended to yield more results than solely going to court (chapter 6). Finally, Teixeira reconsiders well-worn ideas about judges and their votes, including that lay judges (the workers' and the employers' representative) automatically voted in favor of those they represented, or that career judges invariably based their votes on professional or political criteria, without taking into account the circumstances of each case (chapter 5).

A final and extensive essay works with the records of a 1962 case centering on a sugar mill in the interior of São Paulo, to analyze the expansion of labor rights to rural workers during the Goulart government. By contrasting a communist union leaders' memoirs with the archives of the trial, Teixeira discovers that left-wing union leadership's criticisms that the case displayed ("classist" justice, controlled by the bourgeoisie and aimed primarily at controlling the workers), were rooted in a competition between left-wing trade unions, the Church, and the Goulart government to organize rural workers.

The essays in *Workers before the Courts* depict Brazilian labor tribunals as much more benevolent than previous treatments in historiography, in the legal literature, or by unionized workers. They show that, far from being an irrelevant institution whose primary function was workers' social control, labor courts functioned as an arena workers could use to their benefit, as the number of cases in which the courts favored workers demonstrate. The author also shows that the courts' intervention in industrial relations were not an obstacle to workers' mobilization, as evidenced by the combined strategy of direct action and judicialization to which they appealed. Most importantly, the essays demonstrate that the Brazilian working class experienced the establishment of labor courts and the everyday experience of being able to fight for their rights before the new judicial arenas as a formative moment, forging a legal consciousness among them and shaping their identity around a renovated rights culture.

It is this empowerment of workers, encouraged by the Goulart government and certain state institutions such as labor courts, that alarmed the propertied classes, business leaders, and other forces behind Brazil's military coup. It is the foundation of Teixeira da Silva's bold but very plausible argument that "the participation of workers and their leaders in the institutions set up since the 1930s to deal with labor relations was at the core of the 1964 coup" (1).

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Becoming Entitled: Relief, Unemployment, and Reform during the Great Depression

Abigail Trollingier

Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2020

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In the midst of an unprecedented economic collapse, how did unemployed workers transform the idea of direct government assistance from unacceptable handouts to a matter of right? In *Becoming Entitled*, Abigail Trollingier seeks to rescue settlement house workers from, as E. P. Thompson put it, the "enormous condescension of posterity" by arguing that "settlement workers were instrumental in the shift toward entitlement" (2).