

throughout the volume, that the dominant form of trade unionism in the US has always been some kind of apolitical “business unionism”. Not so. The American labor movement, including the AFL, has always been actively engaged in politics, as the work of Julie Greene, among others, has shown. It has not generally trusted the state to solve the problems of workers. It has also always been more concerned with securing its own freedom of association than with abolishing “the wages system”. But these traits have not made it “apolitical”. It has been simply differently political than, say, those movements which insisted that the solution to workers’ problems lay in public – i.e. state or government – ownership and control of the means of production. Nor should we take the American movement’s desire to give wage earners themselves a direct and determining voice in the terms and conditions of employment as evidence that it was business-minded or coddled employers. “Business unionism” was not a phrase invented by the labor movement to describe its activities; rather, it was coined by its adversaries to impugn its integrity. Until we get these matters straight, it will be difficult to understand the international history of the American labor movement, which has always been of a piece with its domestic history.

These gaps and blind spots are fortunately counterbalanced by the volume’s refreshingly non-dogmatic, serious treatment of many significant themes – most importantly, that whatever outcomes American labor’s “global ambassadors” may have sought, the trade unionists with whom they worked in other countries had their own goals and objectives. They were not patsies but partners, as committed to a vision of free, democratic trade unionism as were the Americans. If this shared desire or framework has to be labeled, the best name for it, I think, is “democratic syndicalism”. The American labor movement has long championed the view that labor is the best guarantor of labor’s rights; and, that a free people ought not, and most probably will not, sell its birthright in return for the mere promise of better days to come – especially if those better days are not to be the product of their own efforts. American trade unionists have also long been associated with, and lent their support to, others around the world who thought along similar lines. These allies and associates came to their democratic loyalties and anti-communism by their own paths, and had their own ideals. If the essays in *American Labor’s Global Ambassadors* are any indication, it may now be possible, finally, to tell their stories.

Michael Merrill

The Harry Van Arsdale Jr Center for Labor Studies,
SUNY Empire State College
325 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10013, USA
E-mail: Michael.Merrill@esc.edu

A Justiça do Trabalho e sua história. Os direitos dos trabalhadores no Brasil. Org. Ângela de Castro Gomes [e] Fernando Teixeira da Silva. Editora Unicamp, Campinas 2013. 525 pp. R\$60.00. doi:10.1017/S0020859015000127

This collection of essays aims to illuminate the historical role and reach of Brazil’s labor-court system, created in the 1940s as an independent branch of the country’s judiciary.

The volume groups the contributions into five blocs, each focused on a key aspect of the labor judiciary's operation and/or the limits of its reach.

The first and second bloc, respectively, analyze the use of conciliation and arbitration, the two principal avenues available to labor-court judges to resolve grievances under the 1943 labor law. The third bloc highlights the courts' normative power, i.e. the ability to impose binding solutions to disputes and to set new legal precedent, which distinguishes the labor courts from other branches of the judiciary. The limited coverage the labor law offers to rural workers constitutes the focus of the fourth bloc. The fifth and last bloc highlights another group of workers that have never enjoyed the full protection of the law: those with atypical labor contracts, whether as a result of outsourcing or their youth. These blocs provide structure, albeit not necessarily historiographical coherence. Unifying analytical themes are not readily apparent because of the diversity of approaches, time periods, and economic sectors represented by the essays.

The editors remind us in their introduction that the study of the labor judiciary's history is still in its infancy and describe the contents of the volume as a "sampling" (*amostragem*) of recent scholarship. That is an honest characterization, although it may not satisfy the reader expecting an introduction to the history of the labor judiciary as an institution. For some essays the labor courts serve merely as a backdrop or a quarry of sources to write histories in which the labor judiciary is not the primary focus of analysis.

One example is Benito Bisso Schmidt's engaging micro-history of the case of Therezia, a worker who filed a grievance against the shoe factory she had worked for to show that she had been the victim of unjust suspension. This is a story of competing discourses: the employer's portrayal of Therezia as an unreliable worker versus her own account of herself as a mother who took care of a sick child. Schmidt analyzes the social conflict between norms of the good worker and norms of the good mother – not the operation or rulings of the courts. Ângela de Castro Gomes's deeply insightful piece on the Brazilian state's legal response to the existence of "conditions of work equivalent to slavery" (*trabalho análogo a de escravo*) is less about the labor courts' history than about the labor judiciary's present-day significance. The state only began to combat modern slavery in the 1990s, although it was first outlawed in the penal code from the 1940s, and Castro Gomes highlights the labor judiciary's role in making prosecution more effective by the mid-2000s.

The remaining contributions focus more exclusively on the judiciary, if to varying degrees dependent on the specific setting and analytical approach. The essays focused on rural settings tell a story of precarious access to the labor judiciary because labor courts either did not exist or were just being established. As Frank Luce reminds us in his study of Bahia's cacao region, rural workers only enjoyed the protections of the labor law from 1963 to 1973, while the *Estatuto do Trabalhador Rural* remained in force. Luce's essay focuses on one judge, Antônio Vieira, president of the *Junta de Conciliação e Julgamento* in Ilhéus, and how he tried to establish the "rule of [labor] law" in an unfavorable political context against local elite resistance. Luce notes that the military regime encouraged rural workers to file their grievances with the courts, and that the local cacao barons tried every trick in the book to delay court rulings – and thus potential payments to workers. Antonio Torres Montenegro's essay on the Pernambuco sugar zone in the 1960s and early 1970s is a detailed and largely descriptive account of how the labor law and the incipient presence of the labor judiciary affected conflicts between rural workers and their bosses. It paraphrases the labor-court documents rather than summarizing or interpreting them, and it shies away from general conclusions about the impact of the labor judiciary.

The contributors writing about industrial workers are in the majority social historians of labor. The most pressing question for them is whether the courts took the workers' or the employers' side. The answer is ambiguous, reflecting the tremendous complexity of the social, political, and economic context, as well as the legal process.

In her analysis of several thousand grievances filed by coalminers in Rio Grande do Sul between 1946 and 1954, Clarice Speranza finds no clear pattern of the courts siding with workers. The only pattern emerging from the records is that workers represented by a union lawyer were less likely to agree to conciliation. Rinaldo Varussa finds similar patterns (or an absence thereof), albeit under very different circumstances: the rather precarious conditions of employment in Paraná's meat-packing industry in the 1990s and 2000s. Larissa Corrêa finds in her chapter on the rulings of São Paulo's Regional Labor Court in the first years of the military dictatorship (1964–1968) that the judges tried to use their normative power in favor of the workers, but found themselves constrained by the military regime's economic policies of wage indexation. Antonio Luigi Negro and E.O. Souza note in their piece on Bahia in the mid-1940s that the judiciary's intervention in the question of work discipline produced "ambiguous effects"; the recognition of the right to discipline pleased the employers, but the workers still found ways to use the courts to claim their rights.

In light of these very tentative and largely inconclusive findings, one wonders whether the question of what the courts did or could do for workers is quite the right one. After all, the labor law was not designed as a weapon for the weak, but rather as a tool to manage labor relations under Brazil's incipient industrial capitalism. Greater attention to the courts' operation on their own terms, as driven by the labor law's doctrinal logic, would appear to be a necessary complement to understand the labor judiciary's place in Brazil's postwar social and political history.

Fernando Teixeira da Silva writes as a social historian of labor, but his essay illuminates the practice of the labor courts and their impact on labor relations more systematically. His essay analyzes close to 500 *dissídios coletivos* (collective grievance procedures) judged by the Regional Labor Court of São Paulo in the fifteen months before the 1964 military coup. Silva's essay defines key concepts and surveys the debate about the impact of the labor judiciary, allowing the reader unfamiliar with specialized legal terminology to follow the argument with ease. Silva hypothesizes that strong unions were more likely to rely on direct negotiations with the employers, while weaker ones sought the help of the judiciary. His quantitative analysis showing that workers gained less in direct negotiations with the employers than in court rulings is surprising, which leads him to argue that the courts used their *poder normativo* in the workers' favor. An alternative interpretation would be that powerful unions were more willing to submit to a court ruling, which promised greater gains than direct negotiations, but posed less risk than a strike because the labor courts managed the conflict with the greater good of the nation in mind. If stronger unions indeed were more likely to challenge employers' offers in court, then the greater gains obtained in *dissídios* would not be as surprising.

Besides Luce's and Silva's contributions, the two essays that provide the most systematic insight into the labor judiciary's impact on labor relations are those by Vinícius de Rezende and Magda Barros Biaveschi on atypical contracts. Rezende traces the intervention of the labor courts in the leather industry of França from the 1940s to the 1980s. A general panorama of forty years of court cases, summarized in a few tables, nicely contextualizes the specific cases that demonstrate how employers tried to evade their

obligations under the labor law. With its long time frame and the effective combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis, the essay serves as an example of how historians can write about the labor courts to reflect both their unique role and their embeddedness in broader social and political struggles. Biaveschi's essay adds a comparative dimension and illustrates how intimate familiarity with the doctrinal logic of the labor law (she is a retired labor-court judge) enriches the analysis. In a first step, she traces how outsourcing undermined the employer–employee relationship as defined in the labor law. Then she uses a comparison of rulings from Rio Grande do Sul's pulp and paper industry to analyze whether the courts resisted the outsourcing by affirming labor rights or went along with the new economic logic. The answer, it turns out, is that it depends on the specific political and economic context.

The volume successfully makes the case that a history of the labor judiciary constitutes a crucial element in the study of the changing social relations of work in postwar Brazil. It is evident that the methodological challenges are considerable, however: too many labor court records have been destroyed, and when they have been preserved, they are often too voluminous for an individual historian to work through. As a result, the essays in this volume only offer very tentative conclusions: they “suggest” possible interpretations and offer “pointers” (*apontamentos*), but no definitive assessment of the significance of the courts. Some lessons for future scholarship on the labor judiciary emerge. A combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis appears best suited to capture both the patterns and the complexity of court rulings. The editors rightly argue that the history of the courts should not focus exclusively on jurisprudence, but neither should it become merely an appendix to the social history of labor. When placed in its proper doctrinal, economic, political, and social context, these essays show, the history of the labor courts can reveal much about Brazil's postwar social welfare capitalism.

Oliver Dinius

Department of History, University of Mississippi
Bishop Hall 323, University, MS 38677, USA
E-mail: dinius@olemiss.edu

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Few pieces of literature have both the ubiquity and longevity of Chairman Mao Zedong's *Quotations of Chairman Mao* (毛主席語錄, pinyin: *Máo zhǔxí yǔlù*), or more famously, the *Little Red Book*. While initially designed by the People's Liberation Army Daily (解放軍報; pinyin: *Jiěfàngjūn Bào*) to inspire PLA soldiers in service, Mao's *Quotations* evolved far beyond its diminutive form to become a medium through which the Chinese revolution could spread outside of China's borders. A selection of his most resonant quotes and precepts, it has been translated into more than sixty languages, and has influenced radically-minded intellectuals and workers in locales ranging from Phnom Penh to Dar es Salaam, Manila to Lima, and Delhi to Paris. Yet despite its global spread, scholars have thus far neglected to shed significant