

EDITOR'S REMARKS

The dialogue between historians who have investigated the ways structures of exploitation and political power have determined the character of national labor movements and those who have sought the explanation of workers' behavior in working people's own experience and cultures has produced a new generation of studies of Latin American workers informed by both concerns. Emilia Viotti da Costa assesses the nascent synthesis in this issue's Scholarly Controversy. She finds major improvements, especially in the study of populism. An earlier focus on the role of governments in shaping labor movements has been replaced by an appreciation of the uses made by workers of the symbols and institutions of populist regimes.

On the other hand, Viotti da Costa finds a glaring absence of attention to the roles of women in the new, as well as the old labor history of the region, despite an abundance of recent research into the history of Latin American women. The two important currents of social history continue to travel on parallel paths. Viotti da Costa also warns her readers that when the scrutiny of popular experience is abstracted from structures of power and conflict, it degenerates into sterile celebration of everyday life. She finds Peter Winn's book on Chilean textile workers exemplary because of its success in situating the local experiences and initiatives of workers in the context of government policies and structures of imperialism that shaped and were reshaped by the daily struggles in the Yarur mills.

Three commentators accept Viotti da Costa's arguments, but they elaborate upon them in ways that lead them into important conflicts with each other. Perry Anderson and Hobart Spalding both argue that only knowledge of structural determinants allows us to identify and explain patterns of diversity within everyday experience, and they warn against the dangers of importing the "discursive idealism," which is now fashionable in European and North American academic life, into the history of Latin America. Anderson adds that the contours of international competition, political authority, and accumulation are not immediately experienced in workers' everyday life and require their own appropriate methods of analysis.

Barbara Weinstein responds that structures of power cannot be incorporated into historical analysis in any way that leaves them "autonomous from the realm of human experience." She points out that the pioneers of structural analysis were social scientists who had engaged in little empirical research, and that many of their long-accepted propositions turned out upon investigation to have had no basis in fact. She concludes that a priori notions of the workers' historic mission and of "false consciousness" still distort the writing of Latin American history.

June Nash argues that Viotti da Costa has described the absence of labor historians' attention to women in a way that fails to illuminate important revisions

in our understanding of class and economic development in Latin America already suggested in research about women (mostly in disciplines other than history). Women's reproductive roles have always shaped class formation and conflict. Recent encouragement of export processing by multinational corporations has had an impact on gender divisions of labor that is very different from that produced by earlier government promotion of manufacturing of domestic substitutes for imported durable goods. Women's work in the changing tertiary sector, and especially in the informal economy, has lent new prominence to their activities in political mobilizations of the working class. Nash provides lenses fabricated in women's studies to sharpen labor historians' focus on both structures and experience.

Two review essays explore developing research in questions of special interest to historians of the United States. Ronald Schatz discusses the revival of interest among labor historians in law and the state. A framework for industrial relations that appeared so stable during the 1950s and 1960s that historians were tempted either to take it for granted or else to assume that it represented the final outcome of American workers' past struggles abruptly came apart. Its disintegration has inspired critical reassessment of labor law's origins and historic significance. John Bukowczyk finds that a resurgence of immigration to the United States and Europe has similarly alerted historians of earlier migrations to global patterns and to previously overlooked meanings of the migration process to immigrants. The result has been a major revision of the images of assimilation and progress that formerly channeled immigration history and labor history into divergent paths.

This is the last issue of *ILWCH* to be edited at Yale University. During the summer of 1989 the editorial offices moved to the Center for Studies of Social Change at the New School for Social Research, 64 University Place, 4th Floor, New York, N. Y. 10003. Helmut Gruber and Ira Katznelson will be the new editors of *ILWCH*. They will be assisted by an editorial board consisting of Geoffrey Field (SUNY-Purchase), Michael Hanagan (Columbia University), Emily Honig (Yale University), Louis Menashe (Polytechnic University), David Montgomery (Yale University), Mary Nolan (New York University), Anson Rabinbach (Cooper Union), Joan Scott (Institute for Advanced Study), Louise Tilly (New School for Social Research), and Sean Wilentz (Princeton University). The University of Illinois Press will continue to publish the journal and to manage its subscriptions.

I have resigned after ten years as editor. In parting I wish to express my appreciation to all those colleagues in the United States, Canada, Latin America, the Caribbean, Australia, Africa, Europe, and Asia, who have contributed to *ILWCH* during the last decade. Their efforts have kept alive and enhanced Bob Wheeler's legacy: a journal devoted to encouraging new approaches to the historical experience of working-class men and women, to emancipating the history of workers' movements from partisan myths, and to the mutual enrichment of historical research and working people's current struggles for a better life.

D.M.