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Nor was the Chicago, Great Western's 1893 refinancing through the issuance of debentures and preferred stock as unique as the author claims. Instead, it seems to follow closely the same pattern employed in the Gould reorganization of the Wabash which was held up in this study as an example of the misappropriation of shareholder wealth that accompanied the rise of corporate liberalism. As in the Wabash case "current debts" of the Chicago based line were exchanged for debentures and preferred stock. In both cases the objective was basically to reduce the overall level of fixed charges in part by converting some of the previously outstanding debt into a contingent claim (preferred stock) for which dividend payments could be deferred in the event of unprofitable operations without forcing the business into bankruptcy.

Although Professor Berk's narrative style is powerful and the issues he addresses are important to business historians, the plausibility of his thesis is called into question by the problems that I have mentioned. Moreover, Professor Berk's interpretation of the rich body of historical literature dealing with business regulation leaves this reader thinking that he has tried to force his facts into a corporate liberal mold.

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Working Women, Working Men: São Paulo and the Rise of Brazil's Industrial Working Class, 1900-1955. *By Joel Wolfe*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993. xii + 312 pp. Tables, illustrations, notes, bibliography, and index. Cloth, \$45.00, ISBN 0-8223-1330-8; paper, \$17.95, ISBN 0-8223-1347-2.

Reviewed by John D. French

The failure to study "independent rank-and-file activism," Joel Wolfe believes, has led to the incorrect conclusion that "Brazilian workers were less radical than their counterparts elsewhere in Latin America, and . . . [thus] had to be mobilized from above by Left political groups and/or the state" (pp. 3, 200). Although Wolfe admits that Brazil lacked "a large-scale, politically active [and powerful] formal labor movement," he argues that workers did sustain an "ongoing, informal, popular social movement organized around factory commissions" in the nation's emerging industrial capital of São Paulo (pp. 3-4, 189). At his most ambitious, Wolfe claims to have discovered a hitherto neglected "independent factory commission structure" among São Paulo's textile and metalworkers from 1917 to 1955 (p.

189). This “factory commission movement” survived the employer repression, state intervention, and police violence that repeatedly destroyed unions, Wolfe believes, because it “was broad based[,] . . . operated on the factory level” (pp. 3, 32–36, 47, 194), and “did not depend on political parties, unions, or other institutions,” including the state (p. 194). For Wolfe, the state-linked trade union structure created after 1930 is largely irrelevant, because the single most important avenue for organization, the factory commission, was never brought under effective state control. Indeed, the “workers’ continued reliance on their own factory commissions,” he argues, expressed a “rank and file alienation from the union structures” that took two forms: a refusal to join these “small unrepresentative formal unions” and a rejection of their sell-out *pelego* leaders (p. 5). For Wolfe, “the prevalence of factory commissions among workers in São Paulo’s larger industrial establishments” not only prevented São Paulo’s workers from “being duped by so called hegemonic ideologies” (p. 5) but guaranteed that neither their rural origins nor government propaganda would obscure their consciousness (p. 114); “they [simply] would not be manipulated by the corporatist government structure” (p. 175).

I have already expressed strong doubts about Wolfe’s argument in *The Brazilian Workers ABC* (1992, p. 332), as well as in an exchange in the *Hispanic American Historical Review* (November 1991). This book fails to marshal convincing evidence to prove that “factory commissions” were in fact a defining characteristic of the struggles of São Paulo’s textile and metalworkers. Beyond the looseness of his definition, Wolfe never offers even a rough estimate of how many existed at any given moment, nor does he explore their geographical, industrial, or social ecology. Although given to ad hoc generalizations, he never systematically documents variations in their distribution across sizes and types of enterprises in two complex industries. In the end, Wolfe’s failure to examine the incidence of “factory commissions” systematically stems, I suspect, from the fact that commissions were by no means as common as he makes them out to be—even during the upsurge of 1946.

Over-generalizing from a limited set of cases is by no means uncommon, and Wolfe may be right about the existence of traditions of “commission”-like organization in certain factories. The great puzzle of this book, however, is its failure to offer an in-depth case study of any given factory commission. After all, only a factory-level study could explain how “groups of five to fifty workers” (p. 1) established their legitimacy or successfully resisted employer repression. We could then identify which problems loomed largest on the shop floor while better understanding the link between various forms of organization and “day-to-day resistance.” A multiple case study approach, in addition to serving as a benchmark for later scholars, would also have forced Wolfe to sharpen the comparative focus of his rather diffuse discussion of metalworkers versus textile workers and male versus female workers. It is particularly disappointing, given the book’s title, that it offers so little on the construction of gender within the factories—the subject of an excellent 1980s São Paulo study that Wolfe lists in his bibliography but fails to use

(John Humphrey, *Gender and Work in the Third World* [1987]). Indeed, Wolfe is often quite cavalier about his citation of other authors, as in the case of an article by Emily Honig that he refers to on p. 207 ("Burning Incense," *Signs* [1985]). Readers are invited to judge for themselves the accuracy of the sixteen footnotes he devotes to criticizing my own work.

Wolfe also contradicts himself on vital questions. For example, after repeatedly emphasizing the commission's ability to survive repression, we are told that the implantation of official union structures during the dictatorial Estado Novo regime resulted in the replacement of "independent factory commissions . . . by instruments of the state and its industrialist allies" (p. 89). Yet he then asserts on page 123 that the "Estado Novo and wartime measures . . . could not end workers' grass roots organizing" through their factory commissions, which not only fought "harsh conditions on the shop floor, [and] bargain[ed] for higher wages" but were used to "combat high rents and food costs in their neighborhoods" (p. 123)—extraordinary claims for which he offers no proof. At another point, he says that commissions disciplined "workers who wanted to participate in the government's industrial relations system or foremen's production speedups" (pp. 115, 191) after having repeatedly said that workers used the government's labor courts during these years.

More strikingly, the overall logic of much of Wolfe's argument is abandoned, with little ado, in chapter six ("Factory Commissions and the Triumph of São Paulo's Working Class Movement, 1950–1955"). After having exaggerated the opposition between workers, the unions, and the state, he now goes to the opposite extreme and hails 1951 as the year when the factory commissions seized "de facto control of the textile and metalworkers union" (pp. 183, 179). In his account, a striking "unity of purpose between the rank and file and the union leadership" (pp. 174, 178, 185) is established almost overnight, even with some of the *pelego* union leaders Wolfe has earlier denounced so vigorously (pp. 165–66, 172, 176). And Wolfe's jealously independent commissions are now willingly "transformed into formal shop-floor councils within the unions, [which] bargained directly with employers" (p. 189). Even the newly elected President Vargas, he writes, finally abandons "the corporatist policies he had so forcefully introduced during the early 1930s and the Estado Novo" (p. 175). The transformation is so complete, Wolfe suggests by way of conclusion, that "São Paulo's industrial workers had managed to establish a de facto [open] industrial relations system [by the mid-1950s] . . . unfettered by the elaborate state control mechanisms" of the labor code (pp. 189–90).

As a scholar working on the metalworkers of greater São Paulo in the 1950s, I can say with conviction that Wolfe's overblown claims are simply wrong. The errors could have been avoided easily were it not for Wolfe's impoverished grasp of the *paulista* labor studies historiography, evolution, and defining debates. Most important, he neglected to read the single most famous study of São Paulo metalworkers in the 1950s: Juarez Rubens Brandão Lopes, "O Ajustamento do Trabalhador na Indústria: Mobilidade Social e Motivação," in Bertram Hutchinson, ed. *Mobilidade e Trabalho*

(1960). Based on participant observation, this excellent study examined a medium-sized São Paulo metalworking factory in 1957, both before and during the so-called Strike of the 700,000. Brandão Lopes's work documented the fragility of the link between the workers and their ostensible union while demonstrating the absence of collective organization on the shopfloor (a finding ratified by other studies over the next decade).

In conclusion, it can be said that what is new in Wolfe's book is not convincing and what is convincing is by no means new.

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Technological Innovation and the Development of Transportation in Japan. *Edited by Hirofumi Yamamoto* • Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1993. xiii + 296 pp. Notes, tables, charts, appendix, bibliography, and index. \$50.00. ISBN 92-808-0551-7.

Reviewed by Seiichiro Yonekura

Nowadays, Japanese transportation technologies, such as railroads, automobiles, shipbuilding, and shipping, are undoubtedly considered world class in terms of quality and quantity. Many foreigners who visit Japan are amazed with how punctual and comfortable the Japanese railroad systems operate and how globally dominant and efficient the Japanese shipping industry is. This edited book examines the development of Japan's transportation system from the beginning of the last century up to 1980. It consists of eight chapters and a very short epilogue looking at an overall policy and development of railroads, roads, and shipping within a formative period. When we consider that Japan used only foot, primitive cow- or horse-drawn carriage, and small boats for its transportation before the Meiji Restoration (1868), the development of Japanese transportation is quite an extraordinary stride. Furthermore, when we consider that the systematic development of transportation has a strong relation with the development of the other basic industries and organizational capabilities, it is quite intellectually stimulating to scrutinize the history of Japanese technological innovations in transportation relating to the development of the Japanese economy as a whole. Unfortunately, however, I have to conclude that the result of the book is very disappointing. There are three major reasons for the disappointment. First of all, the four authors, Hirofumi Yamamoto, Hiromi Masuda, Katsumasa Harada, and Eiichi Aoki, defined the impact of technological innovations in transportation so narrowly that they missed an opportunity to examine broader aspects of the importance of the transportation industry. As Alfred Chandler has described in his detailed study, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, Mass., 1977),