

The first chapter establishes the demographic and geographic parameters of that growth, demonstrating the emergence of a publicly visible and impoverished female urban labor force. Hutchison's analysis here is logically focused on Santiago, but could benefit from a more explicit discussion of "urban" Chile more broadly. Chapter two effectively overturns the assumption that women's wage labor declined in early 20th-century Santiago. Hutchison thus shows that women were not only symbolically central to labor politics and the labor press, as analyzed in the next two chapters. Representations of and debates about "la mujer obrera" revealed contradictory assessments of women's capacity for work and radical political agency, including sharp disagreements between anarchists and socialists, but also a consensus that the revolutionary goal was the male breadwinner-headed nuclear family. Hutchison's pathbreaking chapter on worker feminists in the first decade of the century concludes that they shared the gender traditionalism of organized labor, adopting a stance of "cross-gender [class] solidarity" (122). Her reference to labor's mockery of worker feminism thus requires further explanation; could it have prompted those rare critiques of working-class patriarchy that Hutchison located in the worker feminist press? Though Hutchison "intentionally circumvents [the] narrative of liberal feminism" (8) dominant in Latin American women's history, her portrayal of a vibrant working-class feminism also raises new questions about the weakness of liberal feminism in Chile in the early 20th century.

The second half of the book examines three sets of elite actors and their anxieties about female urban labor: private and state forces concerned with industrial education, Catholic feminists, and parliamentary legislators. Hutchison clearly shows that each group understood social and economic change in gendered terms, and that their reform efforts focused on urban working women. Those efforts included a state-run vocational education network, Catholic workshops and female unions designed to compete with leftist organizations, and protective legislation. Hutchison recognizes the limits of these projects, both in scope and in their strong tendency to reinforce the existing sexual division of labor that so disadvantaged women. These projects, as she concludes, laid the groundwork for post-1930 conflicts and negotiations among feminists, the labor movement, and the state. For example, Hutchison details the work of Elena Caffarena, one of the first female Labor Inspectors of the 1920s, who in 1935 founded the Movimiento Pro-Emancipación de la Mujer (Women's Pro-Emancipation Movement), which was one of the strongest cross-class feminist organizations in Latin American history.

Hutchison marshals an impressive array of sources in her portrayal of working women's lives and others' debates about them. Though her prose tends to understate the significance of her findings, it is refreshingly lucid. The introduction makes a particularly clear, compelling case for the relevance of gender to the histories of class formation, labor organization, left politics, and state reform. Valuable to students of Latin American history and to specialists on labor and gender in the region, *Labors Appropriate to Their Sex* will also contribute much to comparative discussion and scholarship as gender analysis continues to transform and enrich labor historiography.

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Afogados em Leis: A CLT e a Cultura Política dos Trabalhadores Brasileiros

JOHN D. FRENCH, 2001

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In 1919, the writer João do Rio published "The Man with a Cardboard Head" (in his

collection titled *Rosario da Ilusão*), a satirical short story in which the protagonist, Antenor, was a young man who put his own ideas into practice, violating the norms of his fellow citizens. Since this irritated everyone, his family asked him to be like other people. His uncle advised him to graduate from law school. Studying was unnecessary. It was enough to ingratiate himself with an important politician, and then become a member of congress or a cabinet minister. Tired of having his own thoughts, Antenor took the advice, began to lie and pretend he was somebody different, and ended up as one of the most illustrious people in the country.

João do Rio satirized Brazilian political culture for its loquacity, cult of formalism, verbal pretentiousness, cynical opportunism, and eagerness to take appearances for reality. This same political culture, according to John French, gave rise to the "Consolidation of the Labor Laws" (*Consolidação das Leis do Trabalho* or CLT), in force in Brazil since 1943.

Created in the first government of Getúlio Vargas (1930–1945), the CLT is a law code designed to regulate the world of labor in great detail. With 922 articles embracing most occupational categories, this code establishes rules governing working conditions as well as individual and collective disputes between employees and employers. Because of its scope, the CLT was much celebrated, both in Brazil and abroad, as the most advanced social legislation in the world. Its drafters argued that it originated in the government's sincere desire to improve the living conditions of the working class. But French does not glorify the CLT. He sees the law code as the work of cynical and ambitious men involved in a legalistic, conservative, and paternalistic policy.

One might also interpret the code as a populist demagogy and sheer ideological reality-concealing discourse. French's analysis avoids this kind of simplification. The cynical legislative fever is only a part of the CLT's history. After all, other actors intervened in order for the legal code to make justice possible. Although "drowning in laws," the workers also starved for justice. This hunger was increased by the employers' disrespect for the law. They considered the workplace the domain of private and not public law. Corruption, precarious inspection by the Labor Ministry, the political influence of the employers, the lack of union representatives in the factories, and the partiality of the judiciary led many workers to regard the CLT as a mystification, a legalism lacking normative power.

It is in this sense that the distance between law and reality illuminates the subjective dimensions of the CLT as evaluated by workers, who had two visions of the law: as fraud and as hope. According to one trade-union leader, "the worker is surrounded by law on all sides and is dying of hunger" (7). A bricklayer, who always carried the CLT under his arm, said "this is my Bible" (11). French explores the "legal consciousness" of the Brazilian working class, that is, the way workers conceived of the law and the way their ideas were transformed when they interacted with it. He sees both the rejection and the idealization of the labor laws as central to this consciousness.

Thus French argues that labor legislation was a powerful formative element of working-class culture in Brazil. Analyses centered on the ideological and institutional aspects of the CLT have considered the law a simple instrument of class domination, which invariably lessened the workers' capacity for organization and mobilization. French, on the contrary, argues that the CLT's normative ideal had real effects only in the context of workers' actions which sought to convert legal discourse into a weapon against the employers. Thus, labor laws have become real insofar as the workers fought to transform them from "an imaginary ideal into a possible future reality" (10).

By assuming that "law equals reality" (81), many scholars concluded that populist ideology, strongly embedded in workers' culture, created a working class with a populist consciousness, which would express itself in terms of paternalistic legalism. However, in the pages of *Afogados em Leis*, workers emerge without cardboard heads.