

played by liquor in the process of reincorporation into rural society. Similarly, Edgcombe, in a welcome chapter, brings the rural and the mining together by looking at the colliery beerhall as a factor in the recruitment and control of labor in Natal's coal-mining industry.

All in all, this collection does an excellent job of bringing to center stage the importance of alcohol in the labor history of southern Africa. Still, it remains very much within the historiographical paradigm that has evolved over the past quarter century. This is evident, for instance, in the geographical area it covers. Like most books with "southern Africa" in the title, this one is actually heavily weighted toward the Republic of South Africa. Ten of the fourteen case studies deal with South Africa, and seven of these are centered on the Witwatersrand and Natal regions, the veritable "burnt-over" districts of South African historical studies. The heavy focus on urban areas and mining centers is also in keeping with the dominant scholarly tradition. Twelve of the fourteen case studies are based on urban areas or mining complexes, or both. Only one essay, Scully's, is concerned with agricultural laborers, historically one of the largest categories of workers in southern Africa. Nor is there anything on domestics, another large group of workers. On the other hand, this volume pays more attention to women than is traditionally the case in southern African historiography, though this is now beginning to change.

For this reviewer, one of the greatest weaknesses of the present collection, as of South African historiography generally, is the extent to which many of the essays, particularly the ones on South Africa, remain cut off from the broader flow of events in the rest of Africa north of the Limpopo River. It bears emphasizing, however, that this does not extend to the editors themselves. Their introductory chapter demonstrates considerable catholicity as far as the literature on liquor and labor is concerned, not just in Africa but in the North Atlantic world as a whole. But, alas, too many of their contributors came up short in this regard. Still, there can be no gainsaying the overall significance of the collection. It will remain a standard reference for many years to come.

Michael O. West

BOLL, FRIEDHELM. *Arbeitskämpfe und Gewerkschaften in Deutschland, England und Frankreich. Ihre Entwicklung vom 19. zum 20. Jahrhundert.* [Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Sozialgeschichte Braunschweig, Bonn.] Verlag J. H. W. Dietz Nachf., Bonn 1992. 685 pp. Ill. DM 198.00.

Books on the German labor movement are legion, but studies of that topic from an international comparative perspective are rare. That is one reason for welcoming Friedhelm Boll's recent publication. Its historical point of departure is the great outbreak of strike activity which swept across Europe in 1889 and 1890, and which may be seen as a major discontinuity in the history of the labor movement – especially, though not only, in Germany. Boll interprets this as a special case of the broader phenomenon of "strike waves" (following Shorter and Tilly's book on French strike history), but also employs it as an entrée into the comparative history of labor union development in England, France and Germany from the middle of

the nineteenth to the early twentieth century. *Arbeitskämpfe und Gewerkschaften* is thus not simply a long book, but one with a large theme.

The “large theme” builds on the tension between the common “strike wave” experience of the three countries, on the one hand, and the diversity of their union organizations and union behavior patterns, on the other. Its treatment takes the form of a number of smaller-scale histories of strikes and of union development in all three countries. Their focus is mainly, but by no means exclusively, the 1880s and early 1890s. For although Boll emphasizes the watershed character of 1889–1890 – and thus made a suggestion for the periodization of German labor history – his aim is to show how the differing pre-1889 histories of labor in Britain, France and Germany shaped their post-1889 development. I return to this point shortly.

The author writes mainly for a German audience, of course, and in this respect his book fulfills two functions: (1) to add to the historiography of the German labor movement; and (2) to provide German readers with up-to-date accounts of the French and English trade union development. The two are related, to be sure, for part of Boll’s contribution to the German historiography is to clearly identify its unique characteristics by comparison with other countries. To illustrate the point, I offer one interesting example.

The example concerns the identification of spatial mobility as a key feature of German labor organization history. According to Boll, this resulted from the earlier subordinate position of journeymen in Germany’s guild-dominated handicraft production and from widespread “structural unemployment”, both of which became acute during the first half of the nineteenth century. This combination forced journeymen workers to keep on the move, rather than organize at the local level – which was the artisan response in England. In England, we learn, not qualification as “master”, but ownership of capital, marked the key class division between “employer-masters” and all others (small masters, journeymen and apprentices). The latter organized locally. The importance of this built-in propensity to move became apparent in the late 1860s, when the legal ban on employee organizations was lifted (1868 and 1869). Germany’s first great strike wave took place at this time (c. 1868 to 1873) and correlated well with the creation of strike organizations which were at once quasi-unions (or the bases of future unions); and these organizations, thanks to high mobility, were supra-local in structure and thus pre-destined to develop a centralized power structure.

The author utilizes this and other elements of the historical background to explain the emergence of Germany’s relatively centralized union organization in the course and in the wake of the strike wave of 1889–1890, though he also acknowledges the important role of employer organizations as a dialectical counter force. Boll’s interpretation of this development also produces, I should add, a more militant picture of union activity than the standard literature. Unions were not only not strike-hindering institutions, as has been claimed, but they also contributed positively to labor’s class consciousness and solidarity.

A noteworthy feature of *Arbeitskämpfe und Gewerkschaften* is its use of quantified data – on the number of strikes and strike participants, on the number, size and branch distribution of union organizations, on the results of strikes, etc. Boll makes a valiant attempt to standardize the data in order to facilitate cross-country comparison; and the results are extremely useful, not only for the direct comparisons they permit but also because they identify certain data discrepancies which limit quantitative comparison and point to true, international differences. One sees

here the influence of the Shorter and Tilly study of French strike patterns, on which Boll draws freely. However, Boll also draws on rather different studies, such as those of M. Perrot, and as one reads on, it becomes clear that he prefers to use statistics as illustrative material, not as analytical instruments. He frequently expresses strong reservations concerning the quantifiability of strike history, both within and across countries. This helps explain why he makes no use of regression or correlation analysis.

The reluctance to use statistics analytically, however, is related to Boll's methodological stance. Despite the book's openness toward economic, sociological and anthropological concepts, it reflects much more of the historian's interest than that of those other disciplines. Boll is less interested in a general explanation of strike waves or union organization valid for all three countries than in identifying the variety and complexity of the many factors at work in each one. A satisfying explanation of the variety, it seems, is valued more highly than testing a theory which focuses on a common element. This is thus not the place to expect a comparative analysis of the kind Shorter and Tilly attempted for France.

This review has focused on *Arbeitskämpfe und Gewerkschaften* as its author sees it: as a historical study of "industrial relations" emphasizing conflict and labor consciousness. In concluding, however, I should like to mention at least an important issue the book avoids: the relationship between labor productivity, on the one hand, and working conditions and incentive structures (including wages), on the other. Industrial relations were not solely, in the economists' term, a zero-sum game, but an area in which cooperative behavior between employers and employees could yield positive gains. Under certain conditions employers will derive utility from union presence, and prefer unionized employees to non-unionized ones. Whether cooperation and the application of positive work incentives has prevailed over negative sanctions and confrontation, in any given situation, would seem to depend on the nature of the work process itself, especially the degree of skill and care required. Boll largely excludes these issues, though there are a few scattered hints in their direction. This has to do with the fact that he does not view labor relations from an economist's point of view, i.e. he has no "model" of the labor market.

Nevertheless, I should like to conclude on a more positive note. *Arbeitskämpfe und Gewerkschaften* is not only a book for German historians. It has much to offer other social scientists as well, e.g. those interested in the causes and consequences of social movements, in the relationship between economic fluctuations and collective action, and in the international diffusion of those phenomena and the links between them. In fact, I think it deserves an English translation.

Richard Tilly