

IN ALLER KÜRZE

Klaus Voll (Editor): Against Child Labour. Indian and International Dimensions and Strategies

Mosaic Books, New Delhi 1999, 376 S.

India and many other countries have known and accepted child labour for so long that one is tempted to say that it will 'always be with us', whatever we might do to try and end it. What are the facts? What, if anything, has been done, is being done, and is planned to be done to lift the burden of India's child workers and those elsewhere in the world? What are their actual working conditions? How is the problem viewed and variously analyzed by scholars and social workers active in the field? What is the attitude of the employers of child labour and the parents of working children? Which roles should Trade Union and NGOs play? Many of these reflections could serve as a potential model for future strategies.

Besides the humanitarian approach of social welfare workers, and their governmental and non-governmental organizations, are the economic-industrial aspects, the short- and long-term effects of different degrees and rates of the withdrawal of child labour. An even newer aspect of the issue is in the area of international trade – the insistence of industrially advanced countries that they will import Indian products and also products from other countries only if they are satisfied that they are not produced with child labour, which raises problems of international inspection and certification, and also suspicions concerning the real intension of the so-called 'social clauses' in trade agreements.

The focus on global, national and local dimensions leads to the logical conclusion that primarily reform forces from within societies with substantial child labour and an increased involvement of representatives of the oppressed sections in well-designed practical programmes will strengthen the attempts to resist a further increase of child labour and to finally eliminate this inhuman social evil one day.

This volume, through contributions from renowned social reforms and experts, constitutes a veritable compendium of information on child labour and analyses of its multiple facets, and the practical steps involved in its abolition. It will be of interest and utility in developing countries sharing India's problems and, in fact, also in industrially advanced countries to enable them to adopt trade and aid policies vis-à-vis developing countries that will best serve the objective of promoting fair trade and the progressive abolition of child labour in the countries with which they trade.

Against Child Labour would be of interest to international and national decision-makers, donors, importers and employers, trade unionists, NGO-activists, academicians and socially sensitive persons worldwide.

Laura Hein/Mark Selden (Hrsg.): Censoring History. Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States

M.E.Sharpe, New York 2000, 301 S.

Schools and textbooks are important vehicles through which contemporary societies transmit ideas of citizenship and both the idealized past and the promised future of the community. They provide authoritative narratives of the nation, delimit proper behavior of citizens, and sketch the parameters of the national imagination. Narratives of nationhood, like textbooks themselves, are always unfinished projects, requiring revision and reinterpretation to remain relevant in ever-changing times.

Controversies over textbook content often break out when prevailing domestic assumptions about national unity are challenged and when international relations change rapidly, as in many parts of the contemporary post-Cold War world. Major wars are defining moments in forging and sustaining national identities. Textbook controversies reveal one important way that societies negotiate, institutionalize, and renegotiate nationalist narratives. This volume examines and compares controversies over textbook depictions of recent wars in Japan, Germany, and the United States.

Because textbooks are carried into neighbourhood schools and homes, and because, directly or indirectly, they carry the imprimatur of the state, they have enormous authority. Yet in all three countries the vision of education as a tool of democratic citizenship has coexisted uneasily with other models; notably, education to compete in the global marketplace, to conform to officially sanctioned ideals of homogeneity, and to sacrifice for national security goals. That tension over defining the fundamental rights and responsibilities of citizens is at the heart of the most important controversies over textbook content. The essays gathered here take a stand on this question – they all assume that education should teach students how to judge for themselves when to support and when to oppose the policies of their own state.

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