significantly advance our understanding of why political violence in Guangxi came to be so much more intense than in most other Chinese regions. This is a must-read for anyone interested in modern Chinese history and the Cultural Revolution in particular.

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ANNA SAILER, Workplace Relations in Colonial Bengal: The Jute Industry and Indian Labour 1870s–1930s [Critical Perspectives in South Asian History.] Bloomsbury Academic, London 2022. xiv, 298 pp. £90.00. (Paper: £28.99; E-book: £26.09.)

Anna Sailer's monograph explores the shifts in workplace relations in the Bengal jute industry from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries and how they impacted worker relations and labor movements in colonial Bengal. Critically studying a versatile array of sources including government records, newspapers, interviews, gazetteers, and visual data illustrations, Sailer argues that workplace labor control policies steered the changes the Bengal jute industry underwent as it moved from uneven production in the 1860s to a global monopoly by the late 1930s. Labor control strategies – such as implementing managerial control processes in relation to employment; initiating alterations in shift systems to organize workflow on the factory floor; and expanding labor control across mill premises through regulating entry and exit to monitor employees' movements and productivity throughout the workday – all contributed to the evolution of workplace relations in colonial Bengal jute industry. Sailer complements these strategies by investigating workers' experiences, actions, and counter-strategies in response to the top-down transformations that ruptured the social fabric of labor relations, which embedded sharing work with family in workers' social network. Analyzing the workplace's importance in labor regulations, Sailer's work critiques the colonial capitalist regulation in Calcutta's industrial hinterlands.

In Chapter One, Sailer maps the spatial context of jute mills. The author shows how the affordable land prices, lower rural municipal tax rates and proximity to abundant labor supply incentivized factory owners to build mills along the river on the outskirts of Calcutta. The author outlines in detail the managerial creation of a pan-Indian workforce through schemes that offered healthcare to women and benefits to Madrassi families, encouraging labor to migrate to Calcutta's industrial belts for factory work. Workers from Madras became a majority in the jute workforce, with non-Bengali laborers also flowing in from Bihar, Orissa, and the United Provinces. The chapter also focuses on work regulation from the 1870s to the early 1920s in the context of the multiple-shift system. Sailer shows how commercial competition extended working hours necessitating the multiple-shift system for workers through deployment of work gangs from the 1890s. With the multiple-shift system in place,

workers had flexible routines which did not hinder the industry's need as mills could tap into a "conserved" productive capacity of labor when adjusting working hours. Sailer discusses how critics of the multiple-shift system cited risks of overproduction and labor control issues, causing many mills in the 1920s to abandon the multiple-shift system.

Chapter Two analyzes the multiple shift system from the 1920s, situating excess employment and shared work at its core. The author shows how traditional, personal habits of workers such as taking breaks for religious observances and long working hours occurred in the workplace and indicated a lack of harmony between workers' habits and workplace's routine within the jute production process. Excess employment of workers to organize shared work allowed scope for better managerial control over work. In this scenario, Sailer points out that extra workers were perceived as part of group assigned to specific jobs or machines and not individually recognized to be working. Nevertheless, sharing work as groups through excess employment created opportunities to build social bonds ensuring mutual support. So, even if workers stepped out to take breaks by the river, managerial control did not see it as "laziness" but a "necessity" since work at the machines did not halt, courtesy of another worker stepping in. Furthermore, Sailer states that this workplace camaraderie created a non-verbal communicative interaction – a "wireless telegraphy" through signs and gestures among workers – that ensured coordinated work but could also challenge mill authority.

Investigating the violent conflicts that erupted in the early twentieth century responding to workplace transformations, Sailer argues in Chapter Three that changes in work organization through the introduction of single-shift system, which was a managerial effort to "modernize" workplace, caused labor struggles. Modernizing efforts brought about a restructuring of wage incentives through formal identification of each worker and evaluation of the quality and quantity of their work and made mass dismissals of workers a defining feature of the workplace. The author shows how modernizing efforts aimed to create an adult male workforce by dismissing child workers and significantly reducing women workers' wages, wherein the lowest paid male coolies outearned the highest paid female workers. Other approaches to modernize work looked like establishing tea stalls within mill premises to keep workers within mills during work hours. All these efforts along with the introduction of the single-shift system, Sailer posits, reduced the functionality of familial units for jute production which was integral to the former multiple-shift system. However, Sailer shows that the single-shift system was a provisional negotiation at best as managerial modernizing efforts became a source of conflict. For instance, tea stalls within mill areas to monitor workers often became spaces for forging solidarity and participating in political conversations among workers. The author concludes that consequences of changes in shift-systems, and not wage disputes, increased workers' activism as individual workers' daily working hours increased and curtailed off-days which were crucial for generating income through other jobs.

Chapters Four and Five explore labor strikes in Bengal jute industry in the 1920s and 1930s. As a nationwide trade union movement was on the rise, Sailer shows that labor strikes spilled over from localized Calcutta hinterlands to join broad

movements. Headed by Prabhabati Das Gupta and Kali Sen (leaders of Bengal Jute Workers' Union, BJWU), the 1929 general strike showed the ideological polarization of workers' politics and the merging of nationalist, moderate, and communist trade union activists reflecting a pan-Indian development. Arguing against a spatial homogenization of the strike as solely concentrated in Calcutta's urbanized localities, the author shows the evolution and complexities of trade union rhetoric and actions in varied locations. For instance, in the context of the Indian Jute Mills Association's decision to extend the work week to sixty hours, Sailer shows divergent leadership approaches within the BJWU. While Das Gupta's moderate stance aimed to center the strike in one region to ensure control, Sen's strategies were sweeping- spreading rumors about implementation of single-shift system and touring mill towns to spread strike action far and wide. Nevertheless, immediate localized contexts fueled strikes in different pockets of jute mill areas in Bengal, indicating that causes of labor strikes were heterogeneous.

In the 1940s and 1950s, geopolitical shifts in colonial South Asia had ramifications for the jute industry. Sailer examines how the Partition caused communal riots whereby skilled Muslim weavers left the mill areas and the geographical division of land meant jute cultivation areas fell under East Pakistan while jute mills remained in India. The author also discusses changes in wages, working hours, and labor relations in the context of the emergence of a state-controlled economy and the Indian government becoming the largest industrial employer, exerting control over production and labor-capital relationships. Jute industrial disputes came to be resolved through legislation and judicial mediation, establishing a state-planned system of industrial relations with labor courts and tribunals playing decisive roles. For instance, the 1947 industrial tribunal's decision led to the abolition of the contract labor system and formalized labor relations within the workspace.

Sailer's work is a noteworthy contribution to labor history as it historicizes the dynamic industrial workplace landscape through an in-depth analysis of contestations and compromises in jute mills. Sailer's detailed narrative explores how changes in the way work was organized in the jute industry were closely linked to where mills and workers were located and how efficiently production and worker management were carried out. This was evident in the 1870s, as concerns about depending on locally available workforce led to regulating work gangs, including more workers than required. By the early twentieth century, excess employment decreased as sources of labor supply increased (to include Bihar and the United Provinces) formalizing employment of each individual worker. Sailer's monograph excels in highlighting how changes in workspaces intimately affected personal lives, familial futures and social bonds that supported workers in their daily factory work. Furthermore, this work unravels the heterogeneity and intersections that existed with the identity of a worker. Hierarchies, difference in nature and amount of work, pay and mobility had different connotations based on other affiliations and markers – whether a worker was Hindu or Muslim; came from the local Bengali society or from "up-country"; whether they were an unskilled worker or a skilled weaver; as well as between bodily markers of gender and age. Sailer's research showcases an exceptional eye for nuances that made up the indigenous colonial Indian workers' community and the versatility of indigenous experiences that

constituted colonial India. This book makes important contributions to the history of colonial capitalism and studies of colonial South Asia.

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Contingent Workers' Voice in Southern Europe. Collective Experiences of Protection and Representation. Ed. by Sofía Pérez de Guzmán, Marcela Iglesias-Onofrio, and Ivana Pais. [Southern European Societies Series.] Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham [etc.] 2023. ix, 219 pp. £95.00. (E-book: £25.00.)

This book looks at a paradigmatic aspect of contemporary capitalism – contingent workers. It explores the collective dimension within which practices and initiatives emerge to develop effective strategies that empower these workers and experiment with innovative forms of protection and representation. Curated by three accomplished sociologists – Sofía Pérez de Guzmán, Marcela Iglesias-Onofrio, and Ivana Pais – this volume is the result of a collaboration with seven other scholars and researchers as part of the European SWIRL (Slash Workers and Industrial Relations) project.

The book specifically focuses on two of the six countries examined in the SWIRL project – Spain and Italy. These nations, both in Southern Europe, have economic-productive profiles and labour market characteristics that exhibit commonalities while also presenting some notable differences. In the analysis of industrial relations systems, Spain and Italy are traditionally positioned within the cluster of Southern European countries. The book sheds light on the challenges and opportunities faced by contingent workers in these contexts, emphasizing the need for collective efforts to address their concerns and pave the way for innovative solutions in protection and representation.

The two countries share similar labour markets and exhibit comparable trends in the realm of contingent workers. However, simultaneously, they also highlight some notable differences concerning the case studies analysed. In both countries, contingent workers are only partially encompassed within a social protection system modelled on full-time employees and, to a much lesser extent, on the self-employed. Furthermore, in both cases, this limited inclusion has become more apparent with the proliferation of platform work. In this context, workers are frequently self-employed, despite the nature of their work and the conditions under which they perform, warranting recognition as employees.

Another shared characteristic, which will be explored in greater detail later, pertains to the actions and strategies of the organizations mapped and studied. Over the years, these entities have demonstrated, albeit with limitations and shortcomings, their ability to innovate the concept of representation, highlighting and attempting to