

democracy to respond to social movements such as feminism and environmentalism in reconstructing social-democratic ideology. The CCF was born, or course, out of a previous generation of social movements and Whitehorn's guide to the future might also prove a key to the past.

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John E. Zucchi — *The Little Slaves of the Harp. Italian Street Musicians in Nineteenth-Century Paris, London, and New York*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992. Pp. vii, 205.

Children as victims of economic crisis, unstable family situations, and opportunistic adults are no new themes in social history. But John Zucchi's examination of the lives of young itinerant street musicians in three major nineteenth-century cities illuminates a neglected area of the history of nineteenth-century childhood. The street musicians were sometimes orphans, but usually they were indentured to a *padroni* by an Italian peasant family who would have known little about the nature of the promised employment. Once in a large foreign city, the children were hurriedly taught to play the street organ, violin, or harp or to display trained animals for whatever tips they could earn. Their *padroni* managed a dozen or so children each and thus earned comfortable livings for themselves, if not their charges. Information about these child musicians is sparse and Zucchi has carefully mined the court records, newspapers, parliamentary reports and diplomatic messages to ferret out the history of this form of child labor.

After tracing the emigration patterns from Italian villages (complete with maps), Zucchi then describes in detail how the children were treated by their *padroni*, how and where they worked, and the types of local ordinances passed to inhibit them. He devotes a chapter to the street musicians in each of the cities under study. Toward the end of the century, society became increasingly concerned over the health and welfare of these immigrant children, and reform groups in New York and London sought to remove these children from the streets, get them into school, or send them back to Italy.

In a separate chapter, Zucchi traces the growing concern within (newly unified) Italy that the national image was being tarnished by the inflammatory accounts of child exploitation found in the London and New York presses. Working in cooperation with municipal authorities, Italian officials attempted to stop the flow of children out of the country and to repatriate those who were being sent back. In the end, the author concludes that Italian legislation was not nearly as important in stopping the practice as events within the cities where the itinerants performed.

What this cross-cultural study reveals is that the late-century Victorian sentimentalizing of childhood that fuelled both the American and British campaigns against child labor does not translate to the French and Italian experience where economic conditions were vastly different and the acceptance of child labor was much greater. Zucchi finds that even though the Italian government spent considerable energy trying to stop children from being taken to other cities to work, the decline in

the street musician trade had more to do with changing economic conditions in those other cities than it did with the success of the Italian legislation.

In fact, the explanation of the decline in street musicianship is probably overdetermined. The author acknowledges that outlawing child musicians did not stop them from working, but simply shunted them off to less conspicuous jobs, such as streetvending, shoeshining, or laboring in the glass factories.

For all its great detail, this book is disappointing in that we virtually learn nothing about the children themselves. Did they feel victimized? Or did they enjoy the vibrant urban world where poor living conditions were nothing new, but the entertainments and excitement of the city were worth the discomforts? Much of the description of their lives comes from the files of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children or the Children's Aid Society, both in New York City. Zucchi acknowledges their propensity to exaggerate, but leaves the reader with little other assessment of these children and their lives.

Much of the advantage of a cross-cultural study is lost in the author's failure to comment on the similarities and differences in the three societies' tolerance of the street musician and their attempts to decrease their numbers. We do learn that "the Franco-Prussian War was probably the single greatest influence in the decline" of child musicians in Paris, although it is not clear why (74). In London and New York, it was the work of the nineteenth-century "child savers", and the cooperation of the press, that succeeded in eliminating the trade.

Zucchi disappoints in his failure to place the experience of the street musicians in the larger context of the Victorian child-saving movement. Although public sentiment against the child musicians undoubtedly had its roots in the strong anti-immigrant sentiment of the 1850s (at least in New York), the author fails to draw out these relationships to other issues of social history.

The Little Slaves of the Harp, though extremely well grounded in primary sources, connects not at all with scholarship on the history of childhood in the nineteenth century. This narrow focus often results in a lack of continuity in Zucchi's writing and a propensity to lose the thread of generalization or interpretation in the morass of detail. The author could have profited from a more creative examination of children's experience, such as that found in David Nasaw's *Children of the City* (Oxford University Press, 1985). Here is a study which portrays the lively culture which newsboys created for themselves on the streets of New York.

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