Child Labor in the World Economy

written by Glenn Perusek | May 27, 2010

A WORLD AWAY FROM US, IN THE STRAITS OF MALACCA, between Indonesian Sumatra and Malaysia, approximately 2,000 fishing platforms, known as jermals, operate miles from shore. Fewer than 400 are officially registered with the Indonesian government; the rest operate illegally. These small fishing platforms are built from giant logs that are sharpened like stakes and dropped from barges into the sea floor in water up to twenty meters deep. They form an open-ended rectangular stockade to which smaller timbers are lashed horizontally. Above these, rough sawn timbers form the deck, about two to three meters from the surface of the choppy sea. A wooden shanty with a corrugated metal roof is placed upon the deck.

Nets strung below the deck are raised by hand. The fish caught in the nets are hauled into wicker baskets and dragged into the shanty. Here they are poured onto the floor, and the difficult, dangerous work of sorting valuable teri, squid, shrimp, eels, crabs and larger fish from jellyfish and poisonous sea snakes is done. The junk fish, "hacked, crushed, and scattered," are pushed back into the sea through cracks in the deck. The workers are left covered in shiny silver scales.

The working day begins at 4 a.m., with the hauling in of the long nets by manual equipment. The nets are lowered and raised again ten times in the day — every two hours. The work is performed largely by children; it does not end until 11:30 p.m. or midnight — one a.m. during the high season. The working day is 12 to 13 hours, with short breaks totaling about six hours.

KKSP (*Kelompok Kerja Sosial Perkotaan,* "Working Group on Social Problems"), an Indonesian humanitarian group, conducted a five-year investigation of labor conditions on the jermals, interviewing workers on more than 140 of the platforms. They found that more than 75 percent of more than 8,000 employees in the industry are children, one-third of whom are under 14. The report puts the number at "at least 5,400 children, and probably many more" are on the jermals. The fishing industry is openly in violation of UN and International Labor Convention on children's rights, and in violation of Indonesian law, which prohibits children under 14 from working more than four hours per day.

Conditions on the jermals are abysmal. The structures are flexible, to be able to absorb the shock of the sea during storms. Nausea is a common complaint. Not only do children haul in the nets, sort and boil fish, they must also cook their own meals. Children, the report says, "are given little food, of poor quality" and no variety to speak of. Nearly every meal consists of rice with fish. Only once every two months are there fresh vegetables. Children are so desperate for food that they will "submit to (homo)sexual relations with one of the older workers" for extra rations. The working hours leave children chronically short of sleep. "Worse than almost anything else is the misery caused by lack of sleep. Some foremen pour boiling water on children who inadvertently doze at their post or fail to wake promptly when summoned." There are no beds for the children on the jermals — this privilege is reserved for the foremen, often the only adults on board. Instead, children sleep on damp board floors or in makeshift shelters on the shanty roof, or on beds of brown paper.

The report found that the following are common: injuries caused by exhaustion; malaria; high blood pressure due to excessive sodium intake; vitamin deficiencies; respiratory and skin problems caused by continuous exposure to damp conditions and salt water; and jellyfish stings. Sanitary facilities on the platforms are nonexistent. Lack of clean water for showers left most children with skin irritations. Exposure to the elements, including strong seasonal winds, and long working hours,

left most with coughs, dizziness, nausea.

First aid is rudimentary and insufficient, consisting only of "iodine tincture for cuts, battery acid for stings and a poultice soaked in diesel [fuel] for stomach ache." There is no emergency equipment, not even a boat. In effect, children have no way to escape the platforms, so it is not surprising that KKSP has recorded accounts of physical, verbal and sexual abuse. Investigators found that "most of the children lived in fear of drowning as they were not able to swim." Some had been bitten by sea snakes accidentally caught in the nets; others had been injured by the equipment used to lift the nets. Isolation from families led to the use of tobacco, alcohol or hashish. In addition to the physical strain and hardship caused by work on the platforms, children suffer incalculable psychological damage from isolation, separation from their families and abuse at the hands of foremen and older fishermen.

Children are sought after as jermal workers because they are more "manageable." They are less likely to protest against low wages and long working hours or the isolated conditions. Since the operations are illegal, operators use illegal labor brokers who seek out poor families. The brokers receive an average of 8,000 to 15,000 rupiahs for each child recruited. They promise children wages of 3,000 rupiahs per day — 38 cents per day — plus all the food they can eat. These are wages much higher than street children or farm laborers can earn. Yet, tellingly, the recruiters do not seek child laborers in coastal fishing villages, where conditions on the jermals are well known. Instead, children are typically migrants from inland villages or street children recruited from the bus terminal in Medan City. Investigators found that while parents sometimes knew that employment on the jermals would be hazardous to the health of their children, they seldom knew the extent of these hazards. Abject poverty and promises from the recruiters led them to let their children go. Recruiting agents promise the young boys good wages for working hard, an appealing prospect for those living in impoverished peasant families. According to Pardoen's survey, seventy percent of the boys had fathers working as plantation laborers or tenant farmers, with an average income of 37,000 rupiahs per week.[1]

The labor system on the jermals requires that the boys stay for three months at least, as they are paid only quarterly by operators. They are allowed to leave the jermal only if the operator has found a substitute. Wages are paid only after a substitute has been found. Most jermal children interviewed in Pardoen's study (74 percent) received only 10,000 rupiahs per week, or 120,000 for the three month period, the equivalent of about 17 cents per day. But there are no written contracts and a dozen conditions and exceptions that reduce even this meager sum. As much as two-thirds of the wage can be deducted for food and supplies while the child laborer is on the platform. Children are not paid until they return to dry land, and are not paid in full unless they agree to return to the jermal. Some children Higgs spoke with had worked on Sinchiacuan jermal for 18 months without a break. One 14-year-old had worked there for three years with only five months on land. Since the jermals are mostly unregistered, there are no official channels through which to press for improved working conditions, benefits, food and holidays.

When a nongovernmental organization sued jermal owners and governmental bodies for violating labor legislation in 1993, an agreement was reached between several governmental bodies, the All-Indonesia Fishermen's Association, and the All-Indonesian Workers' Union, that jermals would hire only workers over 18. But the agreement was ignored. KKSP started a pilot project to eliminate child labor on fishing platforms in 1994. Receiving funding from the International Labor Organization's International Program to Eliminate Child Labor, they sought to raise public awareness and to rescue 100 children from the platforms, especially those under 13. KKSP has unsuccessfully attempted to press legal cases against the jermal owners for kidnapping and child abuse. Jermal owners are supposed to pay the fishing authorities and the Indonesian Navy for their permits, but there appears to be no record of their doing so. Thus, KKSP suspects, the jermal owners

are paying "protection money" to the Navy and "corruption at the highest level," as Taufan Damanile, founder and chair of KKSP, puts it, allows these conditions to continue to exist.[2]

Sharp Blades

THE JERMAL FISHING BOYS are hardly an isolated case. In impoverished northeastern Brazil, children work ten hours a day, cutting, piling and carrying sisal, the raw material for rugs, rope and handbags for export. Children and their parents regularly have eyeballs punctured or fingers chopped off by the sharp blades of processing machines. "I saw a boy lose his hand," relates one child worker. "He had it one minute, and then he didn't have it the next. He was working with the [sisal shredder]. He was crying a lot, and he was bleeding — on his clothes, on the ground."

In northeastern Brazil, the paucity of decent-paying jobs for parents compels children to work early. Jose Francisco de Jesus, a man with eight children, lives in a tiny brick house without electricity, indoor plumbing or a telephone. Owning no livestock, he typically cannot afford pharmaceuticals for his children. Since his wages are only $7.50 per week, it is necessary for the children to work, as well. They each earn up to $1.50 per week.

For the family, under present circumstances, child labor is necessary for survival. De Jesus is grateful to the sisal farm owner. "If my children didn't work," he says, "we would have to go hungry." In de Jesus' village, Povoado de Jose Valerio, many families live from meal to meal. In Bahia state, annual per capita income is about $140, compared to the Brazilian national average of $4,800. Unemployment exceeds 60 percent — illiteracy 70 percent.

For much of the 1990s, Povoado de Jose Valerio's school was closed because the Teofilandia administration failed to pay teachers. Today, even many children who do attend school must do so intermittently, as their parents must put them back to work when money is scarce. Under such conditions, all of economic and cultural life is centered on survival. "The problem is lack of jobs," says the mayor of Teofilandia. "If you have industry, you can have jobs, and if people have jobs, they're able to survive."

Even though Brazil has had laws against child labor since 1891, these are regularly ignored by states, corporations and parents. In 1996, 3.3 million children, aged 7 to 14, worked. But also in that year, a new government program that pays families $12.50 to $25 a month per child who attends school regularly came into effect. The program had only 3,710 participants in 1996, but 362,000 by 2000. The program's success has helped reduce to 2.5 million the number of child workers in Brazil. Still, the director of Brazil's anti-child labor programs, Glaubert Santos, admits, "It's not a solution. We still have to make sure families have a way to earn steady income — and that means creating jobs."[3]

The ILO Report

THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM of child labor is staggering. Behind the stories of particular groups of child workers are the macrostatistics. The International Labor Organization (ILO), in concert with some governments and firms, labor organizations and nongovernmental organizations, has been engaged for more than a decade in a campaign against what they term the worst forms of child labor. Their recent report, *A Future Without Child Labor*, should be required reading for anyone interested in globalization and labor conditions.[4] The ILO carefully distinguishes "economically active" children from those engaged in "child labor." Economic activity by children that is

appropriate to age, safe and consonant with a child's education, is perfectly acceptable. Once school and homework are completed, light age-appropriate work may even help children "learn to take responsibility." The ILO has no interest in abolishing "household chores, work in family undertakings" or "work undertaken as part of education." Light, part-time work, could begin at age 12 and, in general, non-hazardous work should begin no earlier than age 15, although "national social and economic circumstances" will lead different countries to establish different standards; developing countries today might set 14 as a minimum age standard. The ILO hopes to establish 16 as "the general minimum age to which countries should aspire," with hazardous work restricted to those 18 and older.

According to the ILO's definition of economic activity, some 211 million children aged 5-14 are at work. For all children under 18,352 million are economically active. But most of these children are not performing ordinary, acceptable work. Instead, fully 186 million child laborers aged 5- 14 and another 59 million aged 15-17 are classed as child laborers. This means that on a world scale, one child in six is a child laborer. In the "worst forms," toil 180 million children, one in eight. Furthermore, most of the children engaged in hazardous work, 111 million, are under 15 years old. Another 59 million are 15-17. Even in the most developed economies, a significant minority of children aged 10-14 is economically active. Especially where there are large pockets of poor families in developed countries, child labor becomes part of an overall family survival strategy.

What does the ILO want to abolish? They define child labor in three general categories:

1. *Child too young for type of work*. Labor performed by persons under a minimum age specified by "national legislation, in accordance with accepted international standards." Essentially it means that children are doing work that they are too young to do, based on social standards established by national legislation *and* international standards. The ILO offers that the general minimum should be not less than 15; 16 as a target which countries should strive for; but that developing countries may wish to apply 14 as a more realistic standard. Light work "compatible with schooling" from age 12 is acceptable.

2. *Hazardous work*. "Labor that jeopardizes the physical, mental or moral well-being of a child, known as *hazardous work*."

3. *Unconditional worst forms of child labor*. The so-called "unconditional worst forms of child labor," namely, slavery, trafficking, debt bondage, forced recruitment into military service, prostitution, pornography or other illicit activities.

Not surprisingly, the ILO estimates 70 percent of child laborers are in agriculture, often (but not always) on family farms. A significant number work in commercial agriculture. Because it involves long hours, the use of poisonous chemicals and/or dangerous equipment, the work is hazardous. In manufacturing, children tend to work in "supply chains producing for the domestic market" rather than directly for export-oriented industry. Still, the poverty of workers in such industries contributes directly to the need for families to send small children to work. Even a five- or six- year-old child is an economic asset who can help the family survive until next week or next month when parents' wages are too low to support children and send them to school. While the very worst forms of child labor, such as prostitution or forced recruitment into military service, are significant, they comprise relatively small numbers of the children who are at risk. The estimated 300,000 child soldiers and 1.8 million sex industry workers comprise a minority of the 8.4 million in the "unconditional worst forms of child labor," most of whom, 5.7 million, are in forced labor.

Poverty, Child Labor and Illiteracy

THE ILO SPEAKS OF POVERTY as "inextricably linked to child labor." But the report's authors insist that other factors play a role in giving us a full portrait of the causes for child labor. "Inadequate social protection coupled with under-resourced, poor-quality education systems play a large part in perpetuating child labor."

That's pretty clear: Poverty, bad schools and a lack of social protection lead the most vulnerable, children, into work — whether in agriculture, fishing or other primary industries — or in manufacturing or "service" industries, a particularly pernicious category when we are speaking of children, as it includes domestic work but also illegal activities such as drug trafficking or prostitution. A poverty cycle exists, where children born into abysmal poverty are forced by circumstances to work too young, which is directly detrimental to their health but indirectly also leads to inferior education — which only condemns the next generation to more or less the same situation. "It is abundantly clear that the poverty conundrum at the very heart of this problem — where poverty breeds the worst forms of child labor and the worst forms of child labor breed poverty — must be tackled head on," the report explains.

What can break this cycle? The ILO report calls for higher living standards, improved schools and effective mechanisms for monitoring child labor. That child labor is linked to poverty is "widely acknowledged and undeniable." Labor force participation rates for children 10-14 is 30-60 percent in countries with annual per capita income of $500 (US) or less [in 1987 prices]. When income rises to 501-1000 dollars, participation drops to 10-30 percent.[5] "No one would argue with the general proposition that child labor is both a result and a cause of poverty. Household poverty pushes children into the labor market to earn money to supplement family income or even to survive. Evidence is also clear that, by lowering human capital accumulation, child labor perpetuates household poverty across generations and thereby slows national economic growth and social development."[6]

The Nineteenth Century

IF THE GLOBAL PHENOMENON of child labor appears today as a ubiquitous feature of economic life, it is hardly a recent development. Some of the most moving passages in Karl Marx's *Capital* concern the length of the working day and the conditions of child laborers. We get a real sense of the nature of industrial work, of the ceaseless conflict between rapacious factory owners and generally powerless laborers, in the work's concrete and descriptively empirical chapter on the working day. Marx, we might say, sublimates his outrage at the conditions of laborers to create the systematic and rigorous understanding of the laws of motion of capitalist development.

Marx marshals myriad sources, including the observations of men of the cloth and government inspectors, in describing the manufacturing employer's "werewolf-like hunger for surplus labor." The capitalist in basic manufacturing is endlessly enterprising in extending the length of the working day.[7] Even slave-owning *conquistadors* were no more cruel.[8] Marx relies heavily upon ordinary newspaper reports and official government investigatory documents. In the lace trade, in Nottingham, England,

> children of nine or ten years are dragged from their squalid beds at two, three, or four o'clock in the morning and compelled to work for a bare subsistence until ten, eleven, or

> twelve at night, their limbs wearing away, their frames dwindling, their faces whitening, and their humanity absolutely sinking into a stone-like torpor, utterly horrible to contemplate…The system, as the Rev. Montagu Valpy describes it, is one of unmitigated slavery, socially, physically, morally and spiritually.[9]

Marx goes on to cite depositions given by children themselves, reported in documents of parliamentary inquiries. "William Wood, 9 years old, 'was 7 years 10 months old when he began to work.' He 'ran moulds' (carried ready-molded articles into the drying-room, afterwards bringing back the empty mould) from the very beginning. He came to work every day in the week at 6 a.m., and left off at about 9 p.m." Fifteen hours of work per day, six days a week, at the age of seven. Laborers in this industry, children and adults, suffered a high rate of pulmonary illnesses and short life expectancy. The hand manufacture of matches led to a form of tetanus peculiar to workers in the industry. "The manufacture of matches, on account of its unhealthiness and unpleasantness, has such a bad reputation that only the most miserable part of the working class, half- starved widows and so forth, deliver up their children to it, their 'ragged, half-starved, untaught children'." Some workers in this industry were as young as six. The working day extended from twelve to fifteen hours, including "night-labor, irregular meal-times and meals mostly taken in the workrooms themselves, pestilent with phosphorus."[10]

In *The Making of the English Working Class*, a classic of labor history, E. P. Thompson lends support to Marx's analysis. Thompson takes pains to distinguish the work of children in industrial settings from agricultural labor conducted under the supervision of parents. The apologists for child labor are indeed correct that it was not a new phenomenon associated only with industrialization. "The child was an intrinsic part of the agricultural and industrial economy before 1780, and remained so until rescued by the school." Climbing boys and ship's boys were subjected to very bad conditions. But most child laborers before the industrial revolution worked at "home or within the family economy." Fetching and carrying by very small children or work alongside parents in cotton spinning were common. "So deeply-rooted was child labor in the textile industries that these were often held up to the envy of laborers in other occupations where children could not find employment and add to the family earnings…"

Thompson acknowledges that conditions in farm labor, even under family supervision, could be very poor. "In agriculture, children — often ill-clothed — would work in all weathers in the fields or about the farm." But this is very different from the factory system, emphasizes Thompson. "There was some variety of employment (and monotony is peculiarly cruel to the child)." Work was "intermittent: it would follow a cycle of tasks, and even regular jobs like winding bobbins would not be required all day unless in special circumstances…" Children were *gradually* introduced to work, and any manufacturing work they did was "interspersed with running messages, blackberrying, fuel-gathering or play. Above all, the work was within the family economy and under parental care." It was not only the development of the factory system, but two other factors, one material, the other ideological, that contributed to the rise of child labor: First, the growth of specialization, "the increasing differentiation of economic roles," and the "break-up of the family economy"; and secondly, the "breakdown of late eighteenth century humanitarianism."[11]

The breakdown of the family, and the erosion of extended kinship ties, had been underway since at least the fifteenth century. The demise of kinship networks made way for the nuclear family ideal in the heyday of industrial capitalism. Today, the unfettered market has eroded the family even further, as it has eroded all other institutions of social protection.[12] Under the piece rate system children came to be employed in "monotonous application for ten, twelve or more hours" per day. "The crime of the factory system was to inherit the worst features of the domestic system in a context which had none of the domestic compensations: 'it systematized child labor, pauper and

free, and exploited it with persistent brutality…'"[13] Common was a working day of 12 to 16 hours for children, "in the last hours of which children were crying or falling asleep on their feet, their hands bleeding from the friction of the yarn in 'piecing', even their parents cuffing them to keep them awake, while the overlookers patrolled with the strap. In the country mills dependent upon waterpower, night work or days of fourteen and sixteen hours were common when they were 'thronged'."

Under circumstances of great poverty, working class parents, then as now, had to view their children as economic resources. Many industrialists surely saw them that way. "The mixture of terror and of fatalism of the children comes through in the laconic reports. An eight-year-old girl, employed for thirteen hours a 'day' to open and close traps: 'I have to trap without a light, and I'm scared…Sometimes I sing when I've light, but not in the dark; I dare not sing then.'"

Masters and Laborers Alike

CONFLICTS OVER CHILD LABOR were necessarily played out in the churches. Some owners were reputed hypocritically to insist that masters and laborers alike attend church, even after the week-long abuse of child laborers, which might end only "five minutes before midnight on the Saturday" and attendance at Sunday school was enforced. While some clergy apologized for the factory system, others joined the ten-hour movement. One "old Methodist lay preacher" preached consistently against the factory, and was repaid for his efforts when "the local Methodist mill-owner at Mytholmroyd always locked the chapel when it was his turn to preach."[14]

Under the growing capitalist economy, labor power was being transformed into a commodity for sale in the marketplace. Land, too, became commodified. In the view of Karl Polanyi, to the extent that markets are free to dispose of humans and the natural surroundings, this entails nothing less than the "demolition of society." Labor power cannot be stored, used indiscriminately, or left idle without profoundly affecting the people attached to it.

Robbed of the protective covering of cultural institutions, human beings would perish from the effects of social exposure; they would die as the victims of acute social dislocation through vice, perversion, crime and starvation. Nature would be reduced to its elements, neighborhoods and landscapes defiled, rivers polluted, military safety jeopardized, the power to produce food and raw materials destroyed. Finally, the market administration of purchasing power would periodically liquidate business enterprise, for shortages and surfeits of money would prove as disastrous to business as floods and droughts in primitive society.

Industrialization, the application of increasingly complicated machines to the production process, drew land, labor and money inexorably into the market system. The factory system above all else transformed human society because it intensified the process of commodification of labor. "All along the line, human society had become an accessory of the economic system." Polanyi argues persuasively that the creation of a labor market in England necessitated the "wholesale destruction of the traditional fabric of society."[15]

It also immediately called into existence countermovements for self-protection. Indeed, the freeing of the labor market, through the Poor Law Reform of 1834, turned intellectuals and social reformers to the question of the condition of the community. As the nineteenth century progressed, two great social movements contended. One was the forward momentum of the principle of economic liberalism, seeking to establish the self-regulating market. This was countered by movements for social protection, seeking to preserve humanity and nature, and productive

organization itself from the vagaries of the market, through the establishment of protective legislation, restrictive associations and other interventions.

Long Cycles

CHILD LABOR LEADS TO A continuing cycle of poverty, even in countries undergoing a process of economic development. At an adequate income level, parents hardly wish to hold children back from education and advancement. It is abject poverty that forces parents to view their children as economic resources in the struggle for survival. But children who labor full-time (or more) for subsistence wages are permanently closed out of the possibility of educating themselves for skilled work. Thus poverty continues generation after generation.

Economic Activity and Child Labor, 2000

	5-14 years old		15-17 years old		Total	
	number (millions)	% age group	number (millions)	% age group	number (millions)	% age group
Econ. active children	211	18	141	42	352	23
of which: Child laborers	186	16	59	18	246	16
of which:						
Children in Worst Forms	—	—	—	—	179	12
Children in hazardous work	111	9	59	18	170	11
Children in Unconditional Worst Forms	—	—	—	—	8	.05

SOURCES: ILO estimates for 2000 and *World Population Prospects: The Sex and Age Distribution of the World Population* (New York: United Nations, 2001).

The social movements which succeeded in placing such issues on national and international agendas for change have taken a long time to gestate. They are often politically confused, complicated webs drawing together a myriad of different interests, aiming at unattained goals but achieving results nevertheless. The experience of today's developed countries, as they were developing, contains lessons for social movements, antiglobalization activists and children's advocates. In the United States, for instance, child labor was uncontroversial in the colonial period, as children worked on family farms or would enter into trade apprenticeships between ages 10 and 14. The rise of the factory system in the nineteenth century led to widespread employment of children as cheap laborers. Educational reformers in the mid-nineteenth century pressed for legislation that would establish wage minimums and school attendance requirements. These efforts at the social protection of children were stymied by the influx of southern and eastern European immigrants, the patchwork quality of American state legislation and the powerful interests who sought, for economic reasons, to confine the protective legislation. Child labor grew such that by 1900, 18 percent of 10-15 year olds — the official figure of 1.75 million — were employed. One-quarter of southern cotton mill employees were under 15; half of these children were under 12.

The National Child Labor Committee was organized in 1904 to address the problem. Along with numerous state child labor groups, the movement "pioneered the techniques of mass political action, including investigations by experts, the widespread use of photography to dramatize the poor conditions of children at work, pamphlets, leaflets and mass mailings to reach the public, and sophisticated lobbying." Still, the political mood was such that little progress could be made. When Congress passed federal child labor laws in 1916 and 1918, they were declared unconstitutional by

the Supreme Court. Child labor opponents managed to press for Congressional passage of a constitutional amendment authorizing federal child labor legislation in 1924; church groups and farm organizations prevented ratification.

Only under the New Deal was lasting progress finally achieved. The codes of the National Industrial Recovery Act sought to reduce child labor, but the codes as a whole were struck down as unconstitutional. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 for the first time established national minimum wage and maximum hour standards, and established limitations on child labor. Now children under 16 were effectively prohibited from manufacturing and mining employment.[16] The political mood had of course changed, now making such legislation possible. The technical-economic situation had changed, as well — the mechanization of jobs diminished the usefulness of unskilled child laborers. But the decades-long work of children's advocates was indispensable to the passage of any protective legislation at all.

The jermal children and their millions of brothers and sisters toil daily under the weight of grinding poverty. Their futures are bleak so long as subsistence is bought at the price of foregone education. Activists against poverty, globalization and sweatshops are working to awaken world consciousness to their plight. While this movement has been temporarily sidelined by the political reaction to September 11, perseverant and patient activism is indicated. In the coming decades, world-level labor standards, including a global minimum wage, comparable to the national legislation that elevated children out of sweatshop work in the early twentieth century, can be made central to the global social justice agenda.

Footnotes

1. At the exchange rate of 8,000 rupiahs to $1, the tenant farmer income of 37,000 rupiahs was $4.63 per week. This was the exchange rate at the end of 1998; today the rupiah is somewhat weaker, at 8470 to the dollar in late August 2003. See *The Economist*, August 30, 2003, p. 74.

2. The description of the jermal laborers draws from the excellent article by David Higgs, "The Fisher Boys of Sumatra," *Independent* (London), November 28, 1998, pp. 21-2. See also Sutrisno R. Pardoen and associates, *Children in Hazardous Work in the Informal Sector in Indonesia* (Jakarta: International Labor Organisation, 1996), pp. 37-45; Ben White and Indrasari Tjandraningsih, *Child Workers in Indonesia* (Bandung: AKATIGA, March 1998), pp. 52-56; and www.antislavery.org.

3. Stephen Buckley, "Heavy burdens of the littlest laborers," *Guardian Weekly*, March 30-April 5, 2000, p. 33. The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics released a study in April, 2003, showing that of the more than 5.5 million child laborers in the country, 49 percent received no remuneration at all. Francisco Fausto, president of the Supreme Tribunal on Labor, responded that the survey "demonstrates the necessity for greater involvement by the Minister of Labor…the exploitation of children for labor is as grave as slave labor, in that both of them strike at human nature." Carmen Gentile, "Study: Brazil's Child Laborers Exceed 5.5M," *United Press International*, April 16, 2003.

4. *A Future Without Child Labor*, International Labor Conference, 90th Session 2002, Report I (B) (Geneva: International Labor Office, 2002).

5. P. Fallon and Z. Tzannatos, *Child Labor: Issues and direction for the World Bank* (Washington: World Bank, 1998). The ILO notes that "the decline in the labor force participation of children is less marked as GDP rises in more affluent countries." See *Future*, p. 46 and note 122.

6. *Future*, 46. See R. Galli, *The economic impact of child labor* (Geneva: International Institute for Labor Studies, 2001), p. 21.

7. "At the beginning of June 1836," Marx writes in a footnote, "information reached the magistrates of Dewsbury (Yorkshire) that the owners of eight large mills in the neighborhood of Batley had violated the Factory Act. Some of these gentlemen were accused of having kept five boys between 12 and 15 years of age at work from 6 a.m. on Friday to 4 p.m. on the following Saturday, not allowing them any respite except for meals and one hour for sleep at midnight. And these children had to do this ceaseless labor of 30 hours in the 'shoddy-hole,' the name for the hole where the woollen rags are pulled to pieces, and where a dense atmosphere of dust, shreds, etc. forces even the adult worker to cover his mouth continually with handkerchiefs for the protection of his lungs! The accused gentlemen affirmed…that they had, in their great compassion for the unhappy children, allowed them four hours for sleep, but the obstinate children absolutely would not go to bed." They were fined £20. See Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1 (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), pp. 351-3.

8. "The cupidity of mill-owners whose cruelties in the pursuit of gain have hardly been exceeded by those perpetrated by the Spaniards in the conquest of America in the pursuit of gold," concludes John Wade, *History of the Middle and Working Classes* (1835), quoted in Marx, *Capital*, p. 353n.

9. Marx, *Capital*, pp. 353-4, quoting a report in the *Daily Telegraph*, January 17, 1860. The report continues, probably summarizing the view of Rev. Valpy: "What can be thought of a town which holds a public meeting to petition that the period of labor for men shall be diminished to eighteen hours a day?…We declaim against the Virginian and Carolinian cotton-planters. Is their black-market, their lash and their barter of human flesh more detestable than this slow sacrifice of humanity which takes place in order that veils and collars may be fabricated for the benefit of capitalists?"

10. Marx, *Capital*, p. 356, citing *Children's Employment Commission*, p. liv.

11. See E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1966), p. 332-4; and M. Dorothy George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), chapter five.

12. See Mary Ann Glendon, *The New Family and the New Property* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1981); Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage Books, 1962); Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975); Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

13. Thompson, *Making*, 335, citing H. L. Beales, *The Industrial Revolution* (1928).

14. Thompson, *Making*, pp. 334, 338 and 346.

15. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon, 1944), p. 73, 75 and 77.

16. Irwin Yellowitz, "Child Labor," in Eric Foner and John A. Garraty, eds., *The Reader's Companion to American History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991), pp. 166-7.