

Another May Day Meaning: A Child Labor Dozen

May Day is Labor Day in many countries, based on historic events right here in Illinois. We're therefore going to abjure the usual flowers in favor of a more serious dozen, which covers child labor in the past and present, abroad and at home, and in fiction and nonfiction. Kids whose greatest obligation is taking out the garbage will find much to consider here.

*Deborah Stevenson, Editor
May 2009*

THE BULLETIN

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

The *Bulletin* Dozen is a monthly theme-based booklist available from the Bulletin's website. Since we're awfully fond of bakers here at the Bulletin, we thought we'd adopt their philosophy of generosity and throw in an extra one or two when we have them to offer — so don't expect an even dozen.

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A Child Labor Dozen

*A Bulletin Dozen
Booklist*

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Auch, Mary Jane. Ashes of Roses. Holt, 2002 Gr. 5-9

Seventeen-year-old Rose, an Irish immigrant, manages to find a job in New York, but it lands her in the middle of the infamous Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire. (BCCB 7/02)

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. Kids on Strike. Houghton, 1999. Gr. 5-8

This title provides a broad look at American labor actions, covering several major industries relying on child labor and their key strikes as well as the social changes and activism that reduced the nation's reliance on young industrial workers. (BCCB 12/99)

Boling, Katharine. January 1905. Harcourt, 2004. Gr. 4-7

Point of view alternates between twin eleven-year-old sisters, one of whom works in the textile mills, the other keeping house for the family, in this story treating both historical fact and family perspective. (BCCB 6/04)

Brown, Don. Kid Blink Beats the World; written and illus. by Don Brown. Roaring Brook, 2004. 6-9 yrs

Brown turns his well-known author-illustrator style to a history of the newsboys' strike of 1899. (BCCB 12/04)



Currie, Stephen. We Have Marched Together: The Working Children's Crusade. Lerner, 1997. Gr. 4-7

The 1903 Philadelphia textile strike included thousands of children, some of whom were organized by Mother Jones into a dramatic march on New York City, an event that Currie documents in this accessible chronicle. (BCCB 6/97)

D'Adamo, Francesco. Iqbal; tr. by Ann Leonori. Atheneum, 2003. Gr. 6-9

This fictional account of Iqbal Masih, rug worker turned child activist until his death, gives readers a dramatic picture of the young teen's battle against injustice. (BCCB 1/04)

Freedman, Russell. Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade against Child Labor. Clarion, 1994. Gr. 5-12

Photographer Lewis Hine became one of the strongest advocates against child labor as well as a documenter of its victims; a multitude of reproduced photographs add a vivid dimension to this account of his life and work. (BCCB 10/94)

Gourley, Catherine. Good Girl Work: Factories, Sweatshops, and How Women Changed Their Role in the American Workforce. Millbrook, 1999. Gr. 6-9

This moving history draws on photographs, diaries, letters, and other documents to explore not only the famous events in labor history but also the struggle of those who labored in less famous but still grueling industries. (BCCB 7/99)

McCully, Emily Arnold. Bobbin Girl; written and illus. by Emily Arnold McCully. Dial, 1992. Gr. 3-5

This fact-based story follows ten-year-old Rebecca, a "bobbin girl" in a nineteenth-century Massachusetts textile mill, who must decide for herself whether or not to join her older colleagues in a labor walk-out. (BCCB 3/96)

Meltzer, Milton. Cheap Raw Material: How Our Youngest Workers Are Exploited and Abused. Viking, 1994. Gr. 7-12

This overview of child labor starts with a historical look and then examines modern practice and exploitation both nationally and globally. (BCCB 2/94)

Parker, David L. Stolen Dreams: Portraits of Working Children; by David L. Parker with Lee Engfer and Robert Conrow; illus. with photographs by David L. Parker. Lerner, 1998 Gr. 5-9

This thoughtful and moving photoessay examines contemporary child labor, ranging from commonly accepted work such as farm tasks to the most exploitative industries. (BCCB 2/98)

Paterson, Katherine. Bread and Roses, Too. Clarion, 2006 Gr. 5-8

Veteran author Paterson provides a child's-eye-view of the 1912 textile-workers' strike. (BCCB 3/07) See also Paterson's Lyddie.

Williams, Sherley Ann. Working Cotton; illus. by Carole Byard. Harcourt, 1992. 5-8 yrs

Still one of the most evocative pictures of a family at labor, this sparsely texted picture book features a young African-American girl, out in the fields at dawn to help her parents and older sisters pick cotton. (BCCB 10/92)

Winthrop, Elizabeth. Counting on Grace. Lamb, 2006. Gr. 5-8

In early twentieth century Vermont, twelve-year-old Grace and her classmate Arthur are pulled between the family need for money that drives them to millwork and their teacher's encouragement to continue with their schooling. (BCCB 3/06) illustrations. (BCCB 7/00)