

Senior Editors' Note

International Labor and Working-Class History 78 opens with four essays in a special section, "Shifting Boundaries between Free and Unfree Labor," selected and edited by Carolyn Brown (Rutgers University) and Marcel van der Linden (International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam). In "Revisiting Russian Serfdom: Bonded Peasants and Market Dynamics, 1600s–1800s," Alessandro Stanziani of the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales and the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris offers a provocative reinterpretation of serfdom. Challenging neat divisions between free and coerced labor, Stanziani views emancipation as a long process rather than a single event. Kwabena Akurang-Parry (Shippensburg University), in his article "Transformations in the Feminization of Unfree Domestic Labor," explores *abaawa*, or prepubescent female servitude, in late colonial and post-colonial Ghana. He connects this system of bonded labor to both colonial slavery and the flawed processes of emancipation. Drawing on three decades of fieldwork in Gujarat, Jan Breman (University of Amsterdam) examines the multiple forms of "neo-bondage" that are integral to capitalist development in India. In "From Child Labor 'Problem' to Human Trafficking 'Crisis,'" Benjamin N. Lawrance (Rochester Institute of Technology) analyzes shifting discourses among NGOs about child labor and critically assesses the shortcomings of advocacy groups and anti-trafficking legislation in contemporary Ghana. These essays reaffirm the journal's commitment to providing its readers with ambitious scholarship that ranges across centuries and spans the globe. We hope they will provoke further research and debate on old and new forms of unfree labor and the complexity of labor systems used by capital and challenged by labor.

Mae Ngai (Columbia University) teamed with senior editor Dorothy Sue Cobble (Rutgers University) on the next feature, a selection of illuminating policy-oriented papers from a recent conference, "Fixing America's Broken Immigration System," held at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. This forum is vintage *ILWCH*: In it, we offer readers the perspectives of prominent scholars from multiple disciplines and regions on a pressing and timely issue. Ngai, Maria Cecilia Hwang (Brown University), Rhacel Salazar Parreñas (University of Southern California), Gary Gerstle (Vanderbilt University), David G. Gutiérrez (University of California, San Diego), David Abraham (University of Miami School of Law), and Christian Joppke (American University of Paris) not only explore the injustices embedded in current US immigration policy but also propose more inclusive and egalitarian frameworks for formulating law and practice. The participants bring the insights of history, sociology, law, gender studies, and other disciplines and fields to the discussion; they also use comparative

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analysis, drawing on the history and current policy of other regions and nations to unearth possible alternative paths for the United States.

ILWCH 78 continues with three Reports from the Field, an innovative format that allows the journal to present firsthand accounts of developments around the globe related to labor. The first, by Michael Zweig (SUNY, Stony Brook), is an extraordinary portrait of the Iraqi labor movement, its struggle to protect workers from all regions, cultures, and religious faiths, and its continuing commitment to worker solidarity across national borders, including US-Iraqi trade union ties. In our second piece, *ILWCH* Review Editor Kate Brown (University of Maryland, Baltimore) reflects on the deep losses to people and places caused by the business of making plutonium in Russia. Brown, who has traveled widely in Russia over the last decade, introduces us to a small community of activists who, at great cost to themselves, seek redress from the state for the many injuries endured by the men, women, and children working and living near plutonium plants. This section concludes with a view of the deepening crisis in California's higher education system by Choi Chatterjee, who teaches history at California State University, Los Angeles. Chatterjee is particularly concerned about the impact of educational cutbacks and declining job prospects on immigrant and working-class students, on the future of the university, and by extension, on us all.

Next, in "Commonwealth and 'Commonism,'" Michael Merrill (Empire State College, SUNY) reviews two recent and widely debated books on the history and politics of the "commons," Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Commonwealth* (2009) and Peter Linebaugh's *The Magna Carta Manifesto: Liberties and Commons for All* (2008). He offers both a detailed rendering of their arguments and a stirring rebuttal. Merrill lauds their commitment to "the commons" as both an economic and an ecological resource but criticizes their refusal to recognize the various newer forms of "communing" characteristic of modern commercial economies.

Our final full-length article, "Nationalism and Sectarian Violence in Liverpool and Belfast, 1880s-1920s," by Gareth Jenkins, traces the histories of sectarian violence in Liverpool and Belfast and suggests reasons why the two cities ultimately took such divergent paths, with confrontation subsiding in Liverpool yet growing ever more deadly in Belfast. *ILWCH* 78 closes with a letter to the editors from John Womack Jr. (Harvard University) and replies from James Green (University of Massachusetts, Boston) and Elizabeth Jameson (University of Calgary, Canada). Womack writes in response to an article in *ILWCH* 76 (Fall 2009) by Green and Jameson on the desecration and restoration of the Ludlow Memorial, a site erected in honor of those who died during the 1913–1914 southern Colorado coal strikes. His letter is published in full because it reveals an important new dimension to the story—and to the historical record—of how the Ludlow Memorial came to the attention of historians and the broader public.

We are pleased to report our plans for future issues. *ILWCH* 79 (Spring 2011), edited by Prasannan Parthasarathi (Boston College) and Donald

Quataert (Binghamton University), will focus on migrant workers in the Middle East. *ILWCH* 80 (Fall 2011) will include a special section on labor and the military, edited by Joshua Freeman (CUNY Graduate Center) and Geoffrey Field (Purchase College, SUNY), as well as a symposium on labor rights as human rights. *ILWCH* 81 (Spring 2012), edited by Mary Nolan and Mae Ngai, will feature essays on the production and consumption of global commodities, with particular attention to questions of environmental history, commodity production, and labor.

The journal is grateful for the support offered by Rutgers University as we enter our third year in residence there. We also wish to thank Allison Miller, the journal's talented managing editor, and are thrilled that she will continue with the journal for a second year.

Dorothy Sue Cobble, Mary Nolan and Peter Winn
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