



ASA Labor and Labor Movements Newsletter

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Symposium: COVID-19 and the Present and Future of the Labor Movement

*Joseph van der Naald
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After more than half of a year since the emergence of the novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), it is safe to say that the pandemic has and will continue to reshape life as we know it. At the time of writing, the United States (the virus' global epicenter) has accumulated more than 3.37 million documented cases of COVID-19, and more than 137 thousand deaths, with the number of new cases rising swiftly each day. The United States' economy is, after more than four months of the pandemic, has fallen into a serious recession with no end in sight. In April 2020, unemployment in the United States hit [14.7%](#), the highest rate since the 1940s. Workers in the service sector have faced the brunt of the layoffs, as businesses closed their doors and hospitality services ceased in the face of mounting health concerns. The union UNITE HERE [reported in April](#) that almost the entirety of its membership had been unemployed. On the other hand, workers in healthcare, transport, and food production and distribution whose services have been deemed essential have been pushed to the brink. The [Centers for Disease Control](#) documented as of mid-July more than 98 thousand cases of COVID-19 among healthcare workers across the United States. Further, the toll of the pandemic has not been distributed evenly among working people. The Economic Policy Institute, in a [report released in June](#), found that Black workers were both more likely than white workers to experience unemployment and to be employed in frontline jobs. The same report also found that Black Americans experienced a disproportionate rate of death from the virus: though comprising just 12.5% of the population, Black Americans made up almost a quarter of all deaths as of May.

Despite these dire circumstances, workers have not stood idly by. Faced with increasingly dangerous work or the risk of unemployment, workers have leapt into action, many pushing for [adequate personal protective equipment](#) and increasingly

striking in solidarity with Black Lives Matter. The website [PayDay Report](#) has documented more than 900 wildcat strikes since March of 2020. In June alone, [PayDay Report](#) estimated there to have been a remarkable 600 work stoppages (at least) in solidarity with Black Lives Matter marches across the country. [Data collected](#) by Strikewave editor C.M. Lewis and contributor Kevin Reuning from the National Labor Relations Board has documented 356 new representation petitions since March 2020, a considerable figure given that [the closure](#) of many of the agency's regional offices and a suspension of elections that began in March.

Where the labor movement goes from here is far from certain. It could likely be that to keep up the growing momentum of pandemic worker militancy, unions and workers organizations must incorporate new generations of radicals and activists, as section member Ruth Milkman has recently [argued](#). In that case, one should view the increasing number of work stoppages in [solidarity with calls for racial and economic justice](#) as a promising sign for a labor movement post-COVID.

Given the unprecedented nature of this moment, the Labor and Labor Movements section newsletter opened a call for contributions on COVID-19 and the present and future of the labor movement. We are pleased to present five pieces, focusing on different occupations across four different continents. All examine the challenges that essential workers and their unions have faced and continue to face as the pandemic rages on. We are also especially pleased to feature the writings of union organizers in this symposium alongside those of section members.

Lina Stepick, Lola Loustaunau, Larissa Petrucci, and Ellen Scott present new findings derived from interviews with low-wage essential workers in Oregon, exploring the challenges that frontline food services workers face in ensuring their health and safety. **Kirsty McCully and Katherine Ravenswood** report on the struggles of a neglected category of essential workers, community support workers providing in-home care to homebound clients in New Zealand. **Jerry Detse Mensah-Pah** provides insights on how the COVID-19 crisis has been experienced in Ghana and how his union, the Health Services Workers

Union, has mobilized to protect membership. **Bashiratu Kamal** and **Emelia Ghansah** also reflect on the effect of the pandemic in Ghana, detailing how their union, the General Agricultural Workers' Union of Ghana, has mobilized to provide economic security to membership, reaching agreements with growers to stabilize markets. Last, **Nick Krachler** reflects on how the tactics of German and American nurses unions have been shaped by the response of their respective governments to the COVID-19 crisis.

#ForeverEssential

What Does It Mean to Be a Low-wage Essential Worker in the Age of COVID-19?

Lina Stepick, Lola Loustaunau, Larissa Petrucci, and Ellen Scott, University of Oregon

Despite the continuing threat of COVID-19, grocery stores announced that they plan to eliminate the \$2/hour 'hero pay' for the essential workers taking personal risks to provide the public with food and supplies. In response to organized pressure, some stores have extended the pay a couple of weeks or issued one time 'thank you' payments. This is not enough, according to workers. UFCW hashtags #AlwaysAHero and #ForeverEssential underscore the sacrifices workers are making and that low-wage work has always been essential.

Though they are essential workers, retail and food services did not necessarily choose this work as a calling. They must make impossible choices between taking health risks or being unable to pay their bills. As one retail worker put it, "Some of us don't really have a choice. And the idea that we're still showing up and putting ourselves in harm's way...It's a lot more than the job that we signed up for."

When the COVID-19 crisis hit Oregon, our Fair Scheduling Law Study research team recontacted our statewide sample of rural and urban, union and nonunion retail, food services, and hospitality

workers and conducted over 50 interviews with workers in the last two weeks of April 2020 to ask: What does it mean to be an essential low-wage worker in this context?

No Choice but to Be Essential

Most of these workers have no safety net. They have little choice about whether to work. A Latina food services worker with asthma told us that her eleven year old daughter asks her to stay home, saying, "Mami, why do you have to go to work now?" Hers is the only income in her household so she has to continue working.

Very few reported having sufficient paid sick time. Even those who tested positive for COVID-19 felt pressured to return to work as soon as they were cleared by a doctor, even if they had not fully recovered, because they had used up their paid sick time.

A grocery worker said: "We were told we were allowed to go home if we didn't feel safe. We were told that we have a choice. Do we have a choice, though? We won't be able to pay our rent, and we won't be able to purchase food. If we live paycheck to paycheck, like many of us do, we don't really have a choice."

More Hours, More Risk, More Instability

Workers in retail, food services, and hospitality typically experience highly unstable schedules and lack of guaranteed hours. Suddenly recognized as essential workers in the context of COVID-19, some received more hours and stable schedules. However, workers still face precarity: additional hours were not permanent; work requirements shifted and intensified; work locations changed with the closing of some stores; and workers' physical and emotional health was compromised. Others were laid off when businesses closed and workers did not know if or when they would be able to return to work.

Customers Endanger Workers' Physical and Emotional Health

Workers left in stores that remained open had to contend with customers flooding stores, panic-buying toilet paper and other goods. They reported customers were anxious and angry; interactions became emotionally charged. A Latina food

services worker noted, “Customers shout at you and that can make you scared.” Workers felt persistent anxiety about customer harassment and potential infection. They described the emotional labor they performed to reassure anxious customers, while also experiencing increased stress, anxiety, and new levels of emotional exhaustion at the end of the day.

Workers of color were particularly vulnerable, experiencing increased racial harassment from customers in the context of heightened xenophobia during COVID-19. Another Latina food services worker said that customers ask: “‘Why are you here? You almost don’t speak the language.’ It seems to me like there is more racism now.”

Variable Levels of Workplace Safety

Because of a lack of clear governmental guidelines to protect essential workers, especially in the initial weeks of the pandemic, workers were subject to highly variable responses by employers and varying degrees of exposure to health risks. More protective measures included requiring workers to wear masks, installing protective shields at checkstands, and establishing additional cleaning and social distancing procedures. Some workers had their temperatures taken upon arrival at work and were offered the option of 6 weeks paid leave. In less proactive businesses, workers waited weeks to receive PPE, social distancing was not enforced, and COVID-19-specific paid sick leave was only available for workers who tested positive for the virus, and not for others with underlying health conditions.

Worker Recommendations

When asked what recommendations they would have for policymakers, workers discussed universal health care, extending and expanding direct payments to workers (including migrant workers), unemployment benefits, and a universal basic income. Many highlighted the importance of expanded paid sick leave so that workers could make the decision to stay home.

Within the workplace, employees recommended expanded hazard pay, PPE provided for them, and enforced procedures for social distancing. For temporarily unemployed workers, they suggested

the right to return and worker retention policies with earned seniority.

Workers argued that if they are essential workers pressured to work through a pandemic, customers should shop only for essential goods, and limit shopping trips. There should be clear governmental guidelines to limit the number of customers in stores.

Workers wanted protections for the right to organize. Workers at unionized stores shared that having the protection of a union helps them feel they can speak up about safety issues without fearing retaliation. In contrast, some nonunion retail workers have been subjected to captive audience antiunion meetings and some have been fired for organizing for safety measures.

Read More:

Alvarez, Camila. H., Loustaunau, Lola, Petrucci, Larissa, & Scott, Ellen. 2019. “Impossible Choices: How Workers Manage Unpredictable Scheduling Practices.” *Labor Studies Journal*, 45(2): 186–213. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0160449X19835041>

Loustaunau, Lola, Larissa Petrucci, Ellen Scott, and Lina Stepick. 2020. “Assessing the Initial Impacts of the First Statewide Predictive Scheduling Law.” *Policy Research Brief prepared for Center for Popular Democracy*, University of Oregon.

Unite against Covid-19: kindness for community support workers?

Kirsty McCully, Ē tū, Member Led Organising; Katherine Ravenswood, Auckland University of Technology

Aotearoa/New Zealand has become famous for our Prime Minister, the Honourable Jacinda Ardern’s, corollary for kindness. But how has kindness trickled through to community support workers who, it could be argued, are the cement of kindness in our communities?

New Zealand had its first known case of COVID19 on the 28th of February 2020 and cases, as we know, escalated until March 20th when the New Zealand government announced the ‘Unite Against Covid-19’ campaign (<https://uniteforrecovery.govt.nz/>) and lockdown from Wednesday 25th March 2020.

Part of the campaign included outlining who should use PPE and in which circumstances; and the ruling that only essential workers could go to work, any other work had to be conducted from isolation at home or put on hold. No travel was allowed except for essential work, urgent healthcare visits and essential supermarket shopping. For those who work closely with, work in or receive community support it goes without saying that support workers are essential workers and they work in close physical contact with their clients. This is where community support workers and their unions faced challenges.

We are essential workers

Government advice, policy and media attention for essential workers brought attention to frontline workers. However, ‘frontline workers’ were those most visible to the population: our supermarket workers who worked hard to restock shelves, doctors and nurses in hospitals and local general practices who were getting ready for the anticipated onslaught of very ill people. Dr Garth Bennie, CE of the Disability Support Network, stated to the government’s Epidemic Response Committee that support workers driving to their client were stopped and challenged by police who did not understand that they were essential workers. Support workers were challenged at supermarkets when they tried to use priority queues for essential workers.

Availability of PPE

The historical undervaluing, and lack of understanding of community support, was apparent in the struggle to gain reasonable access to PPE. Early on, before lockdown, community support workers identified that they should be using masks as a minimum, and gloves as well as other PPE even if their client had no known contact or symptoms of COVID19. Government advice was that PPE was, on the whole, not required. This was despite national guidelines advising people to

avoid visiting their elderly friends and relatives in order to protect their loved ones from COVID19. As one support worker said in media, support workers visit tens of grandmothers every day in their work, travelling from one client to another. Some support workers, in this lack of kindness and understanding of their work, resorted to purchasing their own PPE to use. In the absence of managerial action, support workers conducted their own client screening checks, coordinating with other local support workers, to ensure they were safe on the job. Supermarket checkout operators and police officers had better PPE protection than support workers, despite the close personal contact, and bodily fluids, support workers dealt with every hour.

Mobilising workers

Despite its challenges, the pandemic and lockdown has created some opportunities. Perhaps because the lockdown created such stark differences in experience among essential workers, support workers readily took opportunities to front media and social media to highlight their peril. Media, for once, paid attention to support workers’ union press releases – again, an opportunity caused by the pandemic that meant there was less news available, and it was easier to build clear storylines around lockdown and essential workers. Support workers and their unions provided media ‘interest’ and counter narrative to the rhetoric of team kindness.

The need to organise without physical contact, and in the context of generally increased use of the internet to connect during lockdown, meant greater connection nationally and globally, with support workers in Aotearoa/New Zealand meeting regularly with workers in Australia, the US, Spain, Switzerland and Ireland, creating a greater sense of common concern, unity, and a global cause. The global campaign Caring for those who Care (<https://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/caring-those-who-care>) galvanised this sense of unity and cause by creating a set of demands coordinated through their global union federation UNI Global Union.

COVID19 has highlighted, at least for workers and their representatives, the ongoing undervaluing of their jobs and their clients and the actual impact

this can have on the workers' wellbeing and families. However, they have faced those challenges and leapt forward to use media, social media and new international connections to bring their plight to public attention. Perhaps there is a small silver lining to their experience of the pandemic, that the confidence, skill and connections made in these difficult times now put them in a better place than ever to fight for what are their rights – and just a little bit of kindness.

COVID-19 Pandemic: Response of Ghana's Health Service Workers

Jerry Detse Mensah-Pah, Regional Industrial Relations Officer, Health Services Workers Union of TUC Ghana, Fellow Centre for Social Impact Studies

The novel coronavirus hit Ghana in March 2020 when the first two cases were confirmed after which a partial lockdown was instituted in some parts of the country. Health workers were part of exempted groups affected by the directive which was subsequently lifted in April 2020. It should be noted, however, that employers of health workers introduced several measures including granting health workers six-month tax exemption and payment of an additional 50% of their monthly remuneration for three months to some selected healthcare workers.

Recognizing the complementary nature of different skills in the provision of healthcare delivery and the composition of our membership, the Health Services Workers Union of TUC-Gh (HSWU) sees all healthcare workers as frontline workers.

Prior to the emergence of the devastating and livelihood-wrecking pandemic, the health sector has been underfunded, under-resourced, unprioritized with so many deficiencies in infrastructure and supplies of medications. Without gross exaggeration majority of the members are up in arms against its employers for myriad of unresolved labor disputes.

According to [Bangdiwala et al. \(2010\)](#) increased globalization and interdependence among countries, sustained health worker migration and the complex threats of rapidly spreading infectious diseases coupled with changing lifestyles, makes the health workforce essential. Building the human resources for the health sector should not only include healthcare professionals like physicians and nurses, but every worker within the value chain.

A strengthened primary healthcare system will increase coverage and address the basic health needs of societies especially in low and middle-income countries where healthcare access is a critical challenge. There is a global crisis in the health workforce, expressed in acute shortages and misdistribution of health workers, geographically and professionally. This massive global shortage, though imprecise quantitatively, is estimated at more than 4 million workers.

In spite of the fact that Ghana's healthcare expenditure has increased over the past two decades, additional healthcare expenditures are required to enhance the acquisition of better hospital resources that may improve healthcare geared towards the ultimate goal of achieving optimal preventive and containment measures.

This disturbing situation of Ghana's Healthcare delivery system is further escalated by the emergence of COVID-19 and its attendant challenges. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, health care systems across the globe have reported substantial [shortages in personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) including Gloves, face masks, N95 respirators, powered air-purifying respirators, eye protection, and gowns are central to transmission-based precautions, compromising their ability to keep health care professionals safe while treating increasing numbers of patients. At present, over 100 health care workers have been infected in Ghana, many of whom worked in our government hospitals.

Union Interventions

Representing members of our union, we have consistently monitored interventions by employers and government to ensure strict adherences to [WHO protocols](#) in safeguarding the lives of our

members with reference to Article 21, which provides that “a health agency or facility shall place emphasis on the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees at all times. To this end, the Agency or Facility shall provide in writing Health and Safety Regulations and these shall be reviewed periodically”, similarly, Section 9 (a) states that the employer “provide work appropriate raw materials, machinery, equipment and tools” and (c) “take all practicable steps to ensure that the worker is free from risk of personal injury or damage to his or her health during and in the course of the worker’s employment or while lawfully on the employer’s premises.” Ghana’s [Labour Act 651 \(2003\)](#) enjoins the employer to provide for coherent and systematic measures aimed at promoting occupational safety and health. These provisions set forth the principle that workers must be protected from sickness, disease and injury arising from their employment. Yet for us in the Health Services Workers Union the reality has been different.

The Union’s response to the pandemic is driven by passion built on the tenets of representation and social justice. The Union has additionally procured ten thousand containers of hand sanitizers and thirty thousand nose masks, and has since distributed all of these to its members.

Additionally, the Union continues to advocate for the Government to supply health workers with PPEs.

To respond to this crisis, policies and actions are needed to address the dynamics of the health labor market and the production and management of the health workforce to strengthen the performance of existing health systems. Schools of public health need to develop a range of capacity and leadership in addition to the traditional training of healthcare managers and researchers.

COVID-19 in Ghana: GAWU’s Response in Guaranteeing Decent Work for Agricultural Workers

*Bashiratu Kamal and Emelia Ghansah,
General Agricultural Workers’ Union of
Ghana*

Since hitting Ghana in March 2020, the [novel coronavirus](#) has destabilized the economy and lives of Ghanaians. The government instituted a [partial lockdown](#) in three major cities namely Accra, Kumasi, Tema and Kasoa which was subsequently [lifted](#) in April 2020 coupled with the closure of schools and a ban on social gatherings and religious activities, which have also been eased as part of preventive and containment measures.

Stakeholders in the agricultural supply chain were exempted from the partial lockdown in an attempt to forestall a possible food security crisis, a position also held in [a joint statement](#) by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). They held that “When acting to protect the health and well-being of their citizens, countries should ensure that any trade-related measures do not disrupt the [food supply chain](#).” Meanwhile, several reports indicated how farmers were prevented from going to their farms, the inability of market women to sell their wares and absence of vehicles to convey food supplies to other parts of the country during the partial lockdown. In all, the pandemic has deepened the woes of agricultural workers with disruptions in market linkages and production processes in both the formal and informal sectors.

Contributing [18.27%](#) of the total GDP in 2018, the agricultural sector is characterized by formal and informal activities, employs a large number of women and has a total of about 45% of all employees in the labour market. Whilst [strengthening food production](#) is important, guaranteeing decent work should also be at the core of workers’ rights as Ghana combats the pandemic.

In Ghana, the General Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU) has been organizing both formal and informal agricultural workers for 60 years. Categories of workers in the agricultural sector include casuals, contractors, seasonal (informal within formal), farmers and formal workers. While formal sector workers are regulated by labour laws

and have negotiated collective agreements, the informal sectors are not covered by the [Labour Act 2003 \(651\)](#). Their work arrangements include transportation from community to field, early work hours to avert dangers associated with safety, health and overtime.

As attention is drawn to the spread of the virus, the economic impacts generated by the pandemic have hit many companies negatively such that some have instituted pay cuts, no-wage challenges, redundancies and terminations due to the closure of certain aspects of production or inability to export.

Union interventions

GAWU has operated a functional office during this pandemic with vigorous accessible industrial relations services for workers to guarantee all the pillars of a decent work agenda. Noted as a union with several campaigns, manuals and educational materials on Occupational Safety and Health, the safety of GAWU members have been paramount in monitoring for corporations to adhere to [WHO protocols](#) on plantations, in buses and in offices.

The Union has also worked to ensure that employers uphold provisions in collective agreements pertaining to sexual harassment, gender based-violence and child care not provided for in the Labour Act. The signing of a memorandum of understanding between the management of the Ghana Rubber Estate Limited and the leadership of the Union was crucial in ensuring job security for workers in the case of a redundancy or lay-offs. It has been agreed that the company will consult the Union in the event of any unforeseen situations related to both the job and to continued income security for workers. Similarly, instead of redundancies on oil palm plantations, the Union negotiated leave without pay for workers to guarantee job security.

The Union has developed pictorial information, education and campaign materials using WHO protocols on preventive and containment measures. Sensitization and education of workers on these preventive and containment measures is on-going especially among the self-employed rural workers (farmers and market women included) and child labour free zones in cocoa growing areas. The Union together with management has worked on

busing services to forestall overcrowding and the provisions of sanitary materials like [veronica buckets](#) etc.

GAWU after a difficult time negotiated and agreed on a price of 2.00 Ghanaian cedi per kilo with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture on behalf of cotton farmers. GAWU again facilitated an agreement for soya bean farmers from Bawku with the Maxwell Investment Group of Companies in Ghana to supply them with no less than 15,000 metric tons of soya beans in the new farming season. A market has been secured for farmers even though markets have become unstable.

Conclusions

Since “empty shelves can be [frightening](#), but empty fields and barns would be devastating” the Union continues to work on prompt measures to ensure that food supply chains are kept alive, [domestically and internationally](#), to mitigate the risk of large shocks that would have a considerable impact on everybody, especially on the poor and the most vulnerable.

The Political and Tactical Implications of the Pandemic for Organized Labor

Nick Krachler, ILR School, Cornell University

This piece discusses the consequences of the pandemic for organized labor based on nurse unions’ experience in the US and Germany. It argues political conditions underpinning unions’ ability to act and unions’ tactical responses influence union responses to crises. Unions should build up capacity for telephonic and virtual organizing; and contribute to preventing the mismanagement of crises by pushing for health reforms and including emergency preparedness as a collective bargaining priority.

In a webinar held on the 9th of June 2020 for the 18th Annual Transatlantic Social Dialogue,¹ Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez, President of the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA), and Kalle Kunkel, former senior organizer for ver.di Berlin, reported on these nurse unions' recent experience with the pandemic. Their report was surprising to me: in a recently published article², my co-authors and I found that these unions had transformed their organizations in a very similar manner to become militant and thereby improve nurses' staffing levels through collective bargaining wins in 2015 and 2016. Yet the stories reported on the webinar were markedly different: while both participants stated that the declaration of a state of emergency had robbed unions of their ability to strike and upended labor protections, NYSNA was fighting for its members to receive basic personal protective equipment (PPE) and ver.di Berlin, with other German unions, had managed to pressure the Mayor of Berlin into pledging to propose the end of the Diagnosis-Related-Groups (DRGs) System in a federal council and to engage in negotiations with politicians and employers over pay increases and safety measures.

Why was one union 'firefighting' and the other pressuring politicians and employers for broad changes? Sheridan-Gonzalez reported employers used the state of emergency to refuse to provide PPE, upend contract provisions, and furlough or lay off essential workers because of lost revenues. By contrast, Kunkel reported a concerted pressure campaign: early in the crisis, unionists wrote open letters with political demands such as renationalizing privatized hospitals and ending DRGs, over which the Berlin Senate resolved to negotiate with unions. Ver.di Berlin ran a

telephone organizing campaign to develop a petition with 80 rank-and-file members that got 4,500 signatures and was handed to 20 Members of the Berlin Parliament in an online meeting with 200 workers; parallelly, ver.di Berlin sent 200 letters to Parliamentarians when a majority of healthcare unit's team signed it; finally, media outlets speculated the union might strike if demands went unmet.

While ver.di Berlin's telephone and virtual organizing campaign was important, it does not explain why NYSNA focused on basic protections. Underlying the unions' different priorities were surely also the fact that Germany quickly and effectively contained the pandemic while the US has failed miserably to do so. The uncontrolled pandemic overwhelmed NYSNA members and unionists. Underlying the difference in crisis management was what Michael Moran has called the 'healthcare state': the intertwining of "health care institutions and the institutions of the state"³ that determines resource allocation. A pandemic requires the swift allocation of resources, including PPE and a track-and-trace system led by public health officials. The US government's slow response, its disdain for experts, its priority of stabilizing businesses over managing the pandemic, and the US's lacking data infrastructure⁴ led to a high mortality rate and the overwhelming of healthcare institutions. By contrast, the German government quickly established functioning track-and-trace and aggressive treatment systems based on experts' advice, including Christian Drosten, the head of Virology at the Charité Hospital in Berlins, and Germany's national data infrastructure led to a low mortality rate⁶ and a manageable caseload.

¹ "Essential Workers in Healthcare." 2020. *Vimeo*. (<https://vimeo.com/cuilrlearninginnovation/review/434045523/3904b33216?sort=lastUserActionEventDate&direction=desc>).

² Krachler, Nick, Jennie Auffenberg, and Luifi Wolf. 2020. "The Role of Organizational Factors in Mobilizing Professionals: Evidence from Nurse Unions in the United States and Germany." *British Journal of Industrial Relations*. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/bjir.12556>.

³ Moran, Michael. 1999. *Governing the Health Care State*. Manchester University Press, Page 4.

⁴ Shear, Michael. 2020. "'They Let Us Down': 5 Takeaways on the C.D.C.'s Coronavirus Response." *New York Times*, June 6 (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/03/us/cdc-virus-takeaways.html>).

⁵ Spinney, Laura. 2020. "Germany's Covid-19 expert: 'For many, I'm the evil guy crippling the economy.'" *Guardian*, April 26. (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/26/virologist-christian-drosten-germany-coronavirus-expert-interview>).

⁶ Bennhold, Katrin. 2020. "A German Exception? Why the Country's Coronavirus Death Rate Is Low." *New*

The difference in healthcare state responses shows that preceding unions' opportunities to act are the political conditions of crisis management. What does this mean for organized labor? First, unions should build up capacity for telephonic and virtual organizing in case they are not overwhelmed by poor crisis mismanagement. Secondly, unions should adopt *long-term political aims to influence their healthcare state and thereby avoid such mismanagement*. Sheridan-Gonzalez pointed out what this could mean: NYSNA, with other organizations like the Physicians for a National Health Program⁷, has called for single-payer and

universal healthcare reforms; and collective bargaining could include provisions for emergency measures. The former endorses health reforms that build up public health and data infrastructure and reduce employers' competitive incentives; the latter could establish committees and budgets for health and safety measures such as hazard pay and PPE stocks, which 1199SEIU has recently called for under its 'We Are Essential' campaign. What is clear, overall, is that organized labor not only requires new tactics but also broader political influence to protect workers' and the public's rights in current and future crises.

York Times, April 4. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/04/world/europe/germany-coronavirus-death-rate.html>).

⁷ Gaffney, Adam. 2020. "Bill of Health." *The Baffler*, July. (<https://thebaffler.com/salvos/bill-of-health-gaffney>).

American Sociological Association 115th Annual Meeting, Section and Associated Sessions Zoom Schedule

Below you can find the schedule of the Labor and Labor Movements Section sessions and a selection of associated relevant sessions featuring section members. All sessions will be held as Zoom meetings and the hyperlinks to the meetings are attached to the session names in the schedule below. All Zoom meetings for Labor and Labor Movements section sessions have been arranged by Katherine Maich. Please reach out to Katherine by email if you have any questions pertaining to the Zoom meetings for the section sessions linked below: kem394@psu.edu.

Friday August 7

10:30am – 12:10pm PDT (1:30 – 3:10pm EDT) [**1206: Changing Technologies, Changing Work, Changing Power Relations: Lessons from Sectoral Studies**](#) ⁸

Session Organizer: *Chris Tilly, University of California, Los Angeles*

Presider: *Annette Bernhardt, University of California, Berkeley*

From Instacart to DoorDash and Beyond: Ecommerce and New Food Delivery Channels

Chris Brenner, University of California, Santa Cruz

Beyond Amazon: Technologies Shaping the Retail Store of the Future

Françoise Carré, University of Massachusetts-Boston;

Chris Tilly University of California, Los Angeles

Technology, Race, Class, and Power in the Changing Logistics Industry

Juan de Lara, University of Southern California

Who's in the Driver's Seat? Lyft as Viewed from Below

Sarah Mason, University of California, Santa Cruz

Driverless? Autonomous Trucks and the Future of the American Trucker

Steve Viscelli, University of Pennsylvania

Saturday August 8

8:30 – 10:10am PDT (11:30am – 1:10pm EDT) [**1129: New Strategies for Labor**](#)

Session Organizer: *Jeffrey S. Rothstein, Grand Valley State University*

Presider: *Jeffrey S. Rothstein, Grand Valley State University*

⁸ The original time scheduled for this session conflicted with the Labor and Labor Movements Section's Business Meeting and Roundtable sessions, so it will instead be held live at the time above. The link above is to the Zoom live session, and the password for the session is "Changing" (no quotation marks). Once the live session has been held and recorded, the recording will be posted [here](#).

Interstitial Labor Publics and the Contradicting "New Workers' Movement" in China

Mujun Zhou, Zhejiang University

Leveraging Private Power, Enforcing Public Standards: Supply Chain Agreements in U.S. Agriculture

Kathryn C. Babineau, University of Virginia; Jennifer L. Bair, University of Virginia

Politicizing Tech: Lessons in Alternative Labor Organizing from the Tech Workers Coalition

Larissa Petrucci, University of Oregon

Labor Strategy and the Digital Strike: Social Media in the 2018 Red State Revolts

Eric Benjamin Blanc, New York University

**10:30 – 11:10am PDT
(1:30 – 2:10pm EDT)**

1228: Section on Labor and Labor Movements Business Meeting

**11:10a – 12:10pm PDT
(2:10 – 3:10pm EDT)**

1228: Section on Labor and Labor Movements Roundtables

Session Organizer: *Gay W. Seidman, University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Table 01. Racial dynamics in US labor unions

Presider: *Manuel Zimbalist Rosaldo, Penn State University*

Anti-Racism and Racial Justice as Critical Components of Labor Organizing: A Case Study in Revitalization

Carolina Hernandez

Organization, Ideology, and Race in the Labor Movement: The Case of ILA 815

Michael Billeaux, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Unions, Ideology, and Authoritarianism: The Case of the White Working Class

Gregg Robinson, Grossmont College

Table 02. Facing sustainability challenges

Presider: *Ian Robert Carrillo, University of California, Santa Barbara*

Camp Time: Regimentation and Adaptation in a Mobile Work Regime

Sara K. Dorow, University of Alberta; Sandrine Jean, Memorial University

Can U.S. Labor Unions Provide a Roadmap to Social Sustainability?
Diane M. Sicotte, Drexel University; Kelly A. Joyce, Drexel University

Toward an Environmental Justice of the Workplace
Alexis Econie

Table 03. Global challenges, new strategies

Presider: *Tom Juravich, University of Massachusetts-Amherst*

Community Union Reform in South China

Lefeng Lin, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

Diasporic Influences and Migrant Organising: The Study of Union Branch in the North of England
Zinovijus Ciupijus, University of Leeds

Globalization and Wage-Setting Institutions in Advanced Capitalist Democracies: Retrenchment and Convergence Revisited

Anthony Roberts, Colorado State University; Matthew C. Mahutga, University of California-Riverside

Innovations in Labor Studies: Incorporating Global Perspectives

Kim Scipes, Purdue University Northwest

Table 04. New Strategies for American Labor

Presider: *Rocio Rosales, University of California-Irvine*

National Living Wage Movements in a Regional World: The Fight for \$15 in the United States

Tamara Kay, University of Notre Dame; Robert Allen Manduca, Harvard University; Jason Spicer, MIT

Organized Labor as Interest Group or Social Movement?: Framing Class-Based Contention under Neoliberalism

Diana Reddy, University of California Berkeley

Labor's Forgotten Fight

Jamie McCallum, Middlebury College

Table 05. Changing labor processes

Presider: *Manjusha S. Nair, George Mason University*

Can an Individualized Model of Employment Rights Protect
Workers Rights? Evidence from the UK Hotel Industry
*Orestis Papadopoulos, Manchester Metropolitan
University*

Manufacturing Precarity: A Case Study of a Decade-Long
Lockout among Grain Processing Workers
*Jacquelyn (Jackie) S. Gabriel, Western State Colorado
University*

The Spectacle of Driverless Rapid Transit: A Survival Analysis
of the Influence of Global City Competition and Labor
Dynamics on Driver Automation, 1981-2019
Youbin Kang, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Table 06. Labor Struggles in Education

Presider: *Belinda C. Lum, Sacramento City College*

Graduate Employee Unionization and Organizational Change in
Higher Education
Kathleen Ragon, University of Connecticut

Teachers' Unions and Tactical Innovation

*Amanda Pullum, California State University-Monterey
Bay*

The Political Economy of Corporate School Reform in Chicago:
Crisis-Management, Elite Plans, and Systemic Churn
Jeremy Cohan, School of Visual Arts

Table 07. Organizing Vulnerable Workers

Presider: *Rina Agarwala, Johns Hopkins University*

Intersectional Analysis of Diversity Policies: Classist
Assumptions in French Managerialization of Affirmative
Action Policies
Lisa Danielle Buchter, Emlyon Business School

Organizing Unlikely Subjects: The Constraints and Possibilities
for Domestic Worker Organizing in California
*Cynthia J. Cranford, University of Toronto; Patricia
Roach, University of Toronto; Jennifer Nazareno, Brown
University*

Paternalistic Managers: Institution-Based Relationships and the
Production of Consent
Qi Song, Northwestern University

Social Stratification in Sanitation Labor in India: A Case of
Social Inertia and Inequalities in India
Aditya Bhol, Centre for Policy Research

Table 08. Exploring workplace identities

Presider: *Gay W. Seidman, University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Bringing Society Back into the Workplace. For a Bourdieu-
Inspired Sociology of Professions
*David Pichonnaz, University of Applied Sciences and Arts
Western Switzerland*

Digital Survey Tools for Studying Paid Care Work:
Methodological Opportunities and Hazards
Isaac Jabola-Carolus, The Graduate Center, CUNY

From Alienation to Empowerment: Worker Cooperatives and
Social Relations in the Workplace
Heather Anne Hax, Towson University

**2:30 to 4:10pm PDT
(5:30 to 7:10pm EDT)**

Labor's New Challenges

Session Organizer: *Barry Eidlin, McGill University*
Presider: *Stephanie Luce, CUNY*

Amazon Capitalism and the Cost of Free Shipping
*Jake Alimahomed-Wilson, California State University-
Long Beach; Juliann Emmons Allison, UC-Riverside;
Ellen R. Reese, University of California-Riverside*

Manufacturing Disruption: Worker and Union Response to the
Gig-Economy in New York City's Taxi Industry
Andrew Wolf, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Radical Unionism in America's Jungles: Theorizing The Militant
Minority in United States Meatpacking Unions, 1933-1950
*Joseph Reynolds van der Naald, The Graduate Center,
CUNY*

The Formalization of Informal Workers at Hyundai Motor
Company
Minhyoung Kang, Johns Hopkins University

**2:30 to 4:10pm PDT
(5:30 to 7:10pm EDT)**

**1408: Organizing Domestic and Care Workers: A
Conversation across University and Community**

Session Organizer: *Cynthia Cranford, University of Toronto*
Presider: *Jennifer Jihye Chun, University of California, Los
Angeles*

Panelists: *Cynthia Cranford, University of Toronto*
Mary Romero, University of Arizona
Lan Fong Lau, Asian Immigrant Women Advocates
Stacy Kono, Hand-in-Hand, The Domestic Employers
Network

Sunday August 9

8:30 – 10:10am PDT

(11:30am – 1:10pm EDT)

[2121: Labor and Control: From Platform Labor to Worker Organizing](#)

Session Organizer: *Jasmine Kerrissey, University of Massachusetts-Amherst*

Presider: *Marcos Emilio Perez, Washington and Lee University*

“You Cannot Live Without Work:” The Hyper-Commodification of Platform Labor

Laurie Ann Michaels, The Ohio State University

Delivering Discontent: Platform Architecture, Labor Control, and Contention in China

Ya-Wen Lei, Harvard University

Work and Unionism in Mexico: Challenges for MORENA and the Fourth Transformation Government

Gerardo Otero, Simon Fraser University; Enrique de la Garza Toledo, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana

Learning from Massachusetts Teachers: Organizing Against Charter School Expansion in 2016

Kyla Walters, Sonoma State University

8:30 – 10:10am PDT

(11:30am – 1:10pm EDT)

[2119: Book Salon – *The Spector of Global China: Politics, Labor and Foreign Investment in Africa* \(University of Chicago Press, 2018\) by Ching Kwan Lee](#)

Session Organizer: *Jennifer Jihye Chun, University of California, Los Angeles*

Moderator: *Michael Burawoy, University of California, Berkeley*

Author: *Ching Kwan Lee, University of California, Los Angeles*

Panelists: *Gay W. Seidman, University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Ho-Fung Hung, Johns Hopkins University

Victoria Reyes, University of California-Riverside

Monday August 10

**2:30 to 4:10pm PDT
(5:30 to 7:10pm EDT)**

[3420: The U.S. Labor Movement in the Trump Era](#)

Session Organizer: *Ruth Milkman, The Graduate Center, CUNY*
Presider: *Kathleen C. Schwarzman, University of Arizona*

Teacher Strikes and the New Activism

Mary Ann Clawson, Wesleyan University

Working for Immigrant Rights in the Trump Era: Xenophobia,
Solidarity, and Active Resistance within the Labor
Movement

Shannon Marie Gleeson, Cornell University, ILR School;

Sofya Aptekar, University of Massachusetts-Boston

Re-regulating Labor Markets: Legislative Victories in the Trump
Era

Stephanie Luce, CUNY

The March to \$15: Workplace and Political Mobilization in the
Fight for \$15 Campaign

Chris Rhomberg, Fordham University

**Tuesday August 11
2:30 to 4:10pm PDT
(5:30 to 7:10pm EDT)**

[4405: Mapping the Future of Work: Interdisciplinary Perspectives](#)

Session Organizer: *Arne L. Kalleberg, University of North
Carolina-Chapel Hill*

Presider: *Nancy DiTomaso, Rutgers Business School-Newark
and New Brunswick*

Panelists: *Nancy DiTomaso, Rutgers Business School-Newark
and New Brunswick*

Chris Tilly, University of California, Los Angeles

Steven Vallas, Northeastern University

Announcements and Calls for Papers

Member Announcements

- Beginning July 1, **Todd E. Vachon** stepped into a new role as the Faculty Coordinator of the Labor Education Action Research Network (LEARN) in the School of Management and Labor Relations at Rutgers University, New Brunswick.
- **Rubén Hernández-León**, UCLA, was interviewed by [CNN en Español](#) on the risks that temporary agricultural workers face in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Call for Papers: China's Work and Labor in the Era of Industrial Transition and Globalization Crisis

Labor relations in transitional China have been a core issue in contemporary Chinese and global sociology. Since the early 2000s, sociologists around the world have studied Chinese working conditions and labor process, workers' organizations and culture, and labor-rights protection when China was becoming the world factory. Recently, however, significant changes have taken place in both Chinese and international political economy, such as industrial upgrading and restructuring, technological innovation, and the seeming de-globalization, all of which are leading to a new chapter for studying China's work and labor. In response to those new structural changes, the Journal of Chinese Sociology (JCS), sponsored by the Institute of Sociology, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, hereby calls for papers from sociologists and social scientists at home and abroad.

Theme: China's Work and Labor in the Era of Industrial Transition and Globalization Crisis

We are looking for papers on the following topics (including but not limited to):

1. Employment and labor issues caused by industrial relocation to other countries and Chinese inland
2. Manufacturing employment and labor issues raised by technological changes such as artificial intelligence, robot, and the Internet
3. Organization and labor of traditional, emerging, and atypical service jobs against the background of the digital economy
4. Work and labor issues closely related to minority groups, international migrants, and gender in China
5. Employment and labor issues in Chinese rural and urbanized rural areas

6. The responses of human resources/labor market organizations to the labor demand caused by technological changes and industrial restructuring
7. The role and behavior of the local government in regulating labor relations, such as job upgrading and creation, employment outsourcing, labor legislation and inspection, and labor-rights protection
8. Participation of mass organizations, social organizations, and workers in labor relations governance in the new context of industrial upgrading
9. Problems in the social reproduction of labor caused by changes in employment and work, such as family and housing, education and upbringing, mental and physical health, social interaction and networking, and subcultural formation

Scholars who are interested in submitting articles need to send the title and abstract (both Chinese and English are acceptable, less than 1500 words) to meixiao@cass.org.cn before **July 31, 2020**.

The Journal of Chinese Sociology (JCS) is a peer-reviewed, open access journal sponsored by the Institute of Sociology, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and published by the world-renowned publisher Springer Nature. As Chinese mainland's first English-language journal in sociology, JCS strives to build a first-rate international platform for academic exchange and collaboration between Chinese sociologist and their oversea peers.

Until May, 2020, the Journal has published 117 articles. It has attracted a truly international community of authors and readers. Researchers from more than 20 countries around the world, including China, the US, Canada, UK, Czech Republic, Poland, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Mexico, etc., submitted their works to JCS. The number of downloads of published articles increased from 1404 in 2014 to 98,838 in 2019.

Call for Papers: National Center's 48th Annual Conference Collective Bargaining, Labor Relations, and COVID-19 April 18-20, 2021 New York City

NATIONAL CENTER
for the Study of Collective Bargaining in
Higher Education and the Professions

HUNTER
The City University of New York

The National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions, Hunter College, City University of New York invites scholars and practitioners from multiple disciplines to submit abstracts of proposed papers, panels, or interactive

workshops for our 48th annual labor-management conference on April 18-20, 2020 in New York City.

The theme of the conference will be Collective Bargaining, Labor Relations, and COVID-19.

We welcome proposals involving recent research as well as proposals by authors of recently published books relevant to higher education, collective bargaining, labor relations, or labor history.

Those interested in proposing a panel or workshop should upload an abstract by **September 11, 2020** to the [2021 Abstract Dropbox](#) that includes a title and description along with a list of invited participants including their title, affiliation, and contact information. Questions concerning the call for papers should be emailed to [2021 National Center Annual Conference](#).

Proposed Topics for Papers or Interactive Workshops

We seek proposed papers or interactive workshops on relevant and timely topics including but not limited to the following:

- Lessons Learned from Bargaining During the Pandemic
- Virtual Labor Organizing on Campus in Response to COVID-19
- COVID-19 Related Bargaining Subjects for the Common Good
- An Analysis of Collectively Negotiated COVID-19 Related Agreements
- Post-Pandemic Austerity and Higher Education Restructuring
- Racial Justice on Campus
- Graduate Assistant Collective Bargaining at Private Institutions
- 1918 Flu Pandemic, Labor, and Higher Education
- The History of Social Unionism in Higher Education
- Addressing Cultural Taxation of College Faculty
- Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Disparities in Layoffs
- Gendered Impact of Remote Education
- Collective Bargaining Issues for Essential Employees
- Campus Police Unions and Collective Bargaining
- Surveillance and Privacy in Online Education
- Collective Bargaining Over Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Issues
- Higher Education, Immigration Status, and Enforcement
- The Future of International Students, Faculty, and Campuses
- Community College Collective Bargaining Issues
- Unionization and Collective Bargaining at Religious-Affiliated Institutions
- The Arbitration of Contract Grievances
- Health and Safety Issues on Campus
- Non-NLRB Procedures for Private Sector Representation
- Free Speech, Activism, and Controversies on Campus
- Bargaining Over School Consolidations and Closures
- Contingent Faculty, Job Security, and Academic Freedom
- The Meaning and Implications of the Recent Strike Waves for Higher Ed

- The Duty of Fair Representation in Higher Education

Call for Papers: Rethinking Digital Labour, a special collection in The Economic and Labour Relations Review

Abstract submission deadline: **15 August 2020**

Full paper submission deadline: **30 November 2020**

Guest Editor: Bingqing Xia (East China Normal University)

A number of important topics, themes and concepts frequently recur in studies of digital labour, such as exploitation, precariousness (Standing 2011), ‘the gig economy’ (Graham 2019), and unpaid labour, including those of digital ‘users’ (Terranova 2004) and audiences. Concepts of immaterial, affective and emotional labour have been widely prevalent (Hardt and Negri 2000, 2005). This first generation of critical research has drawn, often valuably so, on a variety of Marxist, post-structuralist and Weberian sources to question prevailing neo-liberal and centrist models centred on values of efficiency and the supposed empowerment of workers and users. Some debates in East Asia follow this tendency to explore labour issues in the digital economy, such as platform workers (Chen and Kimura 2019, Chen 2018, Steinberg 2019, Shibata 2019) and workers in the technology assembly factories (Pun 2005, Qiu 2016, Sacchetto and Andrijasevic, 2015).

While these topics, themes and concepts have been beneficial in establishing a basis for critique, there is a danger that, at least in the form they have been applied, they may become rather familiar and in some cases potentially even a little stale. If so, this suggests a need to renew critique of digital labour, as the digital realm stabilizes around a set of key global players and platforms and as labour activists continue to face serious obstacles to success in an era of authoritarian populism. With its broad scale in the valorization of digital work, here, we concentrate our arguments on the professional workers in the information and communication technologies (ICT) related industries. Some digital labour debates in East Asia suggest certain issues that may contribute to renewal. For example, some authors have examined how creative labour in digital domains, such as creative labour in the ‘platform capitalism’ (Stevens 2019, Luthje 2019) and digital entrepreneurs (Leung and Cossu 2019), offers the bottom-up potential of innovation. It is important to address a renewed critique that beyond the rigid theoretical binaries that have long characterized digital labour debates on exploitation and labour agency.

We don’t yet know the socio-economic consequences of COVID-19, but it may well make worse the quality of working life of some platform worker, such as ride-hailing and food delivery workers, who often lack adequate access to employment-insurance benefits or sick leave. COVID- 19 may change current digital labour debates in East Asia, including how to reform labour markets, welfare systems and government policies to ensure greater dignity of digital working lives. It is necessary to seek for certain agents supporting digital labourers’ own rights that may lead to an alternative of capitalism.

We call for papers that seek to move beyond the theoretical and conceptual vocabulary that has dominated the first two decades of critical research on digital labour. We have particular interests in research exploring the agency beyond the paradigm on exploitation in East Asia, such as the socio-cultural dynamics of digital labour, reproduction of global inequality through digital work and possible responses, the agents originate from inequalities of gender, race and ethnicity. We also welcome papers addressing how COVID-19 may change the current digital labour debates in East Asia.

The print version of the resulting journal issue will be published in Volume 32(3) of *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, September 2021, although individual articles may be published earlier as accepted.

In line with ELRR policy of recognising the particular difficulties faced by women and First Nations/minority scholars during COVID-19 isolation, the journal will be looking for balanced representation in the published collection, and will continue to consider relevant high-quality submissions for publication in subsequent issues in cases where authors were prevented by COVID-19 related circumstances from meeting the relevant deadlines

Among the issues that might be explored are the following, many of which have certainly been present in earlier research, but often in an unconsolidated or under-developed way. This list is only indicative, and we would welcome fresh ideas from any area of critical research, and from any critical perspective.

- Changes in digital labour regulation and policy
- Immigrant digital labour markets and justice for migrant digital workers
- Agency initiated from inequalities of gender, race and ethnicity that may lead to an alternative to or form of capitalism
- Questions of working dignity in digital domains
- Maker culture and digital entrepreneurship
- Socio-cultural dynamics of digital labour
- Crises of digital work
- Alternative approaches to contesting digital work
- Theories of subjectivity and agency in relation to digital labour that build on or go beyond the Marxist paradigm
- Reproduction of social/global inequality through digital work and possible responses

Papers that draw on empirical research and theoretical overviews are equally welcome. We particularly welcome articles that engage with the topic of digital labour in East Asia. Submitting authors should review the scope statement of *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, which can be found at <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/elr>.

Process: Before submitting papers, authors should send an abstract of up to 500 words setting out their topic, and an outline of their argument and theoretical/methodological basis to the Guest Editor and Journal Editors-in-Chief listed below. We would encourage anyone thinking of submitting an abstract to contact the special issue Guest Editor via the following email address: bqxia@comm.ecnu.edu.cn

In consultation with the Editor-in-Chief and Executive Editors, the Guest Editor will select the articles that potentially best fit the special issue, based on peer review. Invitations will then be sent out to submit a full paper. An online workshop will be arranged in order to guide the development of the papers selected. Articles will be double-blind peer reviewed upon completion and subject to regular Editorial Board oversight.

Hagley Prize in Business History – Nominations for Best Book

This prize is for the best book in business history (broadly defined) and consists of a medallion and \$2,500, which are presented at the annual meeting of the BHC. Given the nature of the award's funding and establishment (through the generosity of the Hagley Museum and Library of Wilmington, Delaware, one of the nation's most significant research libraries dedicated to the history of business), the Grants and Prizes Committee will advise the Hagley representative and the BHC President about who would be a suitable person to serve as the third member of the three-person selection committee. The award committee encourages the submission of books from all methodological perspectives. It is particularly interested in innovative studies that have the potential to expand the boundaries of the discipline. Scholars, publishers, and other interested parties may submit nominations. Eligible books can have either an American or international focus. They must be written in English and published during the two years prior to the award. Four copies of a book must accompany a nomination and must be submitted to the Prize Coordinator, Carol Ressler Lockman, Hagley Museum and Library, PO Box 3630, 298 Buck Road, Wilmington DE 19807-0630 USA. Email: clockman@hagley.org. **The submission deadline is November 30.**

The Debra E. Bernhardt Labor Journalism Prize

The Bernhardt Prize is an award of \$1000 given for an article that furthers the understanding of the history of working people.

Articles focused on historical events AND articles about current issues (work, housing, organizing, health, education) that include historical context are both welcome. The work should be published in print or online between August 26, 2019 and August 30, 2020. **The contest deadline is Sunday August 30, 2020.**

The prize is given to insightful work that contributes to the understanding of labor history; shows creativity; demonstrates excellence in writing; and adheres to the highest journalistic standards of accuracy. Only one entry per person; publications and subject matter should target the United States and Canada; neither books nor plays are eligible.

TO ENTER send an e-mail on or before Sunday August 30, 2020 to info@laborarts.org with the following information: 1) Author name; 2) Title of Article; 3) Name of Publication; 4) Date and

Place of Publication; 5) URL link for article (if no link is available attach a pdf of the article and of the front page of the publication to your e-mail).

The winner will be announced at a virtual Forum on Labor Journalism on Tuesday October 13, 2020 at 6pm

The New York Labor History Association and NYU's Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives sponsor this award in order to inspire more great writing for a general audience about the history of work, workers, and their organizations. The award is co-sponsored by LaborArts; Metro New York Labor Communications Council; and the NYC Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO. The contest committee is: Irwin Yellowitz, NYLHA; Rachel Bernstein, NYLHA and LaborArts; Gary Schoichet, Metro; Kate Whalen, NYC CLC; Shannon O'Neill and Michael Koncewicz, Tamiment.

The organization is guided by the vision of the late Debra E. Bernhardt, who worked in so many different realms to share the hidden histories of working people. As head of the Wagner Labor Archives she reached out to an astonishing number of people and organizations, to document undocumented stories and unrecognized contributions, and to make links between past and present. The LaborArts project is [dedicated](#) to Bernhardt, and the online exhibit "[Making History Personal](#)" explores her work.

Jaeah Lee received the 2018-19 Award for "The Real Cost of Working in the House of Mouse," [Topic Magazine](#) (online), September 2018. She was a featured speaker at the 2019 Bernhardt Labor Journalism Forum on October 16, 2019, Labor Journalism - The Next Generation, with Kim Kelly (Teen Vogue) and Alex Pres (Jacobin).

Call for Papers: The Labor and Working-Class History Association's 2021 Meeting: Workers on the Front Lines University of Illinois, Chicago. May 26-28, 2021

The Labor and Working-Class History Association (LAWCHA), an organization of scholars, teachers, students, labor educators, and activists, welcomes proposals for its 2021 conference at the University of Illinois, Chicago, May 26 to May 28. The conference theme will be Workers on the Front Lines. Our conference will overlap with that of the United Association for Labor Education (UALE), which is scheduled May 24 to 27, allowing for shared programming and dialogue. UALE is a network organization dedicated to worker and workplace training and education.

Be it in pandemics, natural disasters, industrial "accidents," or wars, workers always have been and remain on the front lines. The coronavirus crisis has put many workers in harm's way. Too many are deemed "essential" and then underpaid while workers better paid and sheltering in place also suffer during the COVID-19 pandemic. Globally, precarious workers take home poverty wages while forced by employers to undergo new bodily policing procedures and risk

their health and safety and that of their communities. This crisis has widened and deepened when it intersected with protests exploding in the wake of George Floyd’s murder. The pre-existing conditions of racism and police brutality—combined with COVID-19—further exposed the problems of a capitalist society designed to put profits above workers at all costs. Collectively, these intertwined crises reveal the deep significance of labor and working-class history to understanding our current moment. In 2021, LAWCHA seeks presentations that explore the experiences of workers on the front lines, interrogating the meanings of “essential” and “front line” across time and place, examining the stories of workers at the forefront of movements for democracy, sovereignty, rights, and freedoms, and what those histories mean for us today. Truly, there is no better place to hold this conference than Chicago.

The program committee encourages the submission of comparative, global, and transnational panels; sessions on “front line” or “essential” workers; workers and global supply chains; immigration and migration; gender, sexuality and work; the intersection of public health, medical care, and work with eyes towards marginalized workers including Black, Brown, Indigenous, Latinxs workers, and people with disabilities; working-class and labor movements for justice and democracy. We encourage presentations on the United States, across the Americas and beyond, in all time periods; teaching and public history; race, ethnicity, gender, disability, colonialism, citizenship status, and sexuality; working-class communities and social movements. Proposals on other labor and working-class topics are also welcome.

We will consider traditional panels with 3 papers; lightning sessions of 4-to-6 very short presentations; roundtables of 5-6 people discussing a larger theme; workshops; performance-oriented sessions featuring artistic work; and moderated conversations between activists or artists and historians. All sessions must designate a comment/chair or moderator/chair separate from presenters. Please note if your proposal includes UALE members and/or aligns with the UALE conference.

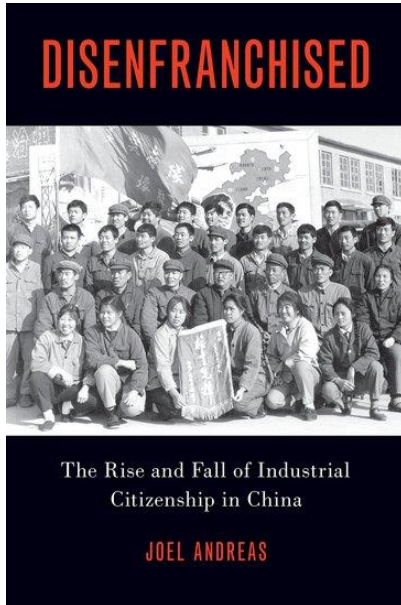
We welcome proposals from scholars and activists in all fields, and especially urge contingent faculty and independent scholars to submit panel proposals and papers, not necessarily related to the labor issues concerning employment status in the field.

We encourage the submission of complete panels rather than individual papers. Single paper authors are encouraged to seek out others prior to submission. To assist, the conference website will have a message board where individuals can post ideas and seek others to create panels. Proposals for complete panels should include a one-page session description that includes a short narrative of the session’s theme, abstracts for each paper or short summary of each presenter’s focus, and two-page CV for each participant including chair and/or commentator. Proposals for individual presentations should include a one-paragraph description and two-page CV. Include contact information for all participants.

The deadline for submissions is October 1, 2020. We plan to announce acceptance of submissions in December 2020. Further instructions for uploading a proposal coming soon. Please [contact lawcha2021@gmail.com](mailto:lawcha2021@gmail.com) with any questions.

New Publications by Section Members

Books



[*Disenfranchised: The Rise and Fall of Industrial Citizenship in China*](#)

By Joel Andreas

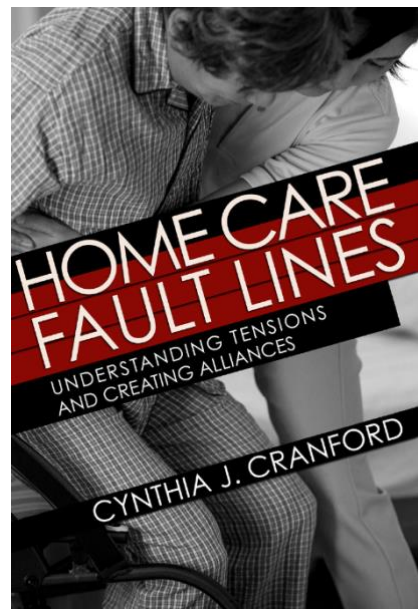
In the decades following World War II, factories in many countries not only provided secure employment and a range of economic entitlements, but also recognized workers as legitimate stakeholders, enabling them to claim rights to participate in decision making and hold factory leaders accountable. In recent decades, as employment has become more precarious, these attributes of industrial citizenship have been eroded and workers have increasingly been reduced to hired hands. As Joel Andreas shows in *Disenfranchised*, no country has experienced these changes as dramatically as China. Drawing on a decade of field research, including interviews with both factory workers and managers, Andreas traces the

changing political status of workers inside Chinese factories from 1949 to the present, carefully analyzing how much power they have actually had to shape their working conditions.

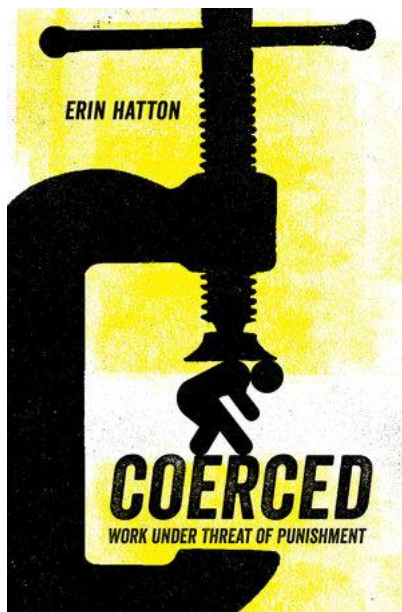
[*Home Care Fault Lines: Understanding Tensions and Creating Alliances*](#)

By Cynthia J. Cranford

In this revealing look at home care, Cynthia J. Cranford illustrates how elderly and disabled people and the immigrant women workers who assist them in daily activities develop meaningful relationships even when their different ages, abilities, races, nationalities, and socioeconomic backgrounds generate tension. As Cranford shows, workers can experience devaluation within racialized and gendered class hierarchies, which shapes their pursuit of security. Cranford analyzes the tensions, alliances, and compromises between security for workers and flexibility for elderly and disabled people, and she argues that workers and recipients negotiate flexibility and security within intersecting inequalities in varying ways depending on multiple interacting dynamics. What comes through from Cranford's analysis is the need for deeply democratic alliances across multiple axes of inequality. To support both flexible care and secure work, she argues for an intimate community unionism that advocates for universal state funding, designs culturally sensitive labor market intermediaries run by



workers and recipients to help people find jobs or workers, and addresses everyday tensions in home workplaces.



[*Coerced: Work Under Threat of Punishment*](#)

By Erin Hatton

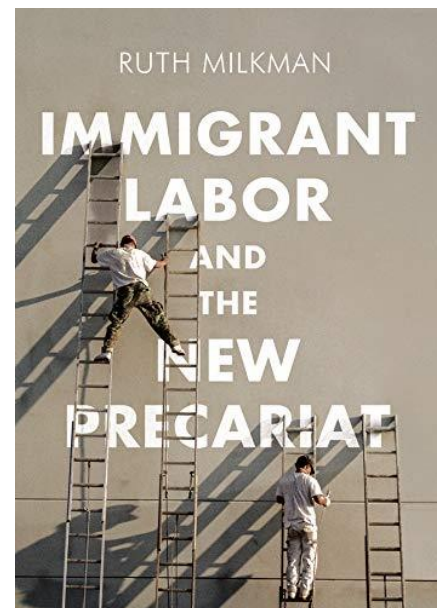
What do prisoner laborers, graduate students, welfare workers, and college athletes have in common? According to sociologist Erin Hatton, they are all part of a growing workforce of coerced laborers. *Coerced* explores this world of coerced labor through an unexpected and compelling comparison of these four groups of workers, for whom a different definition of "employment" reigns supreme—one where workplace protections do not apply and employers wield expansive punitive power, far beyond the ability to hire and fire. Because such arrangements are common across the economy, Hatton argues that coercion—as well as precarity—is a defining feature of work in America today.

Theoretically forceful yet vivid and gripping to read, *Coerced* compels the reader to reevaluate contemporary dynamics of work, pushing beyond concepts like "career" and "gig work." Through this bold analysis, Hatton offers a trenchant window into this world of work from the perspective of those who toil within it—and who are developing the tools needed to push back against it.

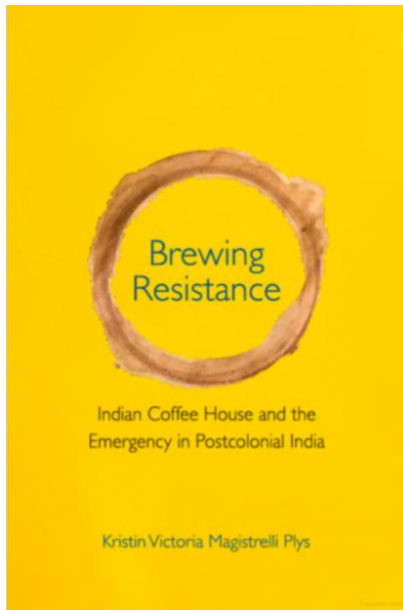
[*Immigrant Labor and the New Precariat*](#)

By Ruth Milkman

Immigration has been a contentious issue for decades, but in the twenty-first century it has moved to center stage, propelled by an immigrant threat narrative that blames foreign-born workers, and especially the undocumented, for the collapsing living standards of American workers. According to that narrative, if immigration were summarily curtailed, border security established, and "illegal aliens" removed, the American Dream would be restored. In this book, Ruth Milkman demonstrates that immigration is not the cause of economic precarity and growing inequality, as Trump and other promoters of the immigrant threat narrative claim. Rather, the influx of low-wage immigrants since the 1970s was a consequence of concerted employer efforts to weaken labor unions, along with neoliberal policies fostering outsourcing, deregulation, and skyrocketing inequality. These dynamics have remained largely invisible to the public. The justifiable anger of US-born workers whose jobs have been eliminated or degraded has been tragically misdirected, with even some liberal voices recently advocating immigration restriction. This provocative book argues that progressives should instead challenge right-wing populism,



redirecting workers' anger toward employers and political elites, demanding upgraded jobs for foreign-born and US-born workers alike, along with public policies to reduce inequality.



Brewing Resistance: Indian Coffee House and the Emergency in Postcolonial India

By Kristin Victoria Magistrelli Plys

In 1947, decolonization promised a better life for India's peasants, workers, students, Dalits, and religious minorities. By the 1970s, however, this promise had not yet been realized. Various groups fought for the social justice but in response, Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi suspended the constitution, and with it, civil liberties. The hope of decolonization that had turned to disillusion in the postcolonial period quickly descended into a nightmare. In this book, Kristin Plys recounts the little known story of the movement against the Emergency as seen through New Delhi's Indian Coffee House based on newly uncovered evidence and oral histories with the men who led the movement against the Emergency.

Frutereros: Street Vending, Illegality, and Ethnic Community in Los Angeles

By Rocío Rosales

This book examines the social worlds of young Latino street vendors as they navigate the complexities of local and federal laws prohibiting both their presence and their work on street corners. Known as frutereros, they sell fruit salads out of pushcarts throughout Los Angeles and are part of the urban landscape. Drawing on six years of fieldwork, Rocío Rosales offers a compelling portrait of their day-to-day struggles. In the process, she examines how their paisano (hometown compatriot) social networks both help and exploit them. Much of the work on newly arrived Latino immigrants focuses on the ways in which their social networks allow them to survive. Rosales argues that this understanding of ethnic community simplifies the complicated ways in which social networks and social capital work. *Frutereros* sheds light on those complexities and offers the concept of the “ethnic cage” to explain both the promise and pain of community.



Building Global Labor Solidarity



Lessons from the Philippines,
South Africa, Northwestern Europe,
and the United States

Kim Scipes

Building Global Labor Solidarity: Lessons from the Philippines, South Africa, Northwestern Europe, and the United States

By Kim Scipes

Efforts to build bottom-up global labor solidarity began in the late 1970s and continue today, having greater social impact than ever before. In *Building Global Labor Solidarity: Lessons from the Philippines, South Africa, Northwestern Europe, and the United States* Kim Scipes—who worked as a union printer in 1984 and has remained an active participant in, researcher about, and writer chronicling the efforts to build global labor solidarity ever since—compiles several articles about these efforts. Grounded in his research on the KMU Labor Center of the Philippines, Scipes joins first-hand accounts from the field

with analyses and theoretical propositions to suggest that much can be learned from past efforts which, though previously ignored, have increasing relevance today. Joined with earlier works on the KMU, AFL-CIO foreign policy, and efforts to develop global labor solidarity in a time of accelerating globalization, the essays in this volume further develop contemporary understandings of this emerging global phenomenon.

Use code 8BGLS20 at checkout for an e-book for 50% off through September 30th.

Articles, Book Chapters, Reviews, and Reports

Feldman, David B. 2020. “Beyond the Border Spectacle: Global Capital, Migrant Labor, and the Spectacle of Liminal Legality.” *Critical Sociology* 46(4-5):729-743.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920519884999>

Winner of the ASA Marxist Section’s Albert Szymanski-T.R. Young Marxist Sociology Graduate Student Paper Award. This essay systematically thinks through the relationship between undocumented immigrants, guestworkers, and nonstatus immigrants as sources of flexible and highly

exploitable noncitizen labor. It argues that many businesses are increasingly likely to view unauthorized workers as more of a liability than an asset, and that this makes an ostensibly legal but intensely surveilled and ultimately deportable workforce look more attractive. Challenging the dominant conception that a so-called pathway to citizenship would resolve the plight of nonstatus and undocumented immigrants, I argue that this would institutionalize liminal legality by bringing undocumented immigrants directly into the surveillance apparatus of the Department of Homeland Security, without offering a realistic chance at obtaining legal permanent residency. To fight back against this potential outcome, the grassroots movement for migrant and immigrant justice must broaden its scope of action and place immediate, unconditional,

and total amnesty for all at the center of its demands.

Feldman, David B. 2020. “The Question of Borders.” *Catalyst: A Journal of Theory and Strategy* 4(1):146-181

<https://catalyst-journal.com/vol4/no1/the-question-of-borders>

The abolition of borders is a basic socialist principle. Yet with a liberal establishment concerned mainly with “protecting” the most upstanding of the 10 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States, framing the ongoing fight for migrant justice around open borders, as advocated by Suzy Lee, is not a strategic route to working-class power. The contemporary socialist movement must reclaim the universalist battle cry of the 2006 immigrant mega marches: immediate, total, and unconditional amnesty for all.

Hammonds, Clare, Jasmine Kerrissey, and Donald Tomaskovic-Devey. 2020. *Stressed, Unsafe, and Insecure: Essential Workers Need A New, New Deal*. Amherst, MA: UMass Labor Center and the Center for Employment Equity.

<https://www.umass.edu/employmentequity/stressed-unsafe-and-insecure-essential-workers-need-new-new-deal>

Only a few months ago low wage workers in the U.S. were largely treated as disposable, the victims of their own choices and societal neglect. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic it is now apparent that these disposable workers are essential. Of course, this was always the case. We needed food, postal delivery, firefighters, warehouse workers, and hospital cleaning staff before the pandemic. What also became clear during the pandemic is the fundamental

class divide between those who could work from home and those who could not. Sheltering at home is a luxury reserved primarily for those with secure incomes and white collar jobs. For the society to continue, many workers had to go to work in order to feed and protect the rest of us. In this report we describe what is happening to these essential workers during the pandemic. We draw from new survey data on the experiences at work and at home of the workers who stayed on the job, taking care of the rest of us. These data come from just one state—Massachusetts—but are instructive for how we should be thinking about policy responses in general, particularly after the pandemic passes.

Herbert, William A., and Joseph van der Naald. 2020. “A Different Set of Rules? NLRB Proposed Rule Making and Student Worker Unionization Rights.” *Journal of Collective Bargaining in the Academy* 11(1).

<https://thekeep.eiu.edu/jcba/vol11/iss1/1/>

This article presents data, precedent, and empirical evidence relevant to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) proposal to issue a new rule to exclude graduate assistants and other student employees from coverage under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). The analysis is in three parts. First, the authors show through an analysis of information from other federal agencies that the adoption of the proposed NLRB rule would exclude over 81,000 graduate assistants on private campuses from the right to unionize and engage in collective bargaining. Second, the article presents a legal history from the past half-century about unionization of student employees at private and public sector institutions of higher education, including the NLRB’s oscillation on the question of whether

student employees are protected under the NLRA. The inconsistencies of the NLRB is in stark contrast to state and Canadian provincial precedent during the same period.. Lastly, the authors analyze the terms of 42 current collective bargaining agreements covering student workers, including 10 at the private sector institutions. The empirical evidence from five decades of relevant collective bargaining history, precedent, and contracts demonstrates consistent economic relationships between student employees and their institutions.

Hernández-León, Rubén. 2020. “The Work that Brokers Do: The Skills, Competences and Know-How of Intermediaries in the H-2 Visa Program.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2020.1731989>

This article analyses the skills and competence acquisition of migration entrepreneurs in the H-2 visa programme, a U.S. temporary worker scheme. This programme, which nowadays largely recruits Mexicans, is managed by a migration industry of labour contracting agencies, recruiters, document processors, and transporters. This article focuses on recruiters, in charge of selecting workers, and document processors, responsible for completing visa application forms. Hailing mostly from the rural working class, recruiters derive expertise from membership in the social world of the migrant. The competences of document processors closely track their belonging in the urban middle class, reflecting experiences of formal education which prepare them to deal with the bureaucratic interface of the programme. These migration entrepreneurs also acquire skills by cooperating and competing with

colleagues, migrants, contracting firms, employers, advocates, and government officials – interactions that expose them the risks and benefits of a more expansive role in the brokerage apparatus.

Ikeller, Peter. Forthcoming. “Labor Relations and the Overdose Crisis in the United States.” *Addiction Research & Theory*.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/16066359.2020.1793962>

Background/Objective: To assess the impact of noted long-term changes in U.S. labor relations and labor market structures on the rapid rise of overdose death in the United States. Methods: State-level overdose death rates obtained from the Centers for Disease Control were combined with Bureau of Labor Statistics data on manufacturing employment, unionization and self-employment, as well as Census data on key demographic variables to construct a longitudinal dataset (N=51, including Washington D.C.). Linear regressions were conducted on a logged transformation of overdose death rate increases from 1999 to 2017. Results: Deindustrialization and low self-employment significantly predict state-level increases in overdose death rates across all models; union decline approaches significance. Together, these three factors explain nearly 40 percent of variance in overdose death change between 1999 and 2017, maintaining predictive power in the presence of controls. Conclusions: Labor relations emerge as important predictors of overdose death and addiction. Specifically, worker autonomy—which is typically higher in manufacturing over frontline service, self-employed over dependent wage and salary, and unionized over non-union jobs—appears to contribute in its decline to increased deleterious substance use.

Lamb, Zachary B., and Todd E. Vachon. 2020. *Working for Just Adaptation: The Green New Deal, Labor, and Planning for Climate Change*. POWER: Infrastructure in America.

<https://power.buellcenter.columbia.edu/essays/working-just-adaptation>

Paret, Marcel. 2019. “Building Labor Solidarity in Precarious Times: The Danger of Union Paternalism.” *Labor Studies Journal* 44(4): 314-332.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0160449X18814310>

In a global context of union decline and widening economic insecurity, unions must decide how to relate to extra-workplace struggles and those without stable or unionized employment. One possibility is that unions will adopt a paternalistic view, in which they attempt to serve the interests of nonunion individuals and groups by disciplining them or speaking for them. Drawing on seventy-five brief interviews with participants in a protest led by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), I examine how union activists understood their relationship to the unemployed and local protests within residential areas. Revealing support for union involvement in extra-workplace struggles, the results show that South Africa’s legacy of social movement unionism remains strong. Yet, some union activists also wanted to discipline or substitute for community struggles, and felt the need to educate or speak for the unemployed. Such paternalistic views may become an obstacle to broad working-class solidarity, in South Africa or elsewhere.

Rhomberg, Chris and Steven Lopez. Forthcoming. “Understanding Strikes in the 21st Century: Perspectives from the

USA.” *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* 44.

Rhomberg, Chris. 2020. “The Struggle for a New Labor Regime: The U.S.” *Tempo Social* 32(1):99-118.

<https://doi.org/10.11606/0103-2070.ts.2020.164863>

This essay examines the American labor movement since the 2008 economic crisis. I begin with a brief review of the structural, institutional, and organizational conditions for labor before the crisis, including changes in employment and the labor force, the conflict between New Deal and anti-union labor regimes, and the emergence of new repertoires in the labor movement. These form the context for the financial crash, and the failure of policy to challenge corporate power. I then discuss the conservative political offensive against unions and movement initiatives at state and local levels. The conflicts have intensified under the Trump administration, with a resurgence of strike activity and the polarization of institutions governing labor and civic life.

Scipes, Kim. 2020. “Regional Aspirations with a Global Perspective: Developments in East Asian Labour Studies.” *Education Philosophy and Theory*.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1752189>

Workers in East Asia have shown over the past 50 years that they are capable of challenging capital, despite facing vehement opposition by corporations, oftentimes joined by governments and their militaries, and sometimes even armed thugs. They have built some of the most dynamic labour organizations in the world. This article is designed to put these developments into a

global and historical perspective. It identifies today's movements of capital as the continuation of processes that developed to a new level in the 1700s, and which continue today. It also discusses struggles of workers under the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU-May First Movement) Labor Center of the Philippines, and shows how valuable research conducted to date has identified a number of lessons learned from these struggles, and how they have been communicated to workers worldwide.

Scipes, Kim. 2020. "Innovations in Labor Studies - Incorporating Global Perspectives: From Exhortation to Making It Real." *Class, Race and Corporate Power* 8(1).

<https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/classracecorporatepower/vol8/iss1/1/>

Ever since the mid-1840s, there has been an exhortation for workers of the world to unite globally. With the exception of a three-year period between 1946 and 1949 - with the founding and development of the World Federation of Trade Unions immediately after the end of World War II - this has been generally a call limited to rhetoric only. The growing understanding of a globalizing world today, however - affecting the world of work, workers and their organizations - suggests it time for workers to try to make it real. This paper examines two issues pertinent to this new understanding. First, we've got to come to terms with "globalization" and its complexity. And second, we need to recognize that there has been an explosion of globally-aware writings on labor that have emerged since the late 1970s.

Scipes, Kim. 2020. "Mass Strikes and Social Movements in Brazil and India: Popular Mobilization in the Long

***Depression* by Jörg Novak (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019): A Review Essay." *Class, Race and Corporate Power* 8(1).**

<https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/classracecorporatepower/vol8/iss1/2/>

A review of Jörg Novak's "Mass Strikes and Social Movements in Brazil and India: Popular Mobilization in the Long Depression" published by Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

Scipes, Kim. 2020. "More Reminisces and Reflections on the 1960s', a Review Essay of *You Say You Want a Revolution: SDS, PL and Adventures in Building a Worker-Student Alliance*, edited by John F. Levin and Earl Silbar." *Critical Sociology* 46(3): 463-468.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920519883919>

A review of 'More Reminisces and Reflections on the 1960s', a Review Essay of *You Say You Want a Revolution: SDS, PL and Adventures in Building a Worker-Student Alliance*, edited by John F. Levin and Earl Silbar.

Vachon, Todd E., Saket Soni, Judith LeBlanc, and Gerry Hudson. 2020. *Bargaining for Climate Justice*. The Forge.

<https://forgeorganizing.org/article/bargainin-g-climate-justice>