

Senior Editors' Note

ILWCH 82 is our fortieth anniversary issue. It commemorates the founding forty years ago of the newsletter that developed into *International Labor and Working Class History*. Since that time *ILWCH* has become a major international journal with a substantial portion of our contributors and readers outside the United States, publishing articles and thematic special issues with a global reach. David Montgomery played a key role in that transformation, as its editor for more than a decade. This issue was designed to begin with an interview with David in which he would reflect on the early years and subsequent history of the journal and the parallel trajectory of labor history from the 1970s to the present day. Sadly, while we were preparing this issue, David Montgomery passed away, making this interview even more valuable as a document of *ILWCH*'s history. This issue opens with that interview—a conversation between Montgomery and two longstanding members of the *ILWCH* editorial board, Geoffrey Field and Michael Hanagan. It ranges from the founding of the newsletter in 1972 and the journal a few years later through the methodological shifts in the field and the incorporation of new perspectives and frames of analysis.

The interview is prefaced by “*ILWCH: Forty Years On*,” an introductory essay by Field and Hanagan that frames not only the Montgomery conversation that follows, but the entire issue. Their essay is more comprehensive than the interview, tracing the history of *ILWCH* from its founding decade through the 1980s and 1990s, through the journal's moves from California to Pittsburgh and then to Yale, the New School and Rutgers, and the leading roles played by David Montgomery, Robert Wheeler, Helmut Gruber, Louise Tilly, Ira Katznelson and Dorothy Sue Cobble in these geographic and intellectual journeys. This essay recalls the debates over direction, scope and subject that punctuated these changes of host institution and leadership, and reflected the new directions in social history in general and labor history in particular—issues that inform their conversation with David Montgomery.

With David's death, what began as a celebration of *ILWCH* and his central role in its development, became a larger commemoration of Montgomery's life and work. This issue is dedicated to his memory, but we felt a need to go further and organized a section of tributes to David's life and work by his family, his colleagues and his students, both in the United States and internationally.

The second section of the journal is a scholarly controversy that brings into the issue the debates about Global Labor History (hereafter GLH), a field that was in its infancy when *ILWCH* was born but which has achieved increased importance as the globalization of capital pushed scholars to breach national

and regional boundaries and engage with the comparative, transnational and international labor history. A central institution promoting the global perspective is Amsterdam's *Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis*. *ILWCH* is fortunate to have its prominent research director and a leading advocate of global labor history, Marcel van der Linden, as its international Associate Editor and a member of its editorial board. Here, van der Linden reviews the emergence of GLH as a disciplinary field and makes a strong case for it as a distinct perspective that raises essential scholarly and political issues and questions for future research. We then asked scholars specializing in South Asia, Latin America, the US, Europe and Africa to respond to the essay from the perspective of their geographical area. The result is a lively discussion and debate that briefly outlines the ways that GLH has influenced these fields and raises questions that challenge the foundational concepts, theoretical approaches and research assumptions and directions of the field. At the same time, these comments raise questions that challenge some of the claims and directions of GLH. This debate is so relevant for our readers and exciting as an engagement of international scholars that the editors have elected to continue the discussion in subsequent issues. We have asked van der Linden to respond to the critiques while also inviting you, our readers, to send us your comments.

Having taken stock of where we started and some of *ILWCH*'s original wellsprings, the most recent developments in comparative labor and working-class history, and the current striving to generate a global labor history, the third section of our anniversary issue projects toward the future. The contributors in this section introduce us to the primary scholars and debates that form labor studies in the fields of Southern African, Latin American, Indian and Chinese history. They offer an extensive discussion of changes within these fields over the last few years: the inclusion of gender, non-industrial and non-waged labor, the role of family survival strategies, and the structural apparatus of evolving capitalism. They grapple with how historians locate and tell the history of previously unrecognized "workers": those who lack citizenship documents, exist on the margins, don't speak the official language or languages of the "nation," or those who practice minority religions. Further, this section is unique in that it reflects directly on current political and social developments within these countries as well as the shifting international economic position they occupy in the global capitalist order. Thus they all illuminate how and why labor history itself remains so intensely relevant. These essays point us in the direction of emerging (and converging) research agendas in regions where *ILWCH*, as an international English-language journal, has been increasingly successful in developing readership. If the first decade of *ILWCH* was dominated by European and US history, we're excited to show the geographical and thematic breadth of *ILWCH* in the twenty-first century.

Finally we have two additional sections: review essays and conference reports. The two review essays in this issue look at the founding years of labor history when *ILWCH* itself took shape. Neville Kirk examines the first

fifty years of labor history. Lawrence Black reviews a recent run of histories of the 1970s in Britain.

The last section brings us two conference reports which we have included because they indicate new forms of engagement with the field. M. Erdem Kabadayi and Kate Elizabeth Creasey organized and participated in the conference, "Ottoman and Turkish Labour History Within a Global Perspective," held at Istanbul's Bilgi University. In addition to exploring emerging developments in Ottoman labour history, the conference compared these to new work in South Asian and African history. The second report, from Brenda Henry-Offor, a labor activist and a conference organizer, describes the First International Conference on the Human Right to Organize, held in New York City. It particularly focused on excluded workers. We are pleased to publish reports on these two conferences that in different ways are on the cutting edge of scholarship and activism. While looking forward to the future, these reports also link us to the early history of *ILWCH*, when conference reports represented a significant portion of each issue! We're proud to share with you, then, the rich past and exciting future of *ILWCH*.

We would also like to share with you the news that *ILWCH* 83 will be a special issue on "Strikes and Social Conflicts." It will draw on some of the best papers presented at the 2011 Lisbon Conference, "Strikes and Social Conflicts in the Twentieth Century", supplemented by specially commissioned articles on China, India and South Africa. While the majority of the papers span the twentieth century, some articles bring the story into the twenty-first century.

Carolyn A. Brown, Jennifer Klein and Peter Winn
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