

Volume 10 Issue 1: Editorial

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This issue of the *Journal of Working-Class Studies* comes at a tumultuous time. The war on Gaza continues, with ongoing destruction and devastation. Despite ongoing protests around the world (including [an historically large march](#) across Sydney's Harbour Bridge), progress towards a ceasefire and withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza has been slow. But Palestinians and allies refuse to give up hope, and the announcements from some western governments to formally [recognise Palestine](#) are a welcome development. We hope to see a ceasefire soon and a move towards permanent peace – people have suffered for too long.

The tumult has also occurred in the US with the start of the second Trump presidency. When we wrote our editorial in December 2024, we were unsure of the impact, but now it is clear. Trump has wrought chaos and harm onto the country, and the effects are deep and may be long-lasting. We send solidarity to those who fear being kidnapped, detained and deported and to those who worry that they might be the next target of Trump's bigotry and hatred. These are very scary times. Again, we don't lose sight of hope, and we look towards the people who are resisting and organising. Solidarity to all.

Closer to home, we are experiencing our own disruptions, with a massive restructure underway at the University that your editors work for. A plan to [cut hundreds of jobs](#), and gut important areas of teaching and research is devastating for staff, students and all who benefit from our work. Important areas are targeted such as public health, teacher training, international studies and languages – areas that attract working-class and First Nations students and which are mainly taught by women. Alas, this kind of restructure is not limited to our institution, and many other universities in our country (Australia) and around the world are suffering from the same assaults on programs and disciplines. The humanities seem to be particularly under threat at a time when we need critical and creative thinkers more than ever. Needless to say, the restructure at our university has pulled us away from some work in order to support our colleagues (in our roles as union reps). This is why this issue of the Journal is coming to you in August rather than June! We appreciate the patience of the authors included in this issue during the disruptions to our usual workflow.

And so, here we are! With a bumper issue of the Journal, with five articles, one analysis piece, three essays, four poems, two non-fiction creative pieces and six book reviews! The pieces in this issue cross geographical regions and historical periods, but all have the interests of working-class people at their core.

The issue begins with two articles relating to Bangladeshi workers. Md. Mizanur Rahman explores the effects of changing technology in "Motorization of Paddle Rickshaws in Bangladesh: A Socio-Economic Evaluation", and explores the positive and negative impacts of the increase of motorised rickshaws on the workers who rely on them for their livelihoods. Bangladeshi migrant workers in the Middle East are the topic of "From Migration to Psychological Distress: Depression, Suicidal Thoughts and Associated Factors among Bangladeshi Migrant Workers". In this article, Pavel Ahmed, Mst. Safia Akter and Rashed

Ahmed Hawlader look at data relating to the mental health conditions of the workers, and discover some concerning findings.

The next two articles are focused on historical topics, spanning the US and Europe. Thomas A. Castillo explores the passage of Florida's 'right to work' constitutional amendment in the 1940s in "The 'Sweetest Sounding' Words of Civil Rights: A Labor Origin Story of the 'Right to Work'". Castillo looks at the ways that the term 'right to work' was used to confuse voters who assumed the idea was pro-worker, when in reality it was anti-union. Scott Weiss follows with "The Emergence of the Proletarian Cinema in the Weimar Republic" which argues that the 1929 film *Mother Krause's Journey to Happiness* could be considered the epitome of proletarian film art.

The last article in this issue is from Kenneth Oldfield who in "From the Particular to the Generic: Fostering a More Socioeconomically Diverse Professoriate" argues that structural nepotism in public administrations needs to be taken into account in order to improve class diversity in institutions.

Following on from the articles is an analysis from Lawrence Eppard, David A. Boatwright and Thomas C. Hatvany who present statistical data on American poverty in "Cross-National Comparisons of Poverty and Working-Class Earnings: How the United States Measures Up". This analysis operates as a follow-up on work previously published in this Journal and adds further data to create a picture of the earnings of the American working class.

A photo essay is the next piece – "Politics, Pandemics and Protest: A Case of 2020 Health Workers Strike in Hong Kong" by Hong Yu Liu, Bill Taylor and Alex Tsz Yuk Chan, recounts the events during a period of union activism in a hospital setting during the Covid-19 pandemic. This is followed by "In Youngstown, Ohio, Deindustrialisation Erodes the Old City, but Palimpsests of Place Yield Insights for Workers, Artists, and Activists, Including Me" which is a personal photo essay by Alice Whittenburg that explores the ways that places are used, and how art might be made in deindustrialised cities such as Youngstown. Ganesh Trichur's "Working Class Politics and Identity Politics: An engagement with Michael Zweig" is the last essay in this section, and it offers a deep engagement with the work of Working-Class Studies leader Michael Zweig.

This issue has a number of creative pieces – a poem "Into the Sun" by Ian C Smith that evokes summer youthful memories, and three poems by William J. Doan, "The Ballard of My Frist Communion" (which also comes with original illustrations), "The Our Father Working-Class Riding Mower Blues" and "Duck, You Dumbass". These poems also offer a look at the past, with a non-romantic description of working-class youth. Two creative non-fiction pieces complete this section, with Lita Kurth's "Wisconsin Milk Strike" telling the fictionalised story of a 1933 attempt by farmers to try and force a decent price for their product, and "To the Woman Ordering Salad" by Debbie Chase that is set in the kitchen of a wine bar and told from the worker's perspective.

We have six book reviews curated by Dr. Christie Launius, and all the books look very interesting! The range of topics is diverse and includes representation of poverty, the preservation of endangered languages in urban areas, definitions of 'work, experiences of call centre workers, stories by Asian workers and prison stories. Plenty to read and engage with as usual!

Many thanks to all of our authors – and to all of our readers. We hope you find something in this issue to inspire, stimulate and to strengthen solidarity.