

## EDITORIAL NOTE

This issue picks up many of the themes dealt with in past *Left History* articles and essays. Our authors analyze newspapers and interviews, radio broadcasts, autobiographies, and monographs. While each author focuses on distinct social groups, places, and time periods, each is attuned to the ways in which narration structures knowledge production and identity formation. Their methodological choices, combined with an analytical emphasis on class, gender, race, and nation, offer glimpses into the dynamics between migratory work and gender, public history and nation, and labour and sexuality in the making of multidirectional stories and identities.

Naomi Calnitsky's exploration of the Canadian Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) moves beyond a description of government policy and bureaucratic control of migratory labour to a humanistic portrait of farm workers' social, cultural, and economic worlds. For Calnitsky, journalists and scholars' narratives of the exploited seasonal labourer partially obscure workers' own lives, thoughts, and experiences. Drawing on an oral history conducted earlier this decade, Calnitsky richly describes adult Mexican men's labour processes, consumption, earnings, and class action in rural Manitoba and British Columbia. Her interviews uncover seasonal lives where routinized harvesting and complex power relations on vineyards, apple orchards, and other agricultural workplaces exist alongside shopping mall strolls, river-based fishing, shared meals, and longing for distant family. While the social relations of production remained impactful, Calnitsky suggests that masculinized notions of adversity, endurance, and familial support have structured transnational mobility, seasonal experiences, and labourer identity.

Rachel Donaldson's examination of the 1941 Radio Research Project (RRP) in the United States contextualizes and complicates the origins of that country's public history. She points out that historians' focus on New Left activists' diverse publishing efforts misses an earlier mass-mobilization of historical knowledge by liberal progressives and leftists. She notes that expanded communications networks and increased state funding combined with Popular Front cultural production to embolden the retelling of the nation's past. Donaldson points out that these radio hosts prioritized locally-engaged topics and interviews, elevated stories of class conflict, and drew attention to the material impacts of racial discrimination. Cultural workers' inclusive methods and diverse narratives, according to Donaldson, produced a complex national story that embraced the long-standing practices of cultural and political democracy as the historical precedents for contemporary civic engagement and resistance to fascism.

Holly Karibo's analysis of Helen McGowan's autobiography, *Motor City Madam*, shows the ways in which class, gender, and race structured the former sex worker and madam's subjective experience of life in mid-twentieth century Detroit, Michigan. Karibo suggests that rather than a voyeuristic tale of sex and vice economies, McGowan's careful description of family conflict, migration, poverty,

and inequality created a working-class personal history. But, as Karibo notes, McGowan's narration of work experiences occurred alongside a critique of criminalization and policing, advocacy for rights and protections of the women involved in sex work, and reflection on the ways in which whiteness ordered the industrial city's licit and illicit economy. For Karibo, McGowan's life story speaks to a working-class and feminist subjectivity, where the labour politics of sex work framed an analysis of class, gender, and racial inequalities' mutually-reinforcing dynamics.

In a research note, Sara Farhan then examines Frantz Fanon's diverse writings to point scholars toward key concepts in the study of decolonization. After a contextual introduction, she notes Fanon's understandings of subjectivity, race, and the structures of colonialism. She also shows how Fanon's renegotiation of humanism, materialism, and gender relations offers scholars complex social theories of colonial, capitalist, and patriarchal power. Throughout, Farhan describes Fanon's dialectics of agency and constraint and, in doing so, notes the ways in which his conceptual frameworks shed light on strategies of resistance and diagnose processes and structures of oppression.

A discussion of the social, economic, cultural, and political processes and structures of knowledge production seems fitting for *Left History's* first issue published as an open-access, online-only scholarly journal. The social inequalities of peer-review and the neoliberal political culture of academic prestige combine with other factors to shape university-based academics' distribution of historical knowledge, while the financial imperatives of subscription-based periodicals often limit their reach to a specialized and privileged audience. *Left History* has long tried to eschew these processes and structures to create a site of transformative thought and debate, but, in deploying paywalls and embargos, partially constrained engagement with and access to critical articles, reviews, manifestos, essays, roundtables, and other papers. We hope that, even though it does not solve the issue of unpaid labour in academic publishing, our turn to open-access engages new communities and conversations.

Along with changes to our publishing model, the *Left History* Editorial Board recently underwent changes as well. The editors wish to thank our departing board members for their many years of guidance and service. With sadness, we also note the passing in 2017 of Board member William Pelz, and offer our condolences to his friends and family. Finally, we welcome incoming Board members Sean Kheraj, Priya Lal, and Paul Lawrie—we look forward to a productive editorial relationship in the coming years!

*The Editors*