

EDITORIAL NOTE

With the upcoming United States Presidential Election spotlighting the rise of right-wing populism, this issue of *Left History* reverts to its foundational theme: collectivist action and workers' rights. Against the backdrop of global political turmoil, this focus gains critical significance, particularly as our host institution, York University, experiences an ongoing labor disruption involving CUPE 3903. *Left History* stands in solidarity with the members of CUPE 3903, offering them our support and admiration.

In this issue, each author delves into distinct social groups, locales, and historical periods, all interconnected by the central theme of individuals and labor organizations striving to improve the conditions of workers. Rather than presenting a linear history of a single socialist institution or labor activist, these manuscripts explore the intricacies of their chosen subjects, adding depth to our understanding of the evolution of collective workers' rights.

Elun Gabriel's article begins this issue focused on workers' rights through an analysis of the twentieth-century German Social Democrats and their debates with anarchists on the idea of the general strike. Using this approach, Gabriel adds new dimensions to the analysis of the German Social Democrats by demonstrating that their party's political thought became mired in anti-anarchistic rhetoric. Indeed, this opposition to the ideology of the general strike became so prominent that "German Social Democrats frequently came to explain their own ideology through the prism of their own antipathy towards Anarchism" (8.) In this way, Gabriel's work not only traces the origins of the idea of the Anarchist general strike and the socialists' apprehension towards the idea but also how these debates spawned rhetoric of anti-anarchist thinking that bore its way to the center of German Social Democratic ideology.

Gabriel Paxton's work spotlights the late nineteenth/early twentieth-century socialist and one of the founders of the Industrial Workers of the World, Eugene Debs, to highlight his innovative concept of spiritual socialism. Indeed, Paxton argues that Debs approached the intersection of religion, socialism, and workers' rights from a unique perspective that was not tied to the work of Christian socialists or the social gospel movement. Paxton argues that this unique approach afforded Debs a "prophetic liminality" which allowed him to broaden the coalitions of American socialism while sidestepping the dogmatic religiosity which often befell Christian socialists. In this fashion, Debs hoped to remove "radical faith from the dictates of Churches" and "place the authority of moral dissent back in the hands of working people and their movements." (51).

Simranjeet Kaur moves our focus on workers' rights from the past to the present with her close investigation of the agrarian economy in Punjab. Specifically, Kaur examines the 2020 Agricultural Acts, referred to as Farm Bills, and their impact on small and marginal farmers. Hailed as progressive economic reforms in-

tended to disrupt the caste hierarchy and empower smaller farmers, Kaur argues that the Farm Bills had the opposite effect. Firstly, these Bills were rendered ineffective by a lack of specificity in how farmers were to acquire capital to bolster their farmsteads, and even if they were able to acquire a loan from a credit agency, the interest rates associated with the Farm Bills were astronomically high. Therefore, Kaur illuminates the ways in which the Farm Bills, touted as legislative tools of social uplift, only really functioned to consolidate the Arhtiya power within society, leaving marginal farmers in an even more precarious social situation.

Left History bids farewell to article and layout editor Alex Gagné with mixed emotions as we welcome new editors, Angelo Laskaris and Luah Tomas. Alex's dedication, perseverance, and leadership during the pandemic and his tenure at Left History facilitated the journal's successful transition to Open Access publishing and the continuation of its academic endeavors. We extend our deepest gratitude to Alex for his thoughtful approach to ensuring the meaningful organization and quality of each issue. While his skills, expertise, and knowledge are difficult to replace, Angelo, a historian of Modern Greece, Canada, and transnational histories, and Luah, a historian of women, gender, and Latin America, bring the enthusiasm and attributes necessary to continue the journal's scholarly pursuits.

Left History extends its heartfelt gratitude to all our contributors, book reviewers, peer-reviewers, and readers. It is your unwavering support that fuels the growth and evolution of Left History. With your continued backing, we are committed to expanding and adapting through evolving platforms and innovative strategies to inform and engage our readership. Together, we will continue to push boundaries and foster critical dialogue in pursuit of social justice and intellectual enrichment. Thank you for being a pivotal part of our journey.

The Editors