

**Celebrating 25 years of
*Labour, Capital and Society***

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This double issue is my final one as Editor of *Labour, Capital and Society (LCS)*. As many of you know, the journal was founded in 1979. For over 25 years, we have continuously produced some amazing articles and special issues to which scores of important researchers, mainly from the so-called global South and Canada, have contributed. During this entire period, it is important to note that we have successfully competed every three years for the learned journal grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), thus maintaining our scholarly accreditation as judged by our peers.

As the founding Editor of *LCS*, I invited all authors who had previously published and supported *LCS* to contribute to this special 25th anniversary issue. Two types of articles were requested: either an article that contributed reflections about the journal over the past 25 years or about labour studies “then and now” (here Ronaldo Munck and Edward Webster have made contributions; also Alain Morice’s article has that long-term perspective) *or* an article from these distinguished scholars, that reflected their current research, often changed from their earlier focus on labour. The result is that we have an eclectic range of articles in this issue, typical of the richness of development research, covering new concerns about the technological revolution, the informal sector, outsourcing, global migrants, a planet-wide income, basic health, immigration, atypical work within paternalism, Canadian mining interests and Canada’s

foreign policy in Africa. The two research summaries, “The Challenges of the Agrarian Transition in Southeast Asia” by Rodolphe de Koninck and the other “Constructing Difference and Managing Development: material and discursive visions of ‘progress’ among African elites, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 1953-1980” from Jane Parpart and Miriam Grant, illustrate yet other directions for development research. Five book reviews round off the issue, especially noteworthy is the review of the important collection of essays by Kari Levitt, an eminent McGill colleague and friend for over 30 years.

It was important to me to have contributions from those with whom I have had a long association through their support at different times and in different ways to the success of the journal; only a few invitees were unable to contribute. I have written a special section “Notes on the Contributors” at the end of this volume to illustrate their personal connection with the journal. In many ways, the research contributions in this special issue reflect the kind of changes that are taking place in our contemporary world and suggest various challenges that are before us as researchers focused on international development. The world is more complex today than it was in 1979 but I still believe that a central issue is the struggle to rectify the obscene inequalities that leave more and more of the labouring poor, mainly in the regions of the South, barely able to survive.

We see the manner in which international organizations have now taken up the same ideas, and even the mainstreaming of critiques of neoliberalism, as a vindication of our focus and perspectives for the past 25 years. However, I remain skeptical as to whether they have simply appropriated the language or are engaged in the political action and policy changes required.

LCS during extremely challenging decades has permitted scholars to maintain the focus on development, development which sets its priority or the centre of its focus as the “labouring poor” within the poorer regions or countries of the world, the so-called Third World or developing world, call it what you will. A defining characteristic of *LCS* which is located within international development studies (IDS) is about “viewing the world from the perspective of the South and that by doing so we learn more about our own societies” (John Loxley, “What is Distinctive about

International Development Studies?” in the *Canadian Journal of Development Studies* 25:1, 2004). *LCS* has also always maintained an interdisciplinary orientation, cutting across all regions while examining various societal issues that relate to labour with global implications.

For me, the influences and inspirations were many over the past 25 years. However, I would like to just briefly address influences that relate to my distinctive role as Editor which is seldom valued as very significant in academia or is misunderstood by many as to what it involves. Three examples of good editors come immediately to mind and each has inspired me for different reasons: first is Antonio Gramsci who viewed the work of an editor as a vital political vehicle, providing leadership to new ideas; secondly, the late George Woodcock well-known for his seminal biography of George Orwell who knew very little about Canadian literature when in 1959 he became the first Editor of the *Canadian Literature Review*. He set about discovering that literature and became a very successful editor in the process. And the third example is the African-American writer, Toni Morrison, who for years was an editor at a well-known publishing house and viewed her time spent as an important apprenticeship towards becoming a novelist and essayist. When I first took up the position of Editor so many years ago, I too regarded myself as training to become a good writer. The process has been a little longer than intended but I think that is where my next venture will take me.

As Editor of *LCS* making choices about articles sometimes unsolicited and often solicited, I have viewed my work as breaking down barriers and challenging the mainstream focus on economic models or abstract economic growth in development studies, as well as giving voice and therefore legitimacy to those who may not have it and in this way dislodging mainstream “canons” in the scholarly field of development that, whatever the intention, often serve to reinforce the instruments of oppression. I have searched to publish articles from the perspective of critically engaged scholars who want to make significant changes in our troubled world. Quite recently, when reading Immanuel Wallerstein’s wonderful essay “The Development of an Intellectual Position” in which he acknowledges among other interesting points that “the duty of the scholar is to be politically and intellectually subversive...” and the

need to eschew “the false claim of disinterestedness that is the slogan so widely mouthed as the presumed indicator of science”, did I feel once again reaffirmed in the work that we have been doing.

In an early issue of *LCS* (15:1, 1982), an article focusing on the problems faced by the labouring poor under the Occupied Territories of Palestine reflected this engaged scholarship that I so value. I regret that we did not publish more articles in this area, particularly when we see how Palestinians still face unspeakable hardships and that more attention needs to be paid to their plight. The reason for so few articles may be that scholars had more directly relevant outlets or were taken up with the central daily struggles of this tragedy. The other important historical injustice of these decades was of course *apartheid* in South Africa. We published many articles from activist scholars based there and brought a global focus on their struggles, as Edward Webster attests in his contribution to this issue. Unlike Palestine, South Africa has witnessed the abolition of *apartheid*, the electoral victory of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1994 and Nelson Mandela as its first President. We have continued to publish scholarship that reflects critical engagement in the post-apartheid era.

At the time of its inception, *LCS* was unique in the area of labour studies. Since then there has been a proliferation of endeavours in the field, combining research and action. When the journal was founded in 1979, we were a rather bold group of students, faculty and researchers, made more so by the unflinching support in the first eight years by the late Peter C. W. Gutkind who was a professor of anthropology at McGill. As I wrote in the *Tribute to Peter* in the special issue on Zimbabwe (*LCS* 33:2, 2000, p. 147), “Peter’s other great legacy was to instill in all of those he touched — student, staff and researcher — the confidence and authority to carry our commitments into our scholarly research and to fight against those arbitrary injustices that occur everywhere, including in daily university life.” *LCS* has tried to do that throughout its history. Most journals have a sustaining association, a regional or disciplinary focus; we had none of that. Even our connections with the labour movements were often sparse. But what we had was an international network of progressive scholars here in Montreal at the four universities as well as scattered in other parts of Canada and

also located around the world, in all regions of the so-called Third World, who saw the centrality of the labouring poor, labour in its widest dimensions, as the struggle to address. They have helped to sustain our work and to affirm its continued importance.

We have lots to celebrate in just lasting 25 years publishing progressive-oriented scholarship in a conservative environment, giving voice and prominence to the struggles of the labouring poor and placing their concerns at the centre of our research while subordinating discussions of the North, though not ignoring them (hence our articles on Japan, Sweden, Australia and of course Canada). I have valued publishing a range of viewpoints, different perspectives on the concerns at hand and never felt bound by rigid categories or paradigms or the need to shift to the current fashionable trends in language or analysis. We set our sights on objective reality and who better to ground us in that than those who are working from inside their societies. We are comfortable with a focus on women's struggles rather than shifting to the use of "gender". Our analyses in many articles over the years examined women's plight in relation to men but we kept the focus on women. One will also find articles that reflect "orthodoxy" and various others that seem "mainstream"; for that I make no apology as it echoed an implicit dialogue in process enabling new possibilities and options for imaginative solutions. I have always had an aversion to pseudo-scientific work that tries to obscure the reality of poverty and the continued immiseration faced by the poor, by concocting new models or analysis that puts a distance from the concerns about people's daily livelihoods. Our problems are primarily about politics and not obscurant technocratic social science gibberish, as George Steiner remarked so many years ago.

Another part of our editorial policy was to publish good scholarship by relatively unknown authors. In fact, we seldom published a person's position disdaining this hierarchical approach prevalent in the university culture; instead the research articles, blending empirical and theoretical material, were judged on their own merits. Many of our authors published their first academic articles in *LCS* (for example, Jane Parpart and Alain Morice) and have since had considerable influence on international development work.

I decided to resign as Editor (25 years is more than long enough) once I knew that Suzanne Dansereau, who is a long-time labour researcher/scholar and associate professor of International Development Studies at St Mary's University in Halifax, was willing to take over; she will assume her role as Editor effective with the April 2005 issue. Suzanne became an Editorial Committee member of *LCS* in 1996, but has had a long acquaintance with the journal, going back to her years as Coordinator of our Labour Studies Group and her involvement in our Colloquium on International Labour Issues, 1-3 May 1980, a seminal event in Montreal-based research on labour referred to by Edward Webster and Ronaldo Munck. Her research focus is on Southern Africa, particularly labour issues in Zimbabwe, and she has done a good deal of work around mining in African countries and Canada. I am absolutely delighted that she will serve as Editor and encourage all of you to give her full support in the work of the journal as you have so generously given to me over the years.

There are so many persons to thank for their support over the past 25 years. In addition to those who have contributed to this special 25th anniversary issue,¹ and to the many individuals who guest edited special issues, I want to especially pay tribute to the Editorial Committee members, past and present, and Consultative Board members who have contributed so willingly on a volunteer basis to ensure the successful production of this journal. They have served as Book Review Editors, assessors of articles, solicitors for new articles, guest editors of special issues, contributors themselves and in many other needed capacities. This journal has always been a collective effort with a small core of people dedicated to changing the inequalities that pervade our world. Let it remain that and flourish in its new location in Halifax under the able guidance of Suzanne.

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¹I wish to acknowledge with thanks the editorial copyediting assistance of Iain Blair. As well, I wish to thank Prof. Jean-Francois Mayer (Concordia University, Montreal) for the French translations of the abstracts in this issue.

Célébration de 25 Années de *Travail, capital et société*

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Ce numéro double représente ma dernière contribution comme Rédactrice en chef de *Travail, Capital et Société* (TCS). Comme plusieurs d'entre vous le savent déjà, cette revue a été fondée en 1979. Depuis plus de 25 ans, nous avons édité de façon continue des articles passionnants ainsi que des numéros spéciaux, auxquels ont contribué un grand nombre de chercheurs de renom, provenant majoritairement de pays en voie de développement (i.e. le Sud global) ainsi que du Canada. Il importe de noter que, durant toute de cette période de temps, nous avons, tous les trois ans, sollicité et obtenu une subvention du Conseil de recherche en sciences humaines du Canada (CRSH), maintenant ainsi une accréditation académique reconnue par nos pairs.

En tant que Rédactrice fondatrice de *TCS*, j'ai invité tous les auteurs qui ont publié dans cette revue et l'ont soutenue durant toutes ces années à contribuer à ce numéro spécial du 25^e anniversaire. Trois types d'articles étaient ainsi demandés : soit un article proposant une réflexion relative au cheminement de la revue au cours des 25 dernières années, ou un article portant sur l'évolution des études sur le travail « d'hier à aujourd'hui » (Ronaldo Munck et Edward Webster ont apporté leur contribution à cette section, de même qu'Alain Morice, dont l'article offre une telle perspective à long terme), ou encore un article de ces chercheurs reconnus portant sur leurs intérêts de recherche actuels — qui diffèrent parfois de leurs préoccupations initiales. Par

conséquent, ce numéro présente une grande variété d'articles — ce qui constitue un trait typique de la richesse des études sur le développement — qui couvrent de nouveaux intérêts de recherche portant sur la révolution technologique, le secteur informel, la sous-traitance, la migration globale, les revenus mondiaux, la santé, le travail atypique à l'intérieur de schèmes paternalistes, les intérêts miniers canadiens, et la politique étrangère du Canada en Afrique. Les deux résumés de recherche, « Les défis de la transition agraire en Asie du sud-est » par Rodolphe de Koninck et « La construction de la différence et l'administration du développement : perspectives matérielle et discursive du 'progrès' parmi les élites africaines, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 1953-1980 » de Jane Parpart et Miriam Grant, illustrent d'autres directions prises par la recherche sur le développement. Cinq recensions de littérature complètent ce numéro, parmi lesquelles se détache particulièrement le compte rendu du livre de Kari Levitt, une éminente collègue de McGill et amie depuis plus de 30 ans.

Il importait beaucoup pour moi d'obtenir pour ce numéro spécial la participation de ceux avec qui j'ai entretenu une longue relation professionnelle, qui s'est exprimée entre autres à travers leurs contributions académiques offertes à travers le temps et de manière diverse. Ces gens participèrent grandement au succès de la revue. Seuls quelques invités ne purent malheureusement collaborer avec nous pour cette occasion. J'ai d'ailleurs rédigé de façon spéciale la section « Notes sur les Collaborateurs », présentée à la fin de ce volume, afin d'illustrer leurs liens particuliers avec la revue. Les travaux de recherche présentés dans ce numéro spécial illustrent de façon particulière le type de transformations qui ont lieu dans le monde d'aujourd'hui, et montrent la diversité de défis qui s'offrent à nous en tant que chercheurs mettant l'emphase sur des problématiques reliées au développement international. Le monde est plus complexe aujourd'hui qu'il ne l'était en 1979, mais je crois toujours fermement qu'un des thèmes centraux des dynamiques internationales demeure la rectification des inégalités criantes, lesquelles font en sorte que de plus en plus de travailleurs pauvres, situés majoritairement dans le « Sud », ont de la difficulté à survivre. Nous considérons que la reprise de nos thèmes et préoccupations de recherches par la plupart des organisations internationales, de même que la récupération de nos critiques du

néo-libéralisme par les chercheurs et médias des courants idéologiques et méthodologiques dominants, représentent une confirmation de l'importance de notre perspective de recherche des dernières 25 années. Par contre, je considère que ces gens et organisations ne se sont approprié que notre langage, et je doute qu'ils se soient véritablement engagés dans le genre d'action politique et de changement politiques requis pour mener à bien les transformations nécessaires pour favoriser véritablement le développement du « Sud ».

Durant des décennies particulièrement riches en défis sociopolitiques et économiques, *TCS* a permis aux chercheurs le désirant de se concentrer sur des thèmes reliés aux grandes questions du développement, tout en conservant comme priorité une emphase sur les travailleurs démunis et défavorisés des régions et pays les plus pauvres du monde, communément appelés Tiers-monde ou pays en voie de développement. Une des caractéristiques fondamentales de *TCS*, et qui se situe dans le contexte des études du développement international (EDI), réside dans sa volonté de « voir le monde depuis la perspective du Sud, ce qui nous permet d'en apprendre plus sur nos propres sociétés » (John Loxley, « What is Distinctive About Development Studies ? », dans la *Revue Canadienne d'études du développement*, 25 :1, 2004). De même, *TCS* a toujours maintenu une orientation interdisciplinaire, se préoccupant de toutes les régions du monde, tout en examinant une variété de thèmes sociaux reliés au travail et ayant des implications globales.

Après 25 ans à la barre de *TCS*, j'ai décidé de renoncer au poste de Rédactrice en chef lorsque j'ai appris que Suzanne Dansereau —une chercheure expérimentée, qui est professeur agrégée en Études du Développement International à l'Université St Mary, à Halifax— consentait à prendre la relève. Elle assumera donc les fonctions de Rédactrice en chef à partir de la publication du numéro d'avril 2005. Suzanne est devenue membre du Comité de rédaction de *TCS* en 1996, mais elle a contribué activement à la revue depuis plusieurs années. Par exemple, elle était Coordinatrice de notre Groupe d'étude sur le travail et a participé au Colloque sur le Travail International, au mois de mai 1980, qui représenta un point tournant de la recherche sur le travail menée dans la région de Montréal, et auquel se réfèrent Edward Webster et Ronaldo Munck

dans leurs textes. Sa recherche porte sur l’Afrique australe, et met l’emphase sur des thématiques reliées au travail au Zimbabwe. Elle a aussi beaucoup travaillé sur la question de l’exploitation minière en Afrique et au Canada. Je suis très heureuse qu’elle ait accepté de servir comme Rédactrice en chef de la revue et vous encourage tous à lui donner votre appui complet dans le cadre des travaux de la revue, tel que vous l’avez fait avec moi au fil des années passées.

Il y a tant de gens que j’aimerais remercier pour leur appui au cours des 25 dernières années. En plus de ceux qui ont contribué à ce numéro spécial du 25^e anniversaire,* et des nombreuses personnes qui ont agi comme rédacteur de numéros spéciaux, j’aimerais souligner tout particulièrement le rôle des membres — actuels et antérieurs—du Comité de rédaction de même que du Conseil consultatif, lesquels ont contribué de bonne grâce à assurer la production de cette revue. Ils ont servi de rédacteurs pour les recensions de livres, d’évaluateurs d’articles, de demandeurs de nouveaux articles, de rédacteurs invités lors de numéros spéciaux, de contributeurs, et ont accompli une foule d’autres tâches nécessaires au bon fonctionnement de la revue. La production de *TCS* a toujours été le fruit d’un effort collectif, en particulier de la part d’un petit groupe de gens qui se dédient à tenter de corriger les inégalités qui caractérisent notre monde. J’espère que la revue gardera cette vocation et qu’elle continuera à se développer dans cette optique, sous la direction compétente de Suzanne, à sa nouvelle adresse de Halifax.

*J’aimerais remercier Iain Blair pour son travail avec les corrections de texte. Je veux aussi remercier le professeur Jean François Mayer (Science Politique, Université Concordia, Montréal) pour avoir effectué la traduction française des résumés d’articles ainsi que de ce texte.



Participants at International Conference on Labour, May 1980
(All photos by Jooneed Khan)



Robin Cohen and Sharon Stricter, May 1980