

EDITOR'S NOTE / NOTE DE LA REDACTRICE

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This is the Part 2 of the Special Issue on *New Forms of Labour: Precarious, Informal and Migrant, Volume 49*, prompted by the changing forms of work and the debates around the future of work. While the journal has usually focused on work and workers in the global south, with some exceptions, the growing similarities in precarious forms of work between north and south prompted us to engage the debate more universally.

Part 1 revealed the increasing numbers of workers engaged in various forms of precarious employment, especially within the growing informal sector and the export processing zones. Migration is integral to this as large numbers of workers are migrating to jobs in other countries, often on a temporary or circular basis as they move between work and home, with little chance of accessing permanent residence and gaining the full rights of citizenship.

This issue was finalized in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has revealed national and global inequalities on an unprecedented scale — and perhaps even the limits of a globalized economy. It has also revealed weakened government capacity to respond after years of austerity programmes. As a result there have been deep cuts in social programmes, especially in the areas of public health. In spite of the hardships felt by most during the pandemic, the poor and marginalized are less able to protect themselves from the virus in contrast to those who have been able to stay safer by self-isolating in their homes and even maintaining their employment. Many are more vulnerable as they lack adequate housing and clean water, especially those who are precariously employed.

The growing awareness of these inequalities has been a contributing factor to the widespread unrest around police

brutality and racial injustice. Massive demonstrations began in the U.S. in reaction to the brutal killing of George Floyd, then spread around the country with demands for racial justice. Several countries took up the demand for racial justice in their own countries, extending it further to address injustices linked to European colonialism.

The pandemic has also revealed the crucial role played by low-waged precarious and migrant workers in most economies, especially in essential services including in the health care sector, food distribution and agricultural production, among others. Working conditions for precarious workers have been further deteriorated as many now face more dangerous working conditions as they are on the front line of the fight against the pandemic. For those working in sectors deemed non-essential, they were the first to be retrenched or to lose their status as foreign workers. Workers in informal markets and workshops have been denied their livelihood activities, making them unable to meet their basic needs as markets closed and street vendors were chased away. Millions have been left unemployed in both the formal and informal sectors, and now face troubled economies.

The articles in this issue were written before the pandemic. They provide a set of case studies revealing significant issues around new forms of work. All represent precarious workers in the informal and gig economies, and some deal with the additional complication of migration for work. They are:

Loubere and his colleagues examine the large number of Chinese informal gold miners in Ghana, asking whether they represent a neo-colonial activity or contribute to a kind of beneficial developmentalism.

Crispen Chinguno explores changing labour relations and worker organizing in the gig taxi industry in South Africa.

Leda Perez engages in a gendered analysis of low-income urban women in the informal sector in Lima, Peru, and the way they provide for their reproductive needs in the absence of state services.

Johannes Machinya explores the precarity of Zimbabwean migrants working in South Africa whose insecure immigration status leaves them in fear of deportation.

It is with sadness that we note the passing of Peter Waterman (1936-2017), a longtime valued contributor to the journal. He taught at the Institute of Social Studies at The Hague and his commitment to international labour studies led him to support not only this journal but others, including the South Africa Labour Bulletin. Rosalind Boyd, founding editor of *Labour, Capital and Society* remembers his early involvement with the journal with great fondness for his unusual style and unwavering commitment to the struggles of working people. You can read about his life and work in an article by Ronald Munk. 2018. Peter Waterman (1936-2017): Labor Historian and Activist, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, May. Available through ResearchGate.

Finally, to authors, contributors and subscribers, please note our new email address: **lcstcs.editor@yahoo.ca**