

EDITOR'S REMARKS

ILWCH Continues

The format may be new and the mailing address may have changed, but *International Labor and Working Class History* is still very much alive. After our tragic loss of Bob Wheeler, Number 13 was edited ably by Vera Wheeler and John Laslett, while the new workshop was being set up in Pittsburgh. Readers proved heroically patient and understanding through the crisis, with its innumerable delays and confusions, and literally dozens of supporters gave freely of their time and advice in getting *ILWCH* back on the track and into motion again. In partial compensation for the vexations and contributions, we offer this double issue for the spring of 1979, Number 14-15. Henceforth, look for us every June and December.

ILWCH can succeed only as a collective undertaking. As an instrument for informal exchange of ideas, information, concepts, and proposed new directions of research, it can accomplish its mission in the future only by means of the same sort of active participation of its readership as it has enjoyed in the past. Although requests and suggestions for contributions aptly will be coming from us to you, your initiatives will be not only welcomed, but indispensable.

Especially welcome is the active role which the editorial committees of *Le Mouvement Social* in France and *Labour/Le Travailleur* in Canada have played in preparing this issue and have committed themselves to continuing in the future. By the time the next number appears it is hoped that scholarly journals devoted to working-class history in other countries will have been added to that list. We also salute the appearance of *The Newsletter of International Labour Studies* and hope to profit increasingly from its expert attention to the Third World.

The most substantial pieces in this issue are all review essays. We hope to embody many of our book reviews in this type of critical survey in issues to come. There is also, however, a real need for think pieces of the sort that *ILWCH* was making famous in recent years. There are so many concepts to be analyzed and terms to be defined: what is "skill?" what was the origin of wages? what can be learned from the changing structure of wages? how useful or treacherous a concept is "working-class culture?" what precise significance have such concepts as imperialism and dependency for workers in both metropolitan and dependent nations? where is the link between the history of the working-class family and the history of the working-class movement? what promise and perils does anthropological analysis hold for historians of

workers? what does “spontaneous” mean? These questions, and so many more, can be treated either in review essays or in short provocative essays. *ILWCH* needs both.

We present *ILWCH* Number 14-15 and await your responses. The conceptual and research difficulties of working-class history, the growth in scholarly interest in such work (which paradoxically does not exclude a growth in hostility toward it), and the profound importance of our studies to the movement to which they are dedicated all underscore the need for a continuous and provocative exchange among those of us who are engaged in the work. With the help of an active readership *ILWCH* can continue to be the useful vehicle of that exchange, which Bob Wheeler designed for us.

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