



The spring 2019 semester was action-packed and full of firsts for the Center! The highlight was the Center's symposium, which brought together labor activists and scholars from across the globe to discuss "Alternative Worker Movements at a Time of Political Crisis" (see below). During the symposium, the Center inaugurated its first art exhibition, curated by Postdoctoral Scholar Paolo Marinaro (p. 3). In another first for the Center, we teamed up with The Sustainability Institute to create a film series, screening four films to nearly 600 students, faculty, and community members (p. 5). In February, Paolo Marinaro and Center-affiliated Assistant Professor Rebecca Tarlau gave a report back from the frontlines of recent strikes in Mexico and the United States respectively (p. 5). Also in February, we hosted a talk by Assistant Professor Michael McCarthy of Marquette University on political struggles over U.S. pensions since the forties (p. 5). In March, five Center-affiliated faculty members traveled to Berlin, Germany to represent CGWR at the Fourteenth Global Labour University Conference (p. 3). Meanwhile, eight GLU students drove to Ithaca, New York for Labor Notes' Troublemakers' School (p. 2). Also in March, Center-affiliated Assistant Professor Elaine Hui spoke at a forum on "International Solidarity and Labor Struggles in China" in Denver, Colorado (p. 6). In June, center-affiliated Professor of Practice Paul Whitehead traveled to Geneva, Switzerland for a special edition of the International Labor Conference, marking the ILO's 100th anniversary (p. 5). This summer, the Labor and Global Workers' Rights (LGWR) students embarked on exciting internships with labor unions across the country (p. 2).

The Center for Global Workers' Rights' Eighth Annual Symposium: Alternative Worker Movements at a Time of Political Crisis

By Paolo Marinaro

On April 4-5, 2019, the Center for Global Workers' Rights held its eighth annual symposium, focusing on "Alternative Worker Movements at a Time of Political Crisis." The center hosted scholars and activists from the United States, Europe, Latin America, and Asia to discuss alternative approaches to worker organizing, which seek to increase the inclusivity and militancy of the labor movement by contesting established leadership, norms, and practices. Among the guests, Ruth Milkman, Beverly Silver, Ha Kim, Katy Fox Hoddess, Jay O'Neal, Minhyoung Kang, Rina Agarwala, Kathy Feingold, Ellen Friedman, Cirila Quintero, Ruy Braga, Maurizio Atzeni, Massimo Modonesi, Julia Soul, and Marshal Ganz reflected on how alternative worker movements can provide counter-narratives and strategic responses at a time when right-wing populists are stoking racism, xenophobia, and misogyny across the globe. The symposium shed light on approaches to labor organizing that prioritize democratic participation, direct action, and intersectional and international solidarity through trades unions, cooperatives, worker centers, wildcat strikes, and transnational activist networks. Master of Professional Studies (M.P.S.) students in Labor and Global Workers' Rights from Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Brazil, Ukraine, Turkey, and the United States contributed to the symposium by introducing scholars and activists to their experiences with the labor movements in their home countries. Additionally, on Thursday, April 4, at 7:30 p.m., assistant professor Elaine Hui moderated the public event, "Labor and Resistance at a Time of Right-Wing Populism: India, Brazil and the United States" with the participation of Rina Agarwala (John Hopkins), Beverly Silver (John Hopkins), Ruth Milkman (CUNY), and Ruy Braga (Universidade de São Paulo). The center also presented a labor rights art exhibition, focusing on labor resistance in the North American Free Trade Zone.

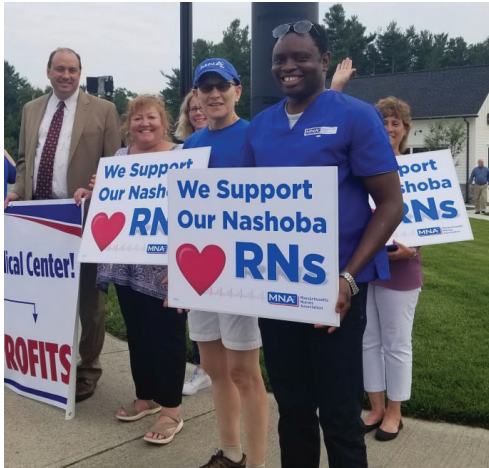


Eighth Annual CGWR Symposium Participants, April 5, 2019.

LGWR Student Summer Internships

By Manuel Rosaldo

Throughout the year, center-affiliated Associate Teaching Professor Mary Bellman worked closely with LGWR students to find internships aligned with their interests and skills. Here is what the students are up to in 2019: Kofi Asianowa (of Ghana) is helping with grievance proceedings, contract negotiations, trainings, and internal organizing with The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Council 8 in Toledo, Ohio. Pnehwon Harris (of Liberia)



LGWR student Sherif Olanrewaju (right front) with The Massachusetts Nurses Association at an action in front of the Nashoba Valley Medical Center.

has an internship with the Service Employees International Union Healthcare Pennsylvania (SEIU-HCPA) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where she is helping build relationships with West African members in nursing homes and home healthcare. Bashiratu Kamal (of Ghana) has an internship at the Solidarity Center in Washington D.C., where she is conducting research and policy analysis on the African Free Trade agreement and African labor rights campaigns. Sherif Olanrewaju (of Nigeria) is assisting with leadership development, contract negotiations, power mapping, and worksite actions with the Massachusetts Nurses Association. Ekin Ozturk (of Turkey) is conducting strategic research with the Global Strategies Department of the Teamsters International in Washington D.C. Rafael Padilha (of Brazil) is preparing for a master's program in philosophy at the University of Porto, where he hopes to work part time for a labor union. Allison Petonic (of the United States) is interning with the United Steelworkers in Pittsburgh, assisting with contract campaigns, trainings, and corporate research. Anna Popovych (of Ukraine) is developing materials, training, and data infrastructure for new member outreach with The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 668 in Pittsburgh. Congratulations to our LGWR students on their internship accomplishments!

LGWR Students Join Upstate New York Troublemakers School

by Manuel Rosaldo

On Saturday, March 23 at 5:30 a.m., eight groggy-eyed LGWR students began the long drive from State College to the Upstate New York Troublemakers School. Three and a half hours later, they received an emotional boost (and some coffee) when they arrived at the Plumbers and Pipefitters Union Hall in Ithaca, New York. There, they joined some 200 electricians, taxi drivers, teachers, nurses, coffee baristas, and other worker activists in a standing-room-only auditorium. The environment was electrifying! The event, organized by Labor Notes, was billed as “a day of skill-building workshops, education, and strategy discussions to put some movement back in the labor movement.”

The opening panel, aptly titled “Expect the Unexpected,” analyzed the recent U.S. strike wave and other surprising forms of worker organizing. Scott Slawson of the United Electrical Workers gave a riveting account of a strike by nearly 2,000 locomotive plant workers in Erie, Pennsylvania. The workers maintained a picket in sub-zero weather for nine days in February, successfully fending off their employer’s efforts to impose a two-tier wage system. Participants spent the rest of the day in workshops on topics ranging from ‘Race and Labor’ to ‘Mapping Your Workplace.’ LGWR student Ekin Ozturk said that her favorite workshop was ‘Using Satire, Parody, and Humor in Organizing’ because “we don’t do much of that in our campaigns in Turkey. I really enjoyed hearing about all the creative and fun ideas that organizers use in actions.” Her colleague, Bashiratu Kamal, said that “the troublemakers school helped in naming ‘invisible’ acts that violate workers rights in my country like wage theft. It also reaffirmed the need to have concerted strategies on organizing.”



Eight LGWR students (from left) Allison Petonic, Sherif Olanrewaju, Pnehwon Harris, and Kofi Asianowa attend a workshop at the Upstate New York Troublemakers School.

Geographies of Resistance: Art, Research, and Labor Struggle

By Paolo Marinaro

On Thursday, April 4, at 7:30 p.m., the Center for Global Workers' Rights inaugurated the art exhibition "Geographies of Resistance: Art, Research, and Labor Struggle," curated by Postdoctoral Scholar Paolo Marinaro in the lobby of the Keller Building. The art expo presented a dynamic group of artists, activists, and labor scholars, who collaborated to trace geographies of resistance and vulnerabilities of workers and labor movements within the North American Free Trade Zone (NAFTA). The project bridged art, research, and activism by looking at the intersection of class, gender, and race in the global economy.

Conceptual art, documentary photography, and ethnographic records depicted experiences of workers in Mexico, Canada and the United States, with particular attention to migration, gender and labor struggles in strategic sites: Mexico City and New York City, and the borders between them. Fred Lonidier and Javier Dragustinovis focused on the experiences of workers in the global factories along the US-Mexico border. David Bacon, Carole Condé, and Karl Beveridge presented works produced in collaboration with Mexican and Central American farmworkers. The Scylla Art Collective featured a project on the unionization of food delivery app workers in Mexico City. The Workers Art Coalition NYC introduced a collection of zines centering on workers' reflective histories of their own lives. The Workers Studio by Sol Aramendi presented collaborations with the LGBTQ group Lunicorns from Staten Island, Jornaler@, and domestic workers cooperative Adikhaar. Geographies of Resistance urges us to reflect upon the arts as a collaborative process and an organizing tool to see the potential for alternative forms of solidarity.



Postdoctoral Scholar Paolo Marinaro gives a tour of the art expo.

The Center for Global Workers' Rights Attends the Fourteenth Global Labour University Conference in Berlin

By Katherine Maich and Paolo Marinaro

A delegation from the Center for Global Workers' Rights (CGWR) at the School of Labor and Employment Relations at Penn State, attended the fourteenth Global Labour University Conference, "Reflecting 100 years of ILO – Shaping the Rules for a New Century of Labour," held March 27-29 in Berlin, Germany. The center-associated M.P.S. program in Labor and Global Workers' Rights is part of the Global Labour University (GLU) network with four other campuses in India, South Africa, Brazil, and Germany. The GLU brings together trade unions, universities, and the International Labour Organization, with a mission to increase the intellectual and strategic capacity of workers' organizations.

The CGWR was represented by Associate Professor Mark Anner, Associate Teaching Professor Mary Bellman, Assistant Professors Katherine Maich (Kate) and Rebecca Tarlau, and Postdoctoral Scholar Paolo Marinaro. Mark presented the Labour Rights Indicators – the open source online database developed by the CGWR that provides strategic data on freedom of association and collective bargaining rights in different countries over time. Recently, the Governing Body of the ILO decided to support the Indicators as the official measurement of workers' labor rights violations globally. Upon returning from Berlin, Kate said, "The conference confirmed the cutting-edge potential of the GLU network for Penn State." Paolo also said, "It was an incredible opportunity to present and discuss my research with such a committed group of scholars and activists from all over the world." For more information on the conference, including the full agenda, speakers and workshops, please visit the website for the Global Labour University: www.global-labour-university.org.



Associate professor Mark Anner presents the Labour Rights Indicator in Berlin, March 27, 2019

Report backs from the Frontlines of Strikes in Mexico and the United States

By Becky Tarlau

On Feb. 28, the Center for Global Workers' Rights hosted a forum on "Workers in Revolt: Report backs from the Frontlines of the Recent Mexican Maquiladoras and U.S. Teachers' Strikes." Paolo Marinaro, postdoctoral scholar at the Center for Global Workers' Rights and Rebecca (Becky) Tarlau, assistant professor affiliated with the Center for Global Workers' Rights, presented on their participant observation in two of the most important strikes of 2019. In Mexico, on Feb. 7, after an almost one-month strike, 30,000 maquiladora workers in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, along the border with Texas, achieved a significant wage increase in 45 factories, mostly operating in the automotive sector. In the United States, on Jan. 14, 34,000 teachers in Los Angeles went on strike for the first time in 30 years with immense community support, and after six days they won all of their demands, including pay increases, lower class sizes, more staffing, and – perhaps most significantly – policy



Postdoctoral Scholar Paolo Marinaro and Assistant Professor Becky Tarlau discuss recent strikes of Mexican factory workers and U.S. teachers.

limits on charter expansion. Paolo and Becky's presentations focused on the strategic innovations of these extraordinary mobilizations in Mexico and the United States. Beyond their January start dates, significant similarities between these strikes included their bottom-up activism, which was in tension with established union leaderships; the primary role of social media; the utilization of direct actions not typical of either union; broad community support; the fact that both strikes led to larger strike waves in each country; and finally, the potential reconfigurations of union-state relations in both countries. The strike report back also illustrates that the faculty at the Center for Global Workers' Rights are at the forefront of researching real workers' struggles, in diverse contexts, with global consequences!

Michael McCarthy Visits CGWR and Speaks on Dismantling Solidarity

By Katherine Maich

On Feb. 27, the Center for Global Workers' Rights welcomed Michael McCarthy, assistant professor of sociology in the Department of Social and Cultural Sciences at Marquette University. Michael presented on his recent book, *Dismantling Solidarity: Capitalist Politics and American Pensions since the New Deal*, as part of the CGWR Speaker Series. *Dismantling Solidarity*, published in 2017 by Cornell University Press, won the American Sociological Association's Paul Sweezy Book Award and the Labor and Labor Movements' Distinguished Book Award Honorable Mention. Faculty and grad students from several departments along with interested community members attended McCarthy's talk, in which he explored the relationship between capitalism and democracy in the United States, looking specifically at ways that structural factors drive policy change. McCarthy focuses on pension marketization in his theoretically and empirically rich text, weaving together a historically grounded analysis of the political economy of the welfare state.

While visiting the center, McCarthy met with M.P.S. in Labor and Global Workers' Rights students Anna Popovych, Kofi Asianowa, Pnehwon Harris, Allie Petonic, and Bash Kamal over lunch to discuss their labor activism and perspectives on the labor movement in their home countries. He also attended the CGWR Event, "Workers in Revolt: Report Backs from the Frontlines of the Recent Mexican Maquiladoras and U.S. Teachers' Strikes," with Paolo Marinaro and Becky Tarlau. At Marquette, Michael teaches in the areas of social theory and political economy, and he is currently working on a new book on the politics of democratizing finance.



Michael McCarthy with students from the M.P.S. program in Labor and Global Workers' Rights.

CGWR and The Sustainability Institute Launch Labor Rights Film Series

By Manuel Rosaldo

Last spring, CGWR teamed up with Penn State's Sustainability Institute on a new film series titled, "Intersections: Landscapes of Labor." The series highlighted connections between labor rights, sustainability, and racial, gender, and environmental justice. The series was co-sponsored by ten academic centers, student groups, community groups, and labor unions. Films were picked thematically to coincide with campus wide programming such as Martin Luther King Jr. Week, Defending Brazilian Democracy Week, and Pride Month. Before each film, student activists circulated petitions and made announcements about pressing labor rights struggles.

Over the course of the semester, we screened four films to nearly 600 students, faculty members, and community members. The first, *Sorry to Bother You* (2018, USA) is an absurdist comedy that depicts the intersecting worlds of call centers, race relations, globalization, and worker organizing in Oakland. The second, *The Organizer* (1963, Italy), offers a neorealist view of the lived experiences of striking textile workers at the dawn of the industrial labor movement in Turin, Italy. The third, *The Second Mother* (2015, Brazil) portrays issues of gender and class in domestic work, telling the story of a live-in housekeeper, who moves across Brazil to help raise a wealthy family's child in order to send money back home to her own child. The fourth, *Pride* (2014, England), highlights the potentials and challenges of intermovement solidarity, depicting an unlikely alliance between out-and-proud gay and lesbian Londoners and striking Welsh mine workers. The film series organizing committee consisted of Peter Boger, Katherine Maich, Paolo Marinaro, and Manuel Rosaldo.



Film series organizers and Penn State faculty and LGWR students on March 19 after a screening of *The Second Mother*.

On 100th Anniversary, ILO Combats Sexual Harassment and Violence at Work

By Paul Whitehead

From June 10-21, government, worker, and employer representatives from around the world assembled in Geneva, Switzerland, for a special edition of the International Labour Conference (ILC) of the International Labour Organization (ILO). This year marked the ILO's 100th anniversary, and dozens of heads of state attended in celebration. Also in attendance was center-affiliated Professor of Practice Paul Whitehead, an observer with the U.S. worker delegation. Many speakers took the occasion as an opportunity to reflect on high and low moments in the ILO's past. Still others focused on the ILO's Future of Work Agenda, discussing the digital revolution in work, threats and opportunities posed by artificial intelligence, the scourge of inequality, and the continuing importance of freedom of association and collective bargaining.



ILO delegates in Geneva celebrate the adoption of the Violence and Harassment Convention and Recommendation 2019. (Photo courtesy of ILO)

In addition to all of the "long views" on the role of the ILO, the 2019 Conference also tackled its perennial and even everyday work. And in the realm of standards, the ILC adopted a brand new international labor norm titled "Convention Concerning the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work." The new Convention No. 190 achieves broad coverage, aiming as it does to eliminate all gender-based violence, including sexual harassment—whether of a general 'bullying' or gender-discriminatory kind. What's more, it protects all workers of any kind (regardless of contractual status) in both the public and private, and formal and informal sectors, as well as job applicants and interns. Altogether, the world's governments, employers, and worker representatives made a major stride toward the prevention and elimination of sexual harassment.



Associate Professor Mark Anner receives LERA's Susan C. Eaton Outstanding Scholar-Practitioner Award

Center Director Receives LERA's Outstanding Scholar-Practitioner Award

Center Director, Mark Anner, was awarded The Labor and Employment Relations Association's (LERA) 2019 Susan C. Eaton Outstanding Scholar-Practitioner Award, in recognition of his accomplishments both as an academic and practitioner. The awards committee wrote that they were "most impressed with [Anner's] top-notch scholarship in the area of global workers' rights, and his impact on changing conditions for workers globally. In addition, this award recognizes his efforts to extend the reach of the Global Labour University to North America by establishing a Master of Professional Studies (M.P.S.) program in Labor and Global Workers' Rights (LGWR) at Penn State that provides trade union activists from around the world the opportunity to prepare to play a role in the global movement to improve labor rights." Congratulations, Mark, for this well deserved honor, which truly embodies the spirit of our center!

Labor Struggles and International Solidarity in China

By Elaine Hui

Dr. Elaine Hui, assistant professor for the School of Labor and Employment Relations, was invited to speak at a recent event titled "Labour Struggles and International Solidarity in China." The event was organized by the Made in China Journal, in conjunction with the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) Conference in Denver, Colorado, from March 21 to 24.

In addition, Hui organized a panel comparing labor relations in post-socialist China and Vietnam for the AAS Conference, which was attended by more than thirty people. Based on her research of the two countries, she presented a co-authored paper, "Strikes and Pensions in Post-Socialist China and Vietnam: A Comparative Study," which compares the pension systems and strikes pertaining to migrant workers in China and Vietnam.

Recent Publications by Center Team Members

Anner, Mark. 2019. "Squeezing workers' rights in global supply chains: purchasing practices in the Bangladesh garment export sector in comparative perspective," *Review of International Political Economy*. (Online first version.)

Maich, Katherine Eva, Jamie K. McCallum, and Ari Grant-Sasson. 2019. "Time's Up! Shorter Hours, Public Policy, and Time Flexibility as an Antidote to Youth Unemployment." In *Youth, Jobs, and the Future: Problems and Prospects*, edited by Lynn Chancer, Martin Sanchez-Jankowski, and Christine Trost. Oxford Press.

Quintero Ramírez, C. and **Paolo Marinaro.** 2019. "The Remaking of the Mexican Labor Movement in the Automotive Industry." *The Journal of Labor and Society*. 22:9-23

Rosaldo, Manuel. Forthcoming. "The Antinomies of Successful Mobilization: Colombian Recyclers Maneuver between Dispossession and Exploitation." *Development and Change*.

Tarlau, Rebecca. 2019. *Occupying Schools, Occupying Land. How the Landless Workers Movement Transformed Brazilian Education*. Oxford University Press.

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