Global Labour Research Centre | GLRC

Newsletter. March 2026.

MESSAGE FROM ADRIAN A. SMITH, DIRECTOR

By all indications, the recently completed annual Graduate Student Symposium was a great success. This year's organizers opted for something of an experiment in podcast production. It consisted of a couple of roundtable-style group conversations and several individual narratives in the form of reflective storytelling. Held in a Scott Library recording studio, with the capable support of folks in York's Media Creation Lab, the symposium combined the emergent practices of scholarly podcasting with a trenchant commitment to self-reflexive knowledge production. As a bookend to the day's activities, Soma Chatterjee led a wonderfully engaging workshop, *From Thesis to Book: A Practical Guide for Emerging Scholars*, which considered academic writing and publication within a highly reflexive praxis finely attuned to the urgent pressures and challenges of postsecondary education today.

The Symposium, *Narratives of Movement: Centering Migrant Women's Voices in Research and Resistance*, emphasized migrant women, gender-marginalized migrant students and researchers with varying degrees of experience. Participants attended to the complex lived realities of those thrust into transnational circuits of migration while refuting, and indeed refusing, depictions of migrant victimization. Self-narratives and stories of migration were put into conversation with accordant theories and practices of resistance. From my perspective, this produced compelling insights, moments of eloquence and even beauty informed by vulnerability. The intensity of the exercise seemed to be amplified by the relative novelty of the podcast format (studio lighting, recording and monitoring equipment, captive studio audience, etc). But it was also a tribute to the commitment and aspirations of these emerging scholars, a cohort intent on upsetting deeply entrenched academic expectations. In this regard, the exercise proved that, when used thoughtfully, podcasting can serve a meaningful function in collective scholarly endeavours *even*

before considering the final output. Here, quite pivotally, it supported a set of dialogical practices aimed at cutting through pervasive if not lifeless notions of the researcher as 'impartial and well-informed spectator'.

When I briefly addressed symposium participants at the outset, my aim was to encourage them to see their time together as opportunity. It provided a chance to not only share reflections as chroniclers of migrant lives of resistance, but in fact find ways to build collective action. It was an encouragement motivated by the belief that, at its core, labour studies teaches us about the indispensable nature of collective struggle. In this, I am reminded of the intervention of CLR James, writing in collaboration with Cornelius Castoriadis and Grace Lee Boggs, who in their *Facing Reality* consider workers' collective struggles (and their chroniclers) in response to the "monster" of "the state power" in the 1950s. James and collaborators remind us that

"… people all over the world, particularly ordinary working people … are rebelling every day in ways of their own invention. Sometimes their struggles are on a small personal scale. More effectively, they are the actions of groups, formal or informal, but always unofficial … . Always the aim is to regain control over their own conditions of life and their relations with one another. Their strivings, their struggles, their methods have few chroniclers. They themselves are constantly attempting various forms of organization, uncertain of where the struggle is going to end. Nevertheless, they are imbued with one fundamental certainty, that they have to destroy the continuously mounting bureaucratic mass or be themselves destroyed by it."

My hope, then, is that this cohort of scholars see themselves as chroniclers of the strivings of migrant workers, builders and aggregators of collective struggles, and destroyers of the ways and means of anti-caring and anti-collectivist action. But in embracing this perspective, they must be willing to concede the uncertainty of where the struggle will end while ardently committing to ending labour migration's destructive status quo. I am pleased that the GLRC has aided in this endeavour and in this way, even as I hope that the symposium's output, a limited podcast series expected in spring 2026, will exist as more than merely an auditory record of these

fine chroniclers in this moment. The importance of historical testimony notwithstanding, particularly as migrant women's struggles remain sidelined, my deepest hope is that this will not be the last we hear from this group.

Considerable credit for this year's symposium is owed to the graduate student organizing committee (Ashwin Nair, Oleena Chaudhuri, Tristan Rampersaud, Valentina Ornelas) for their wonderful work in, among other things, curating the symposium theme and topics and anchoring the day's activities, all under the deft tutelage of GLRC Coordinator Roxana Escobar Nanez, and with support from others including GLRC & Banting postdoctoral fellow Phil Henderson. Thanks is owed not only to this committed cast of organizers but also of course to all participants. All were heartily fed, including with a delicious Caribbean-style lunch, thanks to our friend Anna-Kay (Kay's Fusion Kitchen), who has provided weekly meals for our community-based workers' justice course and has a long association with Jane-Finch Education and Action Group.

GLRC EVENTS

1. GLRC Symposium, Narratives of Movement: Centering Migrant Women's Voices in Research and Resistance- Recap

The Global Labour Research Centre (GLRC) hosted the Graduate Student Symposium *Narratives of Movement: Centering Migrant Women's Voices in Research and Resistance* on February 27, 2026. The event brought together graduate students, emerging scholars and community researchers to share work on migration, labour and gender through critical and decolonial perspectives. Designed as an alternative academic space, the symposium combined scholarly discussion with storytelling and dialogue grounded in lived experience. Conversations were also recorded as part of the new GLRC podcast series *Narratives of Movement*,

creating a digital archive that expands how research on migration and labour is shared beyond the university.

2. Workers Voices on AI and Labour

When: March 23, 2026. 1-2:30pm

Where: Hybrid, please email asmitabv@yorku.ca or glrc@yorku.ca for more information.

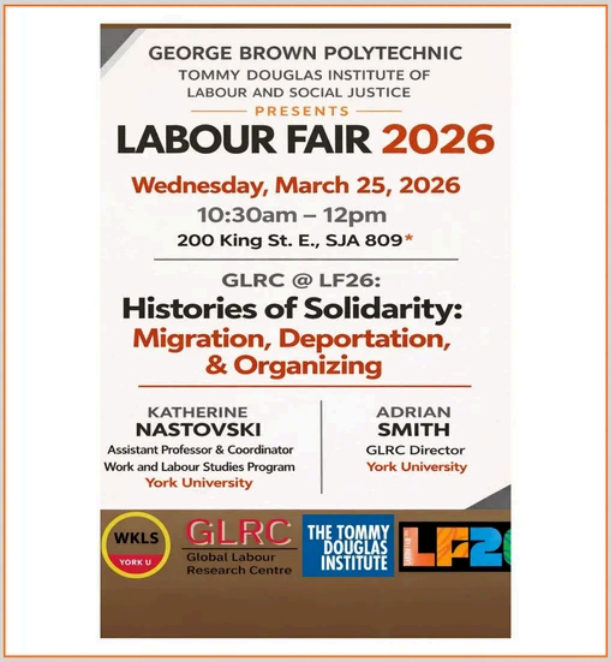
Prof. Bhutani and her research team will share their research findings exploring how artificial intelligence is reshaping work, worker rights, and the future of labour.

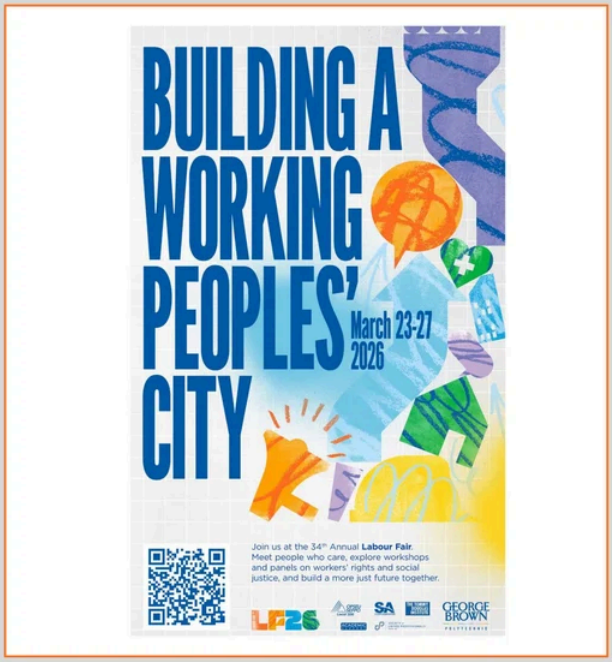
3. Histories of Solidarity, Migration, Deportation & Organizing.

When: March 25, 2026

Where: George Brown College, 200 King St E.

The GLRC will participate in the Labour Fair 2026 organized by the Tommy Douglas Institute at George Brown College on Wednesday, March 25, 2026. As part of the fair, Katherine Nastovski and Adrian Smith will lead the session “Histories of Solidarity: Migration, Deportation, & Organizing.” The discussion will explore how migrant communities, workers, and organizers have built solidarities across borders while confronting deportation regimes and labour precarity. Drawing on research and organizing experiences, the session highlights the role of migrant workers in shaping labour movements and advancing collective struggles for rights, dignity, and justice. Participants are invited to engage in conversation about contemporary organizing and the histories that inform it.





4. GLRC Community Lounge – Office Hours Now Open

The GLRC is pleased to support our community by opening the Centre's lounge for office hours on **Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** Dependants are welcome.

The lounge provides a comfortable space for studying and work, along with access to a small library, a mini-fridge, and a coffee maker.

To use the lounge, **students must register in advance** here and indicate the time they plan to arrive.

We look forward to welcoming you into the space!

RECENT PUBLICATIONS | Perspectives Series

- We recruited them, now we are blocking them: Canada's broken promise to newcomers, by Lynn Yu Ling Ng. *GLRC Perspectives No. 10, January 2026*

CALL FOR PAPERS | GLRC Submissions

We welcome submissions throughout the year for:

1. Perspectives series – concise opinion pieces meant to spark public dialogue and encourage new ways of thinking on a range of work and labour related issues. These articles are meant to inform and promote labour perspectives in a manner that challenges the current state of knowledge in a particular field;
2. Snapshot series – plain-language reports and summaries meant to connect labour, community and academic research in the public interest. It considers "what the research found" and "how it can be used" to identify and communicate real-world impacts from academic research.

Note: Those interested in submitting to either initiative in **video or audio format** can contact us by email at: glrc@yorku.ca.

OUR COMMUNITY EVENTS

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1. Institute for Technoscience & Society

Monthly Virtual Seminar Series for this Winter (12:00pm - 1:30pm)

March 12, 2026 "Mediation, Curation, Materialization: Art-Science Collaborations, Feminist STS, and the Invisible, Contested, and Ephemeral in Biomedicine" with Dr. Suze Berkhout.

April 22, 2026 "Counting herons, photographing melting ice: Public participation in climate change research." with Dr. Sarah Blacker.

2025 - 2026 Research Support Workshops for Graduate students and postdoctoral fellows (12:00pm - 1:30pm)

March 20th, 2026: "AI Headlines Club" (12:00pm - 1:30pm) with Dr. Elisha Lim.

More information coming soon and can be found here and here when available.

2. From Flor to Global Resistance: Toward a World Free From War, Exploitation and Displacement.

When: March 6, 2026
Register here

In a world marked by war, rising fascism, economic crisis, and climate disaster, women continue to be pushed across borders just to survive.

From the execution of Flor Contemplacion in 1995, to the near-execution of Mary Jane Veloso, to the ongoing precarity of migrant caregivers in Canada and around the world — the pattern is clear. Migrant women are celebrated for their remittances, yet abandoned when they face violence, criminalization, and exploitation.

As global capitalism sinks deeper into crisis — with economic slowdowns, inflation, unemployment, and widening inequality — more women are forced to leave their homes to support families and economies. War and climate disasters displace millions. Anti-migrant policies and xenophobia scapegoat those who move. Care workers, domestic workers, and refugees carry the burden of a system they did not create.

This gathering brings together art, testimony, political education, and organizing. Erie Maestro from Migrante-Canada will be delivering a keynote lecture, followed by panels showcasing the importance of solidarity, from the Philippines to Palestine and globally. Through One Billion Rising, a film screening, a candlelight vigil, and a panel discussion, we will reflect on the connections between global crisis and women's forced migration — and strengthen our collective resistance.

A light lunch will be provided.

3. Book Talk: York Centre for Asian Research, ***Stuck at Home: Pandemic Immobilities in the Nation of Emigration***

When: Tuesday, 10 March 2026 | 11 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. | Room 280N
Virtual attendees can register using this link.

Yasmin Y. Ortiga, Singapore Management University
Discussant: **Soma Chatterjee**, School of Social Work, York University
Author of *Skills to Build a Nation: Immigrant Labour Market and Canadian Nationalism* (University of Toronto Press 2025)

Stuck at Home (Stanford University Press 2025) examines how the Philippine state and its aspiring migrants negotiated the meaning of immobility amid the COVID-19 pandemic. In this pioneering book, Yasmin Y. Ortiga studies the narratives that emerged around two groups of Filipino workers: nurses banned from leaving the country and cruise workers who returned home after COVID-19 shut down the travel industry. The book emphasizes the high stakes in telling the "right" story of immobility to a nation built around emigration—one that provides a compelling rationale for who deserves to move and who can be forced to stay.

Yasmin Y. Ortiga is Associate Professor of Sociology at Singapore Management University's School of Social Sciences. She studies how the meaning of "skill" shapes people's migration trajectories, determining how and why people cross national borders. Her work has also been published in *Global Networks*, *International Migration Review*, and *Social Science and Medicine*. Her first book—*Emigration, Employability, and Higher Education in the Philippines*—was published in 2018.

After the talk, (1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.) there will be a lunchtime roundtable with Dr Ortiga for interested graduate students and other researchers. Space is limited. Please register using this link.

4. Book Launch: You are invited to the launch of **Soma Chatterjee's** new book, ***Skills to Build the Nation: Immigrant Labour Market and Canadian Nationalism*** (University of Toronto Press). Soma will be in conversation with York University faculty Shirin Shahrokni (Sociology), Lalaie Ameeriar (Anthropology) and Ethel Tungohan (Politics). Refreshments will be served. Click here to register.
This event is endorsed by the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, the Global Labour Research Centre, and the York Centre for Asian Research.
Date: Thursday March 12, 2026
Time: 7:00 - 9:00 pm
Venue: Another Story Bookshop

CALL FOR PAPERS

1. Call for Articles: Strikes and Social Conflicts in Hostile Environments
Deadline: May 31, 2026

Invitation to Submit Articles to Workers of the World, online journal of the International Association of Strikes and Social Conflicts (IASSC)
Following a highly successful International Association of Strikes and Social Conflicts conference held in Washington, DC in September last year, we are now extending an invitation for submissions of articles on the conference's broad theme of 'Strikes and Social Conflicts in Hostile Environments' (see below) for publication in our journal Workers of the World later in 2026.

Details of the submission process can be found here.
Original call on the website of Workers of the World here

2. Conference | The World History Association 35th Annual Meeting - Closed Borders and Global Connections: Being Global after Globalization
Deadline: May 1, 2026
Conference date: June 25-27, 2026
Location: Incheon, Korea

For more information, please visit: https://thewha.org/conferences/korea-wha.html

3. Conference | Labor Rights in the 21st Century

Deadline: March 15, 2026

Who is invited to submit proposals: activists, academics, politicians, union leaders, and workers are invited to share their experiences and present their ideas

Conference date: November 20, 2026

Location: Montevideo, Uruguay

For more information, please visit: https://www.societas.com.mx/informacion-del-evento/derechos-laborales-en-el-siglo-xxi-conferencia-internacional *(Spanish and English versions available -- scroll down to find the call in English.)*

4. Call for Papers | The Refugee–Migrant Distinction: Toward a Global History

Deadline: June,19th 2026

Submissions accepted from June 1st to 19th 2026

Publication: December 2026

The study of collective identities related to labour has flourished remarkably in Brazilian historiography, achieving significant regional and institutional scope in recent decades. Challenging traditional frameworks of national history, research on the worlds of labour has not only continued the shift towards the lived and perceived experiences of the working class, expanding the theoretical and methodological provocations brought about by history from below, but has also deepened this perspective. Broadly speaking, what unites these studies is the emphasis on the capacities and forms of agency of workers—whether in political struggle, associative practices, social movements, acts of protest, leisure activities, daily life, power relations, or within multiple workplaces and arrangements—and on the socio-legal, ethnic-racial, class, regional, age, gender, and sexuality intersections that historically shape them.

More information here

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

Alexeeva, A., Gold, M., & Rees, C. (2026). Pathways to global worker representation: Three case studies in the metalworking sector. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, Online First

Al James, Julie MacLeavy (2026) Charting 25 years of labour geographies in JEG, *Journal of Economic Geography*, Online First

Borello, A., & Hau, M. F. (2025). Solidarity with and against: Exploring Group Identification among Precarious Migrant Workers. *Sociology*, *60*(1), 59-79.

Fanelli, C. (2026, February 24). *Canadians aren't imagining the cost-of-living crisis*. Policy Options. https://policyoptions.irpp.org/2026/02/cost-anxiety/

Doellgast, V., Kämpf, T., & Langes, B. (2026). Building Worker Voice and Power in AI Decisions: Three Cases in the German ICT Industry. *Work and Occupations*, Online First

Ibos, C. (2026) The battle of the squares: When domestic workers protest. *Work Organisation, Labour & Globalisation.* Vol. 20(1): 78-95.

Institute for Research on Public Policy. (n.d.). *Community transformations project*. https://irpp.org/community-transformations/

Lind, R., Hennum Nilsson, K., Strauss, P., Quinlan, M., Brulin, E., Lee, M. K., & Håkansta, C. (2026). (Un)healthy algorithms? Trade union, employer, and government action for safety and health in algorithmically managed work. *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, Online First

Li, A. K. (2026). Expendable Workers: Food Delivery and Technopolitics in China. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, Online First

Pérez-Ahumada, Pablo, Daniela Olivares-Collío and Kevin Carrasco (2026) The Conditioning Power of Class: Collective Action and Attitudes toward Inequality in Neoliberal Chile (2016–2023). *Critical Sociology* Online First

Rivers-Moore, M., & Hardy, K. (2026). Organising Beyond the Employment Relationship: Scaling Up and Institutional Power in Own-Account Unions. *Work, Employment and Society* Online First.

Tan, J., Luka, N., & Mazo, E. (2025). Unlikely Organizers: The Rise of Tech Worker Labor Activism. *ILR Review*, *79*(2), 187-216

Zheng, X., Du, J., Xiang, Y., Long, L., & Xie, H. (2026). Short-term fit, long-term trap: The career development lock of low-skilled gig workers. *Human Relations*, Online First

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If you would like to submit any announcement items (events, research or job opportunities), contact us at glrc@yorku.ca.

Global Labour Research Centre, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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