

Revista Brasileira de História – RBH

Dossier

"Struggles for Democracy: Worlds of Labour, Inequalities, and Historical Reparation"

Clarice G. Speranza, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS); David Lacerda, Universidade do Estado da Bahia (UNEB); Lucas Poy, International Institute of Social History (IISH)

Submissions accepted from June 1st to 19th 2026

Publication: December 2026

Instructions to authors: [SciELO Brazil](#)

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. The emerging horizon seems to inscribe a type of framework that simultaneously extrapolates, challenges, and repositions explanations based on binary oppositions, such as slavery and capitalism, waged and non-waged labour, modern and archaic, urban and rural, authoritarianism and democracy.

This progressive affirmation of the world of labour as a fertile field for historiographical research, now endowed with indisputable institutional importance, paradoxically coincides with a process of profound capitalist transformation. The prominence of financial capital, deindustrialization, and structural precariousness seem to call into question, in Brazil and in much of the globe, the centrality of work as an organizing element of life. Reaffirming the

importance of the historical struggles of workers is, in this sense, also a way of counteracting in the present an exclusion that is not only economic, but also political and cultural. More than ever, the deepening of capitalist exploitation accentuates inequalities and is associated with the resurgence of political authoritarianism, xenophobia, and fascism. For the success of this exclusionary project, it is necessary to make the working class, its achievements, and its rights invisible.

In contrast, this thematic dossier takes as its reference point the current state of historiographical criticism and the advance of precarious labour and attacks on rights within the framework of global capitalism, punctuated by the acute alteration in ways of living, producing, consuming, and desiring, resulting from the reconfiguration of global commodity chains, the invention of other forms of exploitation of human labour via digital platforms, the algorithm economy, deindustrialization, imminent environmental collapse, and the recent shift of some Latin American governments towards the conservative right.

Thus, we invite researchers to submit unpublished and original articles, in Portuguese, Spanish, or English, that aim to reflect on the historical elements that structure, justify, and legitimize, politically and ideologically, the production and reproduction of racial, regional, class, and gender **inequalities**. The proposal is to observe how such inequalities affect **democracy** and democratic experiences across different time periods, giving rise to specific processes of social exclusion, repression, and coercion of labour, while at the same time being historically and customarily affected by the reinvention of class struggle, and the construction and transformation of collective identities. We are also interested in the analysis of contemporary initiatives to promote **reparation** policies for injustices committed from above against entire multitudes of workers subjected to mass enslavement and regimes of exception.

It is strongly recommended that articles address experiences beyond national borders or seek to construct comprehensive theoretical approaches that aim to cross, compare, connect, and integrate multiple spaces and temporalities, seeking to understand and vary the local, transnational, and global dimensions inherent to their objects of analysis.