Call For Papers: Invisible Labor in Carceral Spaces: A Special Issue of International Labor and Working-Class History

Posted on November 3, 2020 by James McElroy

CALL FOR PAPERS

ILWCH is soliciting articles for a special issue that will examine the history of unfree labor in carceral spaces within a global context. We are seeking essays that explore invisible labor in settings where people have been historically confined and forced or coerced to work. These spaces include, but are not limited to, plantations, prisons, jails, asylums, workhouses, immigration detention centers, work camps, and private homes where unfree labor has been used to serve prison officials, clean up oil spills, fight wild fires, transcribe and convert documents for genealogical companies, make furniture for universities, farm fish, sew lingerie, and so on. We are interested in articles that broaden scholarly conceptualizations of carceral labor and expand contemporary definitions of carceral spaces. We encourage submissions from scholars working on all types of systems of punishment, exploitation, and control designed to dominate human beings and extract profit from their labor.

This issue will offer a long historical view of the unfree labor question, with a preferential focus on the nineteenth century through to the early twenty-first century. Contributors are invited to submit articles that apply a range of empirical, interdisciplinary, and theoretical approaches to understanding the history of unfree labor within a global context. We also invite contributions that highlight oral histories and the voices of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people.

Possible themes for articles include, but are not limited to:

- Plantation slavery
- Convict leasing and chain gangs

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- Incarcerated labor and racial capitalism
- Hidden carceral labor for medical and scientific purposes
- Exploitation of prison labor by private companies for the digital economy
- The role of women in the global prison labor market
- Protest and activism among incarcerated workers
- Cultural representations of unfree labor
- Race, ethnicity, and the formation of global carceral enterprises
- Unfree labor and a global comparative perspective

Prospective authors should send, by **December 2, 2020**, a cover letter (including address, email, and institutional affiliation), a two-page CV, and an abstract of 500 words or less. Depending on the outcome of the editorial review of the abstracts, full manuscripts (not exceeding 8,000 words) will be invited for peer review. The deadline for the submission of first drafts of articles will be **June 23, 2021**.

Contact Info:

All correspondence should be addressed to:
Talitha L. LeFlouria, Department of African-American and African Studies, University of Virginia, TLL4Y@virginia.edu

Vivien M. L. Miller, Department of American and Canadian Studies, University of Nottingham, vivien.miller@nottingham.ac.uk

Contact Email:
ILWCH@Columbia.edu

Author



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James McElroy

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