

LABOR AND LABOR MOVEMENT SECTION, ASA

Business Meeting
August 18, 2002
MINUTES

- 1) **Section Election:** As reported in the newsletter and on our listserve, the following candidates were elected to section offices:

Chair: Kim Voss

Chair Elect: Ruth Milkman

Secretary-Treasurer: Heidi Gottfried

Council: Edna Bonacich; Jill Espenshade; Harland Prechel; Daisy Rooks

- 2) **Section Committees:** The following section committees need additional staffing. Suggested candidates, including self-nominations, should be forwarded to Kim Voss by September 1, 2002.

- **Awards:** This committee will award 2 years from now an annual set of three awards: a graduate students scholarship award; a scholarly publication award, alternating between a book and an article in consecutive years; and a practice or activist award. The committee will need to be staffed next year.
- **Nominations:** Judy Stepan-Norris (chair)
- **Program:** Kim Voss (chair)
- **Membership:** Judy Stepan-Norris (chair)

- 3) **Section Activities:**

- **Newsletter:** Kim Scipes was thanked for serving as our newsletter editor. Dan Clawson has volunteered, schedule permitting, to edit the newsletter.
- **Webpage:** George Mason was thanked for serving as our webpage coordinator. Andy Perrin volunteered to assist another member (to be identified) in maintaining our webpage.

- 4) **Section Program, 2003 ASA Meeting:**

Possible themes for panels at the 2003 meeting were discussed, including

- “new organizational forms” (building on the evolving role of workers’ centers)
- labor and environmental coalition possibilities after Seattle (joint with the Environmental Sociology section)
- political spillovers of organizing
- cross-border cooperation through the EU and NAFTA.

All members are encouraged to weigh-in on these thematic options, plus any others they might wish to suggest. Email Kim Voss with your ideas before the ASA deadline of September 15, 2002.

The Section also needs to select a roundtable coordinator for next year's meeting. Volunteers are urged to contact Kim Voss.

5) Awards Committee: Our section will be allowed to make awards in two more years. One of our awards is meant to recognize individuals whose scholarship has had a practical impact on the labor movement. A brief discussion was held on the criteria for this "practice" award. There was general agreement that the award should be for recent contributions in scholarship that have had a demonstrable impact on the labor movement, either through a constructive intellectual engagement or by developing more immediate implications for policies or practices. The section will need to elaborate and refine these criteria into a formal statement.

6) Dialogue with the Labor Movement: Returning to an earlier theme that contributed to the formation of our section, there was a brief discussion of ways to institutionalize our ongoing dialogue with organized labor. Some suggestions included inviting local union representatives to participate in relevant section activities at future ASA meetings, perhaps as discussants on panels or presenters at roundtables; constituting local "organizing committees" of sociologists to identify labor activities and leaders who would be of possible interest to our members in the hosting city (Tracy Chen offered to help perform this role at next year's meetings in Atlanta); strengthening our liaison efforts with the AFL-CIO, particularly in a way that enables the section to serve as a conduit for vital information regarding ongoing labor struggles; continue to reach out to union activists and democratic caucuses within established unions. The section will revisit this issue next year.

7) Hotel Workers Organizing: Chicago's hotel workers are in the midst of contract negotiations, and have yet to receive what they regard as a serious offer from management, despite the expiration of their contract at the end of August. We heard from a veteran housekeeper who, after more than a dozen years of working experience at the Palmer House Hilton, earns less than \$9 per hour – less than half of what unionized hotel workers earn in New York and San Francisco, the most comparable convention cities. In addition to low wages, Chicago's hotel workers have no sick days, no personal days, and must pay \$85 a month for their health insurance – by far the highest premium of unionized hotel workers. Upon hearing the presentation, some 30 or so members of the section presented the hotel management at the Palmer House with petitions, signed by over 500 members of the ASA, in support of the hotel workers. Section members conveyed their displeasure with the lack of a contract, and indicated that the ASA and other professional associations would prefer to give their conference business to hotels that pay their employees a decent wage and provide improved benefits.