

## **Labor and Labor Movements Section Business meeting**

**Monday, August 25, 2015, Chicago, IL**

Original minutes by Paul Almeida (Secretary/Treasurer)

### **I. Statements by Shannon Gleeson (Outgoing Chair)**

- A. Turnover Chair to Nancy Plankey Videla
- B. Thanks outgoing Chair Shannon Gleeson for her dedicated work to the section

### **II. Statements by Nancy Plankey Videla (Chair)**

- A. Recognize Exiting Council Members
  - a. Steve McKay and Belinda Lum
- B. Recognize Incoming Council Members
  - a. Luke Elliot-Negri (incoming Graduate Student Council Member)
  - b. Joshua Bloom (incoming Council Member)
  - c. Chris Rhomberg (Chair-Elect)

### **III. Treasurer's Report (Paul Almeida)**

- A. Estimated Current Balance of \$989 (which includes 2015 ASA Meeting expenditures)
- B. 2016 Mini-Conference Organizers received \$5000 Grant from Puffin Foundation and will receive \$1,000 from PEWS ASA Section as a co-sponsor
- C. ASA provides \$1,000 plus \$2 per member. 400 members is a desirable goal for budget and 3 panel sessions.

### **IV. Section Membership**

- A. We currently only have 348 members, we need to increase membership to 400
- B. We need additional volunteers for membership committee (Gleeson, Almeida, Ikebe)
- C. One Suggestion for membership drive is to use ASA's new online tools to provide a gift membership to student members

### **V. Committees**

**Need volunteers. The chairs and members per bylaws are:**

- A. Nominations: Shannon Gleeson
- B. Mentoring: Nancy Plankey-Videla and Luke Elliott-Negri
  - a. Need to Formalize Mentorship Committee
- C. Membership: Shannon Gleeson, Shannon Ikebe, ex-officio Paul Almeida
- D. Program: Nancy Plankey-Videla and Chris Rhomberg
- E. Distinguished Scholarly Book Award: Marcos Lopez, Dan Clawson
- E. Distinguished Scholarly Article Award: Jeff Sallaz
- F. Distinguished Student Article Award: Joshua Bloom, Jane McAlevey

## V. Newsletter and Social Media

- A. Thanks to Mark Sherry for his exemplary service and work on the newsletter
- B. Incoming newsletter editor, Valerie Bell with assistance from Todd Vachon. Will only have a fall, spring and maybe summer issue.
- C. Paul Morgan will continue his tenure as webmaster

## VI. 2016 Seattle Mini-Conference (Incoming Chair Chris Rhomberg)

- A. Tentative Title of 2016 Seattle Mini-Conference: “Labor Precarity, Resistance, and Consent: The US, China, and around the World.”
- B. Mini-Conference Committee has formed (Chris Tilly, Lu Zhang, Wilma Dunaway (PEWS), Jasmine Kerrissey, Jenny Chan, Manjusha Nair, Chris Rhomberg, David Smith, David Fasenfest, and others).
- C. Funding from Puffin Foundation, PEWS, and potentially from other ASA sections, SSSP, and Critical Sociology
- D. Committee is currently reaching out to local Seattle Unions and activists
- E. Call for conference papers likely in late fall 2015
- F. The committee is planning several publishing outlets for mini-conference papers, including special journal issues and edited collections.

## VII. Themes for LLM 2016 Panels

- A. Coordinate with ASA President Ruth Milkman
- B. Discussion about Open Call for Papers versus Thematic Panels
  - a. membership had mixed views on open versus thematic panels
  - b. Open panels may generate more roundtables
  - c. Problems of finding coherence among open panel submissions
- C. One suggestion about panel on Parties, Elections, and Labor because of upcoming election year.
- D. Suggestion that one of the sessions be an invited one.

## VIII. Section Awards (with statements from Award Committee chairs)

- A. Best Book Award (Chair Belinda Blum, Award Presented by Pablo Gaston)

**Winner: Dan Clawson and Naomi Gerstel. 2014. *Unequal Time: Gender, Class, Family in Employment Schedules*. Russell Sage.**

The struggle over the working day has long been a key feature of the labor movement, from the Haymarket martyrs with the struggle for the eight hour day in 1886 right up to the present. The committee felt that the methodological sophistication displayed through the rich ethnographies, combined with the strong theoretical framework made this book especially deserving of this award. Dan

Clawson and Naomi Gerstel's (2014, Russell Sage), *Unequal Time: Gender, Class, Family in Employment Schedules* returns to the question of unequal time, with methodological sophistication, taking into account the importance of race, class, gender and the family. By opening up the window on the haves and have-nots, those who control time and those who don't, and attendant inequalities therein, from the workplace to the home, with nuance and vigor, Clawson and Gerstel have reopened the question of struggles over time, never to be viewed the same way again. In raising issues such as unpredictability, official schedules, time off, the intersection between family and work, class, race and gender, in a country renowned for its lack of time-off and adequate family leave and childcare, the authors have added an important dimension to our understanding of contemporary workers, and the second, and third shifts. Ironically, at a time of massive underemployment, when nearly one in seven are either unemployed or underemployed, the authors draw attention to the overwork and the heartbreaking choices confronting workers today, often forced to choose between their own health, work, or their kids, when they or their children get sick, through a detailed examination of medical occupations and organizations, specifically doctors, nurses, medical technicians and nurses assistants.

The authors make innovative arguments about what they call "normal unpredictability," struggles to control schedules, as part of the larger intersectional dynamics of race, class and gender, as well as occupational stratification as a whole, in the web of time, including the cascading effects of changes in time schedules on co-workers, family and friends. Original arguments, brilliant explications of people escaping work to go home, or escaping home through work, organizational constraints of flexible/unpredictable just-in-time workplaces, make this a compelling read and adds much to our understanding of contemporary inequalities.

**Honorable Mention: Lu Zhang. 2014. *Inside China's Automobile Factories: The Politics of Labor*. Cambridge University Press.**

Lu Zhang's (2015, Cambridge University Press), *Inside China's Automobile Factories: The Politics of Labor and Worker Resistance* offers a detailed look at autoworkers in the new workshop of the world. The committee felt the rich ethnographic work took us to place where labor resistance has great meaning but is the least well known. Drawing on extensive multisite ethnographic field research and interviews, Zhang details class struggle in China's auto zones, and the important changes China's auto workers have won with their activism. Drawing on the concept of workplace bargaining power and legitimacy leverage, a form of ideological power, Zhang shows the legacy of Chinese communism/state-socialism, and class in the

epicenter of world auto production and the world class struggle in China's so-called transition to capitalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Moreover, it integrates all these findings into a sophisticated framework, looking at the product cycle, industrial development and the making of the Chinese working class in the context of broader patterns of working-class formation, the state-led triple alliance of multinational, state and local (albeit state-owned) capital groups, in the context of changing labor regimes. By focusing on shop-floor, national and global process, Zhang, has offered us a powerful window into both Chinese working-class politics and the future of China and the global system. This book, so far, offers the strongest book in our field about the Chinese Working Class.

**Honorable Mention: Jake Rosenfeld. 2014. *What Unions No Longer Do*. Harvard University Press.**

Jake Rosenfeld's (Harvard, 2014) *What Unions No Longer Do*, is a critical socio-historical work illuminating the implications of the collapse and ongoing fall of the so-called house of labor in the US and its effects on the increasing inequality. The committee felt that the strength of this book is rooted in the use of strong intersectional quantitative analysis that provides clear empirical evidence that shows the big picture impact of labor's decline, including stagnant and declining wages, decreased strikes, and increasing race-class inequalities. This is an important book about "what we have lost," and "why we have lost it," and what might be needed to reverse the tide. Rosenfeld persuasively argues why this effect of anti-unionism is a massive blow for those seeking a fairer and more equitable country. This book offers readers an important understanding of the ways in which the decline of the union has led to the persistence of inequality in the United States.

**B. Distinguished Scholarly Article Award (Chair Marcos Lopez, Presented by Cedric de Leon)**

Winner of the Distinguished Scholarly Article Award

Sallaz, Jeffrey. 2015\*. "Permanent Pedagogy: How Post-Fordist Firms Generate Effort but Not Consent." *Work and Occupations* 42(1): 3-34.

\*Published OnlineFirst in October 2014

Drawing on ethnographic research carried out at a U.S. based subcontracted call center, Sallaz's article draws our attention to control in the post-Fordist labor process. Contrary to the assumption that the post-Fordist labor process brings back direct

forms of despotic labor control, Sallaz argues that CallCo, the call center he studied, used a learning game to elicit effort without providing rewards to its workers. He found that management left workers alone when learning how to master calls. The unease this created motivated new workers to generate high amounts of short-term effort. However, without rewards, such as raises, promotions, or other substantive incentives to purchase commitment, new workers departed CallCo. Sallaz shows that a high turnover rate created an indirect labor system he calls permanent pedagogy, whereby a learning game is always present at the call center because of the firm's reliance on new workers. The Committee was impressed with Sallaz addition to the discussion on control in the labor process. One committee member stated: 'Sallaz's paper is exactly what we need to be talking about... Sallaz's fresh and provocative answer focuses on a classical preoccupation of our section: the labor process, whereby workers are thrown in the water to sink or swim on the job with little to no training.' While another member stated: 'This is a wonderfully well-written piece that contributes to our understanding of precarious work by explaining why people work so hard at a 'bad' job.'

#### **Honorable Mention:**

Kimeldorf, Howard. 2014. "Worker Replacement Costs and Unionization: Origins of the U.S. Labor Movement" *American Sociological Review* 78(6): 1033-1062

In his article Kimeldorf seeks to understand the patterns the successes and failures that gave rise to organized labor during its formative years in the early 1910s. Kimeldorf finds that most successful organizing campaigns occurred where workers had the greatest disruptive capacities due to the high cost of being replaced. High replacement costs were associated with the scarcity of skilled workers, geographically isolated worksites where it was too expensive to import workers, and time-sensitive tasks where it was too costly to replace workers. Kimeldorf's piece provides convincing evidence that should be looked at closely by the contemporary labor movement. As one committee member commented, 'The main payoff of Kimeldorf's piece is that he spells out the means by which the contemporary U.S. labor movement can be revived by looking at the determinants of replacement costs in the turn-of-the century movement.'

#### **C. LLM and Critical Sociology Graduate Student Paper Award (Chair Jeff Sallaz, Presented by Barry Eidlin)**

Winner of the Best Graduate Student Paper Award and \$500 from Critical Sociology and LLM:

"The Crisis of New Labor and Alinsky's Legacy," by Jane McAlevey, PhD candidate at CUNY Graduate Center.

The ASA's Section on Labor and Labor Movements grants its Undergraduate Paper Award to Jane McAlevey, for her paper "The Crisis of New Labor and Alinsky's Legacy: Revisiting the Role of the Organic Grassroots Leaders in Building Powerful Organizations and Movements." This meticulously researched, well-argued, and engaging paper challenges a central assumption in our field: that decentralized "new unionism" is the best technique for fighting organized labor's sustained decline in the United States over the past half-century. McAlevey exposes the weaknesses of new union techniques for organizing workers, and traces these to the movement's rootedness in the famed writings of Saul Alinsky. She argues that Alinsky's program for mobilization is not inherently flawed, but that it has been uncritically accepted as gospel by the adherents of new unionism. Alinsky's techniques may in fact be ill-suited for confronting the challenges posed by globalization and financialization. For organized labor in America to find new pathways forward, the paper argues, may well entail finding new paradigms to undergird the movement.

## **IX. Remaining Issues**

- A. Upcoming Conference at Florida Atlantic University on Arrighi's work
- B. Labor and Employment Relations Association (LERA) Announcement
- C. LLM Membership Drive should be highest priority in the next month