

In Critical Solidarity

**Newsletter of the American Sociological Association's Section
on Labor and Labor Movements**

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Message from the Chair

Dear Labor Section members,

Just a reminder that thanks to the hard work of your program committee we have a wonderful array of dynamic, high-quality, and very interesting sessions at the Atlanta meetings. They are all at the Hilton Hotel, including our regional spotlight session on Sunday afternoon at 2:30 pm on race and labor organizing in the South and our joint reception off site with the Race, Class, and Gender section on Sunday evening. The rest of our sessions run throughout the day on Monday, all the way through to our business meeting at 5:30 pm. All of the sessions are listed below (as well as other labor-related panels), and I hope to see you all at as many of them as you can attend and of course at the business meeting. We also want to urge all of you to bring a non-member who is interested in labor issues to our reception and our business meeting and help us recruit more members to our section.

I look forward to seeing you in Atlanta,
Kate Bronfenbrenner

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**Labor-Related Events
at ASA**

Sunday, August 15, 10:30 am

Session 184. Regular Session. Labor Movements in Comparative and Transnational Perspective

Atlanta Marriott Marquis

Session Organizer: *Cedric de Leon*, Providence College

Presider: *Cedric de Leon*, Providence College
Access Isn't Everything: State Permeability, Class Capacities, and U.S. and Canadian Labor Regime Formation, 1934-1948. *Barry Eidlin*, University of California-Berkeley

No Borders Movements as Transnational Labor Movements. *Nandita Sharma*, University of Hawaii-Manoa

Social Unionism in São Paulo, Brazil: Shifting the Logics of Collective Action in Telemarketing Labor Unions. *David Flores*, University of Michigan; *Ruy Braga*, University of Sao Paulo-Brazil

Transnational Labor Collaboration: Mexican Union's Perspectives and Experiences. *Sarah Hernandez*, New College of Florida
Discussant: *Ruth Milkman*, University of California-Los Angeles

Sunday, August 15, 12:30 pm

225. Regular Session. Labor Markets: Strategies in a World of Precarious Work

Atlanta Marriott Marquis

Session Organizer: *Toby L. Parcel*, North Carolina State University

Presider: *Steve McDonald*, North Carolina State University

Blame Games: Why Unemployed Israelis Blame the System and Americans Blame Themselves. *Ofer Sharone*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Soviet Legacy or Social Capitalism? Network Use in Russian Labor Market. *Olga V. Mayorova*, American Sociological Association

The Hourglass Economy? Job Polarization in the 21st Century. *Rachel E. Dwyer*, Ohio State University

The Production of Entrepreneurs: The Role of Individual and Market Forces. *Kathryn Densberger*, Pennsylvania State University
Discussant: *Steve McDonald*, North Carolina State University

Sunday, August 15, 2:30 pm

252. Regional Spotlight Session. Race and Labor Organizing in the South, Old and New (co-sponsored with the Section on Labor and Labor Movements)

Hilton Atlanta

Session Organizers: *Kate Bronfenbrenner*, Cornell University, *Cynthia M. Hewitt*, Morehouse College

Presiders: *Kate Bronfenbrenner*, Cornell University, *Cynthia M. Hewitt*, Morehouse College

Panelists: *Kate Bronfenbrenner*, Cornell University, *Stewart Acuff*, Utility Workers Union of America, *William Jones*, University of Wisconsin-Madison

The year 2010 marks the 64th anniversary of Operation Dixie, the million-dollar Congress of the Industrial Organizations (CIO) effort to organize and build power in the South. While the effort from 1946-1953 was not ultimately successful, labor learned important lessons about the significance of the South for the labor movement, lessons they then built on in the years that followed including organizing victories among paper mill workers in the 1940s, Memphis sanitation workers in 1968, or the apparel and textile workers in ACTWU's Southern Region in the 1970s and 1980s. More recently we have seen a new wave of organizing wins among workers in building services, nursing homes, teachers, and food processing. All of these victories occurred in a climate dominated by employers virulently opposed to unions and extremely adept at exploiting race, citizenship status, class, and gender divisions in the workplace to thwart or crush union organizing initiatives. However, when we look at the organizing numbers we know that

the South has great unrealized potential for organizing, as evidenced by the fact that when unions have put resources and energy into organizing in the South they have had equal if not greater success than other regions. Nonetheless, we still have yet to see another ambitious organizing proposal such as Operation Dixie. Organizing the South is an especially timely topic for the 2010 ASA meeting in Atlanta, because of the tremendous increase in international migration to southern states. The Black/White Southern binary, which has been difficult for the labor movement to deal with, has been broken as Latino/ and Asian immigrants have become part of the "New South." How will this new immigration and the changing landscape of citizenship change labor's strategy in the South? It is also timely in the aftermath of last year's election when unions played a significant role in working together with the Obama campaign to register and turn out young, Black, immigrant, and independent voters.

Sunday, August 15, 2:30 pm

277. Regular Session. Political Sociology: Labor, Unions, Interest Groups and Political Outcomes

Atlanta Marriott Marquis

Session Organizer: *Beth Mintz*, University of Vermont

Presider: *Beth Mintz*, University of Vermont
Increasing the State Minimum Wage: Impacts of Political, Institutional and Demographic Factors. *Michael Franklin Thompson*, Indiana University-Bloomington

Minority Threat and Unemployment Insurance Coverage Rates. *Matt J. Costello*, Ohio State University

Parties, Unions and Poverty across the U.S. States. *Stephanie Moller*, University of North Carolina-Charlotte; *Huiping Li*, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics

Unions Membership and Political Participation in the United States. *Jasmine Olivia Kerrissey*, University of California-Irvine; *Evan Schofer*, University of California-Irvine

Discussant: *Marc Dixon*, Dartmouth College

Sunday, August 15, 8:00 pm

Joint Reception: Section on Race, Gender and Class; Section on Labor and Labor Movements (off-site) -- Off-Site Location, Uptown, 201 Courtland St NE

Monday, August 16, 8:30 am

305. Section on Labor and Labor Movements Paper Session. Fighting for Labor and Justice: Workers, Rights and Movements around the World

Hilton Atlanta

Session Organizers: *Steven McKay*, University of California, Santa Cruz, *Mark P. Thomas*, York University

Post-Socialist State, Transnational Corporations, and the Battle for Labor Rights in China. *Alvin Y. So*, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Strangers in their Own Land: Indigenous Farm Worker Politics and Organizing in Baja California. *Marcos F. Lopez*, University of California, Santa Cruz

Transforming Labor Standards into Labor Rights. *Piya Pangsapa*, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad; *Mark Jonathan Smith*, The Open University

Unsure Resistance: Indian contract workers' ambivalence to neo-liberalism. *Manjusha S. Nair*, Rutgers University

Monday, August 16, 10:30 am

317. Thematic Session. Employment Rights: Politics and State Policy

Hilton Atlanta

Session Organizer: *Clarence Y.H. Lo*, University of Missouri-Columbia

Changing Conceptualizations of the Workers' Rights: Producers and Labor Action through US History. *Victoria L. Johnson*, University of Missouri-Columbia

The Right to Not Work: Sick Leaves and Vacations. *Dan Clawson*, University of Massachusetts

Labor's Priorities for the Obama Era, and the Employee's Rights Bill. *Stewart Acuff*, Utility Workers Union of America

The historical spread and expansion of civil and political rights has extended to social and economic rights such as full employment and access to well-paying jobs. This thematic session explores the development of discourses in communities about economic rights, the strategies of labor and other social movements, and the political processes that produce or have not yet produced policy achievements for labor. Victoria Johnson provides historical background on the changing conceptualizations of workers as producers with rights, and the consequences for labor action through US history. Dan Clawson will discuss the fact that in the United States workers have no right to paid sick leaves or vacations, are seriously restricted in their right to take the vacations they theoretically have, and may be penalized or fired for taking sick leave. Stuart Acuff, AFL CIO organizer in Atlanta for many years, now with the Utility Workers Union of America and co-author of the book *Getting America Back to Work*, will speak on labor's priorities for the Obama era, especially the Employee's Rights Bill.

Monday, August 16, 10:30 am

**349. Section on Labor and Labor Movements Invited Session. Politics and Coalition-Building in the Contemporary Labor Movement
Hilton Atlanta**

Session Organizer: *Marc Dixon*, Dartmouth College

Presider: *Marc Dixon*, Dartmouth College

Trends in the Congressional Representation of Organized Labor, 1972 - 2008. *Kyle W. Albert*, Cornell University

Economic Determinants of Voting in an Era of Union Decline. *Jake Rosenfeld*, University of Washington

Class, Community, and Social Ownership of Capital: The Case of Urban Politics in Pittsburgh. *Jae-Woo Kim*, University of California-Riverside
Re-visiting Labor's Cultural Front: Community, Politics and Identity. *Richard Sullivan*, Illinois State University

Discussant: *Marc Dixon*, Dartmouth College

Monday, August 16, 10:30 am

**357. Section on Teaching and Learning in Sociology Invited Session. Dissenting Voices Under Fire—Academic Freedom at Risk (co-sponsored with the Section on Labor and Labor Movements)
Hilton Atlanta**

Session Organizers: *Darlaine C. Gardetto*, St. Louis Community College, *Michael Schwartz*, State University of New York-Stony Brook

Presiders: *Darlaine C. Gardetto*, St. Louis Community College, *Michael Schwartz*, State University of New York-Stony Brook

Panelists: *Chris Tilly*, University of California-Los Angeles, *Margo Ramlal-Nankoe*, Ithaca College, *Jonathan Knight*, American Association for University Professors, *William Robinson*, University of California-Santa Barbara

In the last decade at the same time the right has increased its influence in government and the media there has also been an increase in scholars doing research and teaching in areas such as labor and social movements, international affairs and global trade, investment policies; as well as corporate governance, environment and public health. In the last several years those two trends have come to a head as scholars undertaking research or teaching in these areas have found themselves increasingly vulnerable to attack from both inside and outside the academy. These attacks have come in the form of threats to their employment, written and verbal attacks on their character, their research, and the company they keep in the media, and in some cases through either legislation or litigation. In this panel we will examine some of these issues and what they tell us about our field, our society and the future of academic freedom in the academy.

Monday, August 16, 2:30 pm

**362. Thematic Session. Human Rights at Work
Hilton Atlanta**

Session Organizers: *Randy Hodson*, Ohio State University, *Vincent J. Roscigno*, Ohio State University

Presider: *Randy Hodson*, Ohio State University
Invasion and the Working Class: Labor and Human Rights in Post-Invasion Iraq. *Michael*

Schwartz, State University of New York-Stony Brook
 Engendering Labor Rights? Female Factory Inspectors in the Dominican Republic. *Andrew Schrank*, University of New Mexico
 The Globalization of Work and the Erosion of Workers' Rights: Reading the International Landscape. *Steven Vallas*, Northeastern University
 Discussant: *Kate Bronfenbrenner*, Cornell University
 The session deals with debates and struggles about human rights in the workplace and includes an international focus.

Monday, August 16, 2:30 pm
391. Section on Labor and Labor Movements Invited Session. Disparate Impacts: Race, Labor, Gender and the Environment (co-sponsored by the Section on Race, Gender, and Class)
Hilton Atlanta

Session Organizer: *Carolina Bank Munoz*, City University of New York-Brooklyn
 Presider: *Carolina Bank Munoz*, City University of New York-Brooklyn
 Life on the Line: A Contemporary Ethnography of Indigenous Women Cannery Workers. (*Norma Jean Morgan*, University of British Columbia
 Confronting Racism, Capitalism, and Ecological Degradation: Urban Farming and the Struggle for Social Justice. *Edna Bonacich*, University of California-Riverside; *Forrest Stuart*, University of California-Los Angeles; *Jake B. Wilson*, California State University-Long Beach
 Discussant: *Brian Mayer*, University of Florida

Monday, August 16, 4:30 pm
428. Section on Labor and Labor Movements Roundtable Session (one hour)
Hilton Atlanta

Session Organizer: *John P. Walsh*, Georgia Institute of Technology
 Table 1. Table Presider: *YeonJi No*, Georgia Institute of Technology
 Exploiting Workplace Sex and Stigma. *David Orzechowicz*, UC-Davis

The Effects of Workgroup Gender Composition on Unionization & Union Strength. *Nicholas A Jordan*, The Ohio State University
 Table 2. Unions and Institutions
 Table Presider: *You-Na Lee*
 United We Restrain, Divided We Rule: Neoliberal Reforms, State and Labor Unions in Turkey and Mexico. *Basak Kus*, Yale University
 Globalization of Capital and the Transformation of Labor Relations on a World Scale. *Berch Berberoglu*, University of Nevada-Reno
 Table 3. Worker-Community Alliances
 Table Presider: *Anne Zacharias-Walsh*, Solidarity Ink
 Ethical Attunement, Faith, and Organized Labor: The Case of Interfaith Worker Justice in the United States. *Satomi Yamamoto*, Tsuda College
 Rightwing Attacks on Unions: The U.S. Chamber of Commerce & the Myth of "Small Business." *Abby Scher*, Political Research Associates
 The Consequences of Collective Action: The Blue-Green Coalition and the Emergence of a Polanyian Movement. *Jennifer Seminare*, University of California-Berkeley

Monday, August 16, 5:30 pm
 Section on Labor and Labor Movements Business Meeting -- Hilton Atlanta

Book Reviews

Peter Evans reviews *Grounding Globalization: Labour in the Age of Insecurity*, by Edward Webster, Rob Lambert and Andries Beziudenhout (Blackwell, 2008), winner of last year's distinguished scholarly monograph award of the Labor and Labor Movements section.

By Peter Evans, UC Berkeley

What does "globalization" mean for the lives of ordinary working people? Compelling concrete answers to this question are harder to find in the vast literature on globalization than one might

hope, but refrigerators turn out to be a surprisingly effective vehicle for delivering an answer simultaneously rooted in concrete everyday experience and broader structural analysis. Webster, Lambert and Beziudenhout [henceforth WLB] use three refrigerator plants in three distinctive locations around the world to vividly convey the pervasive common effects of global corporate power.

Ezakheni, South Africa, Orange, Australia and Changwon, Korea are in three countries differently inserted in the global economy on three different continents. Despite disparate locations shaped by different national historical trajectories, the manufacturing workers, families and communities studied by WLB lead similar lives, dominated by pressure at work and insecure futures. The detailed descriptions of these three sites is an antidote to any fantasies that global shifts in production might eventually enable manufacturing workers in the Global South to enjoy protections comparable to those enjoyed by core manufacturing workers in the North during the “Golden Age of Capitalism.” This is a cautionary tale for those in poorer countries who assume industrialization will bring them relief from economic insecurity. Being a manufacturing worker in the era of global neoliberal capitalism is certainly preferable to the more common fate of being excluded from the formal economy, but it is hardly the good life promised by advocates of globalized capitalist development.

The distressing consequences of corporate power exercised through global production networks are only the authors’ initial concern. WLB fully accept the proposition that the goal is not just to understand the world, but to change it. Seeing the workers and communities they study not just as victims of capitalist oppression, but as agents for change, they explore potential strategies for enhancing workers’ agency.

As is often the case, the analysis of strategic response is less well developed than the diagnosis. The responses most compellingly portrayed are individual and often regressive. According to the

authors the workers in the three plants respond primarily by “working harder, withdrawing into households or becoming fatalistic” (p. 212). Lurking in the background is the potential for even more regressive political responses in the form of support for authoritarian politics and ethnic scapegoating (p. 213). In contrast, potentially transformative strategic responses emerge as embryonic and still largely ineffectual.

The analysis of SIGTUR (Southern Initiative on Globalization and Trade Union Rights) (p. 199-211) should have offered opportunity for delving into strategic possibilities in more depth. As a “campaign-oriented network of democratic unions grounded in the global South” (p. 199), SIGTUR is exactly the sort of organization that might provide the workers with transnational organizing tools. The authors have spent years not just studying but working with SIGTUR. Korean, Australian and South African trade unionists are all key members of SIGTUR. Yet, the discussion of SIGTUR remains largely disconnected from the analysis of the struggles of the workers in the three plants. With the exception of an early campaign to stop anti-union legislation in Western Australia (p. 200), there is no reference to transnational campaigns organized by SIGTUR that speak specifically to the needs of the “white goods” workers in the three countries.

WLB’s analysis does offer some interesting clues as to how the specifics of corporate power foster or impede the construction of transnational solidarity. Neither working in LG’s home base in Changwon nor working for nationally owned Defy in South Africa appears to create impetus to build transnational ties. Only in the Electrolux subsidiary plant, Orange, can workers clearly see the parallels between their plight and that of workers in other subsidiaries around the world. Unfortunately, the Swedish Electrolux workers contacted by the Orange union disappoint their Australian comrades with their identification with the mother firm (p. 153), and the subsidiaries that they contact in the U.S. and New Zealand are closed down before counter-campaigns can be mounted. Nonetheless, there is something encour-

aging here. As more and more production shifts from home countries to subsidiaries located in other countries, the share of the workforce likely to recognize the importance of building transnational ties increases. A wider network that includes ties to the full range of subsidiaries including new locations like Thailand and India might hold real promise.

Appropriately, WLB eschew definitive conclusions. The book is designed to pull the reader into engaging the challenges of globalization in the same way that the authors themselves have engaged, and it succeeds admirably. WLB may not have cracked the conundrum of building countervailing power along with refrigerators, but only the most cynical reader could finish *Grounding Globalization* without being drawn to continuing the quest that it launches.

Kim Scipes reviews *Transition from Below: Forging Trade Unionism and Workplace Change in South Africa* by Karl von Holdt (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2003).

By Kim Scipes, Purdue University North Central

Although the concept of “social movement unionism” has seen an increasing amount of usage in North America, especially after publication of Kim Moody’s *Workers in a Lean World* in 1997, the concept was initially developed in response to the “new unionism” that was developed in Brazil, the Philippines, South Africa and South Korea in the 1970s to early 1990s. Karl von Holdt’s excellent case study of social movement unionism in a steel works (Highveld Steel) in South Africa is an impressive attempt to further develop the concept along the lines initially intended, which is qualitatively different than has been developed in North America.

Von Holdt’s case study is largely based on a series of in-depth interviews: 60 with 28 shop stewards of the NUMSA (National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa) local in Highveld

Steel, along with three with trade unionists of the white Mine Workers Union, two with local town councilors, and one with the retired former recruiting officer of Highveld Steel. These interviews took place between 1993 and 1998.

Von Holdt’s interviews cover especially the period of “ungovernability” of apartheid (late 1980s)—ungovernability in the townships but, as he shows, also on the shop floor—and the early years of transition to the post-apartheid system. This coverage adds immensely to understandings of the transition that took place in South Africa, adding a view “from below” to previous efforts “on high” between the African National Congress and the overwhelmingly white Nationalist Party.

The author explores the “transition from below at a micro-institutional level,” examining changes in the workplace, the trade union, the town council and the ANC branch. He argues that his study illuminates that—in addition to the “double transition” argued by Glenn Adler and Eddie Webster (1995), covering a political transition to democracy and an economic transition from a closed to a liberalized economy—there was another factor which, in fact, made it a much more complex “triple transition”: “a transition from apartheid to a post-colonial society” (p. 3).

This study is a closely detailed account of these processes that take place in this one steel works. Von Holdt examines the processes by which the NUMSA local was organized and developed, recognizing the crucial role of collective solidarity. Fighting in a racialized workplace, “The shop stewards played a crucial role in giving voice to grievances of workers, showing that racial power could be challenged, and forging collective solidarity.” Yet, the stewards knew “that it was only the unity of their members, and their preparedness to take action, that protected them.” It was the willingness of the workers to defend those stewards, and stop work—to hell with formal procedures!—that enabled survival. “Their increasingly strategic location in the production process gave black workers more leverage to defend and build their organization.

The result was that no shop stewards were dismissed, other than after the 1987 lockout/strike” (p. 70).

Thus, organizational power based on collective solidarity was integral to the ability of the shop stewards to make institutional power a reality; in turn, institutional power provided the space to build organization. The union challenge to the arbitrary power of management and white workers was simultaneously an attack on racism and racial oppression in the workplace (p. 71).

Yet the organizational power at Highveld Steel was also affected by internal struggles within the union, especially between migrant workers (recruited from the homelands and living in hostels) and those from the nearby township. In fact, the strength of the union was due to the (generally) uneducated migrants, who used their ethnic traditions to build collective solidarity, although that included the use of violence to get offenders back in line and to deter potential violators.

The transition to a post-apartheid society did not take place easily, as Von Holdt demonstrates. In fact, increased opportunities for black worker leaders and educated workers (in the government, at both national and local levels, in the labor movement, and in establishing businesses, etc.) harmed the union, as it left behind the uneducated, who grew increasingly disenchanted with the switch from social movement unionism, based on workplace mobilization, to the formalized procedures of “strategic unionism,” leaving them with less power on the shopfloor.

One of the key findings of Von Holdt’s is that social movement unionism as developed at Highveld Steel was based not just on a “worker” identity or even a “trade union” identity, but that “trade union collective identity in the 1980s

consisted of a complex amalgam of popular, class and workplace identities, many of which—popular political identity and migrant identity in particular—were forged beyond the workplace. These collective identities *both* reinforced each other, generating an extraordinarily intense solidarity, *and* created faultlines between differing conceptions of ‘the union law’—faultlines which, when placed under pressure, could become the front line in a bitter and frequently violent conflict over contending notions of union order” (p. 9).

One disagreement this reviewer has with Von Holdt is that he sees the violence that emerged within this one steel works as being a component of “social movement unionism,” when I would argue the violence, while present in this one situation, is an aberration from the general concept itself (Scipes 1992).

Nonetheless, this is an important work that this author has found distributed (at least) by Barnes & Noble in North America. It’s a vivid representation of the struggles in and around one steel works, much of which focuses on black workers challenging white supremacy in the workplace.

As a former unionized factory worker for a number of years, this account rings true to the many crosscurrents among a workforce, both in creating worker solidarity to challenge managerial control—in this case, greatly intensified by virulent racism—and withstanding determined management attacks over the years. Yet, Von Holdt doesn’t gloss over the problems and shortcoming of the workforce itself, the local union, the national federation (NUMSA), its national labor center (COSATU, Congress of South African Trade Unions), nor of the African National Congress itself.

This is a first-rate study, and deserves the attention of all who are interested in building worker power on the shop floor.

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Kim Scipes, Purdue University North Central, is the author of KMU: Building Genuine Trade Unionism in the Philippines, 1980-1994 (Quezon City, Metro Manila, New Day Publishers, 1996). His latest book, AFL-CIO’s Secret War on Developing Country Workers: Solidarity or Sabotage?, is scheduled to be published by Lexington Books in September 2010. E-mail: kscipes@pnc.edu.

Article Review

Russell Ferri reviews Paul Almeida, “The Sequencing of Success: Organizing Templates and Neoliberal Policy Outcomes,” *Mobilization* (June 2008) 13(2):165-87, winner of last year’s distinguished scholarly article award of the Labor and Labor Movements section.

[**Article abstract:** In the 1990s and early 2000s, government privatization and austerity programs served as the cornerstone of free market reforms implemented throughout the developing world. The selling off of government utilities, resources,

and services laid the groundwork for a highly contested battleground in the global South over social and economic distribution. This study examines the sequencing of campaigns against neoliberal reforms in Central America. Two successful movement campaigns against privatization in El Salvador and Costa Rica followed failed collective attempts to impede similar economic reforms. The policy outcomes against neo-liberal measures are explained by the path-dependent nature of the organizing templates activists chose to employ and the breadth of social movement unionism achieved. The article offers insights into similar battles currently waged in the third world over the pace of economic globalization and the conditions in which oppositional movements are likely to succeed or fail.]

By Russell Ferri, Ph.D. candidate, Law & Society Program, New York University

Paul Almeida primarily addresses two issues in his award-winning article: (1) The importance of external support for social movements, and (2) how historical circumstances impact movements’ ability to assemble wide and forceful coalitions of external allies. To explore these fundamental issues he gathered data from four campaigns of social movement unionism—two in El Salvador and two in Costa Rica. One campaign in each country failed, and one in each country succeeded. Almeida argues this provides an illustration of what types of social movement strategies work, and under what historical conditions they can work.

Many social movement scholars have argued that it is crucial for most, if not all, movements to obtain a substantial amount of “external” support. In Almeida’s article, which focuses on social movement unionism, “external” allies are those beyond a labor union’s organizational boundaries (e.g., other labor associations, students, NGOs, churches). In two of the campaigns (a campaign against telecommunications privatization in El Salvador, and one against teachers’ pension reforms in Costa Rica), individuals directly

involved in the struggle provided the overwhelming bulk of protest participation. Both campaigns failed, as telecommunications privatization was pushed through the legislature, as were the pension reforms (although the unions did receive some concessions). In two other campaigns (a campaign against public health care privatization in El Salvador, and a campaign against telecommunications and electricity privatization in Costa Rica) protests were much more diverse and a majority of protest events included external allies.

Almeida suggests that the unions could have done more to involve external allies in the two unsuccessful campaigns, but also points out that the unique political contexts in which each campaign took place had major effects on protest strategies. For example, the Salvadoran government's telecommunications privatization legislation was introduced at the same time as numerous other neoliberal reforms. The labor sector and civil society were thus divided, as different unions focused their energies on specific proposals (at the time, many observers argued that the different campaigns could have united under a broader "consumer protection" platform, but that did not happen). Almeida also observes that the two campaigns that successfully prevented privatization occurred after the unsuccessful campaigns. He argues that the unsuccessful campaigns provided lessons for future ones, including raising awareness about the need to get organized.

Both of the countries Almeida examines are developing countries situated in the same geopolitical region, but that does not necessarily help explain the specifics of each policy issue, or the degree of support and opposition, either from the public or union members and activists. If one argues that political circumstances and social movement strategizing are the factors that explain success (or failure), that implies at least a comparable degree of latent support for or opposition to each policy proposal. Almeida offers public opinion polls to illustrate that a majority of El Salvadorans opposed the

telecommunications privatization and health care privatization. However, opposition to health care amongst the general public was much higher. Furthermore, it could be argued that health care was much more salient with the general population, and therefore they were more likely to protest and to indicate that their future voting behavior would be based largely on the government's action on that issue.

The very different nature of the two neoliberal reform proposals in Costa Rica calls into question whether the comparison is a useful one. Certainly, public education affects all (or nearly all) citizens, but pension reform for teachers directly affects only a relatively small percentage of the population. It appears the public was divided on this issue, with a small majority agreeing that the teachers' demands were justified. But again, even if one expresses agreement with a particular viewpoint, this does not mean that it is an especially salient issue for that person. Almeida observes that other protests failed to incorporate the teachers' movement into their own actions, but what does that tell us? We do not know if it was a failure of the different activists, or if it was due to ambivalence that the teachers' union could not have overcome, at least in such a short period of time.

Almeida's study is a very useful one and uses relevant evidence to argue that external allies are important to social movement success, and that the ability to successfully organize external allies into protest activities depends in part on the circumstances of the time. However, the attempt to provide a controlled study by focusing on a single region results in a study of protests directed against quite different policy proposals with different ramifications for different unions and for the general public. Thus, Almeida's arguments about the importance of different protest strategies and attempts to incorporate allies can only carry so much weight. Future research may want to break free from regional constraints and focus on protests aimed at similar policy proposals. Even with the comparison between two similar proposals in different countries (the

telecommunications privatization), public opinion was very different, with support for privatization much lower in Costa Rica, where it failed. It can be argued that this explains success or failure more powerfully than the nature of the protests.

Labor's Role in the Obama Era:

A Troublesome and Unreliable Ally?

Nelson Lichtenstein

With a perilous set of midterm elections on the horizon, it would be understandable if labor and its liberal allies just closed ranks with President Obama and the Democrats, downplayed any disappointment they might feel, and muted their critique of his often lukewarm liberalism. After all, if the Republicans take one or both houses of Congress, then the whole Obama presidency will be in danger.

As every good unionist knows, solidarity is a great thing, but in this case it is the wrong prescription for the American labor movement. Instead, the unions and other labor partisans should be difficult and demanding allies of our president. History shows that such a posture would generate the greatest political and organizational dividend, for labor as well as any insurgent group that seeks to transform American politics and policy. To show what I mean, let's take a look at two eras of labor and social movement success—the 1930s and the 1960s—in order to win a few insights that might be useful for our own times. As Mark Twain once wrote, "History never repeats itself, but sometimes it rhymes."

There are three points to be made about such times past. First, conservative movements and right-wing ideas actually grow more extreme in eras of liberal and labor reform. We know that is true today, but it was also true at other moments

of change or potential change in twentieth-century U.S. history. Second, when a Democratic administration is in power, the most potent and efficacious strategy for labor and its leadership is to be, and be seen as, a troublesome, even unreliable ally. And third, the labor movement needs to be, and be seen as, a social movement. This does not come without organizational costs. It is a dangerous strategy, but such a transformation is essential if anything resembling an organized labor movement is to survive.

We sometimes look at past moments of victory through rose-colored glasses, but neither the era of the New Deal nor that of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and early 1960s were times of uncontested liberalism. They were also times of mobilization, a renewal of ideas, and activism on the Right. The opponents of reform were not always out-of-touch reactionaries. They were often innovative and aggressive men and women who would later achieve power and position when the political winds tilted in their direction.

The Right grew in these eras not because of too much radicalism on the part of labor and civil rights activists, but because any great reform, no matter how carefully put forward, polarizes a society. The rise of labor in the 1930s created a kind of civil war even within the working class. It was mainly nonviolent, and it would later subside, but such polarities can be expected whenever many Americans, even some that one might expect to be allies, see change as a subversion of their religious or ideological worldview. In the 1930s that social and ideological civil war divided not just American parties, but also churches, factories, and many communities. Anti-labor and anti-FDR rhetoric was pervasive in the years of the Great Depression, even as the unions triumphed at Flint and Pittsburgh and in the mines and mills of countless smaller towns.

One of the great right-wing demagogues of that time was Father Charles Coughlin, a Catholic priest from Royal Oak, Michigan who pioneered the use of radio for sermons and political talk. He

was a brilliant speaker whose audience far exceeded, in comparative terms, the reach of Fox News and its most flamboyant pundits. Coughlin had been a supporter of FDR and labor in 1933 and 1934 because he hated the big banks, the big corporations, and the Depression itself. "Roosevelt or Ruin" was the slogan he deployed when FDR ran for president in 1932.

Indeed, Coughlin thought that Wall Street and the Communists were the twin evils of a secular Satanism subverting the virtuous citizens of the United States. And as Elizabeth Warren has reminded us in such compelling fashion, Americans really do mistrust the bankers and the speculators of that New York street, today as much as eighty years ago.

Father Coughlin broke with FDR when he realized that the New Deal would regulate Wall Street, not abolish it; and because Coughlin and some other conservative Catholics believed that the new, militant industrial unions, who deployed as organizers lots of socialists and Communists and other kinds of secularists, were stealing the loyalty of their own parishioners right out from under them. Indeed, it was the success of the UAW-CIO right in Coughlin's own Detroit that sent him into a frenzy of anti-labor, anti-Semitic, and anti-FDR invective. To Coughlin, the New Deal was a Jewish plot and the UAW a red front. Sinclair Lewis was thinking of people like Father Coughlin, as well as Huey Long, the roughshod governor of Louisiana, when he published in 1935 *It Can't Happen Here*, a novel which imagined a fascist dictatorship come to America.

Father Coughlin was eventually defeated and silenced when the very highest leaders of the Catholic Church realized that he was a grave liability. The Church did not want to force American Catholics, who were probably a majority of all the workers enrolled in the new unions during the later years of the Great Depression, to choose between their Catholic faith and the CIO and its New Deal allies. Cardinal Francis Spellman, the powerful, conservative New York bishop, eventually told

FDR and other federal officials that he would stand aside if the federal government cut off Coughlin's radio license.

The first point to remember from this tale is that liberal administrations and social movements are bound to face right-wing demagogues. To defeat that threat, labor and other progressive groups must go after their base. This is best done by mobilizing their own constituencies, so as to create an alternative structure of meaning and motion around which those on the fence or even deep within the enemy camp may rally. That is what the CIO did to Coughlin. The second point is that there was never an era of good feeling in American politics, nor for that matter an era when labor and its liberal allies could comfortably command the allegiance of a majority of the populace. They have always been under attack.

The next important point to remember is that the labor movement, as well as the civil rights movement, achieved their greatest influence when the Democratic administration in power perceived the leadership of these social movements as troublesome, unreliable, and unpredictable allies. Labor leaders like John L. Lewis of the Mineworkers, Philip Murray of the Steelworkers, and Walter Reuther of the Autoworkers were frequently seen by the White House as "going off the reservation," a phrase I first encountered in the archives at Hyde Park when I poured through the files of FDR's public policy staff.

In 1936 John L. Lewis took a half million dollars from the UMW treasury—real money in those days—and parceled it out to FDR's reelection effort, but on Labor Day 1937 Lewis denounced the president for trying just a few months before to remain neutral during the Little Steel strike, an industrial war that reached its bloody climax when ten demonstrators were shot to death by police outside of the Republic Steel Corporation on Chicago's South Side. Declaimed Lewis in his rich Shakespearian voice:

"Labor, like Israel, has many sorrows. Its women weep for their fallen and they lament for the

future of the children of the race. It ill behooves one who has supped at labor's table and who has been sheltered in labor's house to curse with equal fervor and fine impartiality both labor and its adversaries when they become locked in deadly embrace."

In 1940 John L. Lewis, by then president of the CIO, rejected FDR's bid for a third term and supported Republican Wendell Willkie, because he thought U.S. entry into the Second World War would lead to the same disastrous results for labor as involvement in the Great War twenty years before: right-wing reaction, strike-breaking, and the destruction of industrial unionism.

John L. Lewis was a difficult and sometimes vain individual. Did he win friends in the White House? Certainly not! Did he win respect for the labor movement and policies more to their liking? Yes, if only because FDR and his advisors were determined, on the eve of the Second World War, to ensure that labor would be an ally and that the influence of Lewis, and the politics he represented, would be effectively marginalized.

The same was true of Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights leadership in the early 1960s. Like the leaders of labor during the insurgent 1930s and 1940s, civil rights leaders were unreliable allies, because the movements they represented were multifaceted and in many respects uncontrollable. These ministers, students, and local activists were loyal first and foremost to the movement over which they tried to preside.

Although King's canonization today often obscures the real tensions that existed between his movement and the administrations of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, King, like John L. Lewis, was indeed a troublesome and unpredictable ally. When, in the late summer of 1964, LBJ asked King to suspend demonstrations during the fall campaign, King was inclined to go along, but he soon rejected the president's request because he simply did not have the power or even the moral authority to enforce such a suspension on a social movement then at flood

tide. King thereby cemented his own leadership and pushed the president to back with unprecedented vigor one of the nation's most radical pieces of legislation, the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which finally consigned a reactionary brand of states rights to the dustbin of American history.

One other example of this sort: just before May 1, 2006, Congressional allies of the Latino organizations and unions that were about to stage a massive "Day Without Immigrants" march advised organizers to hold off-or at least to have their march on a Saturday, not a workday, when the event would be less disruptive. But the organizers, a very loose-knit coalition, went ahead, and with magnificent results, which transformed a march into a general strike and helped solidify a Latino-labor alliance that did much to engender the massive vote for Barack Obama two years later.

And now to my final point. The labor movement wins when it is broad and inclusive, but the expansion comes with its own dangers. Today, given the dire straits in which the labor movement finds itself, those risks must be courted. We know about those risks and rewards from the experience of social movements in the recent past. The feminist movement provides a fitting parallel. It has transformed America—but who are the feminists, and how do you organize them? You don't. In the late 1960s and early 1970s when that movement took off, people simply announced that they were part of the women's liberation movement: there was no test, no membership card, no dues to pay, no line to follow.

The same was true of the labor movement in the first third of the twentieth century, before the codification of labor law and the creation of the administrative apparatus necessary to enforce it. Under those circumstances there was plenty of room for a labor movement to define itself in expansive fashion. Was it an immigrant rights organization which gave voice to Southern and Eastern Europeans recently stigmatized by the 1924 immigration restriction law; was it a

movement for industrial democracy, even socialism, in which middle class people could participate, and even become leaders; or was it a community mobilization in which women and all sorts of non-workers of that time could play major roles?

Those questions remain controversial. In the early 1970s when the feminist movement pushed at labor's door, many women unionists began to organize a group which eventually became the Coalition of Labor Union Women. But would unaffiliated pro-labor feminists be allowed to join? This would have added invaluable energy to the new labor-feminist alliance, but it would also have transformed CLUW into the kind of grouping that the labor leadership of that era might not entirely understand, much less control. So George Meany, who actually remembered similar conflicts stretching all the way back to the Women's Trade Union League in the 1920s, decreed that only existing union women could become part of CLUW. That organization was built, but it lost its links to the feminist Left.

It is therefore not enough for organized labor to broaden itself by welcoming new forces into its ranks. It must also adopt as its own the students and activists who are now on the outside looking in. It is from those unruly movements and initiatives that a new generation of activists will arise. In courting such individuals, labor faces the unpredictable and the untidy, because the AFL-CIO may well be held responsible for the actions and rhetoric of people it does not fully understand or control. But that is a risk that must be taken if we are to become a social movement once again.

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Evangelicals and Working-Class Politics

Mike Boyle

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<http://workingclassstudies.wordpress.com/>

According to the popular stereotype, evangelical Christians want little to do with working-class politics. Instead, we tend to imagine evangelicals as people who are either uninterested in politics or focused entirely on fighting the culture wars, rather than as people who care about issues like unemployment, inequality, and poverty. If the stereotype were accurate, that would be bad news for people hoping for policy changes that would benefit working-class Americans. Such changes only come about when the public puts pressure on governmental leaders, and evangelicals make up about one-third of the American public.

There are, however, good reasons to believe that this stereotype oversimplifies what is in fact a complicated topic. I'd like to review a few of those reasons here, including a survey of evangelical clergy that I conducted last year in Stark County, Ohio. Stark County, which is located near Cleveland, Akron, and Youngstown in Northeastern Ohio, is home to about 380,000 people who are spread across a diverse collection of cities, suburbs, and rural hamlets. For the better part of the 20th century, the three principal cities of Stark County--Canton, Massillon, and Alliance--were important manufacturing centers, particularly in steel and related heavy industries.

Over the course of the past several decades, however, Stark County has conformed to the postindustrial storyline of manufacturing job loss and deepening economic insecurity for the working class. By 2008, 27.9 percent of families in Canton were living below the poverty line, a

rate that is nearly three times the national average and also the highest among Ohio's big cities. In March of 2009, the Stark County job market drew national and even international attention when a whopping 835 people applied to fill a vacant custodial position at the Edison Junior High School in Perry Township.

Because Stark County voting patterns have resembled national ones for a long time, Stark has also earned a reputation as "a bellwether county in a bellwether state," making it a magnet to campaigning politicians, as well as a better-than-average spot to check the pulse of American opinion with a survey. Two hundred thirty-one clergy from the 553 congregations in Stark County filled out, at least in part, the questionnaire sent to them last year. Along with conventional questions about theology, membership, and so on, the survey gave respondents an open-ended opportunity to identify what they considered to be "the most serious issue facing residents of Stark County today." The responses to that question don't quite fit the stereotype.

Evangelical ministers are far more concerned with economic issues than prevailing stereotypes suggest. Ninety of the Protestant churches that answered this final question self-identified as "born-again" congregations--a very good indicator of evangelical belief. Eighty-two of these churches were predominantly white, while eight were predominantly African-American. Forty-two of the 90 "born-again" churches listed an economic problem of some sort as the most serious issue facing Stark County residents. Thirty out of these 42 identified the need for jobs as Stark County's number one issue. The remaining 12 churches identified poverty, food security, and child care, among other things.

Only 22 of the 90 born-again churches, however, identified a religious problem such as "absence of faith" or "spiritual complacency" as the most serious issue facing the county. Six more identified traditional "culture wars" issues such as family breakdown and declining morality.

Together, these 28 answers accounted for only 31 percent of the total, which is far less than what stereotypes about evangelicals would predict. In contrast, nearly 50 percent of the born-again churches--42 out of 90--placed an economic issue at the top of their list of concerns. Others identified crime-related issues, such as drugs and violence, or miscellaneous public issues such as racial prejudice and highway repair. A few responses were too ambiguous to categorize.

Examining these returns even more closely suggests important differences within the broad evangelical community, especially between fundamentalist and non-fundamentalist clergy. Though both embrace the core evangelical doctrines, fundamentalists tend to be more separatist, literalist, and less tolerant of doctrinal differences, even on secondary issues such as dress codes and alcohol consumption. Of the 64 clergy that self-identified as "born-again" but not "fundamentalist," 53 percent identified an economic issue as Stark County's number one concern. Meanwhile, only 31 percent of clergy that identified as both "born-again" and "fundamentalist" did so. It is common for opinion surveys to uncover a divide of this sort between fundamentalist and non-fundamentalist evangelical believers. This divide is rooted in the complex history of American Protestantism, rather than in the core religious doctrines that all evangelical traditions share.

The Stark County data are illuminating for what they tell us about evangelical clergy, but they may not reflect the views of the ordinary believer in the pew. For several decades, however, scholars have been tracking the opinions of ordinary evangelicals through surveys and polls. Although these studies have added a lot to our knowledge of evangelical opinion, they have not demonstrated a clear link between evangelical belief and economic attitudes. In fact, these studies are often inconsistent with one another. Many of them--perhaps even a small majority--do indicate that evangelicals tend to be slightly more conservative on economic issues than non-evangelicals. Others, however, find no significant difference

between evangelical and non-evangelical attitudes toward the economy. Some very good studies even show that evangelicals tend to be more liberal on economic issues than non-evangelical Americans. And to complicate the picture even more, some studies show that evangelicals in other countries are more liberal than their fellow believers in America.

In any event, data from Stark County and elsewhere indicate that many evangelicals are alive to the importance of economic issues in contemporary America. This fact is not enough to demonstrate that evangelicals will support specific policy proposals. What these results do suggest, however, is that support may exist among evangelicals for economic ideas that depart from the conservative to moderately conservative American mainstream. Making the most of these openings and building support for economic strategies that benefit working-class communities will, however, take political work. Both evangelical and non-evangelical conservatives undertook this kind of work for more than a generation, and it turned out to be pivotal in delivering electoral victories to Republicans from Ronald Reagan to George W. Bush and in driving the Democratic Party to the right.

Today, however, more and more evangelicals are working to convince their fellow believers that struggling on behalf of decent living standards for all people is part of what it means to be a faithful Christian. They are reinvigorating currents of evangelical protest that were once prominent in American life, as in the early labor movement and during the agrarian populist upsurge. These evangelicals--many of them young people--have been inspired by prominent believers such as John Perkins, Jim Wallis, Ron Sider, and Tony Campolo, as well as the Scriptures themselves. Already it is becoming evident that young evangelicals are more liberal on economic issues and less preoccupied with the culture wars than their parents and grandparents. Because evangelicals account for such a large segment of the public, we should be encouraged by these developments. They have the potential to affect

the course of future economic policy in ways that benefit all working-class Americans, regardless of their religious background.

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Organizing the Unemployed

Facing South, online Magazine of the Institute for Southern Studies

<http://www.southernstudies.org/2010/07/organizing-the-unemployed.html>

The federal jobs numbers released earlier this month showed that a whopping 14 million Americans are unemployed, with 6.8 million out of work now for more than 27 weeks.

The unemployment crisis has led to growing calls for the labor movement to take action to help the jobless -- by organizing them.

"We need the AFL-CIO, we need central labor councils that bring together different members to pool their resources and start organizing the unemployed," Bill Fletcher Jr. of the Center for Labor Renewal recently said in an interview with GRITtv.

The idea of organizing the jobless is not new: In 1894, populist politician Jacob Coxey of Ohio led unemployed workers in a protest march on Washington that came to be known as "Coxey's Army." The first significant protest march ever held in the nation's capital, it took place during the second year of a four-year economic depression that at the time was the worst the country had ever experienced. The marchers called on the government to create jobs through public works.

Later, during the Great Depression, militant left-wing labor organizations like the Workers

Alliance, the Unemployed Workers' Councils and the Unemployed Citizens' League mobilized out-of-work Americans to pressure state and local governments for jobs and benefits. According to one historical account:

“In cities like New York, Chicago, and Detroit, the Unemployed Councils made an immediate impact, staging large attention-getting demonstrations in the winter and spring of 1930 and in subsequent years building neighborhood based Councils that fought for public assistance and rallied neighbors to conduct rent strikes and resist evictions.”

And in 1932, a Roman Catholic priest from Pittsburgh named James Renshaw Cox led a march of 25,000 unemployed Pennsylvanians on Washington, calling on Congress to launch a public works program and increase the inheritance tax to 70%. The unprecedented mass demonstration -- dubbed “Cox's Army” -- spurred the founding of the Jobless Party and Cox's run for the presidency, though he eventually dropped out and gave his support to Democrat Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Those grassroots organizing efforts helped build political support for helping the unemployed, eventually culminating in President Roosevelt's New Deal.

Today, with the Great Recession dragging on, there are efforts underway once again to organize the jobless. Earlier this year, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers launched the Union of the Unemployed, or UCubed. Unemployed and underemployed workers can sign up at UCubed's website -- www.unionofunemployed.com -- and are then organized by ZIP code to advocate for legislation to help the jobless.

"We're trying to connect unemployed people with one another to eliminate the sense of isolation that comes with being unemployed," an IAM spokesman told *In These Times*, "and to give people the means to be activists."

In Indiana, the Unemployed and Anxiously Employed Workers Initiative (UAEWI) was formed in response to the 2008 financial crisis. It's been involved in efforts to give unemployed workers a greater voice in shaping job retraining programs and was part of a successful effort to prevent cuts in unemployment insurance benefits.

Meanwhile, organizing is underway for an Oct. 2 mass demonstration in Washington calling for more government job creation. Among the groups involved in the One Nation Working Together march are the AFL-CIO, SEIU and NAACP.

Fletcher says marching on Washington is the right thing to do -- but he questions whether it's enough. "What happens on Aug. 2? What happens on Sept. 2?" he asked. "Why aren't we talking about more localized actions where people are raising hell?"

World Wide Work

ICS is once again reprinting “World Wide Work,” the free bulletin of the American Labor Education Center, an independent nonprofit founded in 1979. Please encourage others to subscribe to the bulletin (for free), which they (and you) can do at TheWorkSite.org, a site that provides free, adaptable tools for grassroots education and organizing.

New and worth noting...

FILMS

Entre Nos. An immigrant from Colombia raised her two children alone in the U.S., supporting them by collecting cans from the city's garbage. Now, her daughter and another filmmaker have

collaborated to tell her story in an 82-minute tearjerker.

Frozen Dreams (centroixim66@hotmail.com). In 2007, 160 immigrant workers at a Del Monte food packing plant in Oregon were detained in a federal raid. Some of them tell their story in this 30-minute film, which also includes footage showing why immigrant workers come to the U.S. in the first place.

8: The Mormon Proposition. A former Mormon evangelist who is now a journalist directed this 78-minute documentary about how the Mormon Church drove the initiative campaign in California that took away the right of gays and lesbians to marry. The film says the Mormons plowed \$30 million into the campaign through front groups, while bringing in canvassers from Utah who were instructed not to wear white shirts and ties that would identify their affiliation. Interviewees include a gay descendant of one of the church's original founders.

Word is Out. This 2 hour and 15 minute film was originally issued in 1977 and has now been restored. It is believed to have been the first feature-length documentary about lesbian and gay identity, featuring moving, intimate interviews with 26 people of many different backgrounds. It provides a good history lesson, while provoking thoughts about what has and has not changed.

Obselidia. In this entertaining 97-minute feature, shot in L.A. and Death Valley, a librarian spends his off hours compiling an encyclopedia of obsolete things as he mourns the rapid disappearance of American cultural traditions. He also studies the deadly effects of climate change, which he learns may already be irreversible. After he interviews a silent movie theater projectionist for his book, the two strike up a friendship and help each other find joy and beauty in an increasingly troubled world.

Whiz Kids. Coming of age is a different experience for high school students engaged in serious scientific research and competing in a

prestigious national competition. This 82-minute film focuses on three – an immigrant from Pakistan, a first-generation Ecuadorian-American, and a student in Parkersburg, West Virginia, who researches a pollutant dumped in the Ohio River by the region's largest employer.

The Most Dangerous Man in America. Daniel Ellsberg risked life in prison to leak secret Pentagon documents showing the government's deception about the Vietnam War. This 94-minute documentary dramatically raises the question of why a few individuals go against the tide and challenge the powerful despite the likely personal cost.

BOOKS

The Crying Tree by Naseem Rakha (Broadway). In this masterfully written novel, a 15-year-old Oregon boy is killed at home by a 19-year-old intruder. As the legal system takes many years to process the case, the victim's mother believes that only the execution of the man who killed her son will bring her closure. Over time, she learns deeper truths about the crime, about herself, and about human connection.

Green Gone Wrong by Heather Rogers (Scribner). Many Americans feel that we are taking meaningful action about climate change by substituting cloth shopping bags for plastic ones or buying organic food. But really doing something requires joining together to win government action to control greenhouse gas emissions, develop and distribute alternative energy, invest in mass transit, encourage sustainable local food production, and address the global wealth gap.

Ending the U.S. War in Afghanistan by David Wildman and Phyllis Bennis (Olive Branch). In question and answer format, analysts from the United Methodist Church and the Institute of Policy Studies provide essential background on the real reasons for the Bush invasion of Afghanistan and the continuation of the war by President Obama. They also address the question

of how the U.S. can bring its involvement to an end.

13 Bankers by Simon Johnson and James Kwak (Pantheon). This book explains in convincing detail how Wall Street destroyed the economy, why elected officials and regulators in both the Bush and Obama administrations failed to take the necessary action, and what ought to be done now.

Colorblind by Tim Wise (City Lights). America needs not to “move beyond” race but to adopt innovative public policies that directly address it. Wise gives specific ideas of what those policies might be. Also worth reading is a recent blog entry by the same author, “Imagine if the Tea Party was Black.”

No One is Illegal by Justin Akers Chacon and Mike Davis (Haymarket). This timely and informative book makes clear that current immigration policy is deliberately designed to ensure a supply of cheap labor for corporate interests. It recounts the history of anti-immigrant violence and discrimination in the U.S. and describes the current movement for real immigration reform.

Seeds of Change by John Atlas (Vanderbilt University). The president of the National Housing Institute has written an impressively detailed, thoughtful, and honest history of ACORN, from its founding to its recent reorganization forced by right-wing attacks.

Share This! by Deanna Zandt (Berrett-Koehler). An experienced progressive activist shares her knowledge and insights about the potential and limits of social networking.

The Autobiography of an Execution by David R. Dow (Twelve). A Texas law professor who has handled appeals in more than a hundred death penalty cases provides a powerful personal account of the issues, contradictions, and stresses that his work involves.

A Shameful Business by James A. Gross (Cornell University). Politicians of various stripes occasionally find it useful to decry human rights abuses in other countries. This book details the human rights abuses built into the American workplace, where property rights are consistently valued over workers’ rights.

Spirit of Rebellion by Jarod Roll (University of Illinois). In Missouri in the 1930s, black and white farmers inspired by Pentecostal revivals joined forces to fight for economic justice.

When Chicken Soup Isn’t Enough edited by Suzanne Gordon (Cornell University). Seventy registered nurses, most of them in the U.S., tell briefly about times they have challenged obstacles to providing quality patient care. Most of these vignettes involve individual action such as confronting a doctor or administrator.

God and Sex: What the Bible Really Says by Michael Coogan (Twelve). Political activists often cite the Bible for validation of their views. But the book was written thousands of years ago by a number of different writers in a time when social customs were very different from our own, according to this dispassionate history by a professor of religious studies.

The Illuminated Landscape edited by Gary Noy and Rick Heide (Heyday). This varied anthology of essays, poetry, and stories focuses on the Sierra Nevada region of California from the earliest days of human habitation to the present. It includes work by local authors as well as excerpts from works by some of America’s most famous writers.

Victors’ Justice From Nuremberg to Baghdad by Danilo Zolo (Verso). An Italian academic argues that international law is not impartial but political, legitimizing imperialism and labeling resistance as terrorism.

MUSIC

Love Filling Station by Jesse Winchester (Appleseed). After a long career, Winchester still has a beautiful voice and a knack for fresh and tight lyrics and melodies.

Agriustrial by Legendary Shack Shakers (Colonel Knowledge/Thirty Tigers). Harsh hard rock, including percussion sounds recorded in a blacksmith’s forge, provide the backdrop for angry rants about hard times, past and present, in rural America.

Book Announcement

AFL-CIO’s Secret War Against Developing Country Workers: Solidarity or Sabotage? by Kim Scipes (forthcoming from Lexington Books, September 2010)

This book argues that, in secret and behind the backs of their members, AFL-CIO foreign policy leaders have been carrying out a reactionary foreign policy for more than 100 years, which Scipes describes as *labor imperialism*. This foreign policy is the product of debates in the 1880s over the future of the American labor movement, and was actively implemented by Samuel Gompers during the Mexican Revolution, *before* the Bolshevik Revolution. This foreign policy continues to date, despite intensifying efforts within the labor movement to end it.

The book revolves around three case studies: the 1973 coup in Chile, the struggle to remove a progressive Filipino union out of the largest copper mining complex in all of Asia in the late 1980s, and the 2002 coup attempt in Venezuela. These efforts have taken place under AFL-CIO presidents George Meany, Lane Kirkland and John Sweeney. Besides being a detailed empirical study that is closely documented, Scipes uses it to

challenge macrosociological theory, and proposes an alternative “model of society.”

About the author: Kim Scipes is a long-time labor activist and scholar who has been studying and writing on AFL-CIO foreign policy since 1983. A former printer and trade unionist, he did his MA in [third world] Development Studies at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, and his Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). He currently is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Purdue University North Central in Westville, Indiana, and serves as an elected Board Member of Research Committee 44 (Labor) of the International Sociological Association (2006-2010). Scipes has previously published *KMU: Building Genuine Trade Unionism in the Philippines, 1980-1994* (New Day Press, Quezon City, Metro Manila: 1996), and numerous articles on labor in the U.S. and globally. He can be reached at kscipes@pnc.edu.

