

Labor and Labor Movements Section Business meeting

Sunday, August 13, 2017 – Montreal, Quebec

Original minutes by Jeff Rothstein (Secretary/Treasurer)

- I. Statements by Chris Rhomberg (Outgoing Chair)
 - A. Thanks to outgoing Council members Nancy Plankey Videla and Jeff Sallaz
 - B. Welcome to new incoming Council members Belinda Lum (Chair-elect) and Jasmine Kerrissey
 - C. Turnover Chair to Sarah Swider

- II. Statements by Sarah Swider
 - A. Thanks outgoing Chair Chris Rhomberg

- III. Treasurer's Report (Jeffrey Rothstein)
 - A. \$2,652 balance at end of last quarter
 1. \$836 balance at end of 2016
 2. \$1816 infusions at the beginning of 2017
 - a. We receive from ASA: \$1000 plus \$2 for each member
 - B. 2017 Expenses thus far:
 1. \$1100 for reception
 2. \$355 for awards
 3. \$200 for web maintenance
 - C. 2017 upcoming expenses
 1. Reception beverages
 2. Work In Progress Blog
 - D. 2017 expenses will likely exceed 2017 income

- IV. Proposal for increasing dues (Chris Rhomberg)
 - A. Proposal is to raise dues for regular members from \$10 to \$12
 - B. Would raise about \$500 annually (section has 253 regular members)
 - C. Justifications
 1. Expenses are starting to exceed income (see budget report)
 2. Finance new initiatives (see statement circulated at meeting)
 3. Two-thirds of ASA Sections have dues over the minimum of \$10
 4. The most common dues is \$12
 - D. Logistics
 1. Start with discussion at membership meeting
 2. Goes on 2018 ballot for implementation in 2019
 - E. Comments/Questions
 1. Is it possible to offer a "sustaining membership" for those who want to contribute more?
 2. Should we raise dues higher than \$12?

- a. Discussion ensued why this might lead to loss of membership
 - 3. Could we raise extra money for offsite receptions?
 - F. Agreement is reached to put issue on the 2018 ballot
- V. Proposal to require awards recipients to be members of the section
- A. Should be if their work is relevant
 - B. Can join section at time they submit work for consideration
 - C. Motion passes by unanimous consent
- VI. Committees
- Sign up sheets passed for volunteers. The chairs and members are:
- A. Nominations: Chris Rhomberg
 - B. Mentoring: Belinda Lum
 - C. Membership: Chris Rhomberg, Jeff Rothstein (ex-officio)
 - D. Program: Sarah Swider
 - 1. indicates intention to prioritize gender & race representation on panels and in panel themes
 - 2. Other panel ideas offered by membership:
 - a. immigrant labor
 - b. citizenship & labor
 - c. the gig economy & contracting of labor
 - d. the Supreme Court's impending Janus decision and the end of agency fees
 - e. cosponsored panel?
 - f. 50th anniversary of the Memphis sanitation strike
 - e. organizing in the south
 - f. race & labor
 - g. recent strike waves
 - h. open call
 - i. coalitions between labor & other groups
 - j. mobilizations by groups not traditionally considered labor
 - E. Distinguished Scholarly Book Award: Joshua Bloom
 - F. Distinguished Scholarly Article Award: Penny Lewis
 - G. Distinguished Student Article Award: Jasmine Kerressey
- VII. Announcements
- A. Kim Scipes alerts everyone to Class, Race & Corporate Power online journal.
- VIII. Section Awards
- A. Distinguished Scholarly Book Award:

COMMITTEE: Jeff Sallaz (chair). Vanessa Ribas (2015 winner), Luke Elliott-Negri, Tom Juravich, Elena Shih, and Steve McKay

Chad Broughton's *Boom, Bust, Exodus: The Rust Belt, The Maquilas, and a Tale of Two Cities* is a riveting piece of empirical research, one that portrays firsthand the lives of everyday workers and citizens in today's globalized economy. As its Dickens-esque subtitle advertises, this is a study of two communities traveling very different trajectories: Galesburg, Illinois, where the closing of a Maytag factory eroded the American Dream, and Reynosa, Mexico, a boomtown since Maytag began building refrigerators there at a fraction of the cost of production in the United States. Broughton combines a sociological understanding of global capitalism with a journalist's eye for detail. His book is exceptional in that it shows how corporate decisions to invest in, and disinvest from, local communities have real consequences for workers, labor unions, families, and governments. In short, this book is an exemplar for how to do multi-sited ethnographic research with a serious eye and an empathetic ear.

Steve Viscelli's *Big Rig: Trucking and the Decline of the American Dream* takes us "behind the wheel" of America's trucking industry. We all understand how important is long-haul groundshipping for the working of the global economy. All of those freight containers arriving on the California coast must be transported to Kansas. But it is puzzling, Viscelli argues, why the work of truck-driving has, at the same time, become precarious and degraded. Drawing upon participant observation as a truck driver and in-depth interviewing, Viscelli reveals how truckers are increasingly fragmented and disempowered by what he calls the "contractor confidence game." Like Uber drivers, programmers, and many other workers in the new economy, truckers come to think of themselves as independent contractors. Though in fact, the rules of the game are rigged against them. The erosion of quality trucking jobs, Viscelli shows, runs parallel to the erosion of stable blue collar work in America generally.

DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARLY ARTICLE AWARD

COMMITTEE: Joshua Bloom (chair), Daniel J. Schneider, Daniel Jared Schneider, Adam Reich, Joel Stillerman, Peter Ikeler

Barry Eidlin. 2016. "Why is there No Labor Party in the United States? Political articulation and the Canadian Comparison, 1932 to 1948."

Eidlin tackles a longstanding question – why is there no labor party in the United States? He challenges prevailing "reflection" theories which hold that the success of labor parties reflects underlying structural conditions. He advances, instead, an articulation theory, building on a Gramscian theoretical tradition, in which structures still matter. But politics matter too, shaping coalitions in consequential ways.

To test his theory against rivals, Eidlin compares the U.S. to Canada which he shows was similar structurally on a range of key variables including urbanization, non-farm employment, and unionization. But the outcomes diverged, belying the structural "reflection" theories. In Canada, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, which gave rise to the New Democratic Party, succeeded in organizing an independent left party. While support for an independent left party was similar in both countries earlier, there was a sharp divergence in the 1930s. Why? Eidlin uses close counterfactual analysis of extensive archival data to explain this divergence. Eidlin shows that – facing similar farmer and labor insurgency in the 1930s – in the U.S. FDR brought

elements of labor and farmers into the New Deal coalition, whereas in Canada the mainstream political parties repressed and excluded insurgents. Thus FDR effectively coopted segments of labor as part of the Democratic Party, while excluding others, preventing the rise of a labor party in the U.S. Conversely, in Canada, widely excluded and repressed, labor and farmer insurgents formed an influential third party.

Eidlin's analysis is impressive on many fronts. Historically, he revisits a fundamental question about the shaping of American politics that scholars have grappled with for many decades, and advances a novel perspective likely to change the consensus. Methodologically, Eidlin's close counterfactual analysis and tight comparative design uses primarily qualitative evidence to rigorously analyze an important question in a manner that is not only revealing, but also quite difficult to challenge. Many qualitative historical sociologists are likely to emulate his approach. Perhaps Eidlin's most important contribution is theoretical. Eidlin once again exposes the limits of structuralism in explaining political process. But he does so in a way that is revealing rather than dismissive. He takes seriously the ways that enduring structures help form the identities and interests at the heart of labor politics. But his articulation theory, drawing on the Gramscian tradition, demonstrates the far reaching consequences of political coalition building upon that structural terrain.

DISTINGUISHED STUDENT PAPER AWARD

COMMITTEE: Penny Lewis (chair), Katherine Maich (2015 co-winner), Brian Halpin (2015 co-winner), Erin Hatton, Leslie Bunnage, Amanda Pullum.

The distinguished paper awards committee was very impressed by all of the submissions we read. Among this strong pool, the group unanimously selected Manuel Rosaldo's paper "Revolution in the Garbage Dump: The Political and Economic Foundations of the Colombian Recycler Movement, 1986-2011" as one of the strongest, and we are very pleased to award it the Distinguished Student Paper award for the ASA Labor Section in 2017.

Manuel's paper examines the recycler movement in Colombia across twenty five years, tracing how this group that would typically be viewed as "unorganizable" successfully navigated a changing economic, political, and technological landscape to create social power for itself. He used participant observation, interviews, and archival research to make sense of this successful social movement. A colleague wrote of the paper, "Rosaldo's contribution draws important conclusions the impact of broad political and economic changes on labor mobilization, and importantly, upends assumptions about the impact of neoliberalism. As Rosaldo states, "The rise of neoliberalism and the consolidation of democracy created political opportunities and threats that galvanized the recycler movement in ways that conventional perspectives on the informal economy would not lead us to expect." We are excited that such innovative and important work is being conducted by rising labor sociologists, and congratulate Manuel and the other students who submitted papers on their fine work.

Meeting Adjourned