

# In Critical Solidarity

Vol. 12, No. 5  
October 2014

## ASA Labor and Labor Movement Newsletter

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**Reminder: if you want to review a book,  
contribute an article, or post member news,  
please email [markdsherry@yahoo.com](mailto:markdsherry@yahoo.com)**

## Notes from the Chair - Shannon Gleeson



Thank you to everyone who helped make our 2014 ASA Labor and Labor Movements Section events a success. Our section is currently at 407 members, and we look forward to our 4 sessions next year in Chicago. I will be distributing section announcements twice monthly, and Mark coordinates our newsletter 6 times a year. Please do not be shy about sharing your publications, awards, job promotions, etc. We want to celebrate with you. These are both troubling and exciting times for the evolving labor movement. Today Secretary of Labor Perez announced a minimum wage hike of \$10.10 for federal contractors, just as state and local governments across the nation demand more, and the Fight for 15 continues. Meanwhile, the National Right to Work continues its offensive against organized labor and home health care workers, and conservative leaders slash pensions and health care plans for public sector employees. I am honored to be leading such a great group of scholars whose research I admire, and welcome any and all suggestions you have for me. Best Wishes for a productive academic year ahead, and I look forward to reading your work.

## Notes from the Newsletter Editor, Mark Sherry



I would like to thank Anna Neller, my new graduate assistant, who has done an enormous amount of work on this edition, writing articles as well as compiling the list of new books.

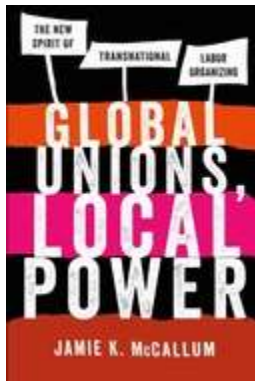
I'd also like to inform you that I am now the Newsletter Editor for the Labor Section of the Society of Social Problems. The other newsletter will have a slightly different focus: on teaching activities, social media, and on labor activism. It will be produced in the alternate months to this newsletter. That will enable me to report on disputes which occur between issues of this Newsletter. If you have any concerns about this, please let me know at [markdsherry@yahoo.com](mailto:markdsherry@yahoo.com)

## AWARDS FOR THE SECTION

### Statements of LLM Award Committees 2014

#### Labor and Labor Movements Distinguished Scholarly Book Award Winner

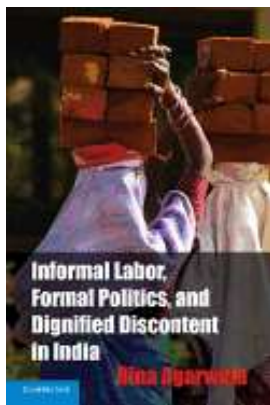
**Jamie K. McCallum**, *Global Unions, Local Power: The New Spirit of Transnational Labor Organizing*. Cornell University Press, 2013.



Jamie McCallum central argument, in *Global Unions, Local Power: The New Spirit of Transnational Labor Organizing*, is that “workers of the world can in fact unite, if not around common demands then around common employers” (17). McCallum examines the SEIU-led campaign against global property security services company, G4S, demonstrating that top-down global union federations and global framework agreements can, paradoxically, provide meaningful opportunities for grassroots organizing by disciplining large transnational corporations to play by union rules and thus impact the entire industry. This book, however, is not a Pollyannaish look at transnational unionism but a nuanced case study of SEIU’s transnational campaign with an in depth look at how local institutional and organizational context in the US, South Africa, and India, shape movement collaboration, conflict, and outcomes.

#### Honorable Mention

**Rina Agarwala**, *Informal Labor, Formal Politics, and the Dignified Discontent in India*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.



In this meticulously researched work, *Informal Labor, Formal Politics, and the Dignified Discontent in India*, Rina Agarwala examines how informal workers have been able to successfully organize under a neoliberal regime that has decimated unions and employment security. Drawing on over 300 interviews with informal workers, non-governmental organizations, union leaders, and government officials, Agarwala compares two

major groups of informal workers, bidi rollers and construction workers, and their movement organizations under very different political and institutional contexts of three cities/states. She finds that informal workers are most successful in states that have competitive elections and free market policies where workers can use their votes to demand social welfare benefits. That is, where informal workers have found innovative ways to organize as citizens at the neighborhood rather than as workers in the almost non-existent shop floor.

### **Labor and Labor Movements Distinguished Scholarly Article Award Winner**

Author: Erynn Masi De Casanova, University of Cincinnati

Article: "Embodied Inequality, The Experience of Domestic Work in Urban Ecuador" Published in: *Gender and Society*: Volume 27, April 2013

Drawing on the experiences of women domestic workers in urban Ecuador, this article explores the “embodied dimensions domestic work and shows how unequal relations between workers and employers manifest in and on the body –specifically through interactions around health, food, and clothing.” Dr. Masi De Casanova argues that, “paid domestic workers bodies are simultaneously resources that can be used (up) for work, and symbols interpreted according to local hierarchies of gender and class. The committee was particularly impressed with the theoretical and empirical dimensions of this work. The methods were strong and rigorous, and the subject matter was innovative –particularly as it relates to the topic of labor. While sociological research has recently turned its focus to body studies – labor remains an important social action that has only been minimally incorporated into this literature. Dr. Masi De Casanova’s ability to connect the ways in which gender and class are lived and connected to the ‘body as symbol’ was particularly compelling and continues to elucidate the continuing importance of gender and work.

### **Honorable Mention**

Author: Wasudha Bhatt, University of Texas at Austin

Article: The Little Brown Woman: Gender Discrimination in American Medicine  
Published: *Gender and Society*, October 2013

Utilizing data from 121 in-depth interviews of first and second generation Indian origin physicians, this article examines the incidence and nature of gender-based discrimination in American Medicine. Dr. Bhatt's work highlights the impact that gender and race have in shaping and influencing the trajectories of Indian women physicians. Her empirical work highlights the experiences of skilled migrant labor and the ways in which race, gender and power relations occur in U.S. workplaces. Members of the committee felt that this article provided an important analysis of 'gendered racism' that is often missing from labor literature that focuses heavily on class. This article also provides important interventions into literature on immigrant workers by focuses on the experiences of highly skilled immigrant workers . Bhatt's analysis shows that education does not decrease experiences of discrimination.

### **Labor and Labor Movements Best Graduate Paper Award Winner**

**Author: Julia Chuang, Brown University (formerly UCLA)**

#### **Paper: Urbanization Through Dispossession: Survival and Stratification in China's New Townships**

Drawing on ethnographic research carried out among labor brokers and construction workers in Central China, Dr. Chuang examines the ill-effects of dispossession because of urbanization following the New Socialist Countryside Campaign (NSCC) in 2006. Building on David Harvey, she argues that the implementation of rural urbanization enables a dual accumulation arrangement, "One occurring through the continuing subsidization of labor reproduction costs deep in the hinterland, and another occurring through the expropriation of land in peri-urban areas." Construction firms choose to employ landed workers from the hinterlands, where subsistence agriculture provides workers a social safety net and allows them to depend less on consistent wages. In turn, she points out that landless proletarianized workers in one of China's emerging townships drown in debt because of rising costs associated with city living. The committee was impressed with Dr. Chuang's analysis that shows how China's rural urbanization projects produce stratification due to the uneven consequences of accumulation by dispossession. Her ability to ground Marxist political economy with ethnographic detail provides new avenues for assessing what structurally at times seem as

antagonistic elements. In her case, she explains how the use of a landed, not landless, workforce helps cushion accumulation.

### **Photos of the awards**

**Taken by Mark Sherry**





## REFLECTIONS ON THE UNITE HERE! LOCAL 2 FUNCTION

**By Mark Sherry**

*Please note: these are the views of Mark Sherry and not Unite Here! Local 2*

I went to Unite Here! Local 2 around 5ish, for the 6.30 Labor Reception. I wanted to be there early for two reasons: to help set up, but also because I like being around unions and unionists, and I get a real sense of the nature of their organization just by being there. There was so much time left, after we'd set up the room, I got a private tour of the union building, and got told a lot of the union history – as well as some broader US labor history – by the organizers.

I spent time with Jessica Inouye, an Organizer with Unite Here! Local 2 who would later address the group, and also Tho T. Do, the Organizing Director. You might assume that a “union history” would start with facts and figures about when it was created and so on. But at Unite Here! Local 2, they didn't share anything like that with me.



*Here is a photo of Jessica Inouye talking to our group.*

I don't know when their union was officially started, or when they moved into the building where we met. But I do know about their struggles over getting their

members respect on the job, the health and safety issues they face (their members have one of the highest workplace injury rates of any occupation), their struggles to get decent medical and pension benefits, and their connections with many community groups. After spending an hour and a half with these union reps, I know the heart of the union... and that seems much more important to me.

These workers and their union have struggled a lot. There have been long strikes, and the other workers have supported their fellow unionists, financially, through the tough times. This sort of union history is never forgotten. There are various markers of it all around the building.



Getting union contracts (and better conditions, safer workplaces, retirement benefits, a voice at the workplace, recognition of seniority, and challenging abusive management practices) was a source of great pride for many of these workers. But these victories don't come easily – this is an active, activist union.

You can also tell this by the hundreds of placards, and a dozen megaphones, sitting in the back room.

Discussions by the organizers started, and stayed, focused on the members. They showed me photos, and told me tales of their important battles – including against Parc 55, where the ASA Convention was held. They'd won that battle, but had many more to go. It was the members who had driven these victories, and the organizers almost spoke in awe of their members' courage and convictions. They'd risked their jobs and their livelihoods for something bigger than themselves – getting a union contract so everyone at their workplace could have better benefits, retirement, job security, safer workplaces, recognition of seniority, and so on.

We talked about the way their workforce is racialized, gendered, often forced into invisible or semi-visible jobs, with back-breaking work. We talked about the ways in which those forms of power affected who was willing to publicly sign petitions that demand a fair process to decide on unionization.



Workers in both unionized and nonunionized hotels had told them they want the right to vote on whether to form a union or not – and they were prepared to put their name and their



photo on union materials to testify to this. This process had happened in the past at Parc 55, and is currently occurring at various non-union Hyatt hotels.

This is a small excerpt of a much, much larger photo with MANY more names and photos demanding the right to vote on whether to have a union. They put their names, photos, and signatures onto public documents to prove their support for unionization. The need for respect outweighs the fear of being blacklisted.



The organizers also emphasized the safety concerns of their workers to me. Workers who clean rooms (who are usually women of color) have some of the highest rates of back injuries. They kept saying “this is back-breaking work.”

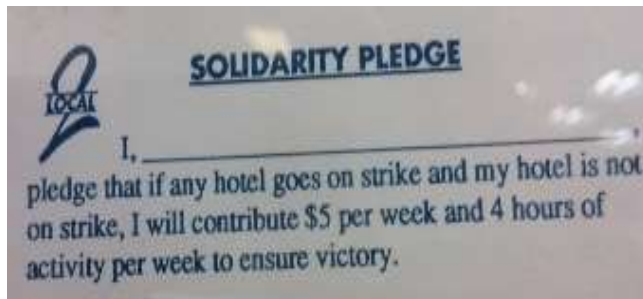
This is the kind of union history we need to know, and we need to teach – real stories about people who were injured on the job, people who had to fight to get their basic rights, or fair wages, or benefits. These stories, more than anything else at ASA, touched my heart.

They have ongoing boycott campaigns against some unions, and they also train people who want to be organizers how to organize an event in support of the boycott.

I got to see the photos of the Chesapeake workers, who are now fighting for union representation, and fair contracts. We talked about the courage it takes to publicly identify yourself as a union supporter in a broader climate of potential retaliation or intimidation. They showed me the names of all the people who’d publicly signed the petition for a fair process to let the workers decide on unionization. Each one of those workers is a labor hero – each one, I bet, has a story to tell. There is so much work to do in our field.

They gave me a private tour of the building. It is amazing. In Brisbane, Australia (one of the cities I lived in) there was a building we called “Old Trades Hall” – in the heart of the city, with decades of union struggles built into it. You could almost feel the solidarity in the walls, and you could certainly see it in the posters on the walls, the photos, the badges, and so on.

If you didn't get to see the rest of the union building, you missed out on a lot. There is a framed list of the names of heroes and villains from a 1994 dispute – and it warmed my heart to think 'labor never forgets' – and on the same wall there is a copy of the famous poem from Jack London about scabs.



I saw another card on the same wall called the "Solidarity Pledge" – and it is no coincidence that examples of solidarity are next to discussions of scabbery. Union members need to learn union principles; this was that basic organizing principle in action.

Another poster was entitled "Helping Each Other Out: Labor's Oldest Tradition". They had lots of information on the resources available to striking workers, including information and referral to community services, landlord and creditor mediation, groceries for strikers and their families, arranging deferred payments of utility bills, childcare information and referral, access to government agencies and services, and health and medical care.



Some of the material which was left on the tables for our members to view recognized the advocacy, courage, and commitment of Billie Feliciano, who was one of the rank and file leaders of the campaign against the Giants. She was described to me as "one of the strongest people you will ever meet." Billie had played a major role as a shop-floor organizer in their campaign against the San Francisco Giants, a baseball team. There are 800 concession workers at AT&T Park (where the Giants play). They stressed that while the team value had gone up by 40%, with team earnings rising \$57 million as a result of winning two World Series, and ticket prices were up 20% (not to mention beer prices going up to \$10.25), the workers had not received any wage increases from Centerplate, the Giants' subcontracted concessionaire.

That's one of the things I really liked about this union – the stories weren't of great (full time, paid) labor leaders leading workers in struggle – it was the honest toil and hard work of their members, and their reps, that led to each and every victory. Some of the cards with her photo were left out in the room for our members to look at, during the reception.



This union thrives on diversity. I LOVED the fact that the union provided all literature, contracts and newsletters in three languages: Chinese, Spanish and English. There were also a lot of graphic cartoons and illustrations for visual learners.

Many of the members love the union. Few unions I've visited receive gifts from their members; most members think that their union dues are a sufficient contribution to the Union. But at Unite Here! Local 2, there were gifts from members to the union, including an incredible Dragon which one member had made and they proudly displayed on their wall.



And they didn't get a chance to tell us in the meeting, but their union has done some AMAZING solidarity with the LGBTQ community in San Francisco. The union's philosophy is that everyone deserves respect, and inclusion. This philosophy has led them to partner with LGBTQ activists in San Francisco around issues of equality, respect, and rights. One of the most amazing things



about this partnership is the "Sleep with the Right People" campaign. This campaign encourages people to stay at hotels which have union contracts, and are strongly committed to nondiscrimination against the LGBTQ community. Another sign in the Union Hall simply states "Love Unites."

In fact, Unite Here! Local 2 has a long history of expressing solidarity with many people, including union members, other workers in struggle, immigrant groups, community groups, and even religious groups. Immigration reform is a big issue for their union, and they want an end to the attacks on undocumented workers.



There is a picture on the wall in support of health workers, which talks about putting patients before profits.

Another picture is of Cesar Chavez. Yet another had pictures of women of color who I personally didn't recognize, but below their photo was the caption "THESE LIVES... precious beyond

all abundance this valley heaps on its holders."

As I'm sure all of you know, there are thousands of homeless people in San Francisco. What you might not know, however, is that a church leader down the street from Local 2 not only supported them, but fought long and hard for free and open access, 24 hours a day, to his church, so that homeless people could sleep there if they wished. There is a photo of this religious leader at a Unite Here! Local 2 Event on the wall.



Another solidarity action which is represented on the wall is the role of Local 2 in mobilizing against evictions in Manilatown in San Francisco in 2000, Manilatown is an area filled with Asian workers who have jobs like day laborers, dishwashers, and other occupations which are stereotypically designated as suitable for Asian people.



Throughout our event, Tho T. Do, Local 2's Organizing Director, worked away in her office. She is a very modest and unassuming woman. But any story about this Local would be completely remiss if it didn't recognize her stature within the labor movement. One person described her to me as "the Mayor of San Francisco" – she is an amazing, committed, long-term union activist who has led many

victories for the union's members.

She's not one of those union leaders that boast of their own achievements, but the members recognize it – as shown by the drawing on the left which presents her towering over the City.

There is an ongoing boycott of certain hotels by Unite Here! Local 2. Please do not patronize these places: Hyatt Fisherman's Wharf, 555 North Point St, San Francisco, CA 94133 and Le Meridien San Francisco, 333 Battery Street, San Francisco, CA 94111. Workers at the Hyatt Fisherman's Wharf were the first among 15 non-unionized Hyatt workplaces to demand a fair process to decide on union representation. The Hyatt at Fisherman's Wharf is owned by Chesapeake Lodgings Trust, a real estate company.



In one way or another, everyone in this section must have considered the issue of corporate greed at some stage. This is particularly the case for this union, where sole proprietors who owned hotels in the past have been bought out by major international conglomerates. This is an area Unite Here! addresses directly. Corporate greed is the cause of their poor working conditions, they believe.

### ***Fundraising:***

Members of our division donated tips alongside their drinks, which were then passed on to Local 2. We raised \$117.12 to support their cause.

### ***Contact Unite Here! Local 2***

If you are interested in learning more about Unite Here! Local 2, their website is

<http://www.unitehere2.org/>





# LABOR NEWS

## AMAZON WORKERS STRIKE IN GERMANY

**By Anna Neller, University of Toledo, Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology**

Second to the US, Germany is Amazon.com's (AMZN) largest market. Yet although Germany may be a major consumer of the Seattle based online retailer, much labor debate prevails amongst the German workers and Amazon.

In fact, for over a year, German Amazon workers have orchestrated walkouts demanding that the online company acknowledges industrywide labor agreements. Despite these relentless striking tactics, little improvements for the workers have materialized — such as their desires for collective bargaining and higher wages.

However, now with the newly founded support and collaboration of Germany's largest union, workers have dramatically increased their labor strikes. According to the Union, thus far the company's methods of handling workers —both on collective and individual levels —has negatively impacted employees in an assortment of ways: people not receiving adequate breaks, increased sick rates, and workers maintaining short term contracts.

Ultimately, the labor dispute showcases the clashes in business approaches. Amazon rigidly adheres to cost flexible methods — whereas Germany sticks to their classic labor model which surfaced in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Union is demanding that German workers be categorized as 'retail' opposed to 'logistics' employees in order to validate the need for higher wages. The expansion of the strike began September 22, 2014.

### **Update**

After several days, German Amazon workers have ended their strike that called for higher pay and improved working conditions. Though it has not been confirmed, it is believed the company was anxious of the strike affecting deliveries — particularly during the peak holiday season.



Despite the end of the strike, it has not yet been revealed if workers and the online retailer have or will reach a labor agreement in the near future.

### **For further information**

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-09-24/amazon-german-workers-expand-strikes-amid-labor-standoff.html>.

[http://www.nasdaq.com/article/amazon-workers-end-strike-in-germany-over-wage-dispute-analyst-blog-cm396412?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+nasdaq%2Fsymbols+\(Articles+by+Symbol\)](http://www.nasdaq.com/article/amazon-workers-end-strike-in-germany-over-wage-dispute-analyst-blog-cm396412?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+nasdaq%2Fsymbols+(Articles+by+Symbol))

## **HYUNDAI STRIKES IN SEOUL**

**By Anna Neller, University of Toledo, Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology.**

Hyundai Motor Co. auto workers were expecting to reach a much anticipated wage deal agreement with the company by the end of this week. However, an unexpected turn of events has complicated industrial negotiations.

Just last week, the Hyundai-led group — which includes sister organizations Kia-Motors and Hyundai Mobis Co. — presented a \$ 10 billion bid for land located in Seoul. The company's primary motives for purchasing such land include the plans to house a headquarters and to construct both a hotel and theme park complex. Hence, the surprise land deal complicates the negotiations between autoworkers and the company.

Consequently, 47,000 union workers in South Korea have resumed their strike for higher earnings. Wednesday marks the second day of their strike. Additionally, Kia's workers have initiated a partial strike which also began Wednesday.

The autoworkers current, relentless endeavors of demanding higher earnings, is not a recent tactic employed by Hyundai workers. In fact, Hyundai, the world's fifth-biggest automaker and its affiliate Kia, has experienced strikes in all, except four years, of the union's 27-year history.

Since July, union advocates and Hyundai motor have been discussing the dynamics of increasing wages. According to the company, higher wages for workers equates to increased labor expenses.

Hyundai domestic workers earn an average of \$90,419 annually, but this does reflect the mean income for the company's executives. .

In hopes of influencing businesses to adjust current strategies for wage calculations, last year the country's Supreme Court ruled that it is essential that regular bonuses be included as base wages and further used to compute overtime allowances and other benefits.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/r-hyundai-motor-land-bid-sparks-strikes-complicates-labor-talks-2014-9>

### **Update:**

The strike ended on 10/2 after a narrow vote in favor of an agreement negotiated between the company and union officials.

<http://www.autonews.com/article/20141002/OEM01/141009942/hyundai-motor-workers-approve-2014-wage-pact-end-strikes>

## **ZODIAC SEATS STRIKE IN GAINSEVILLE TEXAS**

**By Justin Armstrong, University of Toledo**

In Gainesville, Texas, workers have approved a strike against Zodiac Seats U.S., LLC. Two months of negotiations with Cooke County's largest employer, a manufacturer of airline seats, ended on September 21 with the expiration of a three year contract and members voting 374 – 24 in favor of the strike motion. Several hundred workers joined in solidarity, lining the road leading to the factory.

Teamsters Local 767 Vice President Terry Johnson, who is in charge of negotiations, cited a general lack of respect for employees as having damaged workplace morale. Improvements to grievance arbitration and permanent work schedules are other important concerns, as well as the union's claims Zodiac is not enforcing seniority rights and taking away overtime compensation. This is the

second time in nine years there has been a strike at the facility over similar matters and workers say they are willing to continue as long as it takes for these issues to be resolved. In a statement from Zodiac, they have instituted a business continuity plan in order to fulfill their obligations to customers and remain open to continuing negotiations on a contract which benefits employees.

For more information, the following links have been provided:

<http://www.kxii.com/home/headlines/Gainesville-plant-workers-go-on-strike-276491741.html>

<http://www.kten.com/story/26611248/worker-strike-in-cooke-county>

[http://www.gainesvilleregister.com/article\\_fd42c886-43f6-11e4-bb33-0bd02ed0b0a1.html?mode=jqm](http://www.gainesvilleregister.com/article_fd42c886-43f6-11e4-bb33-0bd02ed0b0a1.html?mode=jqm)

<http://www.kten.com/story/26488373/workers-at-huge-gainesville-plant-vote-to-authorize-strike-at-union-meeting>

## **MINIMUM WAGE RAISE IN NYC**

**By Mark Sherry**

In a victory for those who have been fighting for a higher minimum wage, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio's signed an executive order that will raise wages for thousands of New Yorkers. The order expands a 2012 "living wage" law that previously applied to only 1,200 New York jobs and extends it to 18,000 workers over the next five years, and increases the amount they must be paid under the law — up to \$13.13 an hour for some workers.

Meanwhile, other unionists around the country are still striving for a \$15/hour minimum.

## THUNDERCLAP – OCTOBER 7

*(Reprinted from Labourstart)*

To help raise awareness of the problem of precarious work, IndustriALL Global Union has launched a Thunderclap for the World Day for Decent Work on 7 October.

*A Thunder-what?* I'm guessing you've never heard of Thunderclap, so here's the official explanation:

**Thunderclap is the first-ever crowdspeaking platform that helps people be heard by saying something together. It allows a single message to be mass-shared, flash mob-style, so it rises above the noise of your social networks. By boosting the signal at the same time, Thunderclap helps a single person create action and change like never before.**

Is that clear? Maybe not. Thunderclap allows us to allow send out the same message on the same day and at the same time, automatically, to our friends and followers on social networks including Facebook and Twitter. IndustriALL Global Union wants trade unionists and trade unions to sign up to their Thunderclap message on precarious work. The message is due to go out on 7 October, the World Day for Decent Work.

Their message reads: *"STOP Precarious Work! Defend your rights to a secure job. Join the global action on 7 October"*. You can support this campaign by clicking here:

<https://www.thunderclap.it/projects/16472-stop-precarious-work> )

If you've never done this sort of thing before, you'll see that you need to be logged into Facebook, Twitter or Tumblr (ideally, all three). And you'll need to give the Thunderclap app permission to send out the IndustriALL message to your friends and followers at a specified day and time. IndustriALL needs at least 250 of us to agree to go along with this. Otherwise, the Thunderclap won't happen.

Among those who've already signed up are the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the Trades Union Congress (UK), and LabourStart.

## **DEATH OF MARIA FERNANDES**

**By Mark Sherry**

Maria Fernandes, who worked three part time jobs at Dunkin Donuts, died on 25 August while she was taking a nap between shifts. She found it easier to sleep in her car between shifts – but on that fateful day, she died of carbon monoxide poisoning and fumes from an overturned gas can. Maria was found dead in her car eight hours later.

A report in the Guardian on 30 September placed Maria Fernandes' death in the broader context of the lack of power of people who do part-time work:

Fernandes' death highlights the difficulties of part-time workers: their struggle for hours, which can get so intense that they must lie about their other jobs or pretend they don't have children; how uninformed they are about the laws that govern their schedules; how their schedules can be used by managers to punish them.

Maria Fernandes was described by her bosses as an ideal worker, and she was working three jobs to make ends meet because they didn't give her full-time work. Her story should not be forgotten, as the labor movement fights for better wages, working conditions, and full-time work instead of part-time jobs that kill workers.

**For further information:**

<http://www.theguardian.com/money/2014/sep/30/maria-fernandes-dunkin-donuts-part-time-work-hours-schedule-crisis>

## **LA HOTEL WORKERS WIN MINIMUM WAGE RISE**

**By Mark Sherry**

Hotels in Los Angeles will soon be required to pay at least \$15.37 an hour to their workers — one of the highest minimum-wage requirements in the country – after a coalition of labor and community groups ran a campaign to pressure City Council to make this decision. The City Council voted 12 to 3 in favor of this wage rise on Wednesday September 23, imposing the higher wage on large hotels (those with over 300 rooms). Next year, it will expand to hotels with over 150 rooms. This

was a huge victory to a coalition that included various labor unions, the ACLU of Southern California, and supportive community groups. Next year,

## **REPLACEMENT WORKERS JOIN STRIKE**

**By Mark Sherry**

“Scabs”, “strike-breakers” or “replacement workers” – these are three of the words that are used to represent people who cross the picket line when others are on strike. Almost always, labor positions them as the enemies of the workers. Which is why recent events at Golan's Moving and Storage in Chicago is so unusual. Five of these workers walked off the job and joined the strike. The strike is about unfair labor practices, wage increases, health insurance and more. For further information, see <http://www.progressillinois.com/news/content/2014/09/24/golans-replacement-workers-join-strike>

## **SHAHS OF SUNSET, BRAVO TV LABOR PROTEST**

**By Mark Sherry**

Ryan Seacrest Productions and Bravo Media announced last Friday they were dismissing the editorial crew of “Shahs of Sunset.” These workers were trying to negotiate an IATSE union contract. The post-production and production employees for this show have been on strike since September 10. For more information, see <http://www.nycclc.org/event/unfair-labor-practice-protest-bravo-tv-oct-02-2014>

## **STRIKE AT BLUEGRASS STATION, LEXINGTON**

**By Mark Sherry**

On Tuesday Sept. 30, about 170 workeres at Bluegrass Station in Lexington went on strike. The facility provides supplies for the US Army Special Forces. Workers began picketing on Wednesday. Workers were asked to take a 30-50% pay cut, and Bob Wood, spokesman for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, said the strike was over unfair labor conditions. Workers are being asked to agree to being reclassified to a lower grade. For further information, see <http://www.kentucky.com/2014/10/01/3457538/workers-go-on-strike-at-bluegrass.html>

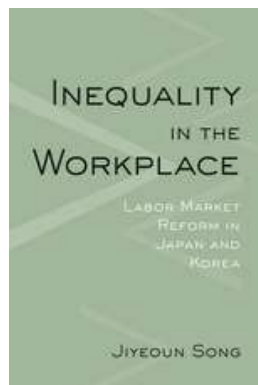


## LINKS TO MORE STORIES

- **Ban Sought on children working on tobacco farms**  
<http://www.abcfoxmontana.com/story/26607276/ban-sought-on-children-working-on-tobacco-farms>
- **Op-ed: The Long, Powerful History Between Labor and LGBT Activists**  
<http://www.advocate.com/commentary/2014/09/22/op-ed-long-powerful-history-between-labor-and-lgbt-activists>
- **Latino workers dying at higher rate in job related accidents**  
[http://www.salon.com/2014/09/27/report\\_latino\\_workers\\_dying\\_at\\_higher\\_rates\\_in\\_job\\_related\\_accidents\\_partner/](http://www.salon.com/2014/09/27/report_latino_workers_dying_at_higher_rates_in_job_related_accidents_partner/)
- **Pro-Union Burger King Worker Disciplined For Poor Pickle Placement**  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/01/burger-king-workers-were-n\\_5914526.html?utm\\_hp\\_ref=tw](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/01/burger-king-workers-were-n_5914526.html?utm_hp_ref=tw)
- **More hurdles for home care workers**  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/02/opinion/more-hurdles-for-home-care-unions.html?emc=edit\\_tnt\\_20141001&nid=1647429&ntemail0=y&r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/02/opinion/more-hurdles-for-home-care-unions.html?emc=edit_tnt_20141001&nid=1647429&ntemail0=y&r=0)
- **EEOC Sues Oran Safety Glass for Pregnancy Discrimination**  
<http://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/eecoc-sues-oran-safety-glass-for-pregnanc-88249/>
- **Seattle: Black Workers Sue Tunnel Contractors Alleging Discrimination** <http://www.theskanner.com/news/northwest/21883-black-workers-sue-tunnel-contractors-alleging-discrimination>
- **Black women profiled as Prostitutes in NYC**  
<http://reason.com/archives/2014/10/01/nypd-profiles-sex-workers-too>
- **Wages up for black men, down for black women**  
<http://michronicleonline.com/2014/10/01/wages-up-for-black-men-down-for-black-women>

# NEW BOOKS

Compiled by Anna Neller, University of Toledo



***Inequality in the Workplace: Labor Market and Reform in Japan and Korea.* Song, J. (2014). Ithaca: Cornell University.**

*Publisher's abstract:*

The past several decades have seen widespread reform of labor markets across advanced industrial countries, but most of the existing research on job security, wage bargaining, and social protection is based on the experience of the United States and Western Europe. In *Inequality in the Workplace*, Jiyeoun Song focuses on South Korea and Japan, which have advanced labor market reform and confronted the rapid rise of a split in labor markets between protected regular workers and underprotected and underpaid nonregular workers. The two countries have implemented very different strategies in response to the pressure to increase labor market flexibility during economic downturns. Japanese policy makers, Song finds, have relaxed the rules and regulations governing employment and working conditions for part-time, temporary, and fixed-term contract employees while retaining extensive protections for full-time permanent workers. In Korea, by contrast, politicians have weakened employment protections for all categories of workers.

In her comprehensive survey of the politics of labor market reform in East Asia, Song argues that institutional features of the labor market shape the national trajectory of reform. More specifically, she shows how the institutional characteristics of the employment protection system and industrial relations, including the size and strength of labor unions, determine the choice between liberalization for the nonregular workforce and liberalization for all as well as the degree of labor market inequality in the process of reform.

***WOULD YOU LIKE TO REVIEW THIS BOOK?***

***IT IS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW.***



***The Next Crash: How Short Term Profit Seeking Trumps Airline Safety.* Fraher, A. (2014). Ithaca: Cornell University.**

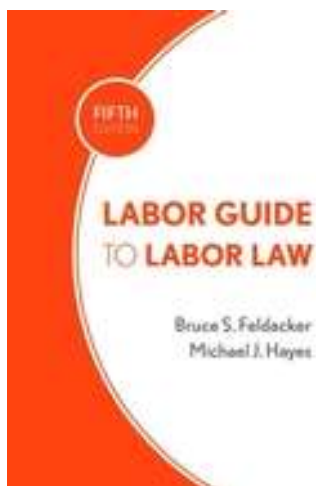
***Publisher's abstract:***

If you are one of over 700 million passengers who will fly in America this year, you need to read this book. *The Next Crash* offers a shocking perspective on the aviation industry by a former United Airlines pilot. Weaving insider knowledge with hundreds of employee interviews, Amy L. Fraher uncovers the story airline executives and government regulators would rather not tell. While the FAA claims that this is the "Golden Age of Safety," and other aviation researchers assure us the chance of dying in an airline accident is infinitesimal, *The Next Crash* reports that 70 percent of commercial pilots believe a major airline accident will happen soon. Who should we believe? As one captain explained, "Everybody wants their \$99 ticket," but "you don't get [Captain] Sully for ninety-nine bucks"

Drawing parallels between the 2008 financial industry implosion and the post-9/11 airline industry, *The Next Crash* explains how aviation industry risk management processes have not kept pace with a rapidly changing environment. To stay safe the system increasingly relies on the experience and professionalism of airline employees who are already stressed, fatigued, and working more while earning less. As one copilot reported, employees are so distracted "it's almost a miracle that there wasn't bent metal and dead people" at his airline. Although opinions like this are pervasive, for reasons discussed in this book, employees' issues do not concern the right people—namely airline executives, aviation industry regulators, politicians, watchdog groups, or even the flying public—in the right way often enough. In contrast to popular notions that airliner accidents are a thing of the past, Fraher makes clear America is entering a period of unprecedented aviation risk.

***WOULD YOU LIKE TO REVIEW THIS BOOK?***

***IT IS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW***



***Labor Guide to Labor Law. Feldacker, B., and Hayes, M. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.)(2014). Ithaca: Cornell University.***

*Publisher's abstract:*

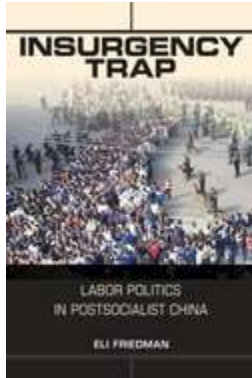
*Labor Guide to Labor Law* is a comprehensive survey of labor law in the private sector, written from the labor perspective for labor relations students and for unions and their members. This thoroughly revised and updated fifth edition covers new statutes, current issues, and the latest developments in labor and employment law.

The text emphasizes issues of greatest importance to unions and employees. Where the law permits a union to make certain tactical choices, those choices are pointed out. Material is included on internal union matters that tend to be ignored in management texts. Bruce S. Feldacker and Michael J. Hayes cover applicable labor law principles from a union's initial organizing campaign to the mature bargaining relationship, including such subjects as the employee right to engage in protected concerted activity, the duty to bargain, labor arbitration, the use of strikes, picketing and other economic weapons in resolving a labor dispute, the duty of fair representation, internal union regulation, and employment discrimination.

This book is also a useful reference and review for full-time union officers and representatives who have a working knowledge of labor law but wish to brush up on certain points as needed in their work. Both authors have extensive experience in the construction field, and they have been careful to include material on those aspects of labor law that are unique to that field.

***WOULD YOU LIKE TO REVIEW THIS BOOK?***

***IT IS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW.***



***Insurgency Trap: Labor Politics in Postsocialist China.***  
**Freidman, E. (2014). Ithaca: Cornell University.**

*Publisher's abstract:*

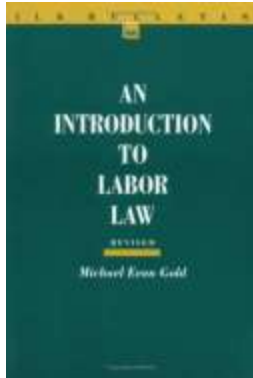
During the first decade of the twenty-first century, worker resistance in China increased rapidly despite the fact that certain segments of the state began moving in a pro-labor direction. In explaining this, Eli Friedman argues that the Chinese state has become hemmed in by an “insurgency trap” of its own devising and is thus unable to tame expansive worker unrest.

Labor conflict in the process of capitalist industrialization is certainly not unique to China and indeed has appeared in a wide array of countries around the world. What is distinct in China, however, is the combination of postsocialist politics with rapid capitalist development.

Other countries undergoing capitalist industrialization have incorporated relatively independent unions to tame labor conflict and channel insurgent workers into legal and rationalized modes of contention. In contrast, the Chinese state only allows for one union federation, the All China Federation of Trade Unions, over which it maintains tight control. Official unions have been unable to win recognition from workers, and wildcat strikes and other forms of disruption continue to be the most effective means for addressing workplace grievances. In support of this argument, Friedman offers evidence from Guangdong and Zhejiang provinces, where unions are experimenting with new initiatives, leadership models, and organizational forms.

***WOULD YOU LIKE TO REVIEW THIS BOOK?***

***IT IS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW.***



***An Introduction to Labor Law. Gold, M. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) (2014). Ithaca: Cornell University.***

*Publisher's abstract:*

*An Introduction to Labor Law* is a useful and course-tested primer that explains the basic principles of the federal law regulating the relationship of employers to labor unions. In this updated third edition, which features a new introduction,

Michael Evan Gold discusses the law that applies to union organizing and representation elections, the duty to bargain in good faith, economic weapons such as strikes and lockouts, and the enforcement of collective bargaining agreements. Gold describes the structure and functions of the National Labor Relations Board and of the federal courts in regard to labor cases and also presents a number of legal issues presently in contention between labor and management.

***WOULD YOU LIKE TO REVIEW THIS BOOK?***

***IT IS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW.***



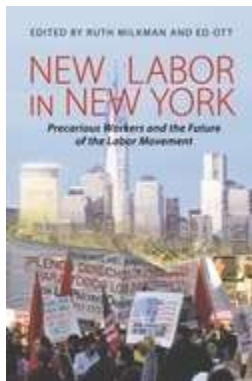
***Collective Bargaining under Duress: Case Studies of Major North American Industries Edited by Howard R. Stanger, Paul F. Clark, and Ann C. Frost Ithaca: Cornell University.***

*Publisher's description:*

The Great Recession that began in 2007 was marked by high rates of unemployment, the near collapse of the banking sector, and the bankruptcy of a host of venerable firms. The economy has only slowly recovered over the intervening years. Throughout this time, the labor movement has faced numerous challenges; among them declining union membership, lackluster organizing performance, and difficulties at the bargaining table. Collective bargaining came under especially severe pressure in both private and public sectors. Employers were now more aggressive than in the 1980s, and unions were expected to concede with no promises of anything in return.



Collective Bargaining under Duress highlights the recent state of collective bargaining in eight different industries across both the private and public sectors. The contributors document the struggles common throughout in new organizing, securing viable collective agreements for members after winning election, and protecting earlier hard-won gains in the face of increasingly aggressive employer opposition.



***New Labor in New York: Precarious Workers and the Future of the Labor Movement.* Milkman, R. and Ott, E. (Eds). (2014). Ithaca: Cornell University.**

*Publisher's abstract:*

New York City boasts a higher rate of unionization than any other major U.S. city—roughly double the national average—but the city's unions have suffered steady and relentless decline, especially in the private sector. With higher levels of income inequality than any other large city in the nation, New York today is home to a large and growing "precariat": workers with little or no employment security who are often excluded from the basic legal protections that unions struggled for and won in the twentieth century.

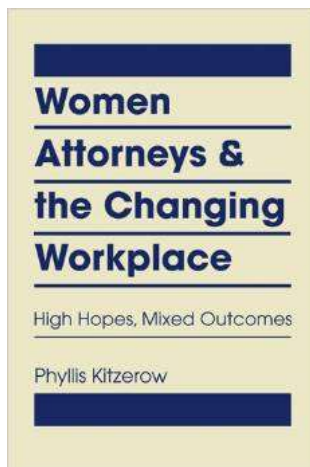
Community-based organizations and worker centers have developed the most promising approach to organizing the new precariat and to addressing the crisis facing the labor movement. Home to some of the nation's very first worker centers, New York City today has the single largest concentration of these organizations in the United States, yet until now no one has documented their efforts.

*New Labor in New York* includes thirteen fine-grained case studies of recent campaigns by worker centers and unions, each of which is based on original research and participant observation. Some of the campaigns documented here involve taxi drivers, street vendors, and domestic workers, as well as middle-strata freelancers, all of whom are excluded from basic employment laws. Other cases focus on supermarket, retail, and restaurant workers, who are nominally covered by such laws but who often experience wage theft and other legal violations; still

other campaigns are not restricted to a single occupation or industry. This book offers a richly detailed portrait of the new labor movement in New York City, as well as several recent efforts to expand that movement from the local to the national scale.

***WOULD YOU LIKE TO REVIEW THIS BOOK?***

***IT IS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW.***



***Women Attorneys and the Changing Workplace: High Hopes, Mixed Outcomes, Phyllis Kitzerow, (2014)  
Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner Publishers.***

A half-century ago, women comprised only a tiny fraction of practicing attorneys. Today, nearly half of law school graduates are female. Phyllis Kitzerow explores the experiences of women in the legal profession over the past fifty years, charting the sometimes surprising impact of shifting social norms on pathways to professional and personal success. Kitzerow contrasts the experiences of women across generations, showing how the backgrounds and expectations of each cohort—from the pioneers of the 1960s to women starting out today—have played out in the evolving legal profession. Her analysis offers important lessons on a range of contentious work-related issues, on the meanings of success, and on the ways that individuals make the best of the options available to them.

***WOULD YOU LIKE TO REVIEW THIS BOOK?***

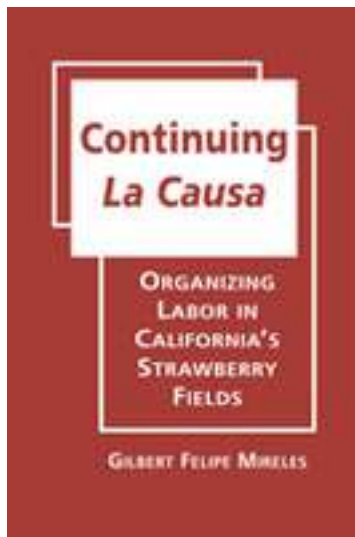
***IT IS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW.***

***If you are interested in reviewing one of the books listed here,***

***Or another book on labor and labor movements,***

***Please email [markdsherry@yahoo.com](mailto:markdsherry@yahoo.com)***

***Graduate students: this is a great opportunity for you!***



***Continuing La Causa: Organizing Labor in California's Strawberry Fields,***  
**Gilbert Felipe Mireles, Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner Publishers.**

Gilbert Mireles explores the legendary United Farm Workers' campaign to organize laborers—predominantly Latino immigrants—in California's strawberry industry. Tracing the UFW's actions from the picking fields to the world of government offices and corporate boardrooms, Mireles shows how the very traits that made the union such a successful advocate for farm workers also inhibited the meaningful participation of those same workers in the union. His systematic analysis of one of the most influential social movements in the country points to troubling implications for the place of immigrants—and the role of civil society and participatory democracy—in US society.

***WOULD YOU LIKE TO REVIEW THIS BOOK?***

***IT IS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW.***

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## **AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS**

**IF YOU HAVE A BOOK YOU WOULD LIKE REVIEWED, OR DESCRIBED IN THIS SECTION, OR IF YOU WANT TO BE A REVIEWER FOR THE NEWSLETTER, PLEASE WRITE TO [MARKDSHERRY@YAHOO.COM](mailto:MARKDSHERRY@YAHOO.COM)**



## ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM MEMBERS

Barry Eidlin recently published a piece in *Sociology Compass* entitled "Class Formation and Class Identity: Birth, Death, and Possibilities for Renewal." The link to the paper is <http://bit.ly/classformation>

### Abstract

While social class served as a powerful organizing identity for much of the 19th and 20th centuries, many doubt its contemporary relevance. This article examines the formation and development of theories of class identity over the past century. From a debate largely among Marxists in the early 20th century about the conditions under which the working class will mobilize to defend its interests – moving from a “class in itself” to a “class for itself” – the question of the relationship between individuals' class position, social interests, and political mobilization attracted greater attention among social scientists following World War II. However, postwar socioeconomic transformations led some to argue for the “death of class” as a central organizing principle for modern social and political life. While others countered that class identities remained relevant, the sharp decline in class-based organization in the late 20th century led scholars to develop more nuanced understandings of the relationship between individuals' class position and collective identities. Although current scholarship shows that there is no natural translation of class identities into collective action, the reality of growing socioeconomic inequality, along with the resurgence of social and political mobilizations to contest that growth, suggests that class identities retain the capacity to unite.

In terms of more popular pieces, Barry Eidlin also recently published an op-ed on *Truthout* that offers a critical take on the latest proposal for progressive labor law reform in the U.S.: <http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/25284-latest-pro-labor-reform-proposal-might-actually-undermine-labor>

In August Barry was the featured guest on the Wisconsin Public Radio morning call-in show, where he spoke and fielded listener questions about the current state and future of the U.S. labor movement: <http://www.wpr.org/researcher-predicts-comeback-labor-unions>