

Message from the President

Welcome to the Spring 2013 edition of the Southern Labor Studies Association newsletter!

It seems hard to believe but after two years of intensive planning, the SLSA's biennial conference, "The Many Souths," is finally over. Profuse thanks go to Jana Lippmann, Steve Striffler, and Evan Bennett, for all the planning that went into hosting us in New Orleans! By all measures, the conference was a great success: around 200 participants, excellent attendance at sessions, special events, a walking tour of local labor history, and wonderful keynote addresses from Adolph Reed, local New Orleans musicians, and immigration activists from across the deep South.

We enjoyed decent attendance at our membership meet-

ing, and benefitted from members' enthusiasm for ongoing activities and for generating new ones. Several people stepped up to volunteer to help in the areas of media and communications, membership, labor outreach, etc. We also unanimously passed a motion to establish the Robert H. Zieger Prize for Southern Labor Studies in honor of this recently deceased labor historian, and longtime mentor to SLSA. The prize will be awarded every two years to the best unpublished article in southern labor studies by a graduate student, early career scholar, journalist, or activist. The fund-raising goal is \$13,000 to establish a sufficient endowment for a \$500 award. We have had a robust start already but still a long way to go. I hope many of you will pitch in to honor Bob Zieger.

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In Memoriam: Robert Zieger

Paul Ortiz
University of Florida

Dr. Robert Zieger, Distinguished Professor of History Emeritus at the University of Florida, passed away on March 6, 2013. Professor Zieger was one of the preeminent labor historians of the United States. He was a two-time recipient of the Philip Taft Labor History Book Award for the best book in labor history. He was a prolific writer and authored classic works including, *For Jobs and Freedom: Race and Labor in America since 1865*, *The CIO, 1935-1955*, and *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience*. Bob was a spirited and rigorous historian who introduced countless scholars, students, union members, and community organizers to the field of labor history. He edited several key volumes in southern labor history including *Life and Labor in the New New South*, published in 2012, which presented some of the best new work in the field of southern labor studies.

Bob Zieger began teaching on the college level at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in 1964, and he moved to Kansas State University in 1973. Subsequently, he served as a professor of history at Wayne State University, and his labor history courses were immensely popular with union members in Detroit. Dr. Zieger moved to the University of Florida in 1986, and in 1998 he received the appointment of Distinguished Professor of History. Bob was a beloved teacher at the UF and his favorite courses were the History of American Labor and The United States, 1914-1945. Scores of Bob's students went on to become union organizers and leaders in the labor movement.

Dr. Bob Zieger talked the talk, and he walked the walk. Bob was a longtime member and leader of the United Faculty of Florida, AFL-CIO. He was his union's delegate to the North Central Florida Central Labor Council for many years,

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Robert H. Zieger Prize for Southern Labor Studies

In honor of the late Robert H. Zieger—teacher, scholar, and tireless union activist—the Southern Labor Studies Association announces that it is raising funds for the Robert H. Zieger Prize for Southern Labor Studies. This prize will be awarded every two years to the best unpublished article in southern labor studies submitted by a graduate student or early career scholar, journalist, or activist (“early career” being defined as no more than five years beyond the author’s highest degree).

To make a tax-deductible contribution, send a check made out to the “Southern Labor Studies Association” and mail to:

Robert H. Zieger Prize, SLSA
c/o Evan Bennett, Treasurer
Department of History
Florida Atlantic University
777 Glades Road
Boca Raton, FL 33431

(President’s Message, Cont.)

Planning is underway for the next SLSA conference in 2015, location yet to be determined. Right now the choices are at the College of William and Mary in Virginia or in Washington, DC. We should have this decision made and an announcement out shortly. Thanks to Cindy Hahamovitch for co-chairing the 2015 conference committee, and to those who have to date volunteered to serve on the conference program committee.

We’re excited to welcome new officers and board members: President Scott Nelson; Vice President Beth English; and Board Members Paul Ortiz, Brian Kelly, and Jennifer Bickham Mendez. You’ll find more information inside the newsletter on these wonderful scholars who have generously committed their time and their talents to serving SLSA.

Finally, it has been a pleasure to serve as President of SLSA (and Vice President before that) and I enjoyed meeting many of you in New Orleans. I do, however, also look forward to handing over the “reins” to our new President, Scott Nelson!

Have a wonderful spring and summer!

Jennifer E. Brooks
Auburn University

(In Memoriam, Cont.)

and he gave the keynote address at the CLC’s Annual Dinner in 2012.

On the job, Dr. Zieger conducted scores of office visits beginning in the 1990s to encourage fellow faculty and instructors to join the United Faculty of Florida. His energy and knowledge of the labor history was an important element in a highly successful union drive on campus recently.

Bob Zieger was born in 1938 in Englewood, New Jersey into a union family. He is survived by his wife, Gay Pitman, a retired college instructor, his son Robert, and his granddaughter Persephone. He enjoyed taking long walks, playing with Persephone, and promoting Gay’s second career as an artist. Bob Zieger will be sorely missed by his colleagues in the history profession, his comrades in the labor movement, and by the countless students that he mentored over an exceptional career of teaching, research, and service.

Bob Zieger, Presente!

“The Many Souths” SLSA’s Biennial Conference Reflects the Vibrancy and Vitality of the Field

Joey Fink
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

The Southern Labor Studies Association held its biennial conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, on March 7-9, 2013 drawing scholars, students, and activists from around the country (indeed, around the world) to the Mississippi Delta. From the earliest stages of planning to the last roundtable, SLSA members Jana Lipman (Tulane University) and Steve Striffler (University of New Orleans) led a team of volunteers, and the success of the conference speaks volumes for all their hard work, creativity, and dedication. There were more than 25 panels and roundtables over the course of three days, as well as a Friday evening roundtable and reception at the Historic New Orleans Collection featuring local musicians Deacon John, Evan Christopher, Meschiya Lake, and Thomas McDermott, discussing music as both art and labor. On Thursday evening, Adolph Reed, Professor of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania, gave the keynote address, “Problems and Prospects of Working-Class Politics in the Contemporary South.” On Saturday, Michael Mizell Nelson and Christina Lawrence (University of New Orleans) led a Labor Walking Tour of the French Quarter, revealing the neighborhood long known for its revelry and hedonism as a site of labor and activism.

This year’s conference was one of our best attended, with scholars, students, and organizers coming from dozens of towns and cities across the United States and from Finland, Canada, the Netherlands, and Ireland. Fresh perspectives were offered on traditional themes in southern labor, such

as union organizing efforts and the intersection of race and gender in labor activism. In panels on religion, sexual agency, feminism, immigration, and governance and law, presenters demonstrated how well-trod paths can lead to exciting new places. New arenas in southern labor were explored, including political alliances between Latina/os and African American workers; literary representations of race and class; precarious labor and guestworker programs; and African American labor and education activism. Several panels expanded our investigations of southern labor temporally or geographically, taking us back into the eighteenth century or out to California (“the Other South”) and into the Greater Caribbean and Latin America.

As our dearly-missed colleague Robert Zieger noted in the introduction to his edited volume, *Life and Labor in the New New South*, “the South of 2010 is as different from the South of the 1970s as was the latter from the classic South of C.Vann Woodward, William Faulker, and W. J. Cash.” SLSA is proud that our conference provided a space for exciting conversations on familiar topics, for starting discussions on new and emerging themes, and for connecting the past, present, and future of “life and labor” in the Many Souths.

Our thanks to all who planned, prepared, presented, and attended our gathering in New Orleans, and we hope to see you all again in two years!

Join the Southern Labor Studies Association

Annual membership is \$25 (\$10 for students and the unemployed); lifetime membership is \$500. Members receive the biannual newsletter, steep discounts on conference registration, and access to other members via the SLSA listserv.

To join, visit:
www.southernlaborstudies.org

SLSA Welcomes New Officers and Board Members

Cindy Hahamovitch, outgoing chair of Elections Committee, happily reports the election results for the Southern Labor Studies Association: Scott Nelson (President) and Beth English (Vice President), Paul Ortiz (Executive Board), Brian Kelly (Executive Board), and Jennifer Bickham Mendez (Executive Board). The accomplishments and projects of our new officers and board members are too numerous to list in totality here; suffice to say, we are lucky to have these talented scholars serving as leaders of SLSA for the next two years.

President

Scott Nelson is the Legum Professor of History at the College of William and Mary. His scholarship focuses on nineteenth-century US History. Among his many accomplishments, his second book, *Steel Drivin' Man*, which explores the real life and legend of railway hero John Henry, won the Merle Curti Prize for best book in US social and cultural history, the Anisfield-Wolf Prize for non-fiction, and the National Award for Fine Arts. His most recent publication, *A Nation of Deadbeats: An Uncommon History of America's Financial Disasters*, an examination of financial crises and the role of debt in America's financial history, was named one of *Bloomberg Business Week's* "Favorite Business Books of 2012." He has given dozens of lectures and keynote addresses on his scholarship across the country, and in Canada, Australia, Ireland, and China. He is currently working on two book projects: one on the Great Panic of 1873-1877, and one on "Railway Kings" and the Civil War.

Vice-President

Beth English is Associate Research Scholar and Director of the Program on Women in the Global Community at the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. She is also an instructor with Princeton's Prison Teaching Initiative. Her work focuses on historical and contemporary labor and working-class issues, gender and social history, and the global South. She is the author of *A Common Thread: Labor, Politics, and Capital Mobility in the Textile Industry*, and her article, "I ... Have a Lot of Work to Do': Cotton Mill Work and Women's Culture in Matoaca, Virginia, 1888-1895" was one of the Organization of American Historians' *Best American History Essays* of 2008 (David Roediger, ed.). Among other projects, she is currently working with Mary E. Frederickson on a new book, *Global Women's Work in Transition: Perspectives on Gender and Work in the Global Economy*, and a book project on the global textile industry.

Executive Board Members

Paul Ortiz is Associate Professor of History at the University of Florida and Director of the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program. He has published and taught in the fields of African American history, Latino Studies, the African Diaspora, Social Movement Theory, US History, US South, labor, and documentary studies. His book, *Emancipation Betrayed: The Hidden History of Black Organizing and White Violence in Florida from Reconstruction to the Bloody Election of 1920*, received the Harry T. and Harriette V. Moore Book Prize from the Florida Historical Society and the Florida Institute of Technology. He also co-edited and conducted oral history interviews for the award-winning, *Remembering Jim Crow: African Americans Tell About Life in the Jim Crow South*. He is currently finishing a book, "*Our Separate Struggles Are Really One*": *African American and Latino Histories*, and is working on a manuscript titled, "C.L.R. James, Caribbean Radicalism, and the Rise of the Modern Anti-Colonial Movement," among other projects.

Brian Kelly is a Reader in History in the School of History and Anthropology at Queen's University in Belfast. His first book, *Race, Class and Power in the Alabama Coalfields, 1908-1921*, won a number of awards, including two prizes from the Southern Historical Association: the H. L. Mitchell Prize and the Frances Butler Simkins Award. His work since ranges from labor abolition in the antebellum period to the 1968 Memphis sanitation strike. Formerly a Walter Hines

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Member News

Joey Fink was awarded the McColl Fellowship from the Center for the Study of the American South for the academic year 2013-2014 for her dissertation, "The Many Norma Raes: Working-Class Women in the Struggle to Organize J. P. Stevens in the 1970s."

Cindy Hahamovitch (currently the Elections Committee Chair) was recently named the Class of '38 Professor of History at William and Mary. She finds that particularly fitting, since that was the year of the Fair Labor Standards Act, although she notes that farmworkers (the folks she studies) were left out of the FLSA. The new title also makes her sound about 92. She will be a National Humanities Center Fellow in 2013-2014.

Max Krochmal, Assistant Professor of History at Texas Christian University, has been awarded the Summerlee Fellowship in Texas History at the Clements Center for Southwest Studies at Southern Methodist University. He will spend the 2013-2014 year-in-residence completing his book manuscript, *Democratic Coalitions: African Americans, Mexican Americans, Labor, and the Fight for Civil Rights in Texas, 1935-1975*.

Jennifer Luff reports that Georgetown University will launch its DC Justice for Janitors digital history project on April 29, from 1:00-5:30 p.m., culminating several years of collecting oral histories, archival materials, and ephemera to document the campaign to organize DC janitors. Campaign activists, labor leaders, and historians will reflect on the meaning of Justice for Janitors and share their stories. Contact [Jen](#) for more information, or visit the [Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor](#) online.

Judson MacLaury's book, *To Advance Their Opportunities: Federal Policies Toward African Americans from World War I to the Civil Rights Act of 1964*, is available [for free online](#). Many will know MacLaury as the Department of Labor's historian.

Jacob Remes, a founding and active member of the SLSA, won the 2012 Eugene A. Forsey Graduate Prize in Canadian Labour and Working-Class History for his dissertation.

Jarod Roll will join the history department at the University of Mississippi as an associate professor in January 2014. His second book, *The Gospel of the Working Class: Labor's Southern Prophets in New Deal America*, co-au-

thored with Erik S. Gellman, won the Southern Historical Association's 2012 H. L. Mitchell Award for the best book on the history of the southern working class.

News from Florida (via Paul Ortiz)

Paul Ortiz gave the keynote address at this year's national Alliance of Graduate Employees Locals conference, which was hosted by the University of Florida's Graduate Assistants United union branch.

The Samuel Proctor Oral History Program of the University of Florida joined with the Interfaith Alliance for Immigrant Justice and other area social justice organizations to celebrate National Farmworker Awareness Week between April 1-7. Events included a public history forum on the past, present and future of farm worker labor organizing in the US featuring oral histories conducted with alumni from the nationally-acclaimed organization, Student Action with Farmworkers.

As part of the NFAW week of activities, area labor activists convened an informational picket at a local Publix Supermarket to urge that grocery chain to join the Coalition of Immokalee's Campaign for Fair Food.

Labor and immigrant rights activist Sheila Payne was the recipient of this year's Jack A. Penrod "Brigadas" Award for Peace and Justice. Jack Penrod was a co-founder of the United Faculty of Florida, AFL-CIO and a veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigades in the Spanish Civil War. The Penrod Award is jointly funded by UFF-University of Florida, Gainesville Veterans for Peace, and the Alachua County Labor Party.

The North Central Florida Central Labor Council voted to contribute \$1,000 dollars to the establishment of the Robert Zieger Award. The Labor Council also expressed strong support for making an annual contribution to this fund in recognition for the many years of service that Dr. Zieger gave to the labor movement as well as to the mentoring of generations of labor historians.

Reed Fink Award in Southern Labor History

One or more fellowship(s) of \$250-\$500 are awarded annually to individual(s) whose research in the Southern Labor Archives will lead to a book, article, dissertation, or other substantive product. The recipient will make a presentation about his/her research to the Georgia State University community and the fellowship amount will be awarded thereafter.

Professors Merl E. Reed and Gary Fink were instrumental in the establishment, development, and use of the Southern Labor Archives at Georgia State University from the early 1970s. Today, the Southern Labor Archives has over 500 collections used by researchers from throughout the Southeast, the United States, and the world. The Reed Fink Award in Southern Labor History now honors both men and their many contributions to education, labor studies, and the Southern Labor Archives.

Faculty, graduate students, upper-level undergraduates, and recognized independent scholars and artists are encouraged to apply. Visit the [archives online](#) for information on the application process and the archives' holdings.

Applications must be received electronically by May 15, 2013.

(Officers and Board, Cont.)

Page Fellow at the National Humanities Center in North Carolina, he has held non-residential fellowships at the Institute for Southern Studies (University of South Carolina) and the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute (Harvard University). He directed the After Slavery Project, an international research collaboration, and with project partners Bruce Baker and Susan O'Donovan, he designed and built the After Slavery website. With Bruce Baker he has co-edited a collection of essays, *After Slavery: Race, Labor and Citizenship in the Reconstruction South*, forthcoming from the University Press of Florida, and is completing an extended monograph on grassroots black political mobilization in Reconstruction South Carolina.

Jennifer Bickham Mendez is Associate Professor of Sociology at the College of William and Mary. Her areas of specialization include gender and the global economy, Latino/a Migration to the "Nuevo South," and citizenship and neoliberalism in the Americas. Her current research examines recent transnational migration to Williamsburg, VA, the barriers that migrants face in gaining full social membership, and the ways in which the larger community has responded to the arrival of these newcomers. She has published articles in *Social Problems*, *Mobilization*, *Labor Studies Journal*, and *Gender and Society*. Her book, *From the Revolution to the Maquiladoras: Gender, Labor and Globalization in Nicaragua*, received the 2008 Annual Book Award from the Political Economy of the World System Section of the American Sociological Association as well as an honorable mention from the Global Division of the Society for the Study of Social Problems. In 2010, she received the Plumeri Award for Faculty Excellence.

Thanks to all of the candidates for their willingness to stand for election and their continued support of SLSA. Many thanks also to Jacob Remes and Robert Chase, the other members of the Elections Committee, and to Talitha LeFlouria, who is stepping down from the board. We are, of course, especially grateful to outgoing President, Jennifer Brooks, who has been captain of this ship for two years. She leaves the organization stronger than it has ever been. Fortunately for us, Jenny now becomes chair of the Elections Committee.

There are many ways to get involved with SLSA. We always welcome ideas for how to grow our organization and further our mission and goals. For instance, we are currently pulling together a communications committee. If you are interested in helping the SLSA develop new communications strategies (digital or print) or have suggestions for how the SLSA can stay in touch with members and reach new audiences, please email [Joey Fink](#) to join the conversation.

Not All Newsletter News Is Good News

Cindy Hahamovitch
College of William and Mary

A year ago, on April 20, 2011, five College of William and Mary students were arrested in the middle of the night on charges of trespassing during a “living wage” protest in the Brafferton, one of the nation’s oldest university buildings. Built in 1723 to house the college’s Indian School, and now the University President’s office, the Brafferton became the temporary site of a 16-hour sit-in.

The event began at 9:00 a.m. with a rally attended by about 50 students and faculty members, who proceeded to file into the building to sign a banner addressed to W&M’s President, Taylor Reveley. Professors Cindy Hahamovitch and Jennifer Bickham Mendez held an impromptu teach-in in the president’s office, but left shortly after the President reentered his office. Most of the students left when threatened with arrest, but five refused to leave “until the administration implement a living wage,” and were arrested at 1:00 a.m. William and Mary police issued a summons requiring the students to appear in court.

This action, which was the culmination of a long series of efforts by a coalition of student groups, was not the college’s first living wage protest. In 2001 the Tidewater Labor

Support Coalition—then a group of mostly staff, faculty, and graduate students—launched a living wage campaign that garnered significant campus support. After months of picketing, the college agreed to raise the minimum wage for new housekeepers to \$8.50, but it took three years to raise existing housekeepers’ wages from \$6.29 an hour to over \$8.50, due to state rules limiting wage hikes. New housekeepers now start at \$10 an hour. The recent campaign was waged by undergraduates on behalf of staff but with fewer workers and no faculty and graduate students involved in decision making.

The students who stayed in the President’s office after having been asked to leave were charged with Code of Conduct violations, including “disruption of the normal living and working conditions of the College,” opening windows, and disobeying administrators’ orders. The judge sentenced them to community service (an outcome the student activists found quite ironic), and the college put them on academic probation. The student organization now seems to be defunct.

News from the Southern Labor Archives

National Domestic Workers Union Records Available Online through Archives Unbound

The records of the National Domestic Workers Union (NDWU) have been digitized by Gale/Cengage Learning and made available through their Archives Unbound database. Gale approached the Southern Labor Archives, Georgia State University Library, about the collection, arranged for it to be digitized, and will host the collection on Archives Unbound for the next five years. Archives Unbound is available by subscription only; inquire at your academic library about accessing the collection. Visitors to Georgia State University Library can access the collection online or in paper.

The National Domestic Workers Union (NDWU) was founded in Atlanta in 1968 by Dorothy Bolden to help women engaged in household work. The records of the NDWU, 1965-1979, provide insight into Bolden’s efforts to organize household workers and the union’s involvement in Atlanta’s black community through programs such as the Manpower Program, the Career Learning Center, the Homemaking Skills Training Program, Maids Honor Day, and others sponsored by government agencies.

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(Southern Labor Archives, Cont.)

The records contain correspondence, legal and financial documents, minutes, printed material, and photographs.

Among the correspondents are Julian Bond, Sam Nunn, Herman Talmadge, Andrew Young, and other Georgia and national political figures. The records also contain information about some of the organizations in which Bolden participated, such as the Citizen's Advisory Committee on Transportation, the Secretary's Advisory Committee on the Rights and Responsibilities of Women, WIGO radio station, and Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA).

Gale/Cengage Learning has also digitized selected portions of the United Garment Workers of America records, which will be available through Archives Unbound later this year. Please direct inquiries to [Traci Drummond](#).

Southern Labor Archives Materials Available in Digital Collections

Georgia State University Library's Digital Collections are comprised of rare or unique resources which have been digitized or are born digital. These resources come from the University Library's Special Collections and Archives Department and, in some cases, its general collection, and are selected for digitization so they can be accessed online to support the research interests of scholarly communities and the general public worldwide. Our Digital Collections include manuscripts, photographs, periodicals, newspapers, oral histories, sound recordings, maps, and printed materials.

The Southern Labor Archives has contributed the following content to Digital Collections: photographs from the labor collections; portions of the PATCO records in their entirety, including strike files and publications; photographs and publications (1889-1994) from the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) collections; the entire run of *The Great Speckled Bird*, Atlanta's underground newspaper 1968-1975.

More labor materials will be added to Digital Collections in 2013 including transcripts for the Voices of Labor Oral History Project and transcripts from the IAM Officers Oral History Project. New photographs are being added monthly.

Please visit the digital collections [on the web](#) and direct inquiries to [Traci Drummond](#).

Southern Labor Studies Association

Studying, Teaching, and Preserving Southern Labor History

Mission:

- To enhance connections between academics and labor activists in the US South;
- To promote working class history in public school curricula and provide resources for public school teachers;
- To encourage the posting of regional events and discussions of interest to scholars of southern labor on a listserv;
- To connect and promote graduate students doing work on southern labor and working-class studies (in a variety of disciplines) with one another;
- To promote the preservation of materials related to southern labor and working-class history;
- To organize the Southern Labor Studies Conference as well as sessions on southern working-class history at other venues.

Masthead Image: Roadside stand near Birmingham, Alabama, 1936. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USF342-008253 [P&P].