

## AFL-CIO Labor Historians Meeting at the OAH, Thursday, April 11, 2013

Posted on April 8, 2013 by Rosemary Feurer

Please see the following message from Dan Katz pertaining to a committee about new and forgotten strategies of unionization. All interested historians are encouraged to attend the meeting at the OAH (San Francisco), April 11th at 4:30pm at the entrance of the book exhibit.

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Friends,

I have been asked recently to chair a committee of labor historians to advise the officers and staff of the AFL-CIO about new and forgotten ways to organize unions. The committee currently includes Nelson Lichtenstein and Michael Kazin. We will be expanding and diversifying the committee shortly. Our charge is to contribute to a report to the quadrennial conference of the AFL-CIO that will be held in Los Angeles in September.

To that end, I am inviting you to gather at the Organization of American Historians in San Francisco this Thursday April 11th at 4:30 at the entrance to the book exhibit. We will then proceed to a space nearby to engage in a salon of sorts. The idea is to have a brainstorming discussion that will help direct the work of the committee and answer some questions.

In general, the AFL-CIO is looking for historical examples of inter-union and/or federation-level cooperation in organizing unions. Officers and staff are open to lessons of failures as well as success, and they are open to listening to healthy debate over differing interpretations of those moments. They have begun thinking about the Steel Workers Organizing Committee and Operation Dixie as examples. Many of the AFL-CIO leaders, including Rich Trumka, read scholarly labor history. Recently, Sue Cobble's article "Lost Ways of Organizing: Reviving the AFL's Direct Affiliate Strategy" made its way around the DC headquarters.

All this is happening quite quickly and is poorly-timed of course, but it is an exciting

moment for us to affect the direction of organized labor for the next four years and perhaps beyond. I hope you can join us.

We will do our best to find suitable space and let people know in advance. We might have to rely on word of mouth, a hastily posted hand-written note somewhere near the book entrance, and/or the kindness of someone sitting near the entrance to direct wandering souls.

Looking forward!

Dan Katz

## Author



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Rosemary Feurer is Professor of History at Northern Illinois University. She is the author of *Radical Unionism in the Midwest, 1900-1950*, among other books and essays. She is working on *The Illinois Mine Wars, 1860-1940* and a new biography of Mary Harris "Mother" Jones.