Building Worker Power in an Era of Anti-Union Assaults: Looking Back, Looking Forward

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April 11, Madison Labor Temple, 1602 S. Park St., Madison. The 34th Annual Conference of the Wisconsin Labor History Society looks to finding clues in worker history to discover strategies to strengthen unions. Much of the conference will be focused on recent efforts to weaken unions, such as Wisconsin's Act 10 that took away most collective bargaining rights of public employees and current efforts to pass open shop laws in the state (often erroneously referred to as "right-to-work" legislation).

Joseph McCartin, professor of history at Georgetown University and author of *Collision Course: Ronald Reagan, the Air Traffic Controllers, and the Strike That Changed America* (Oxford University Press, 2011), will open the conference and will discuss the "New War on Collective Bargaining: Origins, Development, and Implications for Wisconsin and the Nation."

Also presenting will be Jon Shelton, assistant professor in Democracy and Justice Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, who will discuss "Getting Movement into the Labor Movement," concentrating on efforts within teachers unions.

Local union leaders and union representatives will participate in a panel discussion, "Life and the Workplace under Act 10 and the Open Shop." Panelists will be announced.

An afternoon panel will discuss the best ways to respond to the current challenges facing the labor movement. Two attorneys, Mark Sweet of Milwaukee, and Alexia Kulweic, of the UW School for Workers, will outline labor strategies. Jennifer Epps-Addison, executive director of Wisconsin Jobs Now, will discuss recent organizing efforts among low-income workers, and Will Jones, professor of history at the

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University of Wisconsin – Madison, will speak of links between unions and the civil rights movement.

The afternoon session will include a period for audience response led by David Newby, president emeritus of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO.

The annual conferences of the Society have traditionally attracted between 70 and 100 participants and are designed for union activists, historians, educators, researchers and interested citizens.

Complete details and registration form available here. You may call the Society at 414-771-0700 (ext. 20) and leave a message.

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER ONLINE

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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.

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