

LIVE! Reports from LAWCHA Panels: Strange Career of Industrial Relations

Posted on June 23, 2017 by Emily E. LB. Twarog

How exciting! LAWCHA members are live blogging from #LAWCHA2017 at the Univ of Washington in beautiful Seattle. Panels are taking place in the lovely Mary Gates (yes that Gates...) building during a perfectly sunny weekend that apparently is not the norm. I, for one, am grateful as this is my first visit to Washington State.*

Wesleyan's Ronald Schatz on the tension between Industrial Relations (IR) professors and radical students. In 1968 radical students held Columbia administrators hostage for several days and then went on strike allying themselves with the oppression of black and brown communities along with those in Vietnam. Instead of supporting the organizing of radical students, some IR professors seek to figure out how to isolate revolutionary students and avoid "another Columbia." IR professors from around the US develop a plan of a "dispute resolution plan" similar to arbitration for faculty and students. This plan looked a lot like the industry approach to worker protest. What were IR professors so afraid of?

UCLA's Tony Higbie telling the "Real History of Labor Education at UCLA." The worker education movement was rooted in immigrant organizer and worker self-education. Coordination with various worker schools from across the country like Bryn Mawr (check out panel C.8 on Women's Schools for more on this) and the WI School for Workers. Higbie points to Rose Pessota who arrived in LA to help establish a west coast worker education program.** In the 1930s, working-class women in LA played a pivotal role in building worker education programs on the West Coast rather than sending women to the Bryn Mawr School for Women for in NJ which was getting very costly. This led to the founding of the Western Summer School (Pacific Coast Labor School) in 1933 and ran until 1941 was a collaboration between Occidental College and UC Extension.

If you are at the conference, reading this now and wish you were at this panel are in another room, be sure to check out today's afternoon panel C.8 Summer Schools for Women Workers in Room 288.

If you are not here, but interested in knowing more be sure to check out the book

Sisterhood and Solidarity: Workers' Education for Women, 1914-1984 which is in need for an update. Anyone want to collaborate?

* I did bring a raincoat just to ward off the rain.

** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rose_Pesotta

Author



[Emily E. LB. Twarog](#)

Emily E. LB. Twarog is an associate professor in the School of Labor and Employment Relations at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is also affiliate faculty of the Gender in Global Perspectives Program and European Union Center, as well as co-director of the Regina V. Polk Women's Labor Leadership Conference. Her publications include *Politics of the Pantry: Housewives, Food, and Consumer Protest in Twentieth Century America* (Oxford University Press, 2017). She is the associate editor of Going Public section of the journal *LABOR: Studies in Working-Class History*.