

Further Reading and Watching

Below is bibliography of books I used for the class as well as a few books I suggest for further reading. Labor history is a fascinating subject. The events and people of the past are responsible for the good things we are able to enjoy in our lives today. It is up to us to remember the past and pass it along for our future, lest we forget and throw all of their hard work, sorrow, and blood away,

Von Drehle, David. Triangle The Fire That Changed America. New York, Gross Press, 2003:

I have read many books on this tragedy and have found this book to be the best. This book really looks at the whole picture, tends to draw you into the era, and introduces you to the compelling characters in this little piece of history.

Avrich, Paul. The Haymarket Tragedy. Princeton: Princeton University, 1984.

This is not necessarily an easy read, but really puts the 1886 Haymarket bombing and trial in perspective. The book details the events while educating the reader on the impact this tragedy had on history.

Papanirolas, Zeese. Buried Unsung Louis Tikas & the Ludlow Massacre. Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1982.

Louis Tikas was a union organizer killed by the state militia in Ludlow, Colorado. This book is a true insight into an immigrant worker facing unimaginable odds. Anyone interested in labor history should read this book.

Churchill, Thomas. Triumph Over Marcos. Greensboro, NC: Open Hand, 1995

This is a secret gem. Based on the lives of Gene Viernes and Silme Domingo, two Filipino American Cannery Union organizers. The story takes place mostly in Oregon and Alaska within the unique world of cannery workers. This book is fiction, mostly due to the lack of supporting evidence. Although fiction, I recommend this book as it could and probably did happen in the fashion as detailed in the book.

Larrowe, Charles P. Harry Bridges. USA: Lawrence Hill & Co. Publishers, Inc., 1972.

This book may not be old enough to be considered a classic, it is close. Harry Bridges was the organizer and labor leader for the longshoremen's union (ILWU) and was the leader of the 1934 San Francisco strike. Bridges was not known to be a nice man, but one with convictions and

strength. Generally Californians will enjoy this book, but all readers with an interest in labor history will appreciate this easy read.

Jones, Mary H. Autobiography of Mother Jones. USA: Charles H. Kern Co., 1990

As Mother Jones is my personal hero, I believe everyone should read her story. Union or non-union, you have to admire her spirit, the sacrifices she made, and her unwavering belief in the working class.

Zaniello, Tom. Movies, Working Stiffs, Union Maids, Reds & Riffraff an Expanded Guide to Films About Labor. USA: Cornell University Press, 2003.

I was fortunate enough to take Tom's class at the National Labor College and there is little this man does not know about labor films. The book is a reference of just about every film made on labor or loosely based on labor. If you are a collector of movies or really enjoy watching labor films, this is a fantastic reference to have in your library.

Smith, Gibbs M. Joe Hill. Layton, UT: Gibbs M. Smith, Inc. Peregrine Smith Books, 1969.

This book is the story of Joe Hill and his influence on labor. Gibbs has done a wonderful job on his research and to the best of my knowledge; this is the most accurate book on Joe Hill.

Levitt, Martin J., and Terry Conrow. Confessions of a Union Buster. New York: Crown, Inc., 1993.

Great book from a man who "saw the light." Levitt was a paid union buster and very good at what he did. He details all the dirty tricks that management uses to bust the union. If you have ever organized or plan to organize this book could be enlightening. I challenge anyone to read this book and call themselves anti-union.

Kahlenberg, Richard D. Tough Liberal. New York: Columbia UP, 2007.

Biography of Albert Shanker, President of the American Federation of Teachers. This book is a must read for any officer or activist in AFT.

A few suggested labor movies:

Salt of the Earth, 1954, no rating. Directed by Hebert Biberman.

This movie was very controversial in its time and many of those connected to the movie were blacklisted. The International Union of the Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers was expelled from the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations). The female star, Rosaura Revueltas (who plays Esperanza) was deported before the end of the filming. The

director had to shoot some of her shots in Mexico. It is important to understand the era and the Mexican culture in the 1950's to really understand the huge sacrifices these workers and their families made. This is one of my all time favorite labor films.

10,000 Black Men Named George, 2002, PG13. Directed by Robert Townsend.

This relatively new movie is a quiet success. This is the story about the porters working for George Pullman in the 1920's and their struggles to organize a union. Asa Philip Randolph, a great man of integrity and influence in our history, is the leading character. This film is second on my top ten list of labor films.

The Grapes of Wrath, 1940, no rating. Directed by John Ford.

The film is adapted from John Steinbeck's novel of the same title. This classic should be watched every couple of years, or in my case a couple of times every year. For those of you too young to have seen this old flick, it is a great film. They do not come much better than this film.

The Pajama Game, 1957 no rating. Directed by George Abbott and Stanley Donen.

This is a musical starring Doris Day in a textile mill, making pajamas. You may note it is the nicest textile mill you probably will ever see, never the less it is about union organizing. Fun and a nice change from the darker labor films.

Molly Maquires, 1970, Rated PG. directed by Martin Ritt.

This is a violent film about a secret society of Irish-American miners who go against the mine owners on their own. This film is not pro-union, for the Molly's were disenchanted with their union, but it shows how when pushed what lengths some people will go to for their survival.

Silkwood, 1983 Rated R. Directed by Mike Nichols.

This is the Karen Silkwood story. She is the worker at the Kerr-McGee plutonium-processing plant in Oklahoma who died in a car crash under very suspicious circumstances. While the characters are over done and too stereotypical for the gravity of the issue, I like this one all the same.

Newsies, 1992 Raged PG. Directed by Kenny Ortega.

Set in early 1900 in New York, this film has been panned by some, but is a Disney Broadway style film portraying the impromptu union of newsboys in New York.

Matewan, 1987, rated PG13. Directed by John Sayles.

The movie is carefully researched and takes place in the coalmines in Mingo County, West Virginia. The coal miners try to organize a union, but find themselves against what seems to be insurmountable odds: the owners, their company thugs, and the dreaded Baldwin-Felts private police force.

There are many more movies that could be listed, as with the books, so this list should just get you started. Enjoy –

Jenn