



# THE REPORTER

Winter Issue

Illinois Labor History Society

February 2018

430 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60605

[www.IllinoisLaborHistory.org](http://www.IllinoisLaborHistory.org)

## GOT PLANS?

Big plans for Illinois Labor History in 2018!

### UHH 2017 DINNER

Celebrating Adolph Germer, Marcy Marcy, The Illinois 8th Infantry and Beatrice Lumpkin

### MAY DAY

Back in Haymarket Square!

### THE PASSING OF ONE OF OUR OWN

Celebrating the life of ILHS board member, William "Bill" Pelz

### GOOD READS

See whats new in our bookstore for 2018



2017 UHH Inductee Beatrice Lumpkin

# FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

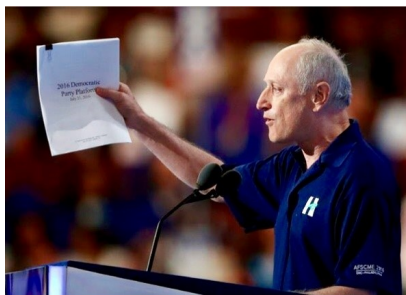
## Larry Spivack



Dear Friends:

When we write about the death of someone we care about we often begin with the words, "It is with great sadness" . . . Having said that- I want to say a few things about three men who left us much too soon. William Pelz, 66, Paul Booth, 74, and Tom Broderick 65, were three men whom I knew from different theaters-so to speak- but all whom dedicated their lives to the cause of workers and social and economic justice. Each of them passed away within the last couple of months.

Bill Pelz, as I knew him (never William) served on our ILHS Board for over a decade, but was engaged in the good fight since the 1960's. Frankly, while Bill was a dedicated participant on the ILHS Board and contributed many ideas to help build the ILHS and serve as an educator on behalf of our organization, I mostly remember him because of his character and wonderfully engaging wit and commentary. Bill had strong labor history pedigree by the research, writing and teaching he maintained over the years, but if you knew Bill as I did you would always want him at a



**Paul Booth on the first day of the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia in 2016.**

activity. (more on Bill Pelz on page 12)

Paul Booth was the man who hired me into the labor movement. As a young educator and local labor leader working for the State of Illinois in 1984 I interviewed for an organizer position with AFSCME. Paul hired me on the spot having heard about my successful organizing for professionals into a new bargaining unit for AFSCME. Paul, who soon left for Washington D.C. and served as AFSCME National Organizing Director and thereafter became assistant to President Gerald

McEntee and then Lee Saunders will also be remembered for many other expressions of a life based on working for justice. While I will let you read for yourselves about Paul if you search the Web (a founder of SDS, an author of the Port Huron Statement, and much more), His Illinois years included a stretch working for the United Packinghouse Workers and later became an architect and leader of the budding and expanding Public Employee Union Sector unionism. I am grateful for the few years I worked directly with Paul and always remember his fondness for labor history and how excited he was when the 1986 centennial for the Haymarket was approaching.

Tom Broderick of Oak Park, Il will be remembered by many of us who shared his bountiful meals and even more bountiful enthusiasm to engage in direct action especially with respect to worker justice. What set Tom apart from most people is he was tenacious about engagement on issues. Most recently, Tom helped spearhead the local Oak Park community to engage the Village Board when it became apparent that our "progressive" Village might opt out of the new Cook County Minimum Wage Ordinance. We won! There probably wasn't a picket line I never saw Tom participate in. Tom took it upon himself, spent his own money and sent hundreds of post cards every month to individuals reminding them of events to attend, protests to go to and letters to write. Tom was an avid supporter of the ILHS and well-- let's just say this.... Tom was always there and always will be.



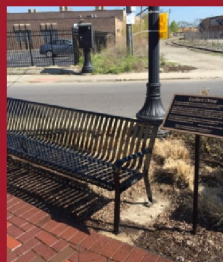
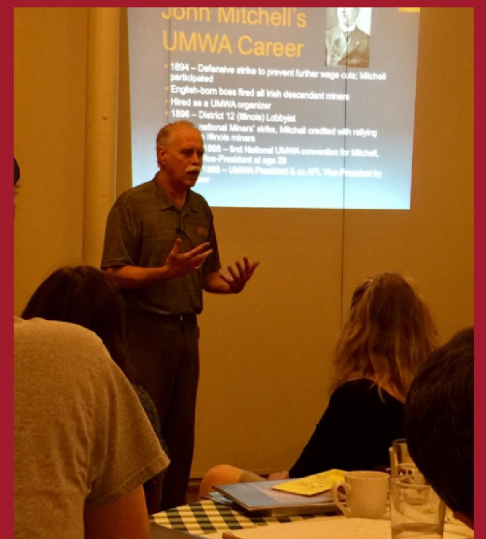
**Tom Broderick in his role as Family Planning Clinic escort.**

Thank you gentlemen for making this society a better place to be because of your service.

# Union Hall of Honor 2017



This year's Union Hall of Honor was celebrated on December 1, 2017 at the Operating Engineers Local 399 Banquet Hall. Inductees included Adolph Germer, Mary Marcy, the Illinois 8th Regiment, and Beatrice Lumpkin. Our guest speaker this year was the International Vice President (Human Affairs) for the United Steelworkers, Fred Redmond. Check out our Facebook and our website for more pictures and the biography's of all of our inductees. (top left) Beatrice Lumpkin speaking to the banquet attendees. (top right) Board member Julia Berkowitz with ULLICO to accept the plaque for Mary Marcy. (middle right) Board member Lisa Oppenheim with new members Gwen King and to accept the plaque for the Illinois 8th Infantry. (bottom left) USW Vice-President Fred Redmond. (center) ILHS volunteers Debby Pope, Stephanie Seawell and Sarah Joy Liles manning the front table before the banquet. (bottom right) The crowd before the start of dinner.



# A look back at 2017

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in pictures.



## DO YOU KNOW YOUR LABOR HISTORY?

[HTTPS://LABORHISTORYIN2.PODBEAN.COM/](https://laborhistoryin2.podbean.com/)

### January 2, 1905

23 industrial unionists held a secret meeting in Chicago. The meeting lasted the next three days, as the unionists discussed their ideas for strengthening and broadening the power of working people. The meeting became known as the January Conference. Over the three days the unionists drafted a manifesto that outlined their ideas. They signed and sent out the document to unions across America as well as industrial unions in Europe. The signers included such important labor figures as Big "Bill" Haywood, Eugene Debs, and Mother Jones. The document critiqued the narrowness of the trade union system, which predominantly represented only skilled-workers in particular crafts. It called for a more inclusive industrial union congress to be held in Chicago that June. The document declared "All power should rest in a collective membership." That June the "Continental Congress of the Working Class" met and formed Industrial Workers of the World, more popularly known as the Wobblies. At its peak in 1923, the IWW consisted of approximately 40,000 members. Yet the impact of the IWW reached far beyond its members. The IWW pushed for more a more inclusive union movement. It organized across ethnicity, race and gender, challenging the status quo of the often exclusive labor unions. Eventually, the organization began to decline due to repression from the U.S. government, which viewed the Wobblies as a dangerously radical group. Throughout its history, Chicago was an important site for the IWW, and the organization's headquarters remain in the city today. For more information about the IWW history and their work today, visit their website: <http://www.iww.org/>

### February 5, 1900

That was the day the newly formed Building Contractors Council locked out 40,000 building tradesmen in Chicago. The Contractors Council was founded in opposition to the power of the Building Trades Council. Solidarity among the trades galvanized their ability to determine wages and working conditions throughout the city. Hard-won gains included use of sympathy strikes, restriction of laborsaving machinery and apprentices, and work pace and production limits. In 1899, citywide building trades contracts expired. Backed by financiers, manufacturers and engineers, the new council demanded the unions abandon these gains and cut all ties with the Building Trades Council. The contractors cited the more than 20 walkouts at the Montgomery Ward construction site as but one example. The bosses' were driven to destroy what historian Andrew Wender Cohen refers to as 'craft governance' in the city. Incredulous, the crafts refused to recognize the contractors' council or its demands. The contractors locked them out. They brought in 6000 scabs to continue construction work throughout the city. Pitched battles continued daily in the streets between locked out tradesmen and scabs. Many contractors brought in cots and food to non-union workers, keeping them on job sites until completion. Labor-friendly Mayor Carter Harrison II offered to mediate, but refused police protection of scabs. The contractors built up their own private force. Then they injected an added racial dimension to the conflict. Among the non-union workers, some were black tradesmen, briefly hired as construction workers and job site guards. The lockout ended in a 1901 defeat for the Building Trades, whose ranks were decimated by 90%. The building trades bounced back and were soon a formidable force in Chicago.

### March 27, 1941

That was the day Indiana State Police began cracking heads of picketers in front of the Richmond International Harvester plant. The Farm Equipment Workers Organizing Committee, or FEWOC, called a strike at six Midwestern plants earlier in the year. 14,000 workers walked out, demanding an elimination of piecework, wage increases, reemployment guarantees for draftees and union recognition. Lucy Parsons addressed strikers in Chicago. She reminded them of her husband's frame-up and murder in 1886. She added that the McCormicks and International Harvester had continued their unending war against labor for over 50 years. In Richmond, workers voted 5 to 1 for a strike. By March 27, Harvester officials there planned to reopen the plant with members of the 'independent union.' FEWOC battled these so-called unions at all the plants. They were the rehashed old company unions the National Labor Relations Board had ordered disbanded. Reports varied widely as to the number of workers ready to betray the strike at the Richmond plant. When they marched towards the gate that morning, strikers closed ranks and sang, "Solidarity Forever." The battle began as strikers, armed with bricks and bats, fought police to prevent the scabbing. More than 80 strikers were arrested on charges ranging from assault and battery to attempted murder. The State Police and Richmond officers then raided strike headquarters and downtown CIO offices. Records and correspondence were seized and furniture demolished. FEWOC leader Cliff Kerr avowed, "They are not going to get away with this brutal, undemocratic attack on the workers. The union intends to fight. The combined efforts of the city... the police... and the Harvester Company are not going to break this strike."



On October 25, 2018 the ILHS teamed up with the DePaul Labor Education Center for the launching of Richard March's book *A Great Vision: A Militant Family's Journey Through the Twentieth Century.* It was a great event with ILHS Vice President Mike Matejka as the moderator and Richard speaking about his family, his book, and playing music on his guitar. His book is

available in our bookstore for \$15.00 plus shipping and handling.

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ILHS and *In These Times* co-sponsored the book launch of *Wobblies of the World A Global History of the IWW*, Friday, November 10, 2017. Co-editors Peter Cole and David Struthers, along with contributors Tariq Khan and Bucky Halker were on hand to talk about the global nature of the radical union, the Industrial Workers of the World. Halker sang a few Joe Hill songs!



PETER COLE'S

This book is the first to look at the history of the IWW from an international perspective. Bringing together a group of leading scholars, it includes lively accounts from a number diverse countries including Australia, Canada, Mexico, South Africa, Sweden and Ireland, which reveal a fascinating story of global anarchism, syndicalism and socialism.



WOBBLIES OF THE  
WORLD: A GLOBAL  
HISTORY OF THE IWW

This book is available in our bookstore for \$28.00 plus shipping and handling.

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# May Day 2018

**BACK AT  
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TUESDAY, MAY 1, 2018  
STAY TUNED FOR MORE DETAILS!**

# May 1, 1886

## The First May Day

May 1, 1886. That was the day that began events in Chicago would make May First the most important day on the calendar for the labor movement across the world. The sun shone brightly in Chicago that day. Ninety thousand workers took to the streets to protest for the eight hour day. Nearly half of them were on strike, and the rest were marching in support of the demands of working people. Many of the marches had a festive air, with music playing and banners waving. Across the country, estimates of as many as half-a million workers participated in the walk out. Labor was on the march. But then, just three days later, striking workers were

gunned down by police at Chicago's McCormick Reaper Plant. Then the next night police marched on a workers rally that was about to wrap up at Haymarket Square. An unknown person threw a bomb into the police ranks, and the police responded by shooting

rounded up and blamed for the crime. Despite a lack of any evidence tying them to the bomb, four of the accused were hung. The Haymarket Martyrs became international heroes of the labor movement. On May 1, 1890 labor leaders across Europe and the United

States declared May Day the worker's holiday. In cities across the world tens of thousands marched for the eight hour day. Now more than 130 years after the fateful week in Chicago, May Day remains International Labor Day. Today a monument stands at the site of



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wildly, striking protesters and their own men. The police crackdown against union leaders and suspected radicals was fierce. Eight men were

Haymarket, and each year labor leaders from across the world travel to Chicago to visit and commemorate the site.



**Above: The BBC filming at the Haymarket Martyrs' Monument this past December.**

ILHS was proud to be a supporter during the book launch of *Politics of the Pantry* by Emily Twarog on November 18, 2017 at Loyola University. Her book is now available in our bookstore for \$35.00 plus shipping and handling.

"Politics of the Pantry makes an original and well-researched contribution to the historical literature by examining 'the rise and fall of the housewife,' not as a private, domesticated figure but as a public, activist figure. By treating the home rather than the workplace as the site of struggle and by depicting consumption rather than production as a central public act, Twarog turns the usual approach of labor history on its head, with thought-provoking implications."--Lawrence Glickman, Cornell University.





March 8, International Women's Day, has made a big come back in recent years. Until recently, the holiday, much like May Day, had been celebrated around the world, but remained obscure in the United States. Women have taken to the streets in the hundreds of thousands since the 2016 presidential election. The #MeToo movement has forced open a nationwide acknowledgment and debate regarding sexual harassment, anti-woman violence, and gender discrimination on the job. A recent World Economic Forum report, which you can download at [weforum.org](http://weforum.org), forms the basis for this year's theme: closing the global gender gap. The report traces progress in gender parity in 144 countries in four areas: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival and Political Empowerment.

Women in the United States are increasingly embracing the holiday as their own and that's a good thing. But the holiday's origins and history remain contentious, controversial and mired in myth. Some sources insist the holiday began in 1907 as a 50th anniversary commemoration of an 1857 protest by New York City women garment workers. The story goes that women workers were protesting low wages, long hours and increasing work assignments. They were met with police assaults and mass arrests. Other sources claim suffragettes started the holiday at the turn of the last century. Critics assail both these origin stories as a way to detach the holiday from its socialist roots and its institutionalization as a formal holiday by the former Soviet Union and Soviet Bloc countries.

What is certain is that the holiday is rooted in socialist politics. Some sources claim it started as a result of a 1907 meeting of socialist women, led by the revolutionary, Clara Zetkin. The First International Conference of Socialist Women met in Stuttgart, Germany during the Seventh Congress of the Second International. As supporters of the Second International, then the premier organization for socialists around the world, these women met to cohere an agenda for women's economic equality and voting rights. From

there, the women led the fight within their national sections. Finally the Socialist Party of America set the last Sunday in February as National Women's Day, beginning in 1909. Still, other sources state the Socialist Party of America started the holiday first and then socialist women under Zetkin's leadership met a year later at the Copenhagen Congress in 1910, to push for women's equality, forcing the Second International to formally adopt the holiday the following year.

According to historian Temma Kaplan, the first meeting took place on February 28, 1909 at the Murray Hill Lyceum in New York City. There, a crowd of 2,000 listened to speeches by socialists and women labor leaders like Leonora O'Reilly. The following year, Rose Schneiderman, Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Metta Stern addressed celebrants at Carnegie Hall. The Europeans followed suit in 1911, setting their date for International Women's Day on the Fortieth anniversary of the Paris Commune, March 18.

By 1913, all parties concerned agreed on an annual date of March 8. As World War I dragged on, the holiday became a way to mobilize against the war in a number of countries. Most dramatically, working women in St. Petersburg, Russia mobilized in political strikes against the war on March 8, 1917. They demanded bread and peace, an end to the war and food shortages, the return of their husbands and sons from the war front, and an end to czarist rule. Their protests sparked Revolution.

International Women's Day became an official holiday there in 1922 but was largely forgotten in the country

of its origin. According to Kaplan, a women's group at University of Illinois at Chicago revived it in 1967. Finally the holiday was acknowledged by the United Nations in 1975.

For whatever reasons you celebrate, Happy International Women's Day!

For more information please go to <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/>

## International Women's Day



# THE LOSS OF ONE OF OUR OWN

by Eric Schuster and Patrick Quinn.

Bill Pelz, a well-known socialist activist and prolific scholar in the field of European and comparative Labor History died at the age of 66 in Chicago on Sunday, December 10, 2017, following a heart attack. Bill was born into a working class family on the South Side of Chicago. After graduation from high school he became a bus driver, "but later lowered my expectations and became an academic historian". An SDS member for a brief time before its demise, he joined the Chicago branch of the International Socialists (IS) at the beginning of the 1970s and soon became one of the best known leaders of the Left in Chicago. He was an early member of the Red Rose Collective, along with historians Mark Lause and David Roediger, and later a long-time member of the New World Resource Center. Both were radical Chicago book shops and important local organizing and information centers. He helped organize Chicago's first Rock Against Racism concert, and later joined Solidarity, served as International Secretary for the Socialist Party USA, and was the Chicago Political Education Office for the Democratic Socialists of American (DSA).

Bill became a Chicago-based academic scholar and professor of history and political science, first at Roosevelt University; then DePaul University, where he was Director of Social

## William A. "Bill" Pelz A life celebrated



Science Programs; and for the last 20 years a popular and award-winning faculty member at Elgin Community College. He received a history PhD from Northern Illinois University, where he studied with Marxist Historians Meg and C.H. George, completing a dissertation on the German Revolution and the Spartakusbund. He founded and led the Institute of Working Class History, co-founded the International Association for the Study of Strikes and Social Conflicts, and helped edit the Encyclopedia of the European Left. Bill also served on the board of the Illinois Labor History Society, which oversees the Haymarket Memorial and the Haymarket Martyrs' Monument.

As a scholar Bill produced many books and articles, including *A People's History of Modern Europe* (2016), *Karl Marx: A World To Win* (2011), *Against Capitalism: the European Left on the March* (2007), *The Spartakusbund and the German Working Class Movement* (1989), and *Wilhelm Liebknecht and Germany Social Democracy: A Documentary History* (2016). Also of note, Bill edited the *Eugene V. Debs Reader* (2000) (2007), with an introduction by Howard Zinn. For many years Bill published film reviews in *Film & History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television Studies*. At the time of his death *A People's History of the German Revolution* had been completed for Pluto Press. He also served on the editorial board for *The Complete Works of Rosa Luxemburg*, and co-edited a forthcoming volume in that series.

Generations of workers, students, and leftists in Chicago looked to Bill for inspiration, good humor, generous friendship, and political curiosity. The international academic community widely admired his commitment to revolutionary principles, and in that milieu he was known as a careful, serious, and rigorous historian. He will be sorely missed. He is survived by his wife, Dr. Adrienne Butler. A memorial service for Bill will be held in Chicago in January 28, 2018.



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# Illinois Labor History Society

## Membership Form



Renew your membership in the Illinois Labor History Society. The **Standard ILHS membership** (\$30 annually) includes: quarterly "Reporter" newsletter, invitations to special events throughout the year and email updates about ILHS activities and programs. Your **Silver ILHS membership** includes: standard membership, an exclusive ILHS Magnet and an exclusive ILHS car decal. Your **Gold ILHS membership** includes: standard and silver membership packages plus a book of your choice from the bookstore.

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Uniting the Rivers:  
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 Sunday January 21, 2018

Speaker: Julie McDonald

\*This lecture is held at the LaSalle County Historical Museum

Labor History in the Illinois Valley  
 Sunday, March 11, 2018

Speaker: Mike Matejka

\*This lecture is held at the Lock 16 Visitor Center

Illinois Memoirs:  
 Our Story, Your Opportunity  
 Sunday April 15, 2018

Speaker: John Hallwas

\*This lecture is held at the LaSalle County Historical Museum

Sunday Lectures  
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**ILHS President Larry Spivack led a discussion at Haymarket Square for the National Trust for Historic Preservation on Thursday November 16, 2017. This is the first tour we have done since the statue returned to Haymarket Square. Looking for a similar event for your group? Email us for more information at [ilaborhistory@gmail.com](mailto:ilaborhistory@gmail.com)**



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#ILHLives

Our Mission Statement

It shall be the Purpose of the Illinois Labor History Society to encourage the preservation and study of labor history materials of the Illinois Region, and to arouse public interest in the profound significance of the past to the present.



**ILLINOIS LABOR HISTORY SOCIETY**  
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Or Current Resident

The day will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voice you are throttling today." August Spies, 1855-1887