



California Right Attacks Labor Studies Scholarship

by Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein

California has long been the birthing ground for social and political developments later adopted by the rest of America, from hot rods in the 1950s and student insurgencies in the 1960s, to the tax revolts and celebrity politicians of more recent years.

And this seems equally true for the labor movement. California is the only large state where union density rose during the last half decade. Indeed, the Los Angeles basin, where the Service Employees and the Hotel and Restaurant Workers have been so active, is the "research and development" venue for the entire American labor movement. With a new strata of Latino/a leaders at the helm, the L.A. Federation of Labor has demonstrated how a creative admixture of organizing and politics can reap real dividends for janitors, hotel workers, home health care workers, and municipal employees.

A small but significant dividend came in the year 2000 when California's Democratically controlled state legislature funded a new University of California research unit, the Institute for Labor and Employment. With a budget of \$4 million a year, the ILE has reinvigorated labor studies scholarship throughout the nine-campus University of California, funding the research of hundreds of graduate students and faculty, hosting innovative conferences, and publishing the annual *State of California Labor*, a key reference for scholars and policymakers world wide. The ILE seemed to herald a new relationship between the trade union movement and university-based intellectuals. An older generation of "industrial relations" programs and institutes -- at Berkeley, UCLA, Cornell, Wisconsin, Illinois, Penn State, and other major universities -- had been established during the era of mass strikes and labor controversy that peaked during the 1930s and 1940s.

Leading figures like Clark Kerr and John Dunlop had structured these programs to ameliorate strife, strikes, and political polarization. The existence of a mass union movement had been taken for granted. Social peace and industrial efficiency were the goals of industrial relations scholarship.

But the ILE's task has been quite different. No one can assume the existence of a labor movement today, especially in the private sector. The promotion of "labor-management cooperation" in an era of rank union-busting has no constituency on either side of the class divide. Real wages and employment-based social provision are under perva-

sive downward pressure. The ILE has therefore seen itself as a think tank for the labor movement and for public officials who seek to advance social justice. Such research is useful, not in terms of day to day tactics, but as a way to ventilate new ideas and aggregate the kind of information upon which the unions and their allies can develop long-range strategic initiatives. And beyond this kind of sociological and economic research, the existence of the ILE has helped legitimate labor-oriented scholarship and generate the intellectual/academic milieu that is producing a new generation of university-based labor intel- (cont'd on page 3)

Greetings from the Editors

by Rick Halpern and Dan Letwin

We are pleased to present this inaugural issue of the *LAWCHA Newsletter*. Its appearance brings to fruition an idea that has been budding within the association for some time. Formally approved by the LAWCHA Executive Committee this past fall, the *Newsletter* is conceived as a means for cementing ties among the ranks of LAWCHA, raising public awareness of the organization, highlighting local initiatives of relevance to our members, and publishing feature essays on the past and present struggles of labor.

Published twice yearly, the *LAWCHA Newsletter* will come free to all members of the organization. Each issue will bring together short essays on topics of current interest, reports "from the grassroots" on locally-based, labor-related activities, items on the latest developments within LAWCHA, and a random notes"section, offering a pot-pourri of news items, archive notes, kudos, calls for papers and panels, and so forth.

In announcing this venture at the start of the year, we

described the *Newsletter* as "very much a collective enterprise," one whose "value and meaning to the LAWCHA community will turn upon the input of its members." Then we paused and waited to see what kind of input might actually materialize.

We did not have to wait long. The weeks ahead brought a raft of contributions from members across the United States and Canada concerning a wide range of endeavours -- both within and beyond the organization -- of interest to our members. These offerings -- together with timely essays from Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein on the assault on labor studies in California, and Leon Fink on the new journal *Labor* -- make up the heart (cont'd on page 3)

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Greetings from Jim Green

President of LAWCHA

On behalf of the officers and Board of Directors of LAWCHA I wish to express thanks to Rick Halpern and Dan Letwin for producing this, the first number of our *Newsletter*. I join them in inviting members to use this publication as a medium for communication and for sharing news of our activities. LAWCHA has had a stronger and stronger presence within the history profession, as you can see from the role our members are playing in various conferences, like the forthcoming

OAH meeting in Boston. However, since so many of our members are active in other realms outside the academy, such as public history projects, union support work and worker education, as well as in art and media production, we need a forum for sharing knowledge of our work in those realms with one another. The *Newsletter* will give us that forum and it will also provide an excellent way of introducing LAWCHA to those who are not yet members.

Report on Labor: Working-Class History of the Americas

by Leon Fink

As *Labor* editor, I am delighted by our new connection to LAWCHA and also happy to see a new publication taking shape in the form of the *LAWCHA Newsletter*. Together, we will hopefully give voice to the highest spirits of creativity in our midst, spirits operating among a diverse range of media and audiences. At the level of scholarly publishing, *Labor* hopes to pick up, extend, and deepen the pathways that a reformed *Labor History* had initiated before our split with its commercial publisher. By way of sizing up the current moment, permit me first to quote from my Editor's Introduction to our "farewell" volume of *Labor History*:

"With this issue, the editors complete a six-issue cycle in leading both the journal and the field towards a new and ambitious future. Against the backdrop of various intellectual and academic innovations as well as dramatic social and political changes in the larger world, we asked labor historians 'to expand our arena of curiosity and sharpen our faculties of understanding.' Our contributors have more than responded in kind.

"In a very short time span, we have featured worker-subjects ranging from colonial and Civil War soldiers to early 20th century teamsters, factory inspectors, and mineworkers to more contemporary poultry processors and welfare mothers. Connecting to political history, we have offered new takes on Richard Nixon and William Z. Foster as well as on NRA codes, social security legislation, and the World Trade Organization. Conceptually, we have from several angles plumbed the

complexity of race, racism, and ethno-racial identity as they have affected both labor and radical movements. Our pages have also thoughtfully introduced the themes of geography, military history, personal narrative (and of course animal rights) for consideration by our readers. Geographically, we have advanced on Mexico in both the revolutionary eras, and an exceptional survey of guestworkers lent us a more global reach. While playing to our 'history' base, we have also ventured into the realm of contemporary trade union policy and politics, while also featuring relevant selections of poetry, photography, and political cartoons. No less significant in their overall impact, our book review section (now encompassing films and websites too) has not only kept the regular reader abreast of all the latest currents in the field, but often done so with additional, critical insight and much-appreciated wit"

As I write this missive, I can attest that *Labor* has already more than picked up the baton from the old journal and editorial board. Amidst a fascinating mix of regular issues, we will have a special issue on Class Analysis in Early America and the Atlantic World, a nod at once to one of the earliest (if subsequently all too neglected) fields within the new labor history and a testament to current conceptual revisionisms. But rather than advertise what is to come, I wish to note here two arenas where I would hope we would see more submissions in the future. The two subject areas I

have in mind -- "women" and "work" -- will likely initially astound readers. After all, is not the latter the *sina qua non* of our very discipline, and is not the former a principal part of the "new" in the old New Labor History? My answer to both questions is yes, and no. Actual focus on the workplace, work routines, work process and transformation has come and gone as a focus among labor historians, and, based on what I have seen as editor, my impression is that it has "gone" again. Indeed, the most impressive work I have seen on work recently is written by anthropologists -- but of course their time period is usually restricted, methodologically, towards the contemporary era. In short, the history of occupations -- and the very significance and meaning of work over time -- is seldom broached by recent studies. As for women, I fear that as active subjects in working-class history they have been swamped by "gender" -- to be sure, a most useful historical concept in itself but insufficient to allow for the complexity of women's experience in relation to working-class social, political, or cultural history. In short, we have received all too few submissions dealing with women workers, women's labor politics, and/or women and working-class life. In these areas (and others unmentioned) we would certainly welcome new work.

One advantage of a newsletter, I take it, is that contributors can write a bit off the top of the head, offering perspectives not yet fully formed, but broaching ideas itching to get out. In that spirit, I offer my own two cents, while wishing this venture, like LAWCHA's larger project, every future success.

The LAWCHA Newsletter is published twice yearly and mailed to all paid-up members of the Labor and Working Class History Association. A PDF version (and eventually back issues) are available via the Association's website:
www.lawcha.org

Copy for the Autumn issue is due on 1 September 2004 and can be sent to one of the co-editors:

Rick Halpern, University of Toronto,
rick.halpern@utoronto.ca

Dan Letwin, Penn State University,
letwin@psu.edu



WHAT'S DOING IN LAWCHA

Message from the Program Committee

Co-chaired by Dan Bender and Nancy Gabin, the LAWCHA Program Committee is charged with the responsibility of maintaining and extending LAWCHA's presence at a variety of conferences.

Since appointed in November 2004, committee members Jose Alamillo, Caroline Merithew, Will Jones, Gabriela Arredondo, and Myrna Donahoe, along with Dan and Nancy, have submitted or helped organize LAWCHA-sponsored panels for inclusion at the 2004 Canadian Historical Association meeting, the 2004 Pacific Northwest Labor History Association meeting, the 2005 Berkshire Conference, the 2005 Organization of American History meeting, the 2004 American Studies Association meeting, and the 2004 OAH Southern Regional conference.

Currently we are working on panels for the 2005 American Historical Association meeting, the 2004 Social Science History Association confer-

ence, and the 2004 North American Labor History Conference. A bit further down the road, we will begin planning for LAWCHA's next "official conference" -- a co-sponsored meeting with the Southwest Labor Studies Association in California in May 2005.

We encourage all readers of this newsletter to work with us in organizing LAWCHA-sponsored conference sessions. If you are planning a panel or want to participate in a conference, the LAWCHA Program Committee can help. LAWCHA panels usually enjoy large audiences and are welcomed by conference program committees. They are also one of the best ways of expanding our organization's membership. If you are planning a panel or would be interested in taking part in a LAWCHA sponsored panel, please contact Nancy Gabin at ngabin@purdue.edu or Dan Bender at debender@watarts.uwaterloo.ca.

Meanwhile, (cont'd on page 4)

Message from the Editors (cont'd from cover)

of the present issue.

Arriving from many quarters (and on short notice), the material gathered here reconfirms the present dynamism of LAWCHA, the broad engagement of its members with the ongoing concerns of North American labor, and the vital role a newsletter can play in bringing this engagement and vitality to light.

Our next issue will come out in November (with copy due September 1). We invite any and all contributions or ideas for this and subsequent issues -- whether it be a report on a labor-based issue in your community, a word about a public history initiative, an idea for a feature essay, or any other item of potential interest to our members. We will select submissions and edit them according to available space.

Inquiries, suggestions, or submissions can be sent to either Rick Halpern (rick.halpern@utoronto.ca) or Dan Letwin (letwin@psu.edu).

California Right Attacks (continued from cover)

lectuals.

It did not take long for the ILE to draw right-wing fire. "Can you imagine a business administration program that doesn't take for granted the need to make profits?" asks Elaine Bernard, who heads Harvard's Trade Union Program, "or that doesn't want to talk to business leaders, or place its students in companies?" But when the ILE, as well as other labor studies programs, generated studies that backstopped union efforts to organize new workers and raise wages, conservatives cry foul. Such research is "advocacy": self-ish, corrupt, and against the public interest.

In July 2003, for instance, the Pacific Research Institute, a right-wing think tank funded by the Scaife and Olin Foundations, denounced ILE grants that sought to popularize unions in the high schools and probe the impact of "living wage" ordinances as indicative of the Institute's "anti-capitalism," one that "strikes at the heart of a basic economic freedom in America -- the right of employers and employees to freely negotiate compensation." A month

later, the *Wall Street Journal* published a column by the Manhattan Institute's Steve Malanga that denounced "the labor movement's successful co-opting of academic departments and programs," both in California and at other major universities.

All this might have remained a bit of conservative bluster had Arnold Schwarzenegger not become governor of California in the October 2003 recall election. From the point of view of the California right, it was payback time against liberals, labor, and the ILE. Schwarzenegger had probably never heard of the institute, but the chair of the PRI served on his transition team, while the anti-union Association of Builders and Contractors mobilized conservative legislators to make sure the ILE was on the governor's fiscal hit list. And so it was. When the governor slashed the state budget in December 2003, the ILE was the only University of California program targeted for outright elimination. Top UC officials did not protest: they probably figured that the labor institute was a sacrificial lamb that might satisfy right-wing hunger.

But the ILE has a lot of friends. The politically potent California Labor Federation stands solidly behind the Institute and sees its viability as important, both for its immediate usefulness and for the legitimacy it conveys upon the entire idea of trade unionism. Cal Fed leaders resent the fact that no business school funds were cut in the Schwarzenegger budget. Meanwhile, many UC faculty see the abolition of the ILE as an assault upon academic freedom and university autonomy. We are anxious to see the Academic Senate condemn such a politically-motivated purge. California Democrats, who control the state legislature, have also supported the ILE in the past, but in the contemporary fiscal crunch their friendship may count for little when the budget bargains are finally hammered out.

To build support for the ILE and for other labor studies programs now under political or fiscal attack, we are forming a "National Committee to Defend Labor Studies Scholarship." To join please e-mail Nelson Lichtenstein at nelson@history.ucsb.edu.

From The Grassroots

Northeast

From New England generally

Susan Pennybacker

Public history activism in New England ranges from venerable operations like Northeast Historic Film in Maine, to new efforts in southern New England like the New Haven Oral History Project at Yale University, and Douglas Rae's Historic New Haven's Digital Collection. The decade-old Hartford Studies Project at Trinity College recently received a Rockefeller Foundation three-year PACT award to complete a documentary film on Hartford from 1969 to the present, based upon footage on community infrastructure, politics, and the '69 riots, shot in the city by Film Board of Canada and LA film makers, under the aegis of LBJ's OEO. The HSP is building a public access archive for all its footage in collaboration with nine community partners, ranging from the NAACP to *La Voz* newspaper and neighborhood development organizations (www.trincoll.edu/depts/hartstud). They work closely with the Connecticut Historical Society, which just acquired the Old State House in downtown Hartford and is the home of a visual imaging project, Connecticut History On Line (www.chs.org). The *Hog River Journal* just entered its second year of publication with a great issue on the social history of medicine in the region (www.hogriver.org). New Haven is the scene of continuing

efforts by the Greater New Haven Labor History Association (www.laborhistory.org), the Jewish Historical Society (pages.cthome.net/hirsch), and the Community Foundation of Greater New Haven and its National Center for Black Philanthropy (www.cfgnh.org). The latter will hold a national conference in June to encourage and identify grassroots efforts in the region. The Greater New Haven African American Historical Society is underway again, and Puerto Rican and Latino-focused efforts at the arts organization -- Guakia, in Hartford, and the new history and culture project, Arte, in New Haven -- reflect the structural and cultural transitions in patterns of politics and immigration in the region. At Brown University, Hilary Silver and Jose Itzigsohn are compiling and editing work on *New Immigrants in Urban New England*. New exploration of the Asian presence is being undertaken by the Institute for Asian American Studies (www.iaas.umb.edu/research/current), through its "Asian Americans in New England Research Initiative."

From New Haven

David Montgomery

New Haven has been the scene of important union actions and effective community/labor coalitions during 2003. HERE Locals 34 and 35, the two recognized unions of Yale employees, had formed an alliance with GESO, the union representing graduate employees, and with the members of 1199 SEIU at Yale-New

Haven Hospital, both of which are fighting to win recognition and first contracts. The contracts of Locals 34 and 35 had expired in January, 2002, but neither a report by outside consultants invited by both sides (Restructuring Associates, Inc.), which was critical of Yale's management style, nor a brief strike in February-March, 2003 moved the negotiations forward.

Consequently at the beginning of the fall term the three unions at the university and the food service workers of the hospital -- its only employees who already had a contract, but which had expired -- walked out together, amid widespread support from the community. On 13 September thousands of members of other unions marched in support. Chief among them were UNITE, the Carpenters, Laborers, Teamsters, Steel Workers, HERE, and SEIU. John Sweeney was among the 152 people arrested for civil disobedience during the demonstration. Not only did prominent political and religious figures speak in support at the rally, but also -- most impressive of all -- 13 Latino immigrants, some of them undocumented, openly quit the subcontractor who had been using them to break the strike, and declared their support for the strikers. "We did not come here to hurt other people," said one Mexican woman.

Within a week Yale had agreed to new contracts with Locals 34 and 35. Those workers won pension improvements of 40-50 percent, wage increases, and improved conditions

Message from Publications Committee

The Publications Committee, co-chaired by Rick Halpern and Cindy Hahamovitch, and which includes Dan Letwin, Julie Greene, Toby Higbie, and Tom Dublin, produces LAWCHA's website (hosted at and supported by the College of William & Mary), newsletter, brochures, and oversees relations to LAWCHA's new journal, *Labor: Working-Class History of the Americas*. The Committee would like to remind all members to update their blurbs on the website's membership directory (www.lawcha.org/members.php) so that everyone will know what LAWCHA members are up to. We're interested in both scholarly achievements and activism. Communications about the work of the Committee can be directed to Cindy Hahamovitch at cxhaha@wm.edu.

Program Committee (cont'd)

look for LAWCHA at the OAH meeting in Boston! The Program Committee is sponsoring a labor history walking tour of the city, a luncheon featuring a talk by Alice Kessler-Harris followed by a panel discussion with local activists, roundtables about sweatshops, and a session devoted to the work and legacy of the late Herbert Gutman.

for casual employees and new hires. In return they agreed to an eight-year contract (two years of which had already run their course by January, 2004). But the hospital food service workers returned to their jobs with their contract still to be negotiated, and GESO initiated a series of teach-ins and petitions to advance its campaign for recognition. Most notably, it convened at City Hall an Academic Labor Board of eminent legal scholars to hear testimony about the unfair labor practices union graduate employees confronted.

Community struggles have obtained union support mainly through the Connecticut Center for a New Economy. In addition to sending eight busloads of demonstrators to the Immigrant Freedom Ride rally in New York, the Center waged a highly successful campaign against brutal bill-collecting practices used by the hospital against patients without insurance. It also mobilized hundreds of active opponents of a move by the New Haven Savings Bank to become a joint-stock firm, with the directors paying themselves huge bonuses for their efforts. Despite the protests state regulators have approved the bank's plan, though the bank did agree to establish a separate institution to finance housing within poorer parts of the city.

The Greater New Haven Labor History Association has surveyed the records of 21 local unions and put the results on its website, along with a valuable bibliography of writings on New Haven labor history.

Jennifer Klein

For International Human Rights Day, Yale workers, retirees, and New Haveners chose to emphasize a woman's right to organize, with a particular focus on the ongoing struggle of Yale New Haven hospital workers and graduate students to win union recognition. Barbara Ehrenreich came to town and led off a community march and vigil. A campus rally called for child care and health insurance benefits for children and dependents. One hundred women, including Ehrenreich, then occupied the street, forming the

women's sign, and took a civil disobedience arrest. We subsequently spent the evening in the police station in high spirits!

Mid-Atlantic

From Cortland, NY

Randi Storch

Community organizing in central New York is bringing academics together with organized workers, environmental activists, and ordinary working folks. In Cortland, Wal-Mart's bid to build a super Wal-Mart over a critical recharge area of the city's aquifer has sparked a coalition of young and old, labor and community activists to form a group called CAPE, Citizens for Aquifer Protection and Employment. Those in the town concerned about the city's water supply are joining forces with those opposed to the building of a super Wal-Mart in town and raising environmental, quality-of-life, and labor-focused questions. Jamie Dangler, chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at SUNY Cortland, is one of CAPE's leaders and a major force in organizing the effort of other faculty members in circulating petitions, writing letters to the editor in Cortland's local paper, attending CAPE meetings and forums, and participating in public education.

From New York City

Gail Malmgreen

The New York Labor History Association plans a full schedule of activities for the spring. Our illustrated Labor History Month calendar will appear as usual in April, with a detailed listing of New York labor history-related events taking place in May. Our annual conference, to be held on 4 May 2004 at the Workmen's Circle, 45 East 33rd St., will feature special guest Marvin Miller (of the Major League Baseball Players Association) and a panel of baseball writers discussing Miller's extraordinary contributions to labor relations in baseball. We are

about to re-start our Labor News Service (after a hiatus following the death of editor Tony Ramirez). Under the editorship of Patrizia Sione, archivist at Cornell University's Kheel Center, the service will provide monthly articles on labor history themes to local and international unions across the country. For more information on the Association, see our newly redesigned website at: www.ilr.cornell.edu/nylha or contact: Gail Malmgreen, Secretary, New York Labor History Association, Tamiment Library/ Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, NYU, 70 Washington Square South, NY, NY 10012, 212-998-2636.

From Rochester

Janet Zandy

In the last year, Metro Justice, a Rochester, New York grassroots and progressive organization doubled its membership. For 35 years Metro Justice has organized campaigns and built task forces to address issues of social and economic justice, locally, nationally, and globally. More recent activities include a Poor People United campaign to provide emergency shelter for homeless people, a "Reality Bus Tour" of poor neighborhoods to highlight the impact of welfare reform and budget cuts on the poor and the entire community, and a widely popular holiday season Alternative Craft Fair. Metro Justice also forms coalitions with other progressive groups, including the "\$5.15 is not enough" coalition to raise the state minimum wage and a coalition



A Voice from the People!

with the NY Civil Liberties Union to urge the Rochester City Council to enact a resolution reasserting our constitutional rights in light of the federal Patriot Act. Other task forces include Social Welfare Action Alliance, Corporate Welfare, International Women's Day, Interfaith Healthcare Coalition, Ciudad Hermana-Sister City Task Force, Rochester Committee on Latin America, Rochester Tikun Community, TV Dinner/Independent Media, and Peace Action and Education. Membership is not only expanding; it is also becoming more diverse racially and generationally. Old Lefties can still find a home here, but younger members are taking leadership roles as we all recognize how much is at stake these political days for the future of democracy and the struggle for economic justice. Contact Information: Metro Justice, 167 Flanders St., Rochester, NY 14619, 585-325-2560, www.MetroJustice.org or metroj@frontiernet.net.

From Philadelphia

Francis Ryan

In Philadelphia, LAWCHA member Francis Ryan has been busy working on an oral history of AFSCME in Philadelphia, highlighting the pioneering role District Council 33 played in early public sector unionism, and the interracial traditions that shaped the council's history since its origins in the 1930s. Through these oral histories and his broader research on the union's history, Ryan has helped develop educational programs used by AFSCME in Philadelphia. Foremost has been a series of classes on the history of AFSCME offered free to union members and their families. These classes, offered at DC 33 headquarters, have been coordinated through the **Comey Institute** of Industrial Relations at St. Joseph's University, where Ryan has taught labor history since 1997. In 2000, Fran, along with fellow historian and LAWCHA member Alice Hoffman, coordinated a photo exhibit for AFSCME's interna-

tional convention, celebrating the history of the union in the City of Brotherly Love. Before working on his PhD at Penn, Fran was a proud member of, and organizer for, the United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 1776.

From Pittsburgh

Marcus Rediker

Faculty and students at the University of Pittsburgh have been involved in the struggles of SEIU Local 585, Division 29, with good results. After a series of militant, pot-banging, traffic-snarling rallies, the union signed in June 2003 a new three-year contract on behalf of 400 workers. The deal, which includes wage increases to offset rising health-care costs, is regarded as the best Pitt janitors have won in years.

From Washington, DC

Joe McCartin

The Metro Washington Council, AFL-CIO, conducts an active program of street demonstrations and labor education in the greater Washington area under the leadership of council president Joslyn N. Williams and organizer Chris Garlock. Chris, the son of labor historian and labor educator Jonathan Garlock (who completed a landmark dissertation on the Knights of Labor under Herbert G. Gutman) once held the same position for the Rochester, New York, labor council where he collaborated with his father Jon in starting one of the country's first annual labor film festivals. In 2001 Chris and the Metro Washington Council inaugurated an annual labor film festival in Washington that has helped build labor culture in the shadow of the nation's capitol. The George Meany Center brings nearly 8,000 local leaders from AFL-CIO unions through its training programs each year. And an annual labor culture festival at the Meany Center attracts musicians and artists. The Metro DC Labor Council also puts out a weekly e-mail newsletter on local labor activities. Anyone who wishes to subscribe to that service may do so at www.union-voice.org/dclabor/join.html.



A local Street Heat group has been organizing solidarity protests on behalf of striking laundry workers, parking garage attendants, janitors, and others in recent years. And within the past two years local activists with the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice have developed more ties between labor and local religious groups. Flowing from that activity, a Labor Seder and a local Catholic Labor Network have been launched within the past two years, and a "labor in the pulpits" program has seen numerous activists speak out on labor's behalf in local churches, synagogues, and mosques. Local college students have also been drawn into labor issues by anti-sweatshop activism. Prominent among them were Georgetown University students who, in 1999, staged one of the nation's first anti-sweatshop sit-ins in a school administration building and who founded a vibrant campus organization called Solidarity. During the anti-war protests of 2003, local labor activists and student solidarity groups played a prominent role.

The 2004 DC Labor FilmFest is tentatively set for 9-12 September; when they are finalized, details on the festival will be made available on: www.dclabor.org.

Mid-West

From Chicago

Nancy MacLean

Several local LAWCHA members are working with people from other disciplines representing a number of area colleges (University of Illinois, Roosevelt, DePaul, Dominican College, and Northwestern among them) in the Chicago Center for Working Class Studies (CCWCS). Founded two years ago, sparked by the wider Working Class Studies movement (Youngstown, SUNY-Stony Brook, etc.), the group has been organizing such events as: a showing of "Unseen America," the worker photo exhibit produced by the 1199 SEIU Bread and Roses Cultural Project (see www.breadandroses.com/gallery/index.html to learn more or show this

outstanding and provocative exhibit in your area); a public panel of veteran Chicago labor activists called "Labor in the Black Metropolis: Chicago's Untold Stories"; and several cultural events in a "Writing Labor" series in which local labor people read their own and others' prose and poetry about work-related themes.

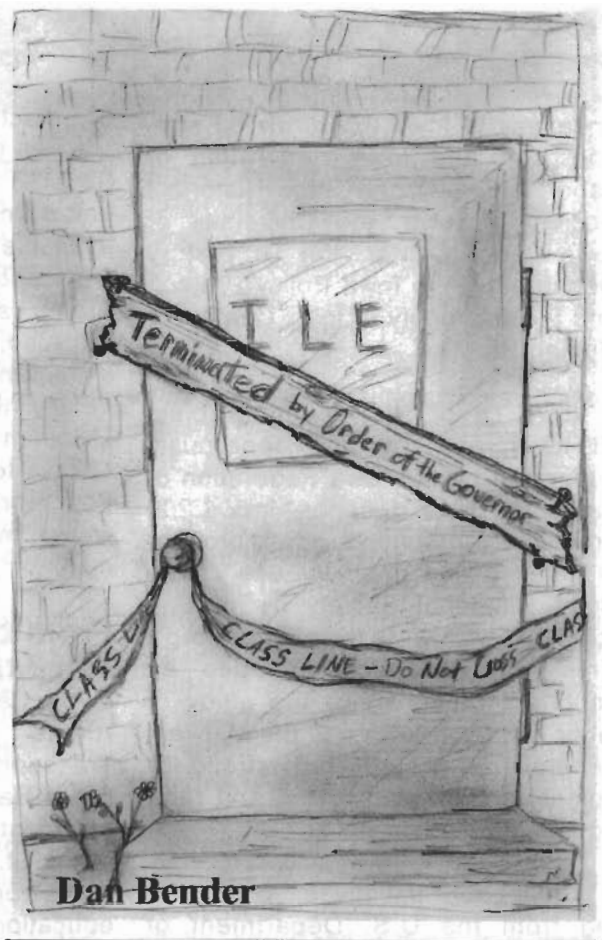
Our main current projects are:

- producing a Chicago Labor and Working Class History Map, a project headed by Leon Fink at UIC and involving a team of faculty and students who are compiling a labor map of the city like one produced in New York some years back, which will also have an accompanying website of related photographs, history, and resources. The Illinois Humanities Council has provided a \$10,000 grant to produce, copy, and distribute the map to area unions and schools;

- initiating and underwriting, with support from the local Weiboldt Foundation, an ongoing network of young labor and community organizers to promote more effective collaboration across old barriers for a more effective overall local movement;

- planning a spring Earl Dotter photo exhibit called "Injuries to All" that will showcase Dotter's haunting images of dangers on the job and their toll on workers. The exhibit will open 22 April. It has already led to collaboration with several local unions and with the UIC Center for Disability Studies for whom the exhibit can be used as an occupational health and safety organizing tool.

In addition to grants for specific projects, the group receives funding from the Chicago Federation of Labor and several area unions and has administrative support from the



Chicago Labor Education Program of the University of Illinois.

From Wisconsin

Michael Gordon

The 118th Anniversary Commemoration of the Bay View Tragedy will be held at 3 p.m., Sunday, 2 May 2004, at the Bay View Historical Marker Site at S. Superior St. and E. Russell Ave. The annual event commemorates the tragedy occurring during an 8-hour strike on 6 May 1886, when the state militia fired on some 1,500 workers near the Bay View Rolling Mills. The troops killed seven people.

The annual meeting of the Wisconsin Labor History Society will take place on Saturday, 17 April 2004, at the Madison Labor Temple, 1602 S. Park St. The conference will focus on "Professional Workers and Unions: From Newspaper Workers to Attorneys to Nurses." For more information, contact Ken Germanson, President, WLHS, at 414-449-4777.

(cont'd)

From Iowa

Shel Stromquist

Several intersecting projects are underway in Iowa that draw on support from the Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, the State Historical Society of Iowa, the University of Iowa Labor Center, the UI History Department, the Iowa Policy Project, and the University of Iowa Center for Human Rights.

Iowa Labor History Oral Project (ILHOP), founded and generously supported by the Iowa Federation of Labor for three decades, has 1,200 oral history interviews, now thoroughly indexed and open for use at the State Historical Society of Iowa in Iowa City (www.iowahistory.org). This rich collection provides an important resource for the study of labor history in Iowa and the Midwest generally. It is particularly strong for unions in the meatpacking and farm equipment industries.

Child Labor Initiatives. With funding from the U.S. Department of Labor, the University of Iowa Center for Human Rights (UICHR), in collaboration with the University of Iowa Labor Center and the Iowa Federation of Labor, has mounted an important new initiative to document and educate union members and the public about global child labor conditions. School and college curricula and workshops on child labor are being developed; a world child labor legal database is in place and undergoing further development; a collection of essays, Child Labor and Human Rights by scholars and policy-makers from around the world is on its way toward publication; and a "Child Labor Research Forum" will be convened in July 2004 to present the project's findings to the public. See the UICHR web site: www.uichr.org.

Iowa Policy Project (IPP), supported by the Iowa Federation of Labor, has released its important report on "The State of Working Iowa, 2003," and other reports analyzing the growing income gap, tax loopholes and tax benefits for the wealthy, the insufficiency of unemployment insurance (Out of Work, Out of Luck), and a

study of the economic and employment benefits of alternative energy. See their web site: www.iowapolicyproject.org.

Iowa Labor History/Public History. Several new publications aimed at union members and students are available: David Colman, *A History of the Labor Movement in the United States* (see www.uiowa.edu/~laborctr). Also, John McKerley, *A History of a Carpenters Local, Iowa City* (2004). Finally, the John L. Lewis Memorial Museum of Mining and Labor in Lucas, Iowa, is open to the public. For more details and hours, see www.uiowa.edu/~laborctr/linkshist.html.

From the Twin Cities

Peter Rachleff

Two LAWCHA members, David Riehle (local chairman, United Transportation Union Local 650) and Peter Rachleff (Professor of History, Macalester College), are active within the St. Paul Labor Speakers Club, which organizes a monthly public educational program at the St. Paul Labor Center. This eighteen year old program was initiated in the wake of the Hormel strike and it has always been managed by a group of union activists and labor educators. Its programs are free and open to the public, advertised by e-mail, postcards, occasional flyers, and notices in the *St. Paul Union Advocate* and the www.workday.minnesota.org website. It also cooperates with the Meeting the Challenge Labor Committee (which has organized an annual labor conference for the past eleven years) and the Friends of the St. Paul Library, on an annual program called "Untold Stories," which has made May "Labor History Month" in St. Paul for the past six years. We'll report more on these related activities in future newsletters.

In December, the Labor Speakers Club highlighted the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride, particularly the involvement of Minnesotans in the project. About fifty people attended a program which featured a rough cut of a video documentary by Howard Kling and Randy Croce of the University of Minnesota's Labor

Education Service, shot on the bus and at various stops and rallies. We also heard from five of the freedom riders, who were themselves Mexican, Liberian, Chinese, and Anglo. The discussion included plans for participation in the campaigns to pass an ordinance in St. Paul that would direct the police department not to enforce new Homeland Security/INS regulations and to pass legislation in Minnesota that would enable undocumented immigrants to get drivers' licenses.

In early January, the Speakers Club hosted a program we called "Flexible Fascism," exploring the connections between the U.S. government's agenda of "free trade" and its willingness to repress protests at home. About sixty attendees viewed a rough cut video by Howard Kling, this one shot in the streets of Miami during the anti-FTAA protests in November, and we heard from a number of Minnesota trade unionists and anti-corporate globalization activists about their experiences in Miami. Our discussion focused on the challenges of building a coalition that linked trade unionists and youthful activists from outside the labor movement.

In February, we will hold our annual celebration of Black History Month. Our program will feature Dave Riehle's visuals and lecture on the complex story of Charles James, an African American boot and shoe union activist who was elected president of the St. Paul Trades and Labor Assembly in 1902 and spent the next twenty years as a prominent activist in the local Black community and a national organizer for the Boot and Shoe Workers' Union.

South

From South Florida

Alex Lichtenstein, Monica Russo, Bruce Nissen

Over the past six months, South Florida has seen a number of important labor solidarity activities. In conjunction with Interfaith Action, Coalition of (cont'd on page 11)

Random Notes

The **Tamiment Library** is pleased to announce that **Peter Miller** won the 2003 **Jacob and Bessye Blaufarb Award** for his documentary film, "**Sacco and Vanzetti.**" The Blaufarb Videotape Library of the American Labor Movement was established at New York University's Tamiment Library in 1981 to help preserve the memories of the American labor movement. It offers post-production grants of \$5,000 or more to video makers whose projects are within the scope of the Tamiment Library's collecting interests. Preference is given to video makers who draw on the resources of the Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. Information about applications is available from **Michael Nash** at the Tamiment: 212-998-2428 or MN46@nyu.edu.

The **Bessemer Historical Society** (BHS), a non-profit organization located in Pueblo, CO, has acquired the archives of the now defunct **Colorado Fuel & Iron Corporation (CF&I)**. The collection contains over 20,000 cubic feet of unprocessed material spanning the entire history of the CF&I from its creation in 1872 to its dissolution in 1993. The archives are a vast untapped reservoir for researchers. The records include extensive collections on labor relations, personnel, engineering, mining, steel production, and medical files. A small portion of the records have been organized, specifically CF&I's numerous publications, Directors' minutes, and the files associated with the 1927-28 IWW strike. These processed records are currently open for research under the direction of the BHS' access policy. The BHS staff hopes to open all of the records to the academic community as soon as possible. They encourage the input of scholars to assist in the formulation of a continued processing strategy. Please contact the BHS with questions, concerns, or suggestions at 719-561-6309 or jay.trask@cfis-teel.org.

The **History Department** and the

Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies at the University of Washington invite prospective graduate students to apply for the **Harry Bridges Labor History Fellowship**, an entering-year award and tuition package. Labor history is one of the strengths of the University of Washington History Department and one of the components of the interdisciplinary program supported by the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies. For information about the Harry Bridges fellowship contact Professor James Gregory at gregoryj@u.washington.edu. Information about the UW History Program can be found at depts.washington.edu/cli/ and information about the Bridges Center can be viewed at depts.washington.edu/pcls.

The **Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era** invites manuscripts from LAWCHA members on any aspect of labor history in the United States between roughly 1870 and 1920. Published by the Society for Historians of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, this is the only journal specifically devoted to this obviously indispensable period for working class culture and life, the work experience, and the labor movement in the U.S. Please contact the editor: Professor Alan Lessoff, Department of History, Illinois State University, Campus Box 4420, Normal, IL, 61790-4420, e-mail: ahlesso@ilstu.edu, or go to www.jgape.org.

Recent issues of **Science & Society** have featured several articles on labor history. The current issue (vol 67, no. 4 Winter 2003-2004) has an article by Martin Hart-Landsberg on the popular mobilization supporting the Roosevelt Administration's World War II price control policy, and another by Brian Lord describing the discussions in 1973 concerning proposals for the formation of a new left-wing American labor party issued by a group around the radical attorney, Arthur Kinoy. In this same issue Michael Munk reviews *Workers after Workers' States: Labor*

and Politics in Postcommunist Eastern Europe, edited by Crowley and Ost. Earlier issues carried articles on Marx's influence on New Deal thinking, Frank Sinatra's flirtation with the left and labor, and Communist education at New York's Thomas Jefferson School of Social Science. Those interested in submitting articles should contact Marvin Gettleman at MARVGET@earthlink.net.

LAWCHA is joining with the Canadian Committee on Labour History, the Canadian Committee on Women's History, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, the *Journal of Women's History*, and *Labor* to sponsor a major international conference on labour feminism. "**Labouring Feminism and Feminist Working-Class History in North America and Beyond**" will take place 29 September-2 October 2005 at the University of Toronto. The conference will be organized around four inter-related themes: labouring feminism and female activism, feminism and the gendering of working-class history, race/ethnicity, and sexuality and bodies. The program will include a mix of plenaries (one devoted to each main theme), research-based sessions on current empirical work in the field, "feminist conversations" between scholars of different generations, and reports on contemporary struggles. Further information is available from: Labouring Feminism Conference, c/o Centre for the Study of the United States, Munk Centre for International Studies, University of Toronto, 1 Devonshire Place, Toronto, Ontario M5S 3K7, CANADA; E-mail: labour.fem@utoronto.ca.

The **Pennsylvania Labor History Society** is working with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Pennsylvania AFL-CIO, and Philadelphia Central Labor Council to dedicate a State Historical Marker in Philadelphia on 17 March recognizing the Mechanics Union of Trade Associations, recognized by scholars and

(cont'd on page 11)

Immokalee Workers, and Unite With Dignity, South Florida Jobs With Justice helped organize an Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride from Miami to Washinton, D.C. in September 2003.

In November, SFJWJ joined with many South Florida trade unions and community action groups to protest the FTAA talks, hosted in downtown Miami. I (Alex Lichtenstein) attended the march, and was fortunate to escape harm from the city's heavily militarized police force, though as is well known, many protesters suffered injuries from the indiscriminate use by police of rubber bullets and pepper spray. What I observed was a peaceful protest that brought together an amazing diversity of activists: trade unionists of all ages, races, and ethnic backgrounds; college students; seniors from the Old Left enclave of Century Village in Deerfield Beach; and community and religious leaders, to name just a few.

On 10 December, International Human Rights Day, South Florida saw a rally and hearing before a "Workers' Rights Board" to investigate local violations of the right to organize, a problem especially prevalent in Florida's burgeoning corporate nursing home industry. The Board, established by Jobs With Justice, brings together clergy, elected officials, and community leaders to create a forum to examine local issues of economic justice.

Finally, the new year ushered in a major victory by Service Employees Internationa Union Local 1991, which won a representation election among medical staff, service, technical, and maintenance workers at Pan American hospital in Miami. The workers joined the union when the hospital unilaterally reduced vacation time and sick days. Pan American vowed to file a challenge with the NLRB, despite the overwhelming pro-union vote of 404-45. "Creo que los trabajadores tienen el derecho de recibir un tratamiento justo y de organizarse; siempre he luchado a favor de la clase trabajadora de este condado." ["I believe the workers have the right to be treated fairly and to organize; I have always fought for the

working class in this community."] Believe it or not, those are the words of Miami-Dade County mayor Alex Penelas. Solidaridad!!

From North Florida

Bob Zieger

The big news in Florida, and especially in North Central Florida, is the fight of the United Faculty of Florida (NEA, AFT) to regain bargaining rights at the eleven former state university system campuses. This process was necessitated by legislation promoted by Governor Jeb Bush in 2002 that dismantled the former State University System, with which UFF had had collective bargaining arrangements dating back to 1976. Rulings by the state Public Employee Relations Commission (PERC) have necessitated that UFF re-establish bargaining rights and re-launch negotiations at each of the 11 campuses separately. Last year, UFF conducted card drives at the campuses, which resulted in overwhelming faculty support for UFF. Since then six of the campus administrations have voluntarily recognized UFF and have begun bargaining. At two others, elections under PERC auspices were held, with UFF gaining massive victories (92 percent at the University of West Florida; 97 percent at Florida State University). Recognition and bargaining have followed. Two other campuses will soon extend recognition, pending the outcome of minor disagreements as to bargaining unit composition.

The administration at only one campus -- that of the University of Florida -- has indicated that it will resist the re-establishment of UFF, despite the fact that 71.6 percent of contacted faculty in the historic bargaining unit signed authorization cards. So we at UFF, aided by an able staff of AFT organizers, are in the middle of our campaign to re-establish collective bargaining at UF. Right now, the key issue is the University's effort -- which many in the faculty regard as a cynical, union-busting ploy -- to expand the bargaining unit to elephantine size, presumably as a means of diluting union strength. Anyone interested in

expressing solidarity could e-mail new president Bernard Machen at president@ufl.edu urging him to support a prompt PERC ballot covering the historic bargaining unit at UF.

From Alabama

Wythe Holt

LAWCHA member Wythe Holt is working with a statewide group dedicated to commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court's 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision. Holt is coordinating the campaign in Tuscaloosa, where he is Vice President of the Coalition for Diversity and Inclusiveness at the University of Alabama. The Coalition is sponsoring a speaker series, campaigning to have local streets renamed, fostering structured dialogue between white and black students, and trying to preserve as an historic site the building where George Wallace stood "in the schoolhouse door" to block the integration of Alabama's public schools.

West

From California

Dana Frank

Here in California we have the best of times and the worst of times. The good news concerns the activities of the University of California Institute of Labor and Employment (ILE), headed by LAWCHA member Ruth Milkman of UCLA. In the past three years, with a budget of \$4 million annually, the ILE has funded a panoply of activities bridging research, education, and the California labor movement. It has made possible training for Latina labor activists, grassroots occupational safety & health projects, and a range of other resources for labor. On the academic front, the ILE has generously funded faculty research, annual graduate student conferences, and forums on issues facing labor in California. All this has helped create a critical mass of engaged scholarship and service to the labor movement, and a great sense of community throughout the state. The bad news concerns Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's attack on labor studies [discussed in

detail in Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein's feature article that opens this issue].

From The Bay Area and Southwest

Don Watson

The 30th Annual Southwest Labor Studies Association Conference will be held at the University of Arizona at Tucson on 29 April-1 May 2004. This is the third SWLSA conference to be held in Arizona. Coordinator Albert Lannon's theme is "Organizing Against the Wind." His program will include issues of labor, politics, migrants, and the border. Andrew Revkin, *NY Times* Science Reporter, will present a plenary session on the murdered Brazilian rain forest activist Chico Mendez.

Conference participants will also see documentary filmmaker Maria Brooks receive this year's Elaine and Karl Yoneda Memorial Award. This award, given annually at SWLSA conferences, honors her films including "The Men who Sailed the Liberty Ships," "The Odyssey of Captain Healy," "We Are the ILWU," and "PileButts."

Meanwhile the Bay Area Labor History Workshop programs are moving along. The new coordinator is Bill Issel from San Francisco State. This spring's programs are on the archeology of the Ludlow Massacre, Indian labor in the California missions, photographer Dorothea Lange, U.S. Labor and the War and, lastly, on the 1930s Garment Workers leader in California, Jenny Matyas. The annual dinner on 2 June will feature Sue Cobble of Rutgers, author of several books on women in the workplace.

From Las Cruces, New Mexico

Jamie Bronstein

New Mexico State University held a May Day celebration last year that was coordinated by David Boje of the NMSU Business School. Union organizers, performers, and faculty members participated in an all-day event, which consisted of speeches, poetry readings, musical performanc-

es, and some historical information being communicated. Those present were particularly urged to get involved with the cause of migrant workers, since their welfare is so neglected in southwestern farm country.

Canada

From Hamilton

Craig Heron

For the past seven years, the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre has produced a steady stream of high-quality exhibitions at its home base in Hamilton, Ontario. About three years ago, it also began producing traveling exhibitions to reach out to many more communities. A general exhibition on the history of Canadian labour has traveled widely under the title *All We Worked For*, and a new show on the history of African-Canadian workers, *And Still I Rise*, is now on the road. In November the Centre took a leap into virtual space with its first on-line exhibition, *Highway Workplace: The Canadian Truckers Story*. Eventually this one will also include a real transport truck traveling about the country with an exhibit in its trailer. For more information contact Heather McClellan, Visitor Services and Communications Coordinator, at wahc3@web.net.

From Toronto

Nathan Smith

The Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3902 (Teaching Assistants) is organizing contract teachers at the University of Toronto. With a vote for unionization of over 80 percent in October 2003, it has applied to the Ontario Labour Relations Board for interim certification so that it may prepare for bargaining. Final certification awaits the Board's decision regarding the non-union faculty association's claim to represent some contract teachers.

From Calgary

Betsy Jameson

LAWCHA member Betsy Jameson is serving as an advisor to a community-based oral history project in the

Crowsnest Pass, which is recording histories of working-class life in this major Alberta coal-mining center. Jameson is also working with the Alberta Spanish Civil War Memorial Foundation to establish a public memorial in Edmonton to honor the veterans of Canada's Mackenzie Papineau Battalion for their service in the Spanish Civil War. She also reports that last January and February, the local anti-war movement marched in sub-zero weather as part of a movement led and organized by the Calgary and District Labour Council. To give LAWCHA members below the 49th parallel some comparative grip on labour in Canada, Alberta is the most conservative and least-organized province (with unions representing only about 20 percent of the workforce).

Random Notes (cont'd)

activists as the beginning of the American labor movement. For more information on the dedication program contact Charles McCollester, President, Pennsylvania Labor History Society at 724-357-4443 or Kenneth Wolensky, Society Board member and PHMC historian at 717-772-0921. The Annual Conference of the Pennsylvania Labor History Society (PLHS) will be held 17-18 September 2004 in Erie, PA. See hhs.iup.edu/laborcenter/PartnerOrganizations/PALaborHistorySociety for more information and for reviews of previous PLHS annual conferences.

There is an ongoing Labor History Seminar at Chicago's **Newberry Library** (co-sponsored by University of Illinois at Chicago). Spring term speakers will include Steve Rosswurm on "Class, Gender, and Religion in the U.S. Catholic Labor Movement: The Campaign for a Feast Day for Christ the Worker"; Juan Mora-Torres on "The Political Development of Mexican Workers in Chicago, 1919-1932"; and Eileen Boris on "Manpower/Womanpower: Developing Workers, Constructing 'Employables.'" For further information, contact Toby Higbie at higbiet@newberry.org.

Who We Are

ABOUT LAWCHA

▶ We are historians, labor educators and working class activists who seek to promote public and scholarly awareness of labor and working-class history through research, writing, and organizing.

▶ We are open to the widest possible variety of approaches to the subject of labor and working class history; through our organization we facilitate the free exchange of ideas and opinions.



▶ We have a demographically regionally, and internationally diverse membership and leadership.

▶ We have developed mutually supportive relationships with existing regional, state, and local labor studies and labor history societies in the US and other countries. We have developed equally important relationships with unions and community organizations.

▶ We promote labor and working-class history within the history and social studies curricula in public schools as well as community colleges, colleges, universities, and unions.

Join Now!

BENEFITS OF A MEMBERSHIP

▶ Connect with other labor historians, educators, and activists through our comprehensive website at www.lawcha.org. It provides a wide range of resources, a membership directory, current news about the labor movement and the labor history profession, and much more.



▶ Participate in LAWCHA sponsored panels at the AHA and OAH, and at labor history and labor studies conferences around the United States. We cosponsor LAWCHA panels, plenaries, and walking tours, and hold an annual members' meeting

▶ Receive our informative and interesting newsletter twice per year that updates members on LAWCHA activities around the country.

▶ Grad student members are eligible for our Research Paper Award as well as annual travel grants to the North American Labor History Conference or to another co-sponsored LAWCHA conference.

▶ Receive reduced subscription rates to the labor history journal *ILWCH*.

▶ Receive a subscription to LAWCHA's official journal, *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas*.

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