



DEMOCRATIC

EFT

Vol. XXIX, No. 2

Fall-Winter 2001

Aftershocks

Special Labor Section inside

Democratic Socialists of America

Statement on the September 11th Terrorists Attacks

Nothing can justify the terrorist attacks that came from the skies on September 11th. Democratic Socialists of America condemns these brutal crimes. The victims of this tragedy require effective justice, not politically motivated hyperbole. Few have been spared the agony of some personal connection to the pain and anguish caused to those who have lost family or friends. Our hearts are with all who have lost loved ones and colleagues. All of the perpetrators of these criminal acts must be brought before the bar of justice. In the days and weeks ahead we will begin to learn the identities of those who perished, compounding the shock of the terrible images that we all saw time and time again on our television screens.

Our television screens have also been filled with the pundits of the right pushing their agenda of increased military spending and diminished civil liberties. Progressives and progressive elected officials must demand that all proposals be based on proven need rather than emotional excess. Sadly, such excess has already resulted in attacks against Americans of the Islamic and Sikh faiths. There can be no doubt that more effective anti-terrorist measures, including more effective intelligence gathering, better security measures, and policing of the skies, are necessary. But we cannot allow these needs to be used as fig leaves for wasteful and ineffective increases in military spending.

Nor should our response be unilateral. The Community of Nations has condemned this heinous act. We should act with them to extradite these criminals and seek justice through trial and punishment rather than the kind of ineffective bombing and missile campaigns that our government has initiated in the past. The apprehension of proven sus-



pects in this crime against humanity should be carried out through the international system of justice and international criminal procedures. We must remember that the terrorists hope to provoke inappropriate military responses. If force must be used, a multinational police action is the most appropriate means. Indiscriminate aerial attacks or prolonged military campaigns on foreign soil will breed more terrorists and further endanger the security of the United States as well as the rest of the world.

We cannot pretend that the answer to terrorism is simply a matter of military or law enforcement measures. We live in a world organized so that the greatest benefits go to a small fraction of the world's population while the vast majority experiences injustice, poverty, and, often, hopelessness. Only by eliminating the political, social and economic conditions that lead people to these small extremist groups can we be truly secure.

Approved September 16, 2001, by the DSA NPC Steering Committee



Editorial Committee:

Paul Buhle, Bill Dixon, Jeffrey Gold,
Steve Max, Bill Mosley, Maxine Phillips,
Kathy Quinn, Jason Schulman,
Joe Schwartz, John Strauss

Founding Editor

Michael Harrington
(1928-1989)

Democratic Socialists of America share a vision of a humane international social order based on equitable distribution of resources, meaningful work, a healthy environment, sustainable growth, gender and racial equality, and non-oppressive relationships. Equality, solidarity, and democracy can only be achieved through international political and social cooperation aimed at ensuring that economic institutions benefit all people. We are dedicated to building truly international social movements - of unionists, environmentalists, feminists, and people of color - which together can elevate global justice over brutalizing global competition.

DSA NATIONAL OFFICE

180 Varick Street FL 12
New York, NY 10014
212.727.8610

<http://www.dsausa.org/dsa>

Democratic Left (ISSN 1643207) is published quarterly at 180 Varick Street, New York, NY 10014. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY (Publication No. 701-960). Subscriptions: \$10 regular; \$15 institutional. Postmaster: Send address changes to 180 Varick Street, New York, NY 10014. *Democratic Left* is published by the Democratic Socialists of America, 180 Varick Street, New York, NY 10014. (212) 727-8610. *Signed articles express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the organization.*

Message From the Acting National Director

Terrorism is also a direct challenge to APEC's vision of free, open and prosperous economies...leaders reaffirm that it is more important than ever for every economy to forge ahead in its goal of achieving...free, open trade and investment.

—Asian Pacific Economic Community leaders' Statement on Counter Terrorism issued at the Shanghai Meeting.

The War on Terrorism is apparently *not* to be a challenge to the economic status quo. The United States and its allies have no intention of changing the nature of international economic development. No change to a system that buys off developing nations' elites yet leaves the vast majority in poverty. No change, presumably, in the direction of international policies that protect corporate profits and defend corrupt regimes across the globe.

The bombs will do it all, I guess. Perhaps the United States can succeed in disrupting that part of Al-Qaeda's infrastructure based in Afghanistan; we probably can force a change in the government of Afghanistan. We can bring to power some other faction or combination of factions.

But what kind of justice are we hoping to achieve? Two Senators—one a leading Democrat, the other a leading Republican—recently opined on the Sunday talk shows that no purpose would be served by a trial of bin Laden. Perhaps they feared a trial would focus public attention on a much-needed examination of our intelligence services and their failure to detect a threat around September 11. Or perhaps a trial would focus attention on the United States government's role in training many of the terrorists with whom we are now at war. But justice without trials is nothing more than street justice.

Terrorism is a tactic adopted out of political desperation and moral corruption; using force to combat international terrorism is also a tactic, and we can debate when and in what form the use of force may or may not be justified. But such a tactic does not get at terrorism's root causes. We could support a serious, multi-pronged campaign against terrorism that was more than just the application of force. Such a campaign would, by necessity, rely much less on brute military force. Is the United States to conquer—and then permanently govern or shop for acceptable alternative governments—every nation that has housed some terrorist activity (including our own states!)? Such a serious "war" on terrorism would more likely involve sophisticated diplomacy; cooperation among intelligence and police agencies; and equitable economic development policies (plus stronger regulation of international financial institutions so they no longer profit from money-laundering). Ending poverty and hopelessness would remove much of the fuel for terrorism.

Bringing criminals indicted by a fair judicial process to justice may require the use of appropriate force. DSA has acknowledged that from the beginning of this crisis. But absent a true international fight against terrorism and its causes, the use of unilateral United States military power is more likely to increase terrorist activity than it is to suppress it.

Our government must not only act consistently in favor of international justice; it must also apply principles of justice at home. The incredible moral double standard exhibited by the government's reaction to the threat of Anthrax is indefensible. *continued on page 19*

inside DL

- 2 **DSA Statement on September 11**
- 3 **Message from the Acting National Director**
- 4 **Narrow Escape:**
My September 11th Story
by Erin Kaiser
- 6 **Economic Citizenship: the Next Battle?**
By Alice Kessler-Harris
- 7 **Organizing Immigrant Workers**
(An Interview with Ruth Milkman and Kent Wong)
- 10 **Rebirth of the Labor Mural: Mike Alewitz**
by Paul Buhle
- 12 **Why be Left in the Labor Movement?**
Reflections of a young organizer in the field
by Gabe Kramer
- 15 **Local Reports**
- 16 **Richard A. Cloward**
Scholar and Activist, 1926-2001
By Ken Grossinger
- 17 **DSA Statement on the Bombings**



NARROW ESCAPE

My September 11th Story

By Erin Kaiser

September 11th was Primary Day in New York City. I woke up early so I could get uptown to Mark Green's mayoral campaign headquarters by 9:00 am. I was exhausted from a night spent putting up posters with some fire department unionists, driving around Brooklyn until 4:00 am.

I was pretty foggy when my roommate, Liz, came in and told me to look out the window. We turned on the news and watched for a few moments as awestruck local newscasters talked about how shocked they were; a plane had crashed into one of the World Trade towers. Stunned, we made our way to our A/C line subway station while Liz recounted the truck bombing in 1993 and wondered aloud if it all wasn't happening again. When we parted ways on the subway downtown, her last words to me were, "Those towers are invincible, nothing can knock them down."

By the time I reached my station to change trains it was closed. I decided to stay on my train, continue uptown and then walk over to the campaign office. Almost immediately after the doors closed a message came over the loudspeaker, "There has been an attack on the World Trade Center; you will be evacuated at your next station." Then there was a pause. "Next stop, Chambers Street, World Trade Center."

Climbing up the stairs of the subway station I heard an explosion. I looked above me and saw a bright



fire. Within seconds the tower collapsed and a rumbling, like an earthquake, shook the handrail and it came off of its fastening. As pieces of concrete, glass, and debris came tumbling down, I remember people running beside me suddenly fell and disappeared from my vision. At one point a woman and I both desperately ducked under the awning of a store. She clutched my hand and we pressed ourselves against the building trying to breathe. As we looked back down the street we could see the real danger: a wall of smoke and debris many stories high that was quickly taking the city, block by block. It was already difficult to take in air, and our mouths were filled with dust.

I ran around a corner and found smoke coming at me from two directions. At a building across the street, people were seeking cover as secretaries waved them into the building. We followed in behind

the front doors to keep the smoke from continuing to overtake us. Inside, we started climbing stairs, desperate to breathe, coughing and spitting up pieces of debris. A few elderly men dropped to the ground and stopped breathing. A pregnant woman went into labor. All around me people were crying, screaming, and praying. One man muttered, "I was on the 104th floor. I just kept running."

Finally away from the smoke in a conference room of a nameless law office that provided temporary sanctuary high in the building, we gathered round the windows and watched in horror as people fell past our view from the second WTC tower windows. Thankfully, smoke soon obscured our view. At first everything outside looked white, like a prairie blizzard, then it seemed like it was midnight.

Rumors flew around the room originating from portable radios and

traveling like a children's game of telephone through the panicked survivors: "Did you hear? The Golden Gate Bridge – gone. The Pentagon, the White House, State Department, Camp David, the Sears Tower, Empire State Building, The UN, Statue of Liberty." It would be hours before any of us would know, for sure, that the whole country was not in ruins.

When the second tower fell, our windows burst from the force of the blast. We were sent into another panic. Some now bloodied, we pushed up the stairs as our air became cloudy. We wondered how many floors we had left to climb and what we would do if we ran out of air. Some started advocating that we leave, now, before the whole financial district fell down. To breathe we had to climb higher, but no one wanted to be closer to the sky. Voices of reason pointed out that the most dangerous thing we were facing was the smoke. In that stairwell, a group of us tried to come to terms with a second seeming reality, the knowledge that in a relatively short period of time we would all be dead. It seemed a horrifying but obvious conclusion to our situation. We sat in the stairwell and drafted last words on pieces of paper and palm pilots to our friends, lovers, and families.

Within 20 minutes fire fighters came to our rescue, their faces and uniforms covered in thick white dust. They silently fitted masks around our heads and pointed us down the stairwell.

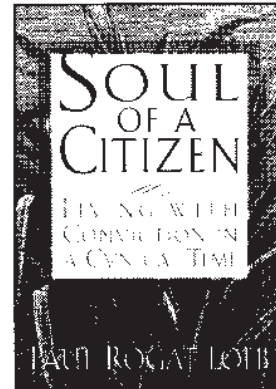
I was stunned to see the streets covered in white snow-like dust and bodies. I couldn't see more than a meter in front of me. Flares were lit to mark a path out of the financial district. Emergency crews rushed past us, back towards the blast zone. I saw a few desperate women and men sob to emergency personnel to let them back in. They had been separated from a friend, a brother, a mother, a husband, and they had to find them. Those people were actually allowed back in; no one had the heart to stop them. We surrendered our military-issue gas masks (in very short supply) and traded them for construction-issue dust masks when we got closer to the Brooklyn Bridge. The sight of millions of people walking over the Brooklyn and Manhattan bridges with masks and smoke and debris is a sight I will never forget. It was apocalyptic. Some people, still panicked, ran the whole way. Some fell to their knees and prayed. Some cried and wiped off the layers of dust and blood. Mostly, we looked ahead to Brooklyn. Someone pointed to a young guy wearing a military-issue gas mask with personalized decorations obviously his own. Why did he have that with him? I looked at his anarchist patches and laughed hard for a moment and responded, "post-Seattle stress disorder." It was at that moment, thinking about Seattle, that I realized that everything was about to change. A plane flew overhead and people cringed and screamed. Could the bridge we were walking on be the next target? I thought it was a military plane. (Someone told me later it had been a passenger plane that had been denied permission to land.) It seemed cruel and unnecessary to subject us to the sound of booming jet engines in the skies above. Looking back at the bridge before I finally reached the safety of Brooklyn, I remember seeing that the bridge was covered in pairs of high heels.

continued on page 15

GIVE A GIFT OF COMMITMENT

"Compassion, intelligence, and thought-provoking wisdom...A new vision for personal engagement with societal issues."

—Publishers Weekly



Please visit www.soulofacitizen.org and pass the word.

"A passionate but reasoned call for Americans to become involved in issues that matter."

—Chicago Sun-Times



"Skillfully erases the seams between the political and personal."

—John Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO



"The voices Loeb finds demonstrate that courage can be another name for love."

—Alice Walker



"A transformative book of courage and authenticity."

—Paul Hawken



"Soul of a Citizen helps us find the faith we need to act on our deepest beliefs—and keep on."

—Marian Wright Edelman,
Children's Defense Fund

Available wherever books are sold

 St. Martin's Griffin

Economic Citizenship: the Next Battle?

By Alice Kessler-Harris

More is at stake in the on-going discussion of privatizing social security than is on the table. While we are deluged with arguments about whether or not the system will be bankrupt in as little as 14 or as much as 30 years, and treated to wild speculation about how much more we will reap if each of us put our own pittance into our own individual accounts, nothing is said about the issue that should concern us most. At stake is whether we abandon the last vestiges of the (truncated) collective quest for economic security developed in the 1930s in favor of the more individualistic ethos promoted by the major political parties and especially by the Republicans. Before decisions are made to alter the system, we should look at the competing value systems that inform current proposals. It is important to do this because Social Security has been a critical factor in moving large groups of people towards what can best be called economic citizenship: the full range of economic rights that underline political participation. Since 1935, the Social Security program has provided an important access route to economic citizenship

Don't get me wrong. I've been as much a critic of these programs as the next person, and I've been particularly concerned with their racial and gendered biases. It is no secret that when the Social Security Act was signed into law in 1935 it excluded fully half of all working people from its unemployment insurance and old age insurance provisions. Casual laborers, domestic servants, the unskilled and untrained, housewives, farm workers, and mothers without good jobs all found themselves on the wrong side of a boundary line that demarcated different kinds of citizenship. Among the excluded were nearly 90

percent of wage-earning African-American women and the majority of women of every race and ethnicity. But over the years, the program has evolved into something more closely approaching social insurance. It has extended its reach to cover the children and widows (widowers were added in the 1970s) of beneficiaries, the disabled and other dependent family members.

Social Security has been a critical factor in moving large groups of people towards what can best be called economic citizenship.

It has expanded its coverage to include every American worker with the exception of federal government employees. Its racial and gendered biases substantially diminished with a series of Supreme Court decisions in the 1970s. And, though Social Security remains regressive at the level of contributions—applying a flat tax to everyone and taxing only a portion of the highest incomes—it is mildly redistributive when it comes to benefits. The lowest contributors get a better return on their money than the well healed. At its heart, Social Security remains a symbolic commitment (perhaps the last remnant of the New Deal spirit) to our shared responsibility for each other.

Granted, that commitment has been limited. When the federal government legislated an array of social benefits and tax incentives in the 1930s, it attached the most valuable benefits not to families but to wage-

work. Work, wage-work, had long marked a distinction among kinds of citizens: intimately tied to identity, it anchored nineteenth-century claims to political participation. Without economic independence, vested for most people in claims to jobs, and acknowledged as the right to work if not as a claim to a particular job, political participation, and most political theorists thought, would remain elusive. "We are," in the words of political scientist Judith Shklar "citizens only if we 'earn.'" American labor leader Samuel Gompers agreed. He told Congress bluntly in 1898 "a declaration of political liberty which does not involve an opportunity for economic independence is a delusion."

Consistent with this spirit, the 1930s old age insurance legislation provided benefits only to those who contributed to the system, rather than to all citizens or all residents as most Western European industrial countries did.

Tying benefits like old age pensions and unemployment insurance to jobs affirmed the status of recipients as independent and upstanding citizens and demarcated those without good jobs or any at all as in secondary positions. Employment emerged as a boundary-line delineating key boundaries of citizenship. The plan's architects described their contributory blueprint as guarantees that Social Security would remain a "right," invulnerable to political influence, and not to be compared to means-tested programs. Casual laborers, the unskilled and untrained, housewives, farm workers, mothers, and domestic servants all found themselves on one side of a barrier not of their own making. Their own benefits were not earned but dependent

continued on page 18

Organizing Immigrant Workers:

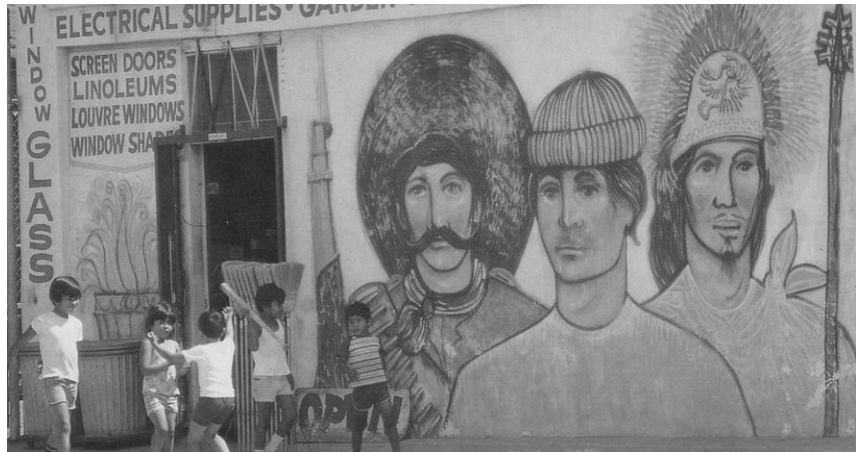
Los Angeles and the Future of U.S. Labor Movement

DL editor Joseph Schwartz recently sat down with two of the leading academic experts on immigration and labor—Ruth Milkman, Professor of Sociology at UCLA, and Kent Wong, Director of the UCLA Labor Center—and discussed the recent changes in the AFL-CIO's policy toward immigration and the successes the labor movement has had in organizing immigrant workers in Los Angeles and elsewhere.

DL: *How much success has been achieved in organizing immigrant workers in Los Angeles in the past several years? Has the success led to a change in the overall unionization rates in the LA-area?*

Wong: In 1999–2000 over 100,000 workers joined the ranks of organized labor in the Los Angeles area. The largest single campaign gained collective bargaining rights for a record setting 74,000 county home care workers, employees who were overwhelmingly women and people of color, with a very large percentage being immigrants. The successful Justice for Janitors campaign also made inroads into organizing immigrant workers....

Milkman: The disproportionate number of immigrant workers involved in these drives, in part, results from the low-wage workforce in Los Angeles being overwhelmingly made up of immigrants. Union density in the city has, however, stayed flat at about 15 per cent of the workforce for lots of reasons. First, the LA economy was growing very rapidly. So the denominator—the total number of jobs—grew rapidly. That means that just to stay in place at 15 per cent unions have had to make major organizing gains. Secondly, tra-



ditionally unionized sectors have lost jobs due to the collapse of aerospace, firms moving to Mexico, etc. LA was one of the major growth nodes of the new economy and many “old” sectors faded.... One thing the ILE will be doing is a detailed census of California union membership by economic sector.

But there definitely has been a transformation in the consciousness of labor leaders in Los Angeles over the past decade in regard to organizing immigrant workers. The AFL-CIO held “town hall” meetings all over the nation in 2000 to explain its change in favor of extending legal status and collective bargaining rights to all immigrant workers in the United States. In LA, the meeting drew 20,000 workers to the sports arena...people were turned away from this event in large numbers. Similar though smaller town halls around the country demonstrate that, in part out of necessity, the labor movement’s attitude towards immigration policy and organizing immigrants has changed. The LA labor movement has played a major role in changing national policy and its innovative efforts in organizing have made a large difference....

DL: *Many students of the history of the labor movement hold that major gains in organizing only come when the labor movement becomes a major social movement, as it did in the 30s. Under such circumstances, workers seek out unions as much as unions seek out workers.*

Wong: There is undoubtedly more social movement consciousness among much of the immigrant workforce and immigrant leadership. An emerging new generation of labor leaders in Los Angeles has a greater orientation to social movement building than did recent past generations. It is significant that the LA County Labor Federation is for the first time led by a person of color (Miguel Contreras of HERE). The leaders of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers, the Home Care workers and Justice for Janitors all have a background in social movement organizing. These leaders have played a major role in changing the AFL-CIO’s national policy on immigration. It’s no accident that the AFL-CIO brought its 1999 national convention to Los Angeles and held a major event to demand amnesty for all immigrant workers in 2000. John

Wilhelm, the national president of HERE, has committed his international to a major national campaign for immigration reform and amnesty for immigrant workers. We have to remember that in 1986 the AFL-CIO had a conservative position on immigration reform, arguing that immigrant workers would take jobs from legal residents.

Milkman: Today many national and local labor leaders recognize that if labor is going to survive it has to organize a changing work force. This shift in policy may have occurred out of necessity, but there is no turning back now. We should also recognize, however, that an immigrant rights movement has developed somewhat apart from labor. As labor has changed its attitude on immigration, we have seen more and more alliances between labor and the immigrant rights movement. Many churches are heavily invested in this movement, as it is one composed of their parishioners. The highest-ranking official in the Los Angeles Catholic hierarchy presided over a public mass with John Sweeney and the LA labor leadership at the height of the Justice for Janitors strike in April of 2000. This close relationship between labor and the religious community around the rights of immigrants has undoubtedly helped to create greater pro-union consciousness within the immigrant community.

DL: Some labor historians have described the rise of the CIO in the 1930s and 40s as a revolt of second generation immigrants, who no longer evaluated their lives in the US in reference to conditions back in their countries of origins. Might this be the case among immigrants who have been in the country for some time now?

Ruth Milkman: There does seem to be some preliminary evidence that the

longer immigrants have been in the US the more likely they are to be union members. It's a bit too early to test your hypothesis, however, as the second generation, the children of recent immigrants, are just beginning to enter the work force. But clearly the longer one is here, the more likely an immigrant will have moved from a very vulnerable job such as day laborer or domestic worker into a more stable job that can be unionized. On the other hand, among Central American and Mexican immigrant workers there is considerable back-and-forth movement to their home countries....

There is a fascinating and complex story to be told around the political effects of transnational connections. Some Mexican immigrants, for example, are suspicious of unions because of bad experiences with corrupt PRI-controlled "official" unions in Mexico. Other recent immigrants have union or political connections from their home countries that more easily facilitate their transition into union organizing in the US. More important than former union or political connections might be the reality that immigrant communities have much more collective life and collective consciousness than do the more individualistic native-born populations. Collective interaction remains a matter of survival for immigrants.... When unions are able to tap into these communal networks, their organizing efforts benefit tremendously.

It's rather ironic that these vibrant communities exist in a southern California that has been stereotyped as a place with a very limited public communal life.... [I]mmigrants live in a very different world...generating a sense of the need for unity and organization.

Wong: Among immigrant communities a strong collective sense is a matter of survival. Latino and Asian

immigrant communities still face tremendous discrimination and exploitation. Obviously, solidarity takes on different forms in different communities. In the Justice for Janitors campaign, much of the leadership was from El Salvador—both individuals with experience in the FDR and FMLN, but also more conservative and Catholic social activists. Filipinos have played a tremendous role in the SEIU campaigns, particularly Health Care worker struggles. Many Koreans have a positive image of unions based on the role of workers struggles in democratizing Korea. While there clearly are conservative elements in both the Korean and Vietnamese immigrant communities, both Vietnamese and Korean workers have played leading roles in successful union organizing campaigns.

DL: How have efforts to organize immigrant workers played out in the broader political arena?

Milkman: As many now realize, former Governor Pete Wilson's attack on immigrant rights via Proposition 187—which denied social welfare benefits to legal immigrant workers—backfired. Naturalization rates skyrocketed and electoral rolls bulged with new immigrant voters. Unions have been even more successful in mobilizing immigrants to vote than in signing them up as members. The labor movement played a central role in Governor Gray Davis's election. Given labor's greater political weight, you now get politicians trying to visibly support union efforts; even Mayor Richard Riordan backed the janitor's strike last year. In Los Angeles County, labor, with its predominantly, but not exclusively, immigrant base, has become the 800-pound guerrilla in local politics. Of course, after Hahn's narrow defeat of Villaragoisa in the spring 2001 mayoral race, a major issue for both labor and the progressive community

is restoring a progressive Black-Brown-labor alliance.

Wong: Obviously, the Central Labor Council backing Antonio Villaragoisa for mayor (in May 2001) was a big gamble, given that labor was somewhat divided and that Hahn was also a pro-labor Democrat. But even though Villaragoisa lost the run-off (garnering 47 per cent to Hahn's 53 per cent), his first place primary win was a sign of the coming of age of the labor-Latino alliance. The incredible mobilization in the Villaragoisa campaign reached into every community. Obviously there were splits within the labor movement, with the building trades and some public sector unions going with Hahn. And given Hahn's father's civil rights record and decades-long representation of South-Central in county government, Hahn got strong support from African-Americans. But, on balance, not only did a pro-labor Democrat win over another even more pro-labor, left Democrat, but labor once again demonstrated its capacity to register immigrant voters and mobilize its base.

To grapple with this issue one has to understand the differences in immigrant concentrations in the LA work force. African-Americans are concentrated much more in transport and the public sector. Latinos predominate in the low-wage service sector, garments, and small factories.... Tensions in the broader society always reflect themselves within the labor movement. Most area unions are quite conscientious in trying to bridge racial divisions and forge alliances.

DL: Are "the lessons of Los Angeles" exportable to the labor movement in the rest of the country?

Milkman: Obviously, LA has one of the highest concentrations of immigrant workers in the nation. But the

phenomenon is spreading, and immigrant workers and their children will play a large role in the workforce in most major cities as well as some less urbanized areas. The conventional wisdom about immigrants and the labor movement has also changed. The mainstream media used to say that immigrant workers were hard for unions to organize because they were grateful for their new standard of living.... More recently, however, for example in the *New York Times* coverage of UNITE's victory organizing textile workers in Kannapolis, North Carolina (after years of defeats), the influx of immigrant workers into the plant was cited as a key factor facilitating the victory.

One obvious issue confronting the labor movement is that the membership is much more "colorful" than is the leadership. Labor leaders tend to keep jobs for life and the composition of the leadership lags behind that of the members. This problem is easier to solve if the movement grows rapidly.

Wong: There is still room for improvement and growth in regards to the leadership looking more like the membership. But there has been more progress here in LA, in terms of women and people of color in leadership, than in most other places. There is a new generation of very dynamic, strong women and people of color in union leadership positions.

DL: *Some recent academic work suggests that there is some competition in lower-wage labor markets between immigrant workers and African-Americans, particularly younger, male African-Americans. How can the labor movement advocate for both?*

Wong: This is a huge challenge for the labor movement. HERE just had its national convention in LA. They devoted an entire day to discussing

immigration...as part of a broader civil rights agenda. HERE leaders were quite explicit in stating that they will not allow businesses to use immigration as a wedge issue against the interests of African-American. There is some evidence that the hotel industry prefers to hire immigrants for certain jobs over African-Americans.

Milkman: The classic answer is that the language of class (and class interest) should bridge this gap. Of course, that does not always happen. This tension is being talked about fairly openly among labor activists in Los Angeles, particularly in light of the Villaragoisa experience. Employers often do like to hire immigrant workers over natives of any race, believing that their more vulnerable status will make them more deferential and hard-working.

Wong: But employers often switch from one group of immigrants to another, if an immigrant work force demonstrates an inclination to organize. We have to remember how much organizing needs to be done among *all* workers. In LA, ninety per cent of the private sector remains unorganized and union density among hotel workers remains lower than San Francisco, Chicago, and New York. In some ways, the quality of the Los Angeles labor movement, its political clout, is higher than its quantity—its numbers.

Milkman: Labor's political mobilization gives it more weight because of the fragmentation of other political forces. The native population of LA is not very interested in politics, and is poorly organized when it comes to elections, something that is rare in other large cities. Indeed, this aspect of labor's success in LA probably could not be easily replicated elsewhere.

continued on page 14

Rebirth of the Labor Mural: Mike Alewitz

By Paul Buhle

Labor's own icons go back centuries. William Blake's etchings immortalized a memory of anti-aristocratic verse in the unanswerable question, "When Adam Delved and Eve Span / Who Then Was the Gentleman?" Recent eras have seen almost as many styles as artists: Wobbly cartoons by forgotten hobos, fabulous radical posters—memorably from the early days of the Russian Revolution—by great modern artists, detailed paintings of urban working class life by the likes of former gas-station attendant Ralph Fasanella, among many others.

But the mural is the historic, natural form for the labor artist. It follows the great frescoes of the medieval masters, who worked hand-in-hand with the artisans in the art forms beloved by masses. In the twentieth century, the Mexican muralists Diego Rivera, Jose Orozco and David Siqueiros practically reinvented the mural as a paean to the suffering and endurance of ordinary folk. The destruction of Rivera's anti-capitalist mural in Rockefeller Center during the 1930s may still provide the juiciest art scandal of the century. American muralists working for the New Deal's Works Progress Administration also made dozens of remarkable paintings on public buildings, although censorship restrained their more radical impulses.

Then came the 1970s and the use of walls to display outrage at neighborhood destruction or tributes to community heroes, especially Latinos and African-Americans. From Los Angeles and San Francisco to Chicago and Manhattan, the social impulses of the 1960s spilled over into artistic projects hardly using the word "socialist" but full of socialistic sentiments. Its counterpart, the political poster, also enjoyed a revival,



Perhaps Alewitz's most future looking work is the cross-border mural erected for the FAT, the Authentic Labor Union of Mexico, sponsored by the United Electrical Workers. "Sindicalismo Sin Fronteras/Trade Unionism without Frontiers" shows workers tearing up borders imposed by bosses. Emilio Zapata, stands at the center, with Albert and Lucy Parsons at the sides. A volcano in the background more than symbolically represents the stress and oppression ultimately prompting eruption of class struggle.

especially notable for feminist works, also for Chicano, Solidarity and anti-nuke themes, but increasingly placed itself within homes and apartments as individuals sought to display their solidarity. Muralists had no choice and a big down side: destruction of buildings, defacement by authorities or spray-painters makes your canvass temporal.

But they have endured and, like a small number of poster makers, cartoonists and casual illustrators, have made a dent in the often out-of-date or absent imagery of organized labor. We can thank cartoonists Mike Konopacki and Gary Huck for the visual humor most often seen in union publications today. But for the inside and outside walls of union headquarters, as in the colorful posters for cross-border organizing, or safety-and-health issues, there's only one big name: Mike Alewitz.

A lower middle class kid from Cleveland, who found himself on the Kent State campus at the moment of the National Guard massacre (he served on the Witnesses Committee, which toured campuses for months afterward); Alewitz actually started out as a socialist agitator who drew an occasional poster freehand. After exciting times organizing anti-war GIs in Texas during the Vietnam

years, he settled into being "industrialized" into various blue-collar jobs. Tantalized by the fading skills of printers and billboard makers, he did his first real murals in Nicaragua during the middle 1980s, as part of a solidarity project. Then came his big chance: directing the creation of a revolutionary mural on the wall of the West Street headquarters of the Socialist Workers Party in New York.

It was a beauty, many hands contributing to his flexible design, with a printing press at center and heroic figures of all kinds ranged around. It was also too heterodox about the chosen political saints and too downright funny to satisfy the chiefs of the SWP: Alewitz was expelled from the SWP before the project could be finished. Later, it was painted over, like his mural for the striking P-9 meatpackers of Austin, Minnesota and all his murals in Nicaragua. But this story has a happy ending. Alewitz was free to become a proletarian artist.

So he did, at once a free-lancer and, for a decade, the semi-official resident artist of the Industrial Union Council of New Jersey. He and friends headed a union caravan from New York and New Jersey to Pittston, West Virginia, where they worked with striking miners creat-

LABOR SECTION



The Teamster Victory Mural located in Chicago, created at Teamster City shortly after the UPS triumph. We find Albert and Lucy Parsons, heroes (and martyrs) of the 1886 Eight Hour Day movement and the Haymarket tragedy, at either end of highways connecting teamsters, with the good and evil of the city spread around the mural.

ing images of solidarity and the corporate enemy. He created hugely oversized puppets (the biggest was Rosa Luxemburg) used in one version for the 1991 Pro-Choice rally in Washington and in another version for striking mushroom workers in Pennsylvania. He formed LAMP, an artists group to protest the Gulf War but mainly to organize art workers to express themselves politically. All this activity flowed into the Artists' Caucus for the Labor Party, which he personally headed, supplying the poster designs for LP conventions at the behest of admir-

er and LP leader Tony Mazzochi. His portable murals punctuated the state's annual Labor Day parade, he taught mural painting to schoolkids, and his farewell project recorded an industrial explosion that left half a dozen chemical workers dead and poisoned a community.

He has painted more than one school wall, and his "Without Action There is No Knowledge" pays tribute to Highlander Folk School, organizing center of southern radicals since 1932. On the one side are workers from the earlier attempts to organize the CIO in the

south, and on the other, the civil rights movement. The two march past barbed wire, with signs in hand, toward bread, roses and a beautiful apple, homage to the agricultural activities of Highlander's residents and also a historic symbol of knowledge. These two movements of what has now become the last century represent the best of our past and the possibilities for the future.

Alewitz and Buhle's Insurgent Images: The Labor Murals of Mike Alewitz is available from Monthly Review Press.



Stephen P. Yokich
President

Ruben Burks
Secretary-Treasurer

Vice Presidents:
Elizabeth Bunn
Ron Gettelfinger
Nate Gooden
Bob King
Richard Shoemaker

The men and women of the
International Union, UAW
salute

Democratic Left

A strong voice for
social and economic justice

Why be Left in the Labor Movement?

Reflections of a young organizer in the field - by Gabe Kramer

I've spent more than three years working in a union since graduating from college. My socialism inspired me to sign up as an organizer, a job I originally approached with a burst of excitement and hope. Today, truth to tell, the quandaries of the shrinking U.S. labor movement sometimes bring me to the brink of despair. But the socialist vision that originally animated my career choice, that helps to keep me going in the bad times, is now working on me in an unexpected way. Socialism is helping me think out a renewed way of being a trade unionist.

My first cohesive sense of the socialist movement crystallized on Mt. Kilimanjaro in 1993. Bob, an English expatriate and old Labour Party stalwart, was our leader on a climb up Tanzania's highest peak. My high altitude conversations with this comrade were as bracing as the views. His socialism seemed at once idealistic and practical, rooted in his working class experience yet open to all people of good will. I went up the mountain a woolly progressive and came down a democratic socialist.

Four years after teaching in Tanzania, I was a student visiting South Africa, traveling to a party with a Textile Workers shop steward. Without any irony or malice, she piped up with "So, what are American unions doing to fight capitalism?" My response was to sling some progressive boilerplate, but I realized how empty and remote from my experience it sounded. As the son of a furniture dealer and small town librarian, I had been sent to university in part to escape the struggles of the working class, to keep climbing the ladder of the American dream to avoid working in an auto plant like Grandpa. It was not obvious to any of the progressive

people I knew how to be socialist in America, or even a trade unionist. "Fighting capitalism" seemed like an abstraction. Her question stung.

Returning to university life in Washington, DC, I told myself it was time to find a way to live up to my professed political beliefs. I helped organize the student anti-sweatshop movement on campus, and sufficiently annoyed the university administration to drop sweatshop garment contracts. By the end of my senior year, I was doing more coalition work with labor organizations than schoolwork. Evidently those struggles of the working class were inescapable.

Which led me to a personal career dilemma. I had a notion of getting work after graduation as a teacher or as field staff for a Democratic House contest in the '98 cycle. But duty called! I am a democratic socialist, I told myself, and the movement needed organizers (not that I knew what that meant, exactly). The trade unions were fighting to kick the lid off of their coffin, struggling to reverse declining density and to organize the service sector. Time to put my money where my mouth had been all these years as a student.

I reached out to the union-organizing janitors in Washington, and they asked me if I would go home to Indiana to help start a hospital campaign. Five days later I was back home in the Midwest cajoling dietary workers on smoke break to join the union.

The Indianapolis Health Care Organizing Committee collapsed. Subsequent attempts to organize hospital workers in Battle Creek, Michigan, and Wheeling, West Virginia, were crushed by union busters. But in Lorain, Ohio, and

Prestonsburg, Kentucky, and Pittsburgh, I was on hand to help organize the health care workers union and twice to help workers go out on strike for a first contract. It has been a rare privilege to be at the side of working people taking power into their hands for the first time. Our union has pushed back the power of bosses and managed to project workers' voices into electoral politics. Our union is organizing and slowly growing—very slowly.

The union has a tenuous existence. Employers are looking to take back whatever lost ground of premium compensation and benefits we win. They try to snuff out the union altogether with legal harassment and striker replacement. The US societal mantra—individualism—portrays solidaristic activities as fruitless, making organizing that much harder. In the meantime, our organizing can't keep pace with macro changes in the economy, and in the health care industry, in particular. I wonder if we can rebuild our movement and the idea of social provision at all. Can there ever be another "Great Generation," nurtured in security by progressive government and organization in trade unions?

I joined the labor movement for reasons of principle and stayed on because of the example of individual workers who inspired me as leaders. Now, to fight back against the crush of the non-union world and its pervasive ideology, I am reaching for my socialism as ammunition. Socialism invites us to apply shop floor solidarity to wider circles of worker organization: coordination of bargaining between shops, mutual aid between locals of union coalitions, and, most important, strengthening the principles of collectivity so that they can gain currency in the wider

LABOR SECTION

society. Socialism values the ideas and ability of ordinary working people, and reminds organizers that the workers themselves hold the key to the best strategies for power. Socialism pushes us to find ways to engage, educate, and mobilize workers, indeed to give the workers themselves the tools to do all of that for themselves. It's a daunting project, but also the only way I have seen to practically create the mass democratic agency that socialists imagine is possible.

My generation in the Midwestern unions is now far distant from the wellsprings of class hatred and immigrant-imported socialist assumptions that inspired my grandfather and his fellow Studebaker workers to join the fledgling United Auto Workers. But the crisis of economic insecurity and the spirit-crushing domination of bosses are so apparent to American workers that I sense an opening for left wing ideas. In some sense, Labor has no choice. The animating socialist goals have always been to change the terms of debate about power in society, and that's where unions have to gain to avoid extinction. I don't pretend that this process will go smoothly; I only suggest that it is our best chance. No one in the labor movement, however, need waste more time wondering how to be a socialist.

Gabe Kramer is an organizer with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) District 1199 WV/KY/OH, and a member of the Young Democratic Socialists, the DSA youth section.

SOCIALISM NOW!

**New England Regional Joint Board, UNITE
867 State Road
No. Dartmouth, MA 02747**

**Edward W. Clark, Jr. Manager
Executive Vice President
UNITE**



LABOR DAY 2001

THE FIGHT
FOR JUSTICE CONTINUES!

The more than
725,000 members of the

COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA

are proud to proclaim our
uncompromising commitment
to workers' rights and justice
in the workplace.

**CWA
Communications
Workers of America,
AFL-CIO**

Morton Bahr
President

Barbara J. Easterling
Secretary-Treasurer

Larry Cohen
Executive Vice President

As we face new
challenges in this
never-ending fight,
let there be no doubt
as to where we stand ...

CWA

**WE STAND
FOR JUSTICE!**

LABOR SECTION

continued from page 9

DL: *Are there lessons to be learned from the organizing of recent immigrants that can be applied across racial and national lines?*

Wong: Many of the ingredients that have led to victories in LA are applicable to white and African-American workers. Such tactics as community-labor alliances, church involvement, and use of advocacy research have successfully organized native-born workers. The broader challenge is how to build a labor movement that is a social movement. The lessons that have been learned in LA are lessons about movement building.

Milkman: Unions that put resources into organizing and build an organizing culture have been successful in diverse settings. But such an organizing culture has not been introduced in all internationals and at all levels of the labor movement. Doing so remains a big, crucial job.

DL: *Before the events of September 11th, President Bush advanced some major immigration reform proposals. Did they add up to anything more than a new "bracero" program?*

Wong: Immigration reform has probably been derailed by September 11th. When and if it returns it will be driven by a series of conflicting forces. Employer interests knew that immigrant labor had been fueling the growth of the economy. High tech industries were clamoring for relaxation of H1 visas due to a serious labor shortage in that sector. And agribusiness clearly wants another bracero program, one which would not grant permanent residency—let alone citizenship rights—to immigrant agricultural workers, but which would bring more workers into the fields.

Bush certainly did want to

appear pro-immigrant, as he wants to avoid the post-Prop.187 experience in California causing even more harm to the Republicans, including in his native Texas.

Labor obviously wants a change in immigration policy so that immigrant labor won't be readily marginalized and victimized. But clearly, Bush cared more about appeasing the corporate community and helping his fellow conservative President Fox in Mexico than he cared about the interests of organized labor. Immigration "reform" always results from a confluence of conflicting forces. If we look back at the 1986 Immigration Reform Act we see that

it had contradictory effects. Its legalization aspects enabled many immigrant workers to emerge from the shadows and organize. On the other hand, its employer sanctions often were used to threaten the interests of immigrant workers. Injecting progressive elements into whenever "immigration reform" proposals reemerge will not be easy.

Joseph M. Schwartz teaches at Temple University, serves on DSA's National Political Committee, and is the author of The Permanence of the Political (Princeton). He is at work on a new book to be published next year.

BEST WISHES

FROM LOCAL 1180


Arthur Chelton
President

Linda Jenkins
1st Vice-President

William F. Henning Jr.
2nd Vice-President

Elaine Allman
Secretary-Treasurer

Albert Van-Lare
Recording Secretary



Members-at-Large

Barbara Bailey
Gerald Brown
Joseph Caldeira
Charles Garcia
Alan Goldfarb
Olivia Middleton
Lynn Sealey-Fayoc
Gwen Richardson
Dore Stacey

Making Government Work For You

Tune in to "The Communicé"
Local 1180's own Radio Show.

FOR DISCUSSIONS ON CURRENT EVENTS & ISSUES FROM A LABOR PERSPECTIVE
EVERY FRIDAY, FROM 1:00 P.M. TO 2:00 P.M.
ON WNYE 91.5 FM

LOCAL 1180
COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA, AFL-CIO
6 HARRISON STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10013-2898
(212) 226-6565

LOCAL REPORTS

Edited by Jason Schulman

Terrorists or no terrorists, socialist activity continues. Under the auspices of the Open University of the Left, **Chicago DSA** and the Chicago Socialist Party celebrated the anniversary of the founding of the original Socialist Party of America by organizing a conference on the SP's history and the state of contemporary U.S. socialism. Chicago DSA also participated in a forum discussing the events in Genoa, Italy, a labor organized rally in support of the Charleston 5, and a campaign to amend the Illinois Constitution to require the state to formulate a universal health care plan for the state within three years of its passage. **Columbus DSA** has become involved with a fledgling chapter of Jobs with Justice to get a living wage ordinance enacted. **Detroit DSA** campaigned door-to-door for a Living Wage ballot proposition in a working class suburb. **Ithaca DSA's** community access cable television program now appears weekly; the local is an active member of the Tompkins County Living Wage Coalition. **New York DSA** continues to play a key role in the labor-backed Working Families Party; NYC members are actively involved in various municipal elections. **Greater Philadelphia DSA** continued its Free Speech Café series with a discussion in September of a local health-care ballot initiative. In August, **San Diego DSA** participated in a debate with Robert Feinberg, who co-authored the FTAA during the Clinton administration. Feinberg is a professor at UCSD; he happened to invite himself to the monthly meeting of the San Diego Action Network at the Joyce Beers Center in Hillcrest that deals with issues impacting San Diegans. The topic for discussion was "NAFTA and

FTAA: Are they Good for San Diego?" **Twin Cities DSA** has begun collaboration with members of the Canadian New Democratic Party and the Mexican Party of the Democratic Revolution. Talks on issues of mutual concern, e.g. fair trade, labor, and the environment, are scheduled to take place April 9th of next year. **Boston DSA** is supporting Kevin Tarpley and Denise Provost for re-election this November to Somerville's Board of Aldermen, and Felix Arroyo for a seat on the Boston City Council. Tarpley, the first African-American ever elected in Somerville, sponsored and helped push through a living wage ordinance in his first term. Provost is an urban environmentalist who has stood fast against "Big Box" developers, demanding neighborhood consultation. Arroyo, a longtime progressive activist, would be the first Hispanic elected to the Boston City Council. Boston DSAers also voted to support local referendum campaigns for the Community Preservation Act, backed by numerous affordable housing and environmental groups. **Two new DSA locals** have emerged, in **Oregon** and **Arizona**. DSA activists in Phoenix, AZ have been largely responsible for many policy changes at Arizona State University and have also been instrumental in organizing with local politicians for the preservation of sacred Native American burial ground.

Material submitted by: Robert Roman, Simone Morgen, David Green, Petra Hepburn, Marc Silberman, George Robson, Steve Oliver, John Hogan, Bob Millar, Virginia Franco, Stephan Peter, Dan Frankot, Jeremy Miller, and Matthew May.

Narrow Escape

continued from page 5

In Brooklyn, the smell of death was strong over the harbor. Fire hydrants were opened and people showered and drank much needed water. Lines for telephones were 20-30 people long. All around, shop televisions were crowded as people stood and stared at the images on TV—the towers falling, again, again, and again. It was maddening.

Everyone who was in New York that day has a powerful story. The destruction, the loss of life, and the terror of that morning shifted us all. I feel compelled to say, before anyone decides what my experience means to them, that September 11th was an intensely political day for me as well. I learned that when cities are attacked people die brutish and horrible deaths. People are disfigured, homes and workplaces are destroyed, families are broken, and lives are shattered. I learned that even surviving doesn't mean that you're the same person. If you feel compelled to support this war, I feel the right to demand: do it in your own name, not mine.

Erin Kaiser was hired as DSA's new youth organizer in May.

Labor Day
Greetings

from the

**Breeden-Schmidt
Foundation**

*Established to
Advance the principles of
Socialism*

PO Box 711718
San Diego, Ca. 92171-1718

Richard A. Cloward

Scholar and Activist, 1926-2001

By Ken Grossinger

On the morning of August 20 our movement lost a light that guided four decades of antipoverty, welfare rights and voting rights activists and scholars. Richard A. Cloward died in his Manhattan home at the age of 74.

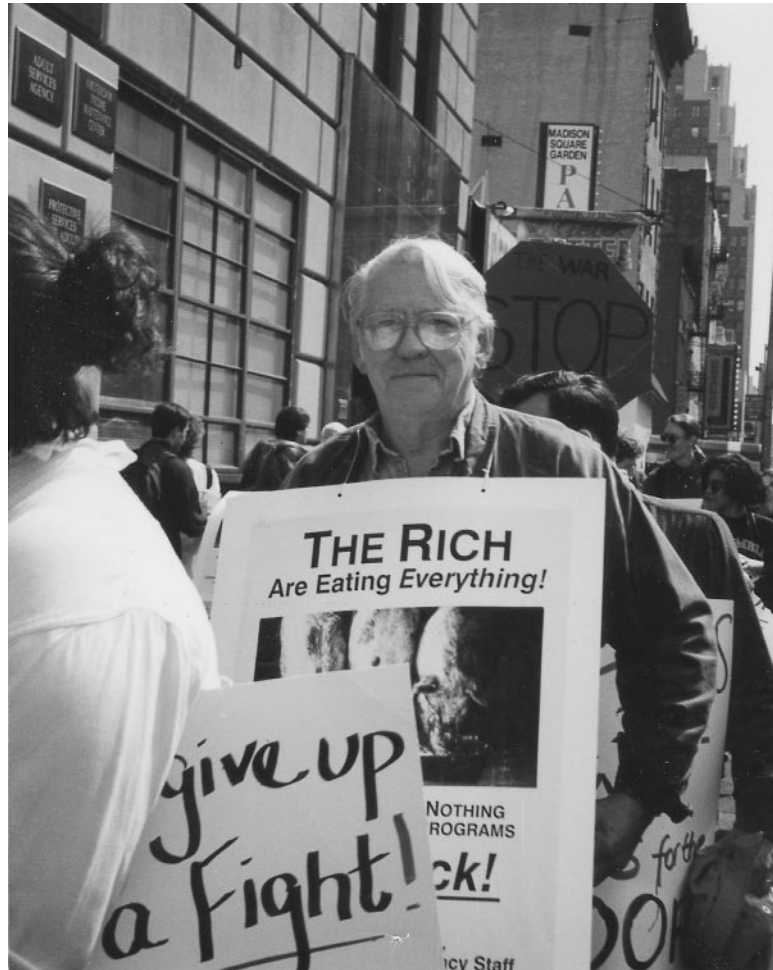
Anyone writing about a mentor knows the difficulty of dealing with a flood of emotions that rush to the surface when recalling the influence of their teacher. Richard loved to teach, and his clarity was a gift. Whether inside or out of the academy, he would not stop. Until his last days, some 21 years after I first met him, he was trying to teach me to balance the personal and political.

I was not alone – far from it. Richard taught countless students and readers about social movements - about race, class, poverty and power. More importantly, he taught us how to think about the society and our political relationship to it. He was a mentor to many. Thousands of his students who learned from his 40 years of classes and community activities

carry on their work for social and economic justice. They are guided by his intellectual contributions and by his commitment to fight poverty, which one could not help but absorb if only through his sheer tenacity.

Richard had the unusual ability not only to generate political ideas about social movements, but also to turn these ideas into action. He raised money to finance organizers and organizations to advance movement strategies. Part of his legacy in the organizing community was his uncommon humility. He held organizers in great esteem and considered them among his closest friends.

Richard was a social worker. Although he held a PhD in sociology and was a former student of Robert Merton, he positioned himself in the social welfare community instead, where he could not only develop theory but where he had the opportunity to work on poor people's issues.



He co-authored nine books, including *Delinquency and Opportunity* (1960), written with Lloyd Ohlin. The book provided the intellectual underpinnings for dealing with gang-related problems. This groundbreaking work received the Dennis Carroll Award and influenced the formation of Mobilization for Youth (MFY), which Richard helped found in 1961. MFY became the programmatic model for the federal War on Poverty and pioneered community action programs and the anti-poverty legal services.

In 1966, Richard helped found the National Welfare Rights Organization, the protest movement of poor women. Its goal of winning federalization of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) by building the local welfare rolls to create fiscal and political crisis very nearly succeeded. Instead, Congress granted fiscal relief to states and localities through a new federal relief program called Supplemental Security Income (SSI). SSI was one of the most important federal social policy innovations in the post-World War II period.

In 1971, Richard, along with his wife and collaborator, Dr. Frances Fox Piven, co-authored *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare*. This is a landmark critique of government's use of public welfare to suppress social disorder among the poor and to reinforce the low wage work market.

Among their other landmark works, Cloward and Piven wrote *The Politics of Turmoil* (1974), *Poor People's Movements* (1977), *The New Class War* (1982), *Why American's Don't Vote*, (1988) and *The Breaking of the American Social Compact* (1997).

In 1982, Cloward and Piven founded the Human Service Employees Registration and Voter Education Campaign (Human SERVE), which promoted the idea that people should be registered to vote when they apply for welfare, food stamps, Medicaid, unemployment benefits and driver's licenses. A decade later, Human Serve's program was incorporated in the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. Popularly known as the "motor voter" bill, it became law in 1993. This legislation represents an historic advance in the struggle to win full enfranchisement for low-income people and people of color. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 had stopped government from preventing people from registering to vote. This act goes further by embodying the principle that government has an affirmative obligation to register the eligible electorate.

Despite Cloward's enormous contributions, or perhaps because of them, some within his chosen profession rejected him. Brandeis University rejected his application to teach at the Heller School of Social Work. That spurred a political uproar among intellectuals and activists who rallied to his side, albeit unsuccessfully. Later in his career he would file an age discrimination lawsuit against the Columbia University School of Social Work while under the administration of Dean Ronald Feldman. Here were two of the most prestigious schools of social work in the nation denying Cloward, who stood among the most prominent intellectuals internationally in the field of social work, either a job or a place of dignity within the field. Cloward once said in a late night conversation that he felt like a lone wolf because of the way the profession ostracized his work.

On Sept. 20, 500 people gathered at the CUNY Graduate Center in New York City to celebrate Richard's Life and Work. Speakers included Barbara Ehrenreich, Howard Zinn, June Jordan, Gus Newport, Joel Rogers, Tim Sampson, Cornel West, Miles Rappaport, Frances Fox Piven and many others. For information on how to obtain a copy of the video of the celebration and an accompanying 87-page journal edited by Richard, which includes extraordinary photographs and materials about his work, please e-mail <kgrossin@aflcio.org>. Proceeds will be used to strengthen grassroots welfare rights organizing for the welfare reauthorization battle next year.

Ken Grossinger was Richard Cloward's student and long time friend. He works at the AFL-CIO.

Economic Citizenship

continued from page 6

on families or means-tested, classified as relief not rights. Along with unemployment insurance, which is largely in the hands of states, this delineation continues to disadvantage those with poor ties to wage-work, including most women.

Many protested their exclusion, but women as a group, were not among them. Historically, women had not been expected to participate in wage work. Their family roles justified and rationalized a limited position for them in the paid labor force. No matter what the actual position of women (they could be unmarried and without children; or poor widows with an absolute need for income), the notion that the family was their normal purview limited women's access to vocational training, jobs, and credit. And even the limited opportunities available to all women were restricted and sometimes withdrawn in the event of marriage or motherhood. The idea of the family also shaped male economic expectations and conditioned men's attitudes towards women in the workforce. Not surprisingly, the first major amendments to the Social Security Act, in 1939, accommodated women as family members by granting benefits to the aging wives and widows of male wage earners and to their surviving children should the male breadwinner die young.

In contrast, some African Americans managed to use the job-related access route to earn direct benefits. Recognizing that to be left outside the Social Security program would disadvantage them economically and reduce their status as citizens, they demanded inclusion. Leaders of the NAACP in the 1930s pointed out that leaving agricultural workers and domestic servants out of Social Security would reduce

their sense of self-esteem as well as their economic security. Their strategy of expanding the job-related categories covered by the 1935 law to incorporate domestic servants, janitors, and most agricultural workers dramatically increased the number of minority males and females who benefited from it. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its equal employment opportunities legislation consolidated the gains of African-Americans dramatically increasing the proportions brought under the Social Security umbrella.

Insofar as we understand economic citizenship as a prelude to democratic participation, we need to adopt political strategies that enhance the independence of all women.

As full-time employment and regular work became more available to women, even married women, in the 1960s, these strategies proved equally effective for them. Piggy-backing on the equal employment strategies of the Civil-Rights movement, women's access routes to economic citizenship expanded as well. But for those (white and black) with looser ties to employment, benefits still largely came from their family membership. Lacking family support, many women found themselves entangled in the web of welfare. For them economic citizenship remains elusive.

Privatizing Social Security by assigning individual accounts to individual wage earners further threatens both the gains of poor wage earners and the social commitment they embody. It rewards those workers most able to accumulate resources—perpetuating the myth that these monies are theirs by right, rather than diversions from

the general treasury. Promoting individual advantage undermines even further the fragile principle of shared responsibility, reducing the ground for advocating other sorts of collective spending, and therefore of expanding economic citizenship for all. It vitiates even the limited possibilities that now exist for other sorts of social spending on such things as job training, childcare, public housing, street safety and public transportation. Because women still tend to have looser ties to the job market—they are still disproportionately represented among low-wage, part-time and contingent workers—any strategy that relies on individual accounts is likely to leave them poorer as a result. It will set back their search for economic citizenship.

Insofar as we understand economic citizenship as a prelude to democratic participation, we need to adopt political strategies that enhance the independence of all women. Doing this requires more social spending; more access for women to good jobs; more investments in family support systems and in community welfare. If we imagine economic citizenship more capaciously—we can then begin not merely to reject notions of privatization, but to advocate for expanding economic independence and social rights. Doing so would preserve the spirit, and the evolving values of the 1935 Social Security Act.

Alice Kessler-Harris, Professor of History at Columbia University, is a prominent labor and feminist historian. She has published numerous books on women and work, including Women Have Always Worked: A Historical Overview. This essay draws on some of the themes of her forthcoming Pursuit of Equity: How Gender Shaped American Economic Citizenship (Oxford University Press).

Democratic Socialists of America Statement on the US Bombings of Afghanistan

The Bush Administration's bombing campaign against Afghanistan has escalated the crisis created by the September 11th terrorist attacks. Although supposedly aimed at the Al-Qaeda network and the fundamentalist Taliban government of Afghanistan that has harbored the network, the campaign is more likely to punish the innocent than the guilty. In fact, the bombings have already resulted in civilian casualties, an increased flow of refugees, and a massive disruption of humanitarian aid—all in a country that has already experienced over two decades of warfare and is in the midst of a massive drought. Democratic Socialists of America opposes this unilateral use of American air power.

DSA firmly believes that the criminals who planned and helped carry out the September 11th terrorist attacks on the United States must be brought to justice. Any peace movement that might convince the majority of the American people that massive use of United States military force is counterproductive must make such an unequivocal call. Justice and the nature of the crime requires that the all of the perpetrators of September 11th be captured and tried for their crime against humanity before an impartial international tribunal that upholds international law and universal human rights. Such a permanent international court would provide all countries with a place to bring charges of human rights violations, including charges against our own government's history of violating universal human rights.

DSA would support the use of appropriate police powers and force to bring indicted criminals before such a tribunal. But the prolonged presence of American ground troops in Afghanistan, which now appears to be the inevitable next step, is more likely to result in increased anti-Americanism swelling the ranks of potential terrorists instead of weakening their organizations. A lengthy campaign will undermine the international cooperation necessary to destroy the covert systems of financing that allow terrorist organizations to engage in sophisticated operations. In addition, such unilateral use of military force will undermine the cooperation with other national intelligence agencies necessary to curtail terrorism.

The Bush Administration has attempted to present its actions as multilateral by cobbling together a series of bilateral arrangements with other nations obtained, in many cases, through the blatant use of coercion and bribes. DSA supports effective international action against terrorism. Terrorism by an individual, a group, or a state is never justified; the innocent are almost always the victims and reactionary forces are always its real beneficiaries. Genuine international cooperation among nations, including involvement by the United Nations is a prerequisite for a campaign that will be seen as in the interest of all nations and not just some nations. Such action will also require prolonged and complex use of a variety of means—diplomatic, ideological, financial, legal, and, at times, the appropriate use of force. How quickly and effectively international cooperation can curtail terrorism is an open question. But, unilateral, massive, and indiscriminate use of the United States military power will subvert the possibility of effectively combating terrorist organizations. Ultimately a campaign against international terrorism must be based on a commitment by all countries, including the United States, to international enforcement of universal human rights and to a more just and equitable world.

*Adopted October 14, 2001
DSA NPC Steering Committee*

Message from the Acting National Director

continued from page 3

Congressman and their staffs got prompt medical attention and immediate inspections of their work environment. At the same time, postal workers' fears were ignored while their infections spread and people died.

It was not just an oversight caused by an unexpected hazard, as government officials would have you believe; it perfectly illustrates how our national elites regard ordinary working people and health and safety issues. Such inequalities are mirrored in the low pay and inadequate training corporate America provides airport security workers and low-wage workers in general. The bailouts and the giveaways underway to stimulate the economy in the United States Congress reflect the same set of attitudes.

September 11th should have caused each of us to review our core values and their application in our society. Join us in recommitting ourselves to the movement for social and economic justice at home and abroad. Enduring freedom can only be achieved when there is liberty and justice for all.

Frank Llewellyn

Labor Day
Greetings

from

Nassau County DSA

Mark Finkel
Chair

Democratic Socialists of America Fund
presents

Justice for All: ***Politics & Peace After September 11***

Friday, November 9, 7:30PM
Doors open at 7:00

Arch Street Meeting House
Fourth & Arch Streets, Philadelphia

A public dialogue on the
consequences of the attacks

Featuring:

Bill Fletcher

Co-Convenor, Black Radical Congress

Harold Meyerson

Executive Editor, *American Prospect*

Linda Panetta

Director, School of the Americas Watch, NE

&

Cornel West

Theologian, author and activist

Honorary Chair

Democratic Socialists of America

\$10-\$5 sliding scale donation requested

No one turned away

Free parking available

For further information, call 212-727-8610

