

---

# In Critical Solidarity

*Newsletter of the Labor and Labor Movements Section  
American Sociological Association*

**Vol. 5, No. 1**

**May 2005**

---

## Diversity and the Future of American Labor

---

Dorian T. Warren

The current debate about the future of the labor movement, culminating at the July 2005 AFL-CIO convention in Chicago, is remarkable for how public it has been. Since being kick-started by SEIU and the now-dissolved New Unity Partnership months ago, the main contours of the debate have revolved around organizational structure, proposals for membership growth and strengthening unions' bargaining and political power, and creating a political climate and culture more open to workers' rights. SEIU and the AFL-CIO have widely solicited proposals for change from rank-and-file workers, academics, and labor leaders, and have posted copies of letters and proposals on their websites. Individual International unions, central labor councils and state federations, departments within the AFL-CIO, constituency groups, scholars and activists have all chimed in with their thoughts and specific ideas about what direction the trade union movement should go. Though it is unclear what will happen with all of these proposals, how seriously they are being considered, and which ones will have the most influence on the future of the labor movement, students of unions now have a unique opportunity to evaluate them.

I examined more than twenty-five of the proposals from national unions, AFL-CIO departments, and constituency groups available for download on the AFL-CIO website in March 2005.<sup>1</sup>

What is impressive about the majority of the union proposals is how thoughtful, detailed, and spirited they are. Most of them grapple seriously with how best to restructure the national federation to provide incentives for individual unions to become more effective at organizing, collective bargaining and political action.

*Continued on page 2*

---

<sup>1</sup> These proposals can be found at:  
<http://www.aflcio.org/aboutaflcio/ourfuture/proposals.cfm>.



---

## Labor in the Academy: Graduate Teachers Mobilize Against Bush Agenda

---

Christy M. Glass

Many observers of the academic labor movement feared that the NLRB's recent decision stripping graduate teachers and researchers of federal protections and employee status would seriously thwart organizing efforts in the academy. The July 2004 decision, decided 3-2 along strict party lines by the Republican majority, overturned a 2000 NLRB ruling granting graduate teachers and researchers employee status and represented yet another facet in the Bush Administration's broad attack on worker rights. Fears that this decision would seriously arrest mobilizing efforts at private universities proved unfounded. Instead, this decision prompted graduate

*Continued on page 4*

### In this Issue

Diversity and American Labor	1
Labor in the Academy	1
SF Hotel Workers Update	3
A View From the Field	5
Illinois Childcare Providers Update	7
Research and Activism	8
Global Labor Mini-Conference	9-10
ASA Labor Sessions/Roundtables	11

---

**Warren** (continued from page 1)

---

Noticeably missing from the vast majority of these proposals are concerns that have been the Achilles heel of the labor movement from its inception: issues of diversity. By “diversity” I mean workers marginalized by race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation. These workers experience multiple forms of inequality both at work and at home, and have been historically excluded or discriminated against by unions because of their racial, ethnic, national, gender, or sexual identities. Workers of color, women workers and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) workers arguably represent the future of the American labor movement. These workers are also represented by the various constituency groups affiliated with the AFL-CIO, all of whom have weighed in on the current debate.<sup>2</sup> I paid special attention to the proposals from these groups.

Unfortunately, most of the discussion and debate has ignored the issue of diversity. And it is clear that marginalized workers—either as potential union members or as important community and political allies—are not seen as central to the future of the labor movement. Only about a tenth of the national union proposals even addressed the issue. In one of the proposals (International Association of Fire Fighters) it was to assign fault: the Fire Fighters explicitly articulated what other proposals only hinted at by arguing that the ineffectiveness of the Executive Council was due to the increase in its size in 1995 (from 35 to 54) to accommodate a more diverse council. The solution put forth by several unions is to greatly reduce the size of the council to no more than 15-20 members, and the 25 member Executive Committee to no more than 10 members (of the largest unions) in order to make decision-making more efficient and streamlined. By most accounts, this would create an Executive Committee of all white men and an Executive Council of mostly the same. “If the ten largest unions will comprise the Executive Committee, no Black that I’m aware of, or

woman that I’m aware of, heads up a union of that size,” claims William Lucy, President of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU).<sup>3</sup> In a letter to President Sweeney, CBTU protests this seeming consensus around reducing the size of the Executive Council by arguing that “the added size of the Council bears no relationship to the decline in labor fortunes.” None of the proposals for restructuring from national unions (including IAFF), for all their detail around many other issues, propose mechanisms to ensure the representation of underrepresented groups of workers in decision-making at all levels of the labor movement.

The constituency groups, along with a couple of unions (SEIU, Machinists, AFT) have articulated principles of diversity to be taken into account and have also demanded specific changes within the house of labor. These proposals include demands for greater diversity in organizing, leadership, and politics. Several of the proposals, particularly from LCLAA, CBTU, and the “Unity Statement” issued together by all of the constituency groups, raise these issues. In terms of organizing, the proposals suggest increasing resources for organizing among people of color (especially in the South and Southwest), targeting organizing campaigns among women and workers of color, and the developing of marginalized workers to become volunteer and paid organizers.

Leadership and decision-making is a major issue affecting workers of color, women workers and LGBT workers. All of the proposals from the constituency groups, but only a couple from national unions, emphasize the importance of the leadership at all decision-making levels of the labor movement representing the diversity of its current (and potential) membership. Several of these proposals include: increasing the role of constituency groups in decision-making; establishing an AFL-CIO Department to build formal relationships with community allies and institutions; maintaining the Civil, Human and Women’s Rights Department at the AFL-CIO as opposed to its abolition, which most national unions recommend; more diversity among union convention delegations, state and local labor bodies, and all of the AFL-CIO’s governing bodies; and most important, mechanisms of accountability to ensure greater diversity and representation of marginalized workers. *<continued>*

---

<sup>2</sup> “Constituency groups” receive resources from the AFL-CIO to support these groups of workers’ particular interests within the labor movement, both nationally and via smaller union local- and locally- based caucuses and chapters. The constituency groups include: A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI), Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LACLAA), Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA), and Pride At Work (PAW).

---

<sup>3</sup> “No Real Labor Reform Without Blacks.” *The Black Commentator*. March 3, 2005.

[http://www.blackcommentator.com/128/128\\_cover\\_labor.html](http://www.blackcommentator.com/128/128_cover_labor.html).

The final set of issues linked to diversity emphasized by these proposals concerns labor's political agenda and activity. These include: expanding labor's resources to register and mobilize voters in communities of color; expanding and protecting voting rights for all, particularly African Americans and immigrants; building permanent and long-lasting relationships with racial justice, women's, and gay and lesbian political organizations and allies; and expanding and defending a broader political agenda around civil, human and women's rights. Political issues that should be on an inclusive agenda include fighting workplace discrimination against workers of color, women and LGBT workers, legalization and immigration reform, pay equity, violence against women, affirmative action and opposition to global racism and exploitation.

All of these diversity issues—around organizing, leadership and politics—which are being forced onto the table primarily by the constituency groups will, I hope, be taken more seriously as the debate continues into the summer. As the LCLAA proposal aptly states, “this is not a matter of diversity and inclusion but rather a matter of survival for labor in these critical times.”

*Dorian Warren (dorian@uchicago.edu) is a Post-Doctoral Scholar at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago. Warren specializes in the study of inequality and American politics, focusing on the political organization and mobilization of marginalized groups.*

### ***From the Editor***

In this issue, we inaugurate two new columns. One, “A View From the Field,” will discuss ongoing or recent research with emphasis on the researcher's experience and preliminary conclusions. In this issue, Carolyn Turnovsky brings us into the world of day laborers on a street corner in Brooklyn. The second column, “Research and Activism,” will address how sociological research can benefit labor. In this issue, Mike Miller shares some broad ideas about possible research topics, questions, and methods.

If you are interested in contributing to either column, please e-mail the editor at the address below.

**Newsletter Editor:** Rachel Sherman  
(rachel.sherman@yale.edu)

**Editorial Assistant:** Christy Glass  
(christy.glass@yale.edu)

---

## **San Francisco Hotel Workers Still Fighting for a Contract**

---

**Teresa Sharpe**

During the ASA meetings in San Francisco last fall, many of us participated in a delegation to the management of the Hilton hotel in support of UNITEHERE! Local 2 members whose contract had recently expired. Nine months later, 4,000 San Francisco hotel workers are still working without a contract. In September 2004, workers in four major downtown hotels went out on a two-week strike, and the employer coalition responded by locking out workers at fourteen hotels. Workers were locked out for seven weeks but allowed back to work after two pivotal events: public support from Mayor Gavin Newsom – who enthusiastically joined a picket line and refused to attend events at hotels involved in the dispute – and an announcement by Kaiser Permanente that they would continue to provide health benefits to locked-out workers whose health coverage was due to end soon.

Since the end of the lock-out and the 60-day cooling off period, members and allies of Local 2 – one of the most militant and creative unions in the nation – have continued to pull off large and highly visible actions in the streets of San Francisco. While the local continues its boycott against fourteen San Francisco hotels, the national union has launched a nation-wide boycott of those hotel chains involved in the dispute. The main corporations under boycott are Hilton, Hyatt, Starwood, InterContinental, and Marriott. In San Francisco, the boycott has resulted in significant lost revenue for the hotels and the city. The largest group to cancel their event was the Organization of American Historians, which at the end of March pulled 2200 people out of the Hilton and relocated to San Jose. The Convention and Visitors bureau estimated that this alone cost the city \$1.8 million.

At issue in the negotiations are employers' concessionary demands around health care benefits and pension contributions, as well as the union's demands for increased workload protections (in light of a rejuvenated post 9-11 tourism industry) and coordinated contract expiration dates in major U.S. and Canadian cities. The union has made it clear that they are particularly unwilling accept cuts to their health benefits, and that they will continue to advocate for contract expiration dates that would allow them to better coordinate national bargaining in the future.

*<continued>*

For more information on the local and national campaigns, as well as a list of hotels under boycott, visit [hotelworkersunited.org](http://hotelworkersunited.org).

*Teresa Sharpe (tsharp@socrates.berkeley.edu) is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of California, Berkeley. She has previously written on staff-worker tensions endemic to the organizing model of unionism. Currently, she is working on a dissertation that explores the roots and politics of organizational change within national unions.*

---

### Glass (continued from page 1)

---

student unions at several private universities, including the University of Pennsylvania, Yale University, and Columbia University, to forge new cross-union ties in efforts to form a national coalition of academic workers.

Unions at all three universities began the academic year with aggressive membership drives. By December, a large majority of graduate teachers at Yale and graduate teachers and researchers at Columbia had demonstrated support for a union by signing membership cards, and Connecticut Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz and New York Secretary of State Eliot Spitzer certified that a majority of teachers on both campuses supported unionization. Both officials called on the administrations of Yale and Columbia to recognize the unions. Issues at stake in these recognition drives range from bread-and-butter issues, such as dependent healthcare and pay equity, to broad questions regarding the casualization of academic labor and diversity among university faculty.

In April, after several months without any response from university officials, union members at Yale and Columbia voted overwhelmingly to approve a five-day strike, which began on both campuses on April 18<sup>th</sup>. National political and labor leaders from around the country—including the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr., John Sweeney, President of the AFL-CIO, Barbara Ehrenreich, John Wilhelm and Bruce Raynor, co-Presidents of UNITE-HERE, and Elizabeth Bunn, Secretary-Treasurer of the UAW—walked picket lines, spoke at rallies, and marched with graduate teachers throughout the five-day strike in New Haven and New York City. Wednesday, April 20<sup>th</sup> marked the mid-point of the five-day strike. On that day, labor leaders, politicians, and university workers from throughout the New York region joined Yale and Columbia's graduate teachers in New York City for the first-ever march for organizing rights in the academy.

The weeklong strike successfully inaugurated the first national coalition of academic workers. During the week, graduate unions from around the country pledged their support and nine graduate unions from around the country, including UMASS, University of Wisconsin, Rutgers, NYU, University of Pennsylvania, Ohio State, SUNY, University of Florida, and University of California, participated in solidarity actions ranging from one-day walkouts to rallies and speak-outs. All nine unions signed and submitted a Declaration of Principles to their university presidents, calling on universities to establish clear standards for protecting workers' rights to form unions and bargain collectively.

Significant challenges to this burgeoning national coalition remain, not least of which is the extraordinary commitment shown by presidents and administrators at private universities to resist unionization by graduate teachers and researchers. In the wake of the recent strikes, Richard Levin, President of Yale University, affirmed his long-standing position that Yale would not recognize a union of graduate teachers regardless of majority support. A confidential letter signed by Columbia University's Provost, historian Alan Brinkley,<sup>1</sup> outlined the ways the university might threaten and/or retaliate against striking teachers. In the letter, sent to several university deans and administrators, Brinkley proposed requiring strikers to teach an additional semester or year or disqualifying them from consideration for summer funding or special awards. Such retaliatory measures, while currently legal, are certainly contrary to the stated commitment to fairness and equity of liberal universities. The absence of federal protections for graduate teachers and the unwillingness of university administrators to take a position of neutrality with regard to unionization mean that winning unions in the Ivy League will require no less than a coordinated national effort.

Another major challenge includes the ability of graduate unions to effectively coordinate efforts not just across geographic locations but across union boundaries as well. As observers of the labor movement are well aware, Internationals such as UNITE-HERE, the AFT, and the UAW vary markedly in terms of organizing style and leadership structure. For instance, Yale and Columbia's graduate unions have made distinctly different

<continued>

---

<sup>1</sup> The confidential memo is available online at: [http://www.thenation.com/special/pdf/brinkley\\_letter.pdf](http://www.thenation.com/special/pdf/brinkley_letter.pdf)

decisions regarding the strategic definition of the unions' respective bargaining units; Yale's GESO excludes graduate researchers in the sciences while Columbia's GSEU includes all graduate teachers and researchers. These unions also differ to some degree in terms of their long-term vision for future direction of the labor movement. The success of the national academic coalition, however, will depend upon graduate unions' ability to transcend these differences in the interest of strengthening academic labor and expanding worker rights in the academy. This will certainly not be an easy task, particularly given the current battles within the labor movement that, on the eve of the possible showdown at the AFL-CIO convention in Chicago this July, could reinforce barriers between academic unions.

If these cross-union and cross-campus organizing efforts prove successful, however, this coalition may establish—in substance if not in form—the first industry-wide union of academic workers. Mirroring the ongoing debate within the AFL-CIO regarding the importance of industry-wide unions to fight industry-wide campaigns, union leaders hope that coordination across academic campuses will allow unions to address issues such as the growing casualization of academic labor in a way that any single-campus union could not. The first real test of this nascent coalition may come as soon as next fall, when GSOC-UAW, the union of graduate teachers at NYU and currently the only recognized graduate teachers union at a private university in the country, enters contract renegotiations. The current contract expires at the end of August, and there have been hints that the NYU administration may use the 2004 NLRB ruling to refuse to bargain with the union. Exactly how the coalition will respond should NYU's administration refuse to enter contract negotiations will be discussed at length at the next conference of the CGEU, the Coalition of Graduate Employee Unions, to be held in August in Madison, Wisconsin.

*Christy M. Glass (christy.glass@yale.edu) will receive her Ph.D. from the Department of Sociology at Yale University in May 2005. She is an organizer for GESO/UNITE-HERE.*

**PLEASE NOTE!**

Bruce Nissen is interested in compiling ideas about what is being done to research the denial of the right to organize, and how that denial of labor rights/human rights can be corrected. Send ideas to Bruce at nissenb@fiu.edu.

## A View From the Field

### Day Labor and Marketing Identity on a New York Street Corner

By Carolyn Pinedo Turnovsky

*Ronaldo arrives early to the corner usually by 6:30am with a thermos of Café Bustelo in hand and waits for Luis and Santiago. At this early hour, William should be riding the W train to school, but today he has skipped class and will spend his morning alongside the others. Kasper sits quietly reading one of the Polish daily newspapers. A car pulls up along the curb and conversations stop. Bodies lean forward and faces look curious. With speed and agility, the men respond to the calling voice and “beep-beep” of the horn...*

Scenes like the above are a burgeoning and visible reminder of a vibrant informal economy across New York City. Each morning Mexican, Ecuadoran, Panamanian, Polish and young African American men arrived on a street corner in Brooklyn looking for work as day laborers. Three categories of workers labored on this corner: Regulars, Temps, and *la profesora*. I labeled the men as Regulars or Temps based on how often they came to the corner to find work. The Regulars were mostly immigrants of Latino or Eastern European national origin who looked for work on a daily basis. The Temps were U.S. citizens, mostly young African American men who visited the corner less frequently. Generally these men were hired by private homeowners and local businesses for work in roofing, carpentry, painting, demolition or stockpiling. Last, *la profesora* was the label the men assigned to me to identify the Latina whose research explained her regular presence on the street corner. I came to work here for two and a half years; rather than replacing shingles on a roof, my work was to observe behavior and social relations in this setting.

Because the men shared this workspace, they stood at the same intersection, sometimes on the same corner, while maintaining loose boundaries, often in groups of nationality, ethnicity and sometimes race. This helped guide the hiring process so that a small business owner could drive to the southeast corner to hire Mexican Regulars, stop five yards ahead of them to hire Polish Regulars or cross the street to hire African American Temps. Aside from the status of Regular or Temp, I learned from

the men and some employers that an order on the corner linked the men's perceived nationality and ethnicity with the status of a "real day laborer" shaping these outcomes in the hiring process. Each day I saw employers stop their cars in front of the Regulars who were the desirable workers and avoid the Temps because they lacked the status of a "real day laborer."

The day laborers themselves invoked these distinctions. After losing a job when a car pulled away from the corner where a group of Temps were having a boisterous and loud discussion, Ronaldo, from Cuenca, Ecuador, expressed his frustration: "...These boys don't understand what it is to live poor... They are Americans. Why do they come here? ... They can work anywhere... If you want to understand better, come stand with us over there."

William, a young African American Temp, shared his experience on the corner. "Y'know, I was born here, I speak the language... But people don't want to hire me sometimes. Not even here. They go to the Mexicans first. I guess 'cause they're illegal, so they can pay them whatever. That's okay. I make my money, too."

Employers like Danny explained why he hired a few Mexican men from the corner: "These men, I know will work hard." I pressed him for his thoughts on not hiring the black men whom he perceived as African Americans. "I don't know about them. They look so young – like they haven't worked a day in their life. Why aren't they working in McDonald's or something..."

After I explained that some of the black men were also Latino immigrants, his response didn't change except to acknowledge that he "couldn't tell just by looking at them" that they were also "Hispanic."

Based on visual and spatial markers of residential status (immigrant versus native), race and ethnic status (Mexican versus American), and gender status (strong and respectful man versus inexperienced youth or delinquent), this social order helped distinguish who was a good or bad worker and who was a moral diligent immigrant versus a mediocre native.

Meanwhile, as the men were struggling to find their "place" on the corner, *la profesora* struggled, too. Like the men, the status of my own identity, including a "nice woman," varied by our interactions and even according to where I stood on the corner. This often depended on exchanges with men who were perceived as a "decent or proper man." I learned about these roles while exploring displays of

masculinity on the corner that were generally related to social activities, either in the treatment of women and in assumed roles of a father, husband or community leader. These were particularly visible early on in my fieldwork with the Latino Regulars as I tried to hold individual or group conversations with them on the corner. Gerry felt obliged to share his thoughts with me:

"Some of us know why you are here, but not everyone... Where we come from, a woman by herself doesn't stand with a lot of men to talk. You don't see that unless you're that kind of woman... that's why we say that you are lying to us. A man would never let his wife stand with strange men outside in public. But it's different here in this country."

The men who labeled me a "nice woman" became my friends and in time they were engaged in helping me with my project. They also considered themselves "decent, hardworking, proper" men who were different from the "bad, lazy or *malcriados* (spoiled or poorly brought up)" who only came to the corner to "find trouble" and were not diligent about finding work. As this second group of men also doubted the substance of my project and my motivations for hanging out on the corner, they identified me as a prostitute, though this was also true about men with whom I had only a brief acquaintance.

These gendered roles both constrained and facilitated my fieldwork, particularly my capacity to learn about their personal lives; topics like sexuality and marriage varied in appropriateness for public or private conversation. Amused at my naiveté, men like Gerry explained and concluded to me that, "Yes, you're *hispana* but you don't understand because you are also *americana*. Understand?... Life is different here... Ask your parents, they understand."

Though we shared a common language and cultural background, our differences in nationality, class, and gender, among others, challenged our interactions on the corner. Though at times frustrating, this experience was vital in learning about the different categories and boundaries of social interactions with men and women. Much like the integrity of the order that defined a "real day laborer" for the workers and employers, an underlying principle of decency in this gendered order defined a hardworking, decent man or a nice woman and guided our social interactions.

The multiple realities and shifting identities of the men and myself revealed the complex ways that

<continued>

race, ethnicity, and gender operate in our society. While institutional and cultural factors affect the men's lives and experiences, they have also been able to shape their own reality and construct social meanings through their daily activities on the corner. I found *Compadre's* statement most compelling: "The people who come here, with one look, they know everything." Though at first hidden to the casual observer, it became clear that this "one look" embodied discrete meanings that revealed the men's active efforts to negotiate their work *and* social experiences as they struggled to articulate their place in New York City.

*Carolyn Pinedo Turnovsky (cturnovsky@gc.cuny.edu) is currently a doctoral candidate in the Sociology Program at the CUNY Graduate Center in New York. Her dissertation is titled "Doing the Corner: A Study of Immigrant Day Laborers in Brooklyn, New York."*

## Conference on Caring Labor

University of Washington, Seattle

Friday May 20th & Saturday May 21st, 2005

Caring labor jobs that have been traditionally defined as women's work have increasingly moved into the market economy. This economic shift has led to changes in a number of other social and political arenas - how gender roles are understood within the family and in the workplace, how organized labor approaches the challenges of the service economy, how public policy has developed in response to women as workers and political actors. These are some of the issues that will be taken up in Seattle.

This conference will bring together researchers, practitioners, and activists whose work focuses on those providing caring labor services for children, families, the elderly, and the infirm, among others.

Keynote address by Nancy Folbre on Friday evening. See our website for a complete schedule:  
<http://depts.washington.edu/pcls/>

Please join us!

## Historic Union Victory for Family Child Care Providers in Illinois

Fred Brooks

At the ASA meeting last August in San Francisco I presented a case study of Local 880 Service Employees International Union's (SEIU) organizing drive of family child care providers in Illinois (family child care is the care of unrelated children in the home of the provider). My data was collected in 2001 and documented the first 5 years of Local 880's remarkable success recruiting members, collecting over 2000 authorization cards, filing grievances, and winning a pay increase in 1999 through legislative lobbying. This was impressive organizing, especially when you consider Local 880 accomplished all of this with a de facto union—the union was not recognized by the state as the bargaining agent for family child care providers. The union is de facto no more. Thanks to a successful election Local 880 is now the official bargaining agent for over 49,000 family day care providers!

On April 7, 2005 Local 880 capped their successful 10 year organizing drive by winning the largest union election in Illinois history. Family child care providers overwhelmingly voted to have Local 880 represent them in contract negotiations with the State. The union won 82% of 16,700 votes cast (by mail); only 359 votes were for no union representation. The election was sanctioned by Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich's Executive Order issued in February authorizing a union election. The election was administered via mail by the American Arbitration Association. Local 880 says the first priorities for the new bargaining unit will be electing leadership and beginning negotiations with the state around health care coverage and pay increases. Some providers are reimbursed as little as \$9.48 per child per day.

The Illinois victory is the second biggest successful union election in the USA in over 60 years, surpassed only by SEIU 434B's victory in 1999 representing 75,000 homecare workers in California. These two successful union drives used essentially the same organizing strategy developed in the 80s and 90s by Local 880 and several SEIU affiliates to organize home health care workers. Key elements of the successful strategy include: 1) a grassroots, rank-and-file, organizing approach emphasizing home visits and interpersonal contact for recruitment; 2) direct involvement in legislative and gubernatorial elections; 3) experience with non-

NLRB organizing and maintaining unions without official recognition; 4) building and working with coalitions (of community and advocacy organizations) on legislative campaigns on issues that affect the unions' constituency (e.g., Living Wage Campaigns); and 5) cutting the issue as what is best for clients.

A unique aspect of the Illinois victory was the infusion of community organizers during the last several weeks of the drive. Local 880 is affiliated with the community organization ACORN. During the last few weeks leading up to the election ACORN contracted 50 organizers to assist Local 880 with doorknocking and telephone calls. This joint community and labor organizing blitzkrieg helped secure Local 880's wide margin of victory.

The victory has implications beyond Illinois since SEIU is already replicating 880's child care organizing model in California, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin. The union estimates there are over 500,000 family child care providers nationwide.

*Fred Brooks (fbrooks2@gsu.edu) is Assistant Professor of Social Work at Georgia State University. He researches innovative community and labor organizing campaigns. For more details on Local 880's organizing drive, see his article "New Turf for Organizing: Family Child Care Providers" published in the January 2005 edition of Labor Studies Journal.*

### **Member Request**

Brothers and Sisters-  
I write to ask your help with a book I am writing about the 1981 PATCO Strike. About 15 months from now the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary (August 3) will arrive, and it is not too early to begin to ponder the meaning of it all. Accordingly, would you share—at any length—your response to this question: What are the major lasting impacts, if any, of the 1981 PATCO Strike? Why? And with what consequence for unionism, labor-management relations, and America?

Fraternally,  
Art Shostak (shostaka@drexel.edu)  
Co-author, *The Air Controllers Controversy: Lessons from the 1981 PATCO Strike* (1986).

### **Member Publication**

S. M. Miller and Anthony J. Savoie, *Respect and Rights: Class, Race, and Gender Today*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2002. pb.

## **Research & Activism**

### **Union Organizing: How Can Sociologists Help?**

**By S. M. Miller**

1. Gauging public opinion about unions at national and local levels. Who believes what about unions? What steps would strengthen support for unions?

Opinion polling could clarify how people think about unions. Adding questions to on-going national or local polls is not always expensive and sometimes can be done without charge. Various kinds of qualitative approaches to clarifying opinions are not costly. Focus groups where the panel members interact with one another on labor and union issues could be illuminating. Intensive interviewing of a useful sample (e.g., employees in various kinds of service industries) could reveal what might strengthen or change attitudes towards unions. Such interviewing could reveal ignorance, false beliefs or negative views about unions, their history and performance. In particular, intensive interviewing could reveal what would build support for changing Congressional and National Labor Relations Board's regulations to facilitate organizing drives.

2. Choosing organizing sites. What conditions and circumstances are conducive to successful organizing or strong barriers to its effectiveness?

Reviewing a number of organizing efforts, both successful and unsuccessful, could clarify what structural and other conditions promote or hinder unionization. The sources of information would be organizers, union officials, workers, company managers, media people, and community activists.

3. Improving organizing approaches. Under what circumstances is "parachuting" in union organizers effective? What is the useful balance of initiatives and decision-making between the union organizer and worker leadership? How to promote initiating union activities by workers rather than by union organizers' attempting to promote support for a union? What do these grass-roots initiatives need to be effective?

Researchers could use interviews or historical accounts. First-hand observational or retrospective study of different approaches to and experiences of organizing would be helpful in understanding what



should be changed, dropped or improved. A variety of actors would be the focus of interest.

4. After failure. What happens to the workers after a failed organizing effort? When is it worthwhile to try again to organize the firm? Sampling several efforts of unsuccessful and/or second-try efforts would be useful.

5. Worker proselytizers. What moves unionized workers to proselytize workers in non-union firms? How to increase the number of proselytizers? Interviews with proselytizers and non-activist union members as well as with union leaders and organizers would be useful.

This obviously incomplete listing of topics and methods suggests that sociologists' research could aid union organizing and political efforts. Such research could also contribute to various sociological fields (e.g., organizational analysis, communication effects, the interactions of structural and attitudinal variables). Activism and the further development of sociology need not be in separate, competing boxes.

*S. M. ("Mike") Miller (fivegood@aol.com) is the director of the Project on Inequality and Poverty at the Commonwealth Institute, Cambridge MA, professor emeritus of sociology at Boston University, co-founder of United for a Fair Economy and co-founder and first president of the Research Committee on Poverty, Inequality and Social Policy of the International Sociological Association.*

## 2004-2005 Section Officers

**Chair:** Dan Clawson (UMass-Amherst)  
clawson@sadri.umass.edu

**Chair Elect:** Peter B. Evans (UC-Berkeley)  
pevans@socrates.berkeley.edu

**Past Chair:** Ruth Milkman (UCLA)  
milkman@soc.ucla.edu

**Secretary-Treasurer:** Heidi Gottfried (Wayne State)  
heidi.gottfried@wayne.edu

**Council:**  
Edna Bonacich (edna.bonacich@ucr.edu)  
Michael Schwartz (mschwartz@cc.sunysb.edu)  
Teresa Sharpe (tsharp@socrates.berkeley.edu)  
Joel Stillerman (stillejo@gvsu.edu)

**Web address:**  
<http://www.laborstudies.wayne.edu/ASA/>

## Global Labor Mini-Conference

August 12, 2005  
University of Pennsylvania

*Cosponsored by the Political Economy of the World System, Labor and Political Sociology Sections of the ASA*

*Location: David Rittenhouse Laboratories (DRL), at 53rd and Walnut Sts., Philadelphia. (One block south and three blocks east from the University City Sheraton). Rooms A5, A6, A7 & A8*

**8:30 to 9:00 AM** Coffee/Continental Breakfast

**9:00 to 9:15 AM** Welcome

**Fred Block** (UC-Davis), *Political Sociology Section*  
**Dan Clawson** (UMass-Amherst), *Labor Section*  
**Bob Ross** (Clark University), *PEWS*

**9:15 to 11:00 AM**

Session 1: Archetypal Global Industries I: Textiles and Apparel

**Gay Seidman** (UW-Madison) Chair  
**Edna Bonacich** (UC-Riverside) "The Logistics Revolution, Its Consequence for Labor, and the New Vulnerabilities it Creates"  
**Virginia Carty** (Niagara University) "Labor Struggles, New Social Movements, and America's Favorite Pastime: New York Workers Take on New Era"  
**Bob Ross** (Clark University) "Freeing the Slaves to Fashion"  
**Ian Robinson** (University of Michigan) Comment

Session 2: Archetypal Global Industries II: Auto

**Peter Evans** (UC-Berkeley) Chair  
**Adriana Bohm** (Delaware County Community College) "Auto Unions Confront Globalization"  
**Jeff Rothstein** (UW-Madison) "Opportunity or Threat?: Autoworker Union Approaches to Globalization in Mexico and the Midwest"  
**Lu Zhang** (Johns Hopkins) "Hegemonic Regime? Globalization, Market Reform and Changing Labor Politics in China's Automobile Industry"

**Mark Anner** (Penn State) Comment

**11:15 to 1:00 PM**

Session 3: Community and Contingency in the Service Sector

**Peter Evans** (UC-Berkeley) Chair

**Bridget Kenny** (University of the Witwatersrand) "Local Divisions of Labor and the Global Service Sector: Global Lessons from Contingent Labor in East Rand (South Africa) Food Retailing Labor Market"

**Jennifer Jihye Chun** (UC-Berkeley) "Contesting Urban Marginality: Organizing Low-wage Service Workers in Los Angeles and Seoul, Korea"

**Marina Karides** (Florida Atlantic University) "Claiming Space and Globalizing Streets: Street Vendors and Transnational Resistance to Capitalist Expansion"

**George Gonos** (SUNY-Potsdam) Comment

Session 4: Identity and Resistance in Center and Periphery

**Dan Clawson** (UMass-Amherst) Chair

**Kathleen Schwartzman** (University of Arizona) "The Global Chicken: Immigration and the New American Dilemma"

**Jay Arena** (Toulane) "Race, Class, and Globalization: The Case of the Charleston 5 Dockworkers"

**Ligaya Lindio-McGovern** (Indiana University) "Filipina Domestic Workers Around the World"

**Ruth Milkman** (UCLA) Comment

**1:15 to 2:15 PM** Lunch

**2:30 to 4:15 PM**

Session 5: Transnational Labor Regimes & Cross Border Organizing

**Wilma Dunnaway** (Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University) Chair

**Kaan Agarten** (Binghamton) "Organizing Labor Across Borders: The European Union and The Turkish Experience"

**Jennifer Bickham-Mendez and Marina Prieto-Carron** (Central American Women's Network) "Maquilas and Hispanic Workers in the Southeast"

**Sarah Hernandez** (New College of Florida) "Agricultural Unions Crossing the Border: Union Collaboration Between FLOC and SNTOAC"

**Andrew Schrank** (University of New Mexico) Comment

Session 6: Emerging Economies & Repressed Labor: Mexico & China

**Bob Ross** (Clark) Chair

**Nancy Plankey Videla** (Texas A&M University) "Limits to Industrial Upgrading in Mexico's Garment and Textile Industry Before and After China's Entrance to the WTO"

**Carolina Bank Munoz** (Brooklyn College), "The Tortilla Behemoth: Sexualized Despotism And Women's Resistance in a Multinational Mexican Tortilla Factory"

**Ching Kwan Lee** (University of Michigan) "Labor Politics in China's Rustbelt and Sunbelt"

**Wai Kit Choi** (UC-Irvine) "Modes of Labor Control and Capitalist Development in Two Global Cities: Shanghai and Hong Kong"

**Beverly Silver** (Johns Hopkins) Comment

Session 7: Patterns of Counter-Hegemonic Mobilization

**Bill Gamson** (Boston College) Chair

**Suzanne Franzway** (University of South Australia) & **Mary Margaret Fonow** (Arizona State University) "Feminism and Transnational Labor Advocacy"

**Christopher Chase-Dunn, Ellen Reese & Teivo Teivainen** (UC-Riverside) "Labor and the Other Movements in the Global Polity"

**Laura Reynolds** (Colorado State) "Fair Trade / Fair Labor: Movement Strategies for Fostering Global Worker Rights"

**Peter Evans & Anna Wetterberg** (UC-Berkeley) "Labor Protest in the Global South at the Turn of the Millennium"

**Fred Block** (UC-Davis) Comment

**4:30 to 6:00 PM**

Session 8: Reflections and General Discussion on Labor as a Global Actor

**Peter Evans** (UC-Berkeley) Chair/Moderator

**Dan Clawson** (UMass-Amherst)

**Gay Seidman** (UW-Madison)

**Beverly Silver** (Johns Hopkins)

**7:00 to 9:00 PM**

Dinner and Panel Discussion

**Bob Ross** (Clark) Moderator

**Jeff Hermanson** (AFL-CIO Solidarity Office)

**Neva Makgetla** (Congress of South African Trade Unions)

**Scott Nova** (Workers Rights Consortium)

**9:00 PM** PARTY!!!

*To register, or obtain more information, contact Robert J.S. Ross at rjsross@clark.edu. Please put "Labor Conference" in the subject line of your message.*

## ASA Labor Sessions

2005 Annual Meetings  
August 13-16  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

## Panels

### Panel 1: The Wal-Martization of America and the World: Implications for Labor

**Edna Bonacich** (UC Riverside) Session Organizer  
**Jennifer Bair** (Yale University) “Is Wal-Mart the New Standard Bearer of Industrial Relations in America?”  
**Jake B. Wilson** (UC Riverside) “Racialized Labor and Wal-Mart’s Global Empire”  
**Arindrajit Dube, Barry Eidlin and Bill Lester** (UC Berkeley) “Is there a ‘Wal-Mart Effect’? Examining the Impact of Wal-Mart Market Entry on County-Level Retail Sector Earnings Patterns”  
**Steven Rose** (Indiana University, Fort Wayne) “Behind the Smiley Face Veneer: An Insider’s Observations of Wal-Mart’s Anti-Labor Practices”  
**Tom Juravich** (UMass, Amherst) “Stressed: Customer Service Representatives at Verizon”  
**Richard Appelbaum** Discussant

### Panel 2: The Internal Politics of Unions

**Jonathan Cutler** (Wesleyan) Session Organizer  
**Stanley Aronowitz** (Graduate Center, CUNY) “Future of American Labor”  
**Judith Stepan-Norris** (UC-Irvine) “The Importance of Union Factions: Lessons from the CIO”  
**Stuart Eimer** (Widener University) “Rebuilding the House of Labor: Organizational Structure, Local Unions and Regional Organizing”  
**Laura Ariovich** (Northwestern University) “‘You Help Us and We Help You’: Organizational Reform and Reciprocity in a Union Local”

## Roundtables

*Co-organizers:* Mary Nell Trautner (University of Arizona) & Daisy Rooks (UCLA)

### Table 1: Case Studies of Labor and Labor Movements

**Marc Dixon** (Ohio State University) Presider/Discussant

**Chris Rhomberg** (Yale University) “Action Motown: The Detroit Newspaper Strike, 1995 – 2000”

**Belinda Lum** (University of Southern California) “Negotiating Race, Immigration, and the State: A Case Study of SEIU”

**Piyasuda Pangsapa** (University at Buffalo) “The Piece Work System and “New Slaves” of the Apparel Industry”

**Jill Harrison** (Ohio State University) “Obstacles to Social Movement Unionism: A Case Study of the United Steelworkers of America”

### Table 2: Labor Movements in International Perspective

**Leslie Gates** (SUNY-Binghamton) Presider/Discussant  
**Carsten Jensen** (University of Copenhagen) “European Trade Unions, Influence and Members: A Comparative Analysis of Workplace Influence and Member Composition Among Trade Unions in Europe”

**Lionel How** (National University of Singapore) “Organised Labour’s Changing Situation In Indonesia: Does Reformasi Matter?”

**Daniel Cornfield, Steve Lee, Melissa Sloan, and Haihong Wang** (Vanderbilt University) “Recent Global Trends in Research Themes in the Sociology of Work”

**Kim Scipes** (Purdue University North Central) “Labor’s Foreign Policy Under John Sweeney: Are ‘Misteps’ Aberrations or a Return to ‘Traditional’ Labor Imperialism?”

### Table 3: Social Movement Theory in Labor Movement Research

**Steven Lopez** (Ohio State University) Presider/Discussant  
**Dale Wimberley** (Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University) “Social Movement Theory and Labor Movements: State-Centric Assumptions and Class-Centered Challenges”

**Michael Mulcahy** (University of Connecticut-Stamford) and **Mary Nell Trautner** (University of Arizona) “Communities Fight Back: Neoliberalism, Living Wage Ordinances, and Organized Labor, 1994-2002”

**Baek Min** (Korea University) “The Human Rights of Labor in the View of New Institutionalism”

### Table 4: Lessons from the Contemporary Labor Movement

**Dorian Warren** (Univ. of Chicago) Presider/Discussant  
**Robert Penney** (George Washington University) and **Anne Rooks** (UCLA) “Perceptions of Leadership: Organizer and Worker Relationships in Working Class Collective Activity”

**Jennifer Mendez** and **James Spady** (The College of William & Mary) “Building Coalition in the Ivory Tower: Lessons from a Campus Living Wage Campaign”

**Darina Lepadatu** and **Timothy Thompson** (University of Kentucky) “The US Labor Unions and their (Non)Response to Workplace Diversity”