
In Critical Solidarity

*Newsletter of the American Sociological Association's
Section on Labor and Labor Movements*

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ASA Preview

Labor in New York City

Meredith Kolodner and Penny Lewis

In the post-war period, militancy combined with density to make New York City's organized labor one of the most influential local movements in the country. Programs and policies that helped to "lift all boats" and could be aptly described as social democratic—including affordable housing and decent and widespread health coverage—were fueled, funded, and fought for by a movement that historian Josh Freeman calls exceptional for its "energy, imagination, and ambition."

Labor's history over the past three decades has often stood in stark contrast to its glory days. The fiscal crisis of the mid-1970s was largely resolved through labor's concessions, and it ushered in thirty years of nearly uninterrupted neo-liberal austerity for the city's working class. New York City labor's own limitations—diminished solidarity, bureaucratization, and, in some sectors, conservatism and racism—contributed to its decline, as did the significant erosion of the city's manufacturing base. Public sector workers, the bulk of the city's organized workforce, were guaranteed collective bargaining rights under the 1967 Public Employees Fair Employment Act, known as the Taylor Law. But while the Taylor law requires that employers negotiate and enter into agreements with public sector unions, it denies public sector workers the right to strike.

While New York remains the most highly unionized major city in the country, we also out-pace the nation in income inequality, with hundreds of thousands of working people living at or close to poverty; housing prices out of the reach of the middle class, let alone workers; and close to two million non-elderly

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Section Invited Session

Scholars to Discuss "W.E.B. DuBois and Labor"

This year, the name of the ASA's highest award will be changed to the "W. E. B. DuBois Distinguished Career of Scholarship Award." This historic change, voted by the ASA's membership last year, celebrates DuBois' scholarly contributions, from developing foundational ideas that sustain the profession today, to developing community methodologies that have become the basis of sociological fieldwork, to his incomparable record as the premier public sociologist in the history of our profession.

To celebrate the inaugural "W. E. B. DuBois Distinguished Career of Scholarship Award", the Association of Black Sociologists and the Labor Section of the ASA will host a special intellectual and social event devoted to a central, but often neglected aspect, of Du Bois scholarship. Entitled "W.E.B. DuBois and Labor," the session will feature as panelists Professors David Levering Lewis, Edna Bonacich, Dorien Warren, and Aldon Morris, who represent, among them, the remarkable range and impact of DuBois' thought.

The complex linkages between race and labor have attracted the attention of serious sociological analysts since the beginning of the discipline; DuBois contributed some of the most insightful and impactful of the early analyses. At the beginning of the 21st Century, with the recent efflorescence of sociological scholarship in race, labor and intersectionality, it is fitting that this session should mark this occasion of the first DuBois Award.

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A Note from the Chair

The Meetings

I'm normally not a huge booster of ASA sections or their activities and, quite frankly, I've never been a great fan of the ASA meetings themselves for that matter. But I think that I'm able to recognize an exciting intellectual event when I see one, and I can tell you that some of the most interesting and exciting events that will take place at the meetings in New York are being organized by our section.

First of all, the Labor and Labor Movements Section is sponsoring two truly extraordinary invited sessions: "*W.E.B. DuBois and Labor*" (see accompanying article for details) co-sponsored by the Association of Black Sociologists and organized by Michael Schwartz (who I'm pleased to announce as our section's incoming Chair-elect!); and "*Doing Social Research for the Labor Movement*" that Kate Bronfenbrenner and Dorian Warren have organized. Kate and Dorian have assembled an extraordinary panel that includes Tony Ehrenreich, Regional Secretary for the legendary South African trade union movement, COSATU; Saru Jayaraman, the Co-Director of the Restaurant Opportunities Center in New York; Jessica Goodheart, the Research Director of the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy; and an analyst (TBA) from the Research Department of UNITE HERE. In my view this is exactly the kind of panel that our section needs, as a way of sparking discussion and generating ideas about how we can be of real help to workers and the labor movement.

If the names of the authors and titles of the papers are any indication, our two paper sessions and our roundtables promise to be important intellectual events of their own. "*Mobilizing Asia's Workers: Labor Politics and Organization in 21st Century Asia*," organized by Jennifer Chun (our newly elected section Council member!), will feature papers comparing Taiwanese and South Korean labor movements, labor politics in India, and the mobilization of migrant workers in Southeast Asia, among others. The session organized by Carolina Bank Munoz, "*The Labor Movement and Immigration in NYC and Beyond*" will include papers on organizing immigrant workers in various settings: in the hotel industry, by the Los Angeles

Garment Worker Center, within the meatpacking industry in Omaha, and among Guatemalan Mayan fish processing workers in New Bedford, Massachusetts. The section roundtables that have been organized by Stuart Eimer, have attracted an impressive group of scholars whose presentations will be organized around two broad themes: "*Organizing the Unorganized*" and "*Global Economy, National Unions: Challenges and Opportunities*."

The Labor and Labor Movements Section Reception will be held on Monday the 13th from 6:30 to 8pm at the Hilton Hotel (jointly with the sections on International Migration and Collective Behavior/Social Movements); and our Business Meeting will be on Tuesday Aug. 14th from 11:30am-12:10pm in the Sheraton Hotel.

The Newsletter

You happen to be reading the last issue of our newsletter to be edited by Rachel Sherman. Rachel is stepping down after having done a wonderful job as Editor. This is time-consuming work, and especially so if one is to do as good a job with it as she has. But it shouldn't remain thankless, so I hope that you'll join me in thanking Rachel for raising the standard of the newsletter to a high level, one that poses a challenge to those who'll follow.

And I am very pleased to announce that the new editor of *In Critical Solidarity* will be a "they", a team of editors from NYU led by Jeff Goodwin, who is finishing a stint as co-editor of *Contexts* magazine. In addition to Jeff, the collective includes Ruth Braunstein, Russell Ferri, and Michael McCarthy, all Ph.D. candidates in Sociology at NYU. We look forward to seeing what they'll do with the challenge.

A Reminder

Our membership is hovering at just above the 400 mark. Please, please encourage your friends, colleagues, and students to join our section. Numbers matter because a strong section membership not only gets us the energy and the interests of a broad cross-section of sociologists, but gets us more sessions for next year.

I very much look forward to seeing you all in New York City, my hometown [Go Yankees!].

-Rick Fantasia

*A View from the Field***Boxing "For a Living" in Brooklyn**

Lucia Trimbur

"I box for a living. It feel good when people recognize you for what you do." -- Kenny, 19, an amateur boxer.

I met Kenny at a boxing gym in Brooklyn where I conducted ethnographic research for several years to learn about how young men of color respond to urban marginality and racial exclusion. I found Kenny's self-description fascinating because at the time, Kenny was an amateur and couldn't receive any financial compensation. Thus the "living" Kenny referred to was about something other than money. After speaking with numerous other amateur boxers, it became clear that many fighters consider boxing to be their job or their occupation. This is true both for fighters who plan to fight professionally at some point and for those who do not have any plans to "go pro." And it is true for men who participate in extra-legal and illegal economies outside the gym.

In the urban gym, amateur boxers, typically men of color between the ages of 17 and 24 who have incredible difficulty securing adequate lawful employment, spend upwards of eight hours almost every day working on their bodies in a quest for conditioning and skill perfection. Boxing allows some young men to receive recognition and status for their skills. It allows others to recognize their own admirable qualities. Max told me, "When I step in the ring I feel relaxed, but I feel proud because not everyone can do it. Some people have heart problems. And that's one thing—I don't have a heart problem." Boxing allows some boxers to establish a legacy, which is important to some young fighters with children. Max reflects, "I want my son to see—I want him to be proud. 'Look at my father. He's a boxer. Look at him.'" Omar boxes "to build a legacy. Cause it's like, I always wanted to be like my father. Every kid, they always are gonna talk about they parents." Finally, being a boxer allows young men who have spent time in prison to establish an alternative identity to "criminal" and "ex-con," two identities men in the gym feel are projected onto them.

Although amateurs are not employed in the formal sense, they talk about their experiences in a register of work and approach their training with the

insistence and purpose of a job rather than a leisure pastime. Amateur men seek in boxing activities some of the identities that are typically generated in traditional wage labor and traditional work-sites. Amateurs' training thereby challenges both the binary between employment and unemployment and between labor and leisure. Accordingly the training that amateur men undertake can be understood as an alternative labor practice. This practice illuminates some of the inventive ways in which people develop opportunities for recognition and status in a postindustrial landscape. They reveal the means by which young men intervene in their own lives and attempt to control the conditions of their experiences when maneuvering room is severely constrained.

Lucia Trimbur (ltrimbur@vera.org) obtained her Ph.D. in Sociology from Yale University in 2006 and is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Vera Institute of Justice in New York City.

Plans for 2008 Mini-Conference: Labor and Race

As in-coming co-chairs of the Section, we have decided to adopt the issues of race and racism in the labor movement as the theme for our term, which begins after the 2007 meetings. In preparation for the 2008 meetings in Boston, we are beginning to organize a mini-conference around the theme of "Labor and Race." We hope to be able to co-sponsor the mini-conference with other sections or organizations, so as to develop a comprehensive and deeper approach to the issues. We see the mini-conference as looking at historical and contemporary issues.

So far we have made early approaches to the Association of Black Sociologists (ABS) to serve as partners in developing such an event, and have received some interest. We still have a way to go to build a truly joint planning team, and we also want to include other groups as well, if possible.

We welcome ideas and participation from the section membership in helping to make the mini-conference a significant event. We hope to arrange a planning meeting in New York to work on specifics (co-sponsors, sessions, speakers, logistics, etc.) Please contact us if you are interested in working on this so that we can include you in a "virtual" planning committee and in the meeting in New York.

*-Edna Bonacich and Jill Esbenshade
(edna.bonacich@ucr.edu; jesbensh@mail.sdsu.edu)*

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR
NEW OFFICERS!

CHAIR ELECT:
MICHAEL SCHWARTZ, STONY
BROOK UNIVERSITY

COUNCIL:
JENNIFER J. CHUN, UNIVERSITY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

<DuBois Session, cont. from page 1>

There is no scholar in the world more appropriate to discuss the work and life of W. E. B. DuBois than David Levering Lewis, currently the Julius Silver University Professor at NYU, member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and past president of the Society of American Historians. Both volumes of his DuBois biography won Pulitzer prizes (in 1993 and 2000), making him the only author to win Pulitzers for two works dealing with the same subject. Sociologists are in debt to Professor Lewis for excavating the sociological significance of DuBois, and this event will be a chance to honor his achievement while celebrating the work of DuBois himself.

The second panelist, Edna Bonacich, Emeritus Professor of Sociology and Ethnic Studies at the University of California at Riverside, has focused a lifetime of research on the study of race and class, with special emphasis on racial divisions in the working class. Her pioneering split labor market theory, which ushered in a new understanding of the intersections between labor and race, was built upon intellectual foundations constructed by DuBois. Bonacich, like DuBois, has engaged in a lifetime of public sociology, working with several unions and workers' organizations, including UNITE (the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees), the Garment Workers Center in Los Angeles, the anti-sweatshop movement, the port trucker organizing effort, and currently, the WGAW (Writers Guild of America, west).

The third panelist, Dorian T. Warren, currently Assistant Professor of Political Science and in the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University, specializes in the study of inequality and American politics, the political

organization of marginalized groups and the concatenation of American public policy with race, ethnicity and labor. His scholarly work interests replicate those of DuBois, and Warren relies on a DuBoisian perspective in seeking to deepen and extend our understanding of American political development. Like, DuBois, Warren's social activism is focused on eradicating racial and social equality.

Aldon Morris, currently Professor of Sociology and Associate Dean at Northwestern university will serve as the presider and discussant for the panel. Morris' work focuses on race, religion and class and movements for social change. He is the author of the classic work *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement* and winner of the ASA Distinguished Contribution to Scholarship Award. His current work focuses on DuBois' intellectual legacy; his article "Sociology of Race and W. E. B. DuBois: The Path Not Taken," recently appeared in the ASA commissioned volume, *Sociology in America: A History* edited by Craig Calhoun. Morris is a lifetime political activist and public sociologist in the DuBoisian tradition.

All sociologists are invited to this historic event.

-Michael Schwartz

You're Invited!
To our section reception

Monday, August 13
6:30pm - 8:00pm
Hilton New York

Hoisted jointly with the
sections on Collective Behavior
& Social Movements and
International Migration

ASA Sessions of Interest

Regional Spotlight Session

The Future of the New York City Labor Movement

Sun, Aug 12 - 10:30am - 12:10pm

Sheraton New York

Session Organizer and Presider: Josh Freeman (CUNY Graduate Center)

Panelist: Stanley B. Aronowitz (Graduate Center, City University of New York)

Panelist: Janice Fine (Rutgers University)

Panelist: Immanuel Ness (Brooklyn College)

Discussant: Ruth Milkman (Univ of California-Los Angeles)

Discussant: Ed Ott (New York City Central Labor Council)

Section on Labor and Labor Movements Invited Session

W.E.B. DuBois and Labor (co-sponsored with the Association of Black Sociologists)

Mon, Aug 13 - 10:30am - 12:10pm

Sheraton New York

Session Organizer: Michael Schwartz (Stony Brook University)

Presider: Aldon D. Morris (Northwestern University)

Panelist: David Levering Lewis (New York University)

Panelist: Edna Bonacich (University of California, Riverside)

Panelist: Dorian T. Warren (Columbia University)

Discussant: Aldon D. Morris (Northwestern University)

Regular Session. Labor and Labor Movements

Mon, Aug 13 - 10:30am - 12:10pm

Sheraton New York

Session Organizer and Presider: Kate Bronfenbrenner (Cornell University)

“Sewing Resistance: Globalization and Labor Transnationalism in the North American Apparel Commodity Chain (1990-2005),” Cesar A. Rodriguez-Garavito (University of The Andes (Colombia))

“New Forms of Labor Transnationalism: A Case Study of Philippine Migrant Organizing,” Robyn Magalit Rodriguez (Rutgers University)

“The Racialization of Global Labor,” Jake B. Wilson (University of California, Riverside), Sabrina Akbar Alimahomed (University of California, Riverside)

Discussant: Tony Ehrenreich (Cosatu)

Section on Organizations, Occupations and Work, Paper Session

Labor Unions: Growth and Decline

Mon, Aug 13 - 2:30pm - 4:10pm

Hilton New York

Session Organizer: Philip N. Cohen (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

Presider: Dan Clawson (University of Massachusetts)

Session Organizer: Mark S. Mizruchi (University of Michigan)

“Democratic Competition and Union Growth: Tracing the Relationship between Splits in the American Labor Movement and Union Growth,” Judith Stepan-Norris (University of California, Irvine), Caleb Southworth (University of Oregon)

“Forgotten But Not Gone: Unions and Strike Activity Across U.S. States, 1984-2002,” Andrew W. Martin (The Ohio State University), Marc Dixon (Florida State University)

“Is Corporatism the Answer to Union Decline? : A Cross-National Investigation,” Joelle M Sano (Boston College), John B. Williamson (Boston College)

“Unions, Public-sector Employment, and Within-group Wage Dispersion: A Density-function Decomposition of Rising Inequality from 1983 to 2005,” Changhwan Kim (University of Minnesota), Arthur Sakamoto (University of Texas-Austin)

Discussant: Daniel B. Cornfield (Vanderbilt University)

Thematic Session. The Future of the Labor Movement

Mon, Aug 13 - 4:30pm - 6:10pm

Hilton New York

Session Organizer: Dan Clawson (University of Massachusetts)

Presider: Dan Clawson (University of Massachusetts)

Panelist: Edna Bonacich (University of California, Riverside)

Panelist: Rina Agarwala (Princeton University)

Panelist: Ruth Milkman (Univ of California-Los Angeles)

Panelist: Steve Lerner (Service Employees International Union)

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Section on Labor and Labor Movements Invited Session

Doing Social Research for the Labor Movement

Tue, Aug 14 - 12:30pm - 2:10pm

Building: Hilton New York

Session Organizer: Kate Bronfenbrenner (Cornell University)

Co-Leader: Dorian T. Warren (Columbia University)

Co-Leader: Kate Bronfenbrenner (Cornell University)

Panelist: Tony Ehrenreich (Cosatu)

Panelist: Jessica Goodheart (Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy)

Panelist: Saru Jayaraman (Restaurant Opportunities Center NY)

Panelist: Antony Dugdale (UNITE HERE)

Section on Labor and Labor Movements Paper Session Mobilizing Asia's Workers: Labor Politics and

Organization in 21st Century Asia

Tue, Aug 14 - 8:30am - 10:10am

Sheraton New York

Session Organizer and Presider: Jennifer J. Chun (University of British Columbia)

“Notes on Labor Trajectory: Taiwan's and South Korea's Labor Movements Compared,” Hwa-Jen Liu (University of California, Berkeley)

“Meaning of politics: a different account from contemporary India,” Manjusha S. Nair (Rutgers University)

“Strike and Actor Constitution: Identity Formation and Interest Construction,” Eunjoo Cho (Yonsei University)

“Migrant Workers' Mobilization in Southeast Asia: protecting the vulnerable and the state of things to come in the global supply chain,” Piyasuda Pangsapa (University at Buffalo)

Discussant: Ching Kwan Lee (University of Michigan)

Section on Labor and Labor Movements Paper Session. The Labor Movement and Immigration in NYC and Beyond

Tue, Aug 14 - 2:30pm - 4:10pm

Hilton New York

Session Organizer and Presider: Carolina Bank Muñoz (Brooklyn College-CUNY)

“Avenues to Organizing Undocumented Workers: Guatemalan Mayans in Fish Processing in New Bedford, MA,” Tom Juravich (University of Massachusetts)

“Out in the Cold? NLRA Protections, Undocumented Workers, and Organizing Since Hoffman,” Hector L. Delgado (University of La Verne)

“Organizing for Better Working Conditions and Wages: The UNITE HERE! Hotel Workers Rising Campaign,” Dan Zuberi (University of British Columbia)

“Organizing Immigrants in America's Sweatshops: The Los Angeles Garment Worker Center,” Richard Sullivan (Illinois State University)

“Si, Se Puede: Organizing Latino Immigrant Workers in South Omaha's Meatpacking Industry,” Jacquelyn S. Gabriel (Colorado State University)

Discussant: Dorian T. Warren (Columbia University)

**And don't forget our
Business Meeting**
 Where the book award winner will be
 announced!

*Tuesday, August 14
11:30am - 12:10pm
Sheraton New York*

*• Preceded by the section roundtables
at 10:30*

<NYC Labor, cont. from page 1>

residents without health insurance. NYC unions have too often lacked the clout, and at times the willingness, to fight on behalf working people beyond their own members, though there are many promising signs that this is changing. What follows is a brief snapshot of the current NYC labor scene.

Today the city is about 24% unionized, and the relatively high density is due mostly to the massive public sector, which includes 35,000 cops, 11,000 firefighters, 34,000 transit workers, and 120,000 teachers, counselors and other public school staff. It also boasts AFSCME's largest district (DC 37), with 121,000 members, and the nation's largest Teamsters local, 237, comprising 24,000 public housing workers and peace officers in schools and hospitals.

The major private industries that are unionized are in the service sector. SEIU 1199 Health and Hospitals Union is the giant, with 200,000 members statewide

and most of the city's private hospitals and nursing homes under its jurisdiction. 1199 was predominantly organized in the 1950's as a civil-rights, left-led union remarkable for its fearlessness, progressive culture, and cultural and educational programs, such as Bread and Roses. For decades it flexed its muscles regularly in the streets in contract fights, and for social causes including funding for education and health care. Its power is now exercised mainly in the electoral realm where its *realpolitik* (including endorsing incumbent Republicans) has often triggered resentment from other unions.

SEIU Local 32 BJ is the next largest private sector union, representing 55,000 building service workers in the city (and another 30,000 in the region, making it SEIU's largest building service local in the country). Since it was freed from a corrupt leadership in 1999, it has emerged as a power at the local electoral level and has taken more of a lead in social causes, such as the recent battles for immigrant rights.

While their influence has waned in recent years, the building trades remain powerful forces in New York City. Carpenters, Laborers, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 3, together with numerous small craft locals, have traditionally governed construction work, often allowing smaller-scale development to go non-union as long as the major projects went to their members. The massive spike in real estate values and the city's building boom, however, has emboldened developers to slap up non-union construction sites in the heart of Manhattan, staffing them with mostly Mexican, African, and Irish undocumented workers. The building trades' history of racism and craft unionism, which made joining difficult for the uninitiated, has worked against them over the past several years (if not decades). The trades are unevenly turning towards more inclusive methods for fighting the underground economy, including organizing the unorganized and apprenticeship programs for inner-city youth.

UNITE/HERE has thousands of members in restaurants, hotels, retail clothing, garment shops and laundries, but many establishments are non-union, low-wage, and often staffed by undocumented workers. HERE initiated the Restaurant Opportunities Center a workers center that works with these unorganized sectors, filing successful

Announcements

New Film

Smells Like Money: The Story of Bellingham's Georgia Pacific Plant

This documentary tells the story of the pulp mill through the eyes of its workers. The difficulties of the locally owned mill being acquired by GP, the historic 7-month strike, and environmental protests are all documented in this engaging and informative film.

For more information, visit www.NWFilmSchool.com/Money or email David at albrigd2@cc.wvu.edu

Work-Life Conference

"Work-Life Policies that Make a Real Difference for Individuals, Families, and Organizations" is the title of Penn State's 15th annual Symposium on Family Issues, to be held October 8-9, 2007. The topic will be addressed by 16 experts from major institutions and work-family research centers. Information and registration at <http://www.pop.psu.edu/events/symposium/2007.htm>

lawsuits for back-wages and raising community consciousness.

In the public sector and beyond, the United Federation of Teachers, AFT is a major player, wielding considerable power in Albany and around City Hall. It is second only to 1199 in its ability to turn out members and shape elections, budgets and legislation.

DC 37 should be equally influential, but a series of scandals in the 1990s threw the union into chaos from which it has yet to recover. After AFSCME placed it under an administrator in 1999, DC 37 never got back on its feet. Today, the membership is fairly uninvolved and the union's priorities unclear. Members still enjoy benefits that would be envied by most clerical and hospital workers nationwide, but some members of the mostly Black and Latino union are so low-paid that they qualify for food stamps.

Members of Transport Workers Union Local 100 took the bold step of breaking the Taylor Law in December 2005, grinding the city's buses and

subways to a halt with a 3-day strike. The union was pilloried in the press for the strike, which was actually supported by most New Yorkers, despite having to cross the Brooklyn Bridge and others by foot in freezing temperatures. The members went back to work with a mediocre contract that was voted down by the membership. The final deal contained concessions and was little different from the one management offered before the strike. Members were personally fined for a full day's wages for every day on strike, and the union also had to pay \$2.5 million in fines. The local has lost its automatic dues check-off for at least three months, all courtesy of the Taylor Law. As of June 1, only 50 percent of the members had signed up to pay their dues while check-off is suspended.

The Change To Win/AFL-CIO split has had minimal impact in the city, where nearly all the unions are part of the Central Labor Council. The recently moribund CLC got hit last year by a kick-back scandal that knocked out its popular leader (and State Assembly member) Brian McLaughlin. The organization is recovering and taking a prominent pro-immigrant, pro-organizing stance. It has also gotten involved in environmental politics, and is reaching out to non-AFL-CIO groups such as Domestic Workers United and the Taxi Workers Alliance to include them in the "official" labor movement. The more conservative players on the CLC, however, have sometimes prevented it from taking a more liberal tack, such as blocking resolutions against the war in Iraq.

There are a growing number of union-community partnerships, for example to organize immigrant workers in the retail industry and home day-care workers, and to block some of Mayor Bloomberg's efforts to reorganize the public school system. The New York City Civil Participation Project is one such effort, spearheaded by 32B-J, DC 37, and UNITE-HERE. New York City's Jobs with Justice has similarly stressed community involvement in its recent projects, and is poised to win significant IDA (Industrial Development Agency) reform statewide, which would greatly increase the accountability demanded of commercial developments receiving tax breaks. One of the power brokers in the community coalitions is the Working Families Party, which is controlled by the major unions with heavy involvement by CWA, 1199, and the community group ACORN. Due to New York's election laws, which allow candidates to run on more than one party line, the WFP can endorse Democrats while seeking

to leverage a more progressive set of politics by supplying votes to them on its line. The party has been successful in getting several of its candidates elected and is now a significant part of the city's political scene.

Although the overall picture can appear somewhat dismal, the unions in New York City remain a force, playing a major role in local elections and providing the resources and organizing power not only to maintain benefits and wages not enjoyed outside their ranks, but also on several key political issues, most prominently immigration reform. Internal fighting has marred progress, but opportunities continue to exist inside numerous major unions for reform and pro-democracy efforts. New York City's largest higher education union, CUNY's Professional Staff Congress (AFT 2334) is one example of local that has made strides over the past six years under new reform leadership. The labor movement is much more open to community organizing efforts than it once was, and the most progressive unions are drawing strength from and partnering with organizations largely based in the city's diverse immigrant communities. Behemoths like the UFT, which some on the labor left have criticized for putting political power above democratic principles, have joined up with ACORN to unionize the largest group of public sector workers in a generation, home day-care workers who currently average \$19,000 a year. The city's union movement is no doubt ossified in some quarters and is losing ground under the wave of real estate development, but it is also, by necessity, spreading into new arenas where the desire to organize is palpable.

Further Reading:

*Leon Fink and Brian Greenberg, *Upheaval in the Quiet Zone: A History of Hospital Workers Union 1199*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989.

*Josh Freeman, *Working Class New York*. New York: The New Press, 2000.

*Mark H. Maier, *City Unions: Managing Discontent in New York City*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987.

Meredith Kolodner is a reporter for the Chief-Leader in New York City, covering life in the city's public sector unions and the government policies that affect them. Penny Lewis is a doctoral candidate at the CUNY Grad Center, an instructor at BMCC, and co-chair of the PSC Solidarity Committee.