

# **An Essay on Radical Labor Education**

**Michael D. Yates**



## **Introduction**

I have been a radical labor educator for nearly two decades. I have taught working people, mostly union leaders and members, a wide variety of courses in a wide variety of settings. I have taught economics to auto workers in eight-hour seminars held in motel conference rooms. I have taught collective bargaining to local workers throughout Western Pennsylvania in six weekly three-hour classes meeting in smoky union halls. The last two years I have taught labor economics to union leaders in an MA program at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. In these classes I have utilized all sorts of teaching techniques, from lectures to discussions to role playing. Note that I call myself a "radical" labor educator. My goal is to help students to grasp the nature of our political economy in such a way that they come to see it as one riven by class conflict, driven by the exploitation of wage labor by the capitalist class, and in need of radical

transformation. By radical transformation I mean a movement toward an economic system based upon cooperative production, democratic decision-making, egalitarian distribution, and a thorough reorganization of work relationships. In this essay I will trace out something of the history of radical labor education and will argue that, after a long period of decline, the times are now ripe for a revival.

### **The Rise of Workers' Education**

While many working people are unhappy with their work, or lack of it, and many are alienated from the political system, they do not have a clear understanding of the nature of our political economy let alone a desire to radically transform it (Yates, 1994). This is not surprising. From earliest childhood, we are bombarded with the idea that our economic system is good and that other ones are bad. I hardly need mention the mis-education that occurs in our schools, except to say that critical thinking about the capitalist system of production and distribution is as rare as snow in Miami. I grew up in a factory town, in which nearly every working adult was a union member, yet I learned nothing at all in school about the labor movement. The issues of racism and sexism are seldom confronted, so the deeply entrenched maltreatment of women and racial minorities appears to be a normal state of affairs. Those working people able to get to college have a better chance of learning something critical of capitalism, but even here, with students majoring in business and the schools dominated by corporations, it is surely not certain that a student will gain a critical perspective on any subject.

Marx had the idea that the accumulation process, itself, with its incessant drive to control the labor process, would help to radicalize workers. Workers in factories are more likely to understand their commonalities than are workers laboring in isolation in their homes. The detailed division of labor makes workers more alike by obliterating skill differences, as does the mechanization of production (Marx, 1977). Yet, managerial control of the labor process also alienates workers by taking away from them the right to conceptualize work, to function as full human beings. This has a tendency to make workers incapable of understanding what is happening to them. To paraphrase Adam Smith, doing repetitive work all day makes a person as stupid as it is possible for a person to be (Smith, 1937, 734-735).

Some workers, of course, will figure out what is going on and they will try to do something about it. At the same time, some persons outside of the working class, like Marx himself, will gain a critical understanding and will be led to try to educate workers to gain such an understanding as well. A more or less natural step will be to organize around workplace issues such as long hours and low pay or around issues of control of the speed of work or the ways in which the work is done. Usually led by skilled workers and aided by radical intellectuals, workers form labor unions to confront their employers collectively. A union is, among many things, a means through which workers educate themselves about the nature of their position in society. A strike, coupled with the usual police repression, is a most educating experience. Through their collective actions, working people learn about the exploitive nature of the economic system, and they gain confidence in their ability to do things themselves. In certain situations, such as mass or

general strikes, they may learn that they have the ability to organize production and distribution (Brecher, 1973). By their nature, unions are egalitarian organizations, and they may foster cooperation and understanding between men and women and blacks and whites (Goldfield, 1993 and 1994).

While unions are indispensable educators of the working class, in themselves they are probably incapable of leading a radical social transformation. For one thing, unions may replicate divisions within the working class which are created by capitalism or which antedate capitalism. For example, many occupations are segregated by sex. Nearly all coal miners are men. A union of coal miners is unlikely, therefore, to be a means by which sexism is attacked and eliminated. It is more likely that sexism will become deeply rooted in the union itself. Much the same can be said about racial divisions. Black and white workers may cooperate in a strike and may work side by side, but this does not mean that the union will actively confront the racism which affects all aspects of life in this country (Nelson, 1992). Second, unions are essentially defensive organizations. In their day-to-day operations, they pretty much have to accept capitalism as a fact of life and try to do the best for their members within its confines. A union may begin with a radical perspective, but over time it may tend to accommodate itself to the reality of capitalism and content itself with maneuvering within it. In fact, acceptance of capitalism may become the actual ideology of a labor movement as shown by the history of the labor movement of the United States. Not only do our labor leaders accept the system, but they have collaborated with employers to undermine attempts by workers here and abroad to forge radical labor organizations (Sims, 1992).

Despite their inherent limitations, unions provide a valuable education for their members. What is more, many labor unions and federations of labor unions have consciously sought to formally educate their members. Union-sponsored education has taken a wide variety of forms from teaching English to newly-arrived immigrants to shop steward training to full-blown college programs and technical training institutes (Barbash, 1955; Dwyer, 1992; Griggs, 1983; Kornbluh, 1984). Radicals have played important roles in union-based education programs, but it has often been difficult for them to teach with a truly independent spirit in these union schools. Unions are often interested in practical education with a focus upon training union officials to better perform their jobs as stewards, negotiators, and contract administrators. Union leaders may not see the need for a liberal education, much less a radical one, and they certainly are not keen on a critical analysis of the unions themselves. In other words, the nature of unions as defensive, job-based organizations is usually reflected in union-sponsored education efforts.

Some working class leaders and some radical intellectuals, understanding the inability of unions to bring about a radical transformation of the relations of production, will attempt to form working class organizations on the level of society itself. Labor political parties, formed to capture state power and to encourage the development of working class institutions and working class culture, are good examples. Like the trade unions, which typically comprise a critical component of them, the labor parties have understood that workers need to be actively educated. The European labor parties, more than a century

ago, established schools for workers, at least initially with the goal of preparing workers to lead the transformation from capitalism to socialism. Naturally radicals were central to these institutions. Marx, himself, was a labor educator within a working class party (Griggs, 1983). In the United States, the Communist Party began the New York Workers School in 1923 and remained active in worker education until the Cold War assault on the party (Gettleman, 1993).

The Workers School saw its purpose as helping workers to develop radical class consciousness, and it tried to link theoretical knowledge of capitalism with practical efforts to build a true working class culture (and a nonracist one, it should be noted). At the same time, it was bound to the party line, whatever that happened to be. This allegiance to party line illustrates a possible weakness of party-based schools. They may be sectarian and intolerant of anything but the party line. Education sponsored by the party may be more a means to recruit party members than a vehicle through which workers gain a critical understanding of capitalism. Students in schools run by the Sendero Luminoso movement in Peru may be learning to carry out the will of the party's leaders, but it is hard to imagine that they are being prepared to reorganize society along democratic socialist lines.

To guard against party dogmatism, some radicals have organized independent schools for worker education. Schools such as the Brookwood Labor College and Work People's College in the United States aimed to prepare workers for struggle, within their trade unions and within the larger society. Willing to ally themselves with supportive unions and nonsectarian in their admissions practices, they maintained a fierce independence and commitment to a radically liberal education (Altenbaugh, 1990; Horton, 1989). Interestingly, Local 189 of the Communication Workers of America, a contemporary union of labor educators, began as Local 189 of the American Federation of Teachers representing the faculty at Brookwood Labor College (Bloom, 1997).

A final and more recent type of labor education is centered in colleges and universities. This form of labor education may be described as semi-autonomous. Some programs are closely connected to labor unions and provide extension-like courses for union members, while others are more formally controlled by the colleges. For example, the Pennsylvania State University has a Department of Labor Studies in which students enrolled in the University may study and obtain a degree. Until recently, this Department also housed an extension program, named the Union Leadership Academy, which, in alliance with Central Labor Councils around the state, offered informal courses for workers where they live. These courses ranged from public speaking to theories of the labor movement. Many radicals teach in these programs, probably with a degree of independence somewhere between that of the old labor colleges and that of the union-sponsored schools.

### **The Long Decline of Radical Labor Education**

In the United States radical labor education had great vitality from the heyday of the Socialist Party to the end of the Second World War. In fact, much of the impetus for

labor education came from radicals, and a good deal of labor education had an explicit or implicit anti-capitalist bias during this period. No doubt this reflected the fact that there were strong radical currents alive within the labor movement throughout this time. The AFL, itself, could hardly be characterized as radical and was often strongly opposed to any critical labor education.

But it was not able to completely defeat the radicals, who found havens in the left-wing political parties and the industrial union movement and whose students did the same. Of course, there were many problems that confronted radical labor education in addition to AFL antagonism. The independent colleges were perennially short of funds and were often at odds with the labor unions. The same might be said about party-based schools. Some of the energy and independence of the labor education movement was coopted by the New Deal (Kornbluh, 1987). And even in the left-wing unions there was conflict between the immediate needs of the unions and the more long-term goals of the radical educators (Horowitz, 1997). But, all in all, radical labor education had achieved much and was poised to achieve more at the end of the war. Union membership was at an all-time high, and the rank-and-file were ready for action.

Unfortunately the radicals, including the educators, were defeated through a ferocious assault by the corporations and the state. This assault has been well-documented and needs little further comment (Ginger and Christiano, 1987). The AFL quickly joined the attack on the left, continuing a long policy of systematic anti-communism (Sims, 1992). Most unfortunately, much of the CIO leadership either capitulated or joined the cold warriors. The ultimate withdrawal or expulsion of the CIO's left-led unions foreshadowed the collapse of an independent labor movement (Rosswurm, 1992). Not long after the merger of the AFL and the CIO, union density began its long decline. Even the economic gains which labor won as a part of the "deal" it made with capital could not withstand the end of the long period of postwar prosperity (Moody, 1988). By the time Reagan came to power, the labor movement was, for all practical purposes, dead.

The fortunes of the left spiraled downward as the labor movement moved to the right. There were important periods of revival, notably the civil rights movement and the anti-war and student uprisings of the 1960s. But, without a broader labor movement to nurture and support them, these movements fell upon hard times as well (Yates, Forthcoming). The 1980s were an especially bleak decade for radicals. The political spectrum moved so far to the right that moderate opinions now sound radical. Millions of working people voted for Reagan and Bush, architects of the very policies which devastated their living standards. Left-wing movements around the world were driven from power or put sharply on the defensive. Marxism, both as theory and as social movement, was in disarray, savaged by opponents and abandoned by many former adherents. The remarkable collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellites left capitalism triumphant, the only game in town so to speak. Capitalism's ideologues have trumpeted its victory in the Cold War as proof that it is the only imaginable economic system, the only one truly in accord with human nature. Anyone arguing otherwise is dismissed as a hopeless romantic; capitalism's power is so awesome that it can never be defeated, so we had better be prepared to accept it as inevitable. The capitalist economy, usually described with

euphemisms such as "market forces" or the "magic of the marketplace," takes on an almost god-like quality, immutable and impervious to human actions (Fukuyama, 1992). Even stalwart critics like Robert Heilbroner have thrown in the towel and said that the socialist project is a pipe dream (Heilbroner, 1989).

The postwar purge of radicals from the labor movement and the rise of the right which ultimately followed made it difficult for radical labor educators to get work let alone to teach what they believed to be true. The independent and the party-based schools did not survive. Education sponsored directly by labor unions focused almost exclusively on collective bargaining and contract administration. This was the natural result of labor's acceptance of the postwar "accord" with capital, with its emphasis upon labor-management cooperation and peaceful collective bargaining. Much the same can be said about college-based labor education; while it maintained some independence, it was still tied closely to the wishes of the unions it served. In addition, the dominant academic paradigm was the "industrial relations" model, which raised the "accord" to the level of natural consequence of the development of advanced capitalist economies (Lester, 1958; Kerr, 1960).

I can attest to the difficulties which have faced radical labor educators during the long dark age since the end of World War II. I began teaching workers in 1980, so my circumstances were not as bleak as those who taught in the 1950s. At least by 1980 the colleges and universities had been opened to radicals for some time; in fact, many of today's labor educators are radical products of the uprisings of the 1960s, disillusioned by the inherent conservatism of academe and its growing isolation from the "real" world. Nonetheless, it was difficult for me to raise radical issues in my labor education classes. For example, in labor economics classes, I have utilized Marx's labor theory of value, but I have been leery of using Marx's name. Instead I have used the subterfuge of calling Marx's theory the "workers' theory." I have had to be careful about discussing U.S. imperialism; I was once sharply criticized for showing a film which featured former CIA agent and ardent radical, Philip Agee. I have avoided altogether discussion of noncapitalist ways of organizing production and distribution, fearing that this would mark me as a communist and damage my credibility with the students. Some students would get upset if I extolled the virtues of the most liberal capitalist regimes, such as those in Scandinavia.

One thing which I did do during the darkest reaction of the Reagan years was to be more critical of the failures of the labor movement, specifically its willingness to support the ideology of the employers it was supposed to be fighting and its unwillingness to aggressively organize new members, especially the millions of women and minorities who will soon be a majority of new entrants into the labor force. My analysis of capitalism convinced me that our economy was in a state of acute stagnation, propped up by a mountain of short-term debt, and unlikely to expand any time soon. I believed that the conditions of the working class would continue to deteriorate, making it more difficult for workers to continue to be optimistic about their futures. My biggest worry was that economic decline in a period of reaction might create the conditions for a resurgence of fascism, as an ignorant working class looked for scapegoats and easy

solutions. Therefore, I thought of my labor education work as a small bulwark against reaction.

If I was lucky, I could create a few tiny islands of progressive thinking in a sea of backwardness, and these islands could provide bases for a renewal of working class consciousness when conditions changed.

## **Renewal?**

While the triumph of capitalism over socialism (the advent of a "New World Order") appears to many to have marked the final demise of the radical project, appearances can be deceiving. This is because our external enemy, the Soviet Union, has disappeared and with it much of the strength of our most powerful ideological construct, anti-communism (Kovel, 1994). Literally every dimension of life in the United States has been organized around fear of and opposition to communism. Any critic of capitalism was charged with being a red or having communist sympathies and could not hope to have much influence. Radicals were purged from the schools, from the government, from the unions themselves, and they were denied any access to the media. Communism was the embodiment of evil, and those who were communists or in any way sympathetic to its ideals were evil people, deserving of public scorn, prison, or, if necessary, death.

Now, without an actually existing communist enemy, it will be harder for anti-communism to maintain its grip upon the working class. For example, it was not possible for former president Bush to use President-elect Clinton's youthful opposition to the war in Viet Nam and his trip to the Soviet Union to advantage in the 1992 presidential election. This is quite remarkable, given that a decade ago it would have ruined Clinton's candidacy. Without communism as a foil, capitalism stands alone, naked for all the world to see. Our myriad problems- widespread unemployment, declining real incomes, widening inequality, environmental destruction, racism, sexism, etc.- can no longer be blamed on communism or lessened by comparison to it. Therefore, it may be possible to blame capitalism itself for these problems, without automatically being accused of being a subversive.

In my view, Marxism stands as the best theoretical explanation of capitalism. The labor theory of value, at least in what Paul Sweezy calls its qualitative aspect, offers a coherent explanation of the source of profits in the exploitation of wage labor (Sweezy, 1964). It provides a good foundation for discussion of a host of problems faced by workers, from low wages to speedup to unemployment. In labor economics classes, I contrast a radical approach to capitalism to both conservative and Keynesian theories. Ideas such as surplus labor time and the reserve army of labor are immediately grasped by workers because they experience them in their daily working lives. The inability of capitalism to generate full employment or to expand indefinitely is intuitively understood as well. Working people know already that the government is limited by the power of business, so a Marxist theory of the state meets with little resistance.

What has met with resistance is the word, Marxism. Marxism is the same as communism and Marx is the personification of evil. In the past, I avoided the use of these words. As I stated above, I called the radical analysis of capitalism the "workers' theory." This is deceptive, but I believe justified under the circumstances. Why risk losing the audience by using language which they will inevitably interpret through the screen of anti-communism? However, now that anti-communism has lost some of its authority, it should be possible to teach less obliquely, to call capitalism and imperialism by name, and to tell students forthrightly that the radical analysis of capitalism derives from Marx. It might be possible to help workers to understand that what they are really opposed to is capitalism, the source of the problems they confront as workers and to see that any real solution to their problems will require a transformation of political power and the relations of production. In fact, I have found it easier to be openly radical in my worker education classes, especially in the MA course. Students do not blanch at Marx's name, nor do they automatically think "communist" when they hear a critical analysis of their nation's political economy.

If radical educators now find it easier to directly attack capitalism, they will be confronted with questions of what type of economic system can replace it. The demise of the socialist states will offer powerful testimony against the possibilities of constructing new relations of production. We must be honest in our assessment of these systems. Because the Soviet Union used an anti-capitalist rhetoric, espoused socialist principles, and sometimes stood as a bulwark against capitalist imperialism, radicals sometimes tended to dampen their criticisms of it. Yet, from a working class perspective, there was nothing egalitarian or democratic about these states.

In fact, only by debasing the idea of socialism to a profound degree could they be called socialist at all. We must be relentless in our criticisms of these so-called socialisms, showing that in many respects they had a lot in common with our own economic system. We must expose how both systems are based upon massive propaganda aimed at defining each system in terms exactly the opposite of the truth.

Linking the command economies of the Eastern Bloc and capitalism together as undemocratic and exploitive economies can pave the way for a discussion of alternatives to both. A discussion of a workable, democratic, and egalitarian economic system is beyond the scope of this paper, but lots of interesting ideas have been put forward (Albert and Hahnel, 1991). Democracy and fairness are popular ideas among workers. They want to be involved in making the decisions which affect them both within their unions and within their workplaces. What they need is some evidence that these are possible of achievement. The end of the Cold War should make all of these things easier to talk about.

Anti-communism also served to make workers here xenophobic, blaming workers in other countries for the depredations of their own employers. Not that many years ago, many of my students were ignorant of or hostile to workers in the rest of the world. Union workers were unaware of the efforts of their own unions, in collaboration with their employers and their government, to destroy progressive labor movements around



the globe. The "New World Order," along with the continuing globalization of capital, offer opportunities for radical labor educators to challenge the isolation of U.S. workers. Auto workers cannot what happens in Japan, Mexico, or South Korea. Perhaps in the past, there was some truth to the notion that workers in this country benefitted from the exploitation of foreign workers, but this is not the case today. Workers everywhere are in competition with workers everywhere else.

I have had some success in promoting the necessity of an international working class response to international capital. When workers become aware of the conditions under which workers in poor countries labor, they are sympathetic. They are interested to hear about efforts to forge international class solidarity, and surprised to learn that such efforts have sometimes succeeded.

They are impressed to hear that unions in other countries have helped workers here to fight against their employers, and I am sure that they would be willing to help workers elsewhere if given concrete ways to do so. It is not that hard to explain to them that it is their employers and not foreign workers who are the main beneficiaries of capital's enhanced mobility. They have been told that the only way to meet the challenge of the "New World Order" is for them to work harder and for less money. Naturally, they do not like this, given that they have been doing just these things for years without benefit. The alternative strategy of doing whatever they can to help poorer workers improve their circumstances, to face capital with minimum costs no matter where it locates, is inherently appealing to them.

Since the election in 1995 of the "New Voice" team of John Sweeney, Rich Trumka, and Linda Chavez Thompson, the AFL-CIO, itself, has become much more progressive in its international relations. Member unions have forged links with progressive labor organizations abroad to fight common corporate enemies and to resist pro-corporate initiatives such as the North American Free Trade Agreement. The new leadership has begun to dismantle the Federation's thoroughly reactionary International Affairs Department and put the old cold warriors out to pasture (Yates, Forthcoming). These actions will provide breathing room for radical labor educators to openly address formerly *verboden* subjects.

The working people I have taught have always been supportive of Keynesian macroeconomic policies. Now it should be easier to argue for large reductions in defense spending and for a substitution of social welfare spending. The unwillingness of the government to support policies which benefit workers can now perhaps be confronted directly as a part of the capitalist system in which business exerts dominant control over public policy. This will be especially the case when a Democratic administration proves to be no more capable of promoting fundamental change than a Republican government. Right now the idea of a labor political party has some support among thoughtful workers, and support for such a party should grow in the future. The Labor Party held its founding convention in Cleveland in June of 1996 with more than 1000 delegates representing over one million workers. This momentous event, which took place without an attack by the AFL-CIO, gives labor educators an opportunity to argue in favor of an independent

working class politics (Slaughter, 1996). The charge that such political efforts are inspired by communism should resonate less strongly within the working class now that the Cold War is over. Indeed, a large majority of my students are less than enamored with the Democrats and open to the idea of a labor party.

### **Problems and Prospects**

I have argued elsewhere that the time is ripe for the rebirth of the U.S. labor movement and for the full participation of radicals in it (Yates, 1997). Here I have made a similar argument for labor education. However, there are a number of potential problems with this argument. First, while I believe that a class analysis is necessary for any understanding of capitalism and that workers are receptive to such an analysis, it is true that the working class is badly divided by race and sex. I know from painful experience that racism is alive and well among unionized workers. One class I taught was criticized because there were too many black persons in it (there were two!). It would scare you to hear the anti-Japanese sentiments openly expressed by the automobile workers I have been teaching. The hatred and racism are palpable and not always discouraged by union officials. A fair number of workers are quick to offer the suggestion that the main problem facing the nation is excessive welfare spending. White workers generally send their children to white schools and live in segregated neighborhoods. Many of their unions have done little to combat racial discrimination; it is a common idea among white workers that minority workers are favored in employment. Joblessness is so widespread among minorities that it is not possible even to reach them through traditional labor education (Yates, *Forthcoming*).

What is true about race is also true about sex. Our jobs are sex-segregated, and the men who comprise the majority of organized workers are not much concerned with this. On the other hand, more and more of my students are women, and it is easier to address the issue of sexism than it used to be. In any case, the "New World Order" does little to change the facts of racism and sexism within the working class, but race and sex do provide employers with ways to divide workers, to substitute internal enemies (including the foreign-born, especially if they are persons of color) for the old external enemy. As our working class becomes less white and more female while the economy continues to provide inadequate living standards, white male workers may be more susceptible to white male supremacist arguments. It is critical, therefore, that radical labor educators confront racism and sexism directly, arguing as forcefully as possible that both are injurious to the labor solidarity which alone has any chance of defeating the power of capital.

A second problem facing the radical labor educator is the entrenched bureaucracy and class collaboration of the leadership of many labor unions. The ideology of partnership with employers is strong throughout the AFL-CIO and its affiliated unions. But by definition a radical educator is opposed to this idea, so difficulties are bound to arise. One way to approach this subject is by connecting it to the issue of democracy. The workers in my classes are often unhappy with their own unions, especially their lack of support for the day-to-day concerns of rank-and-file members. In my labor law classes, great

interest is shown in the Landrum-Griffin Act, which guarantees union members certain democratic rights within their unions. I use discussion of this law as a springboard for the promotion of maximum union democracy. This might lead naturally to an exploration of union bureaucracy and the "team" concept which often goes with it. In addition, there are unions and leaders that have rejected cooperation for a more class conscious approach to organizing and bargaining. The AFL-CIO has placed great emphasis on economic education for its members, and, under the leadership of Education Director, Bill Fletcher, has been preparing good, class-based materials for classes and workshops (Center for Popular Economics, 1997). These can be used and expanded upon by radical educators to open up a whole range of radical concepts and actions for discussion. The fact that these materials have been produced at all is reflective of both a new openness within organized labor and the reality that there are still a lot of radicals in the labor movement ready to lead a radicalized rank-and-file (Gapasin and Yates, 1997).

A large proportion of radical labor educators are housed in colleges and universities. Unfortunately, these positions are increasingly tenuous, and this presents a third problem. As higher education has come more and more to resemble private business, the emphasis has shifted away from traditional academic values toward efficiency and income generation. Labor education, never a priority in the groves of academe and not a very likely source of income or academic prestige, has been subjected to budget and staff cuts. At Penn State, the labor education component of the Labor Studies Department was cut adrift by the university-based faculty within the department and had to find a home in the School of General Studies. Compounding such difficulties is the reality that many labor educators are not radical and may, in fact, be hostile to radicalism. However, the crisis in higher education is such that it will be important for all labor educators to join together with other marginal groups (gender and black studies faculty, for example) to fight back.

Finally, a major problem facing radical labor educators is the fact that only a tiny proportion of the working class is organized into trade unions. Labor education operating either through or in collaboration with the unions will not directly reach the millions of unorganized workers. This difficulty can be faced in two ways. First, students must learn that one of the key reasons for the fall of the house of labor is the failure of the unions to aggressively organize the unorganized. Facts about the meager share of union dues used to hire organizers and the unimaginative ways in which many unions go about doing what little organizing they do are enlightening to workers (Bronfenbrenner and Juravich, no date, 1995, and 1995). While they may view the establishment of a noncapitalist economic system as beyond their immediate control, they can see that their unions could try to win new members and they could help it to do so. Second, there is a need for the renewal of independent labor education, modeled perhaps after the labor colleges of the past. Independent schools could reach unorganized workers and could make alliances with working class organizations outside of the workplace such as churches, clubs, cooperatives, single-issue organizations, and so forth. The New Directions organization in the United Auto Workers has conducted conferences and workshops which might be expanded into a more permanent school. The magazine, *Labor Notes*, has done the same

thing. A labor school might also be a natural outgrowth of the birth of Labor Party Advocates.

## Conclusion

To paraphrase Mother Jones, workers must be educated for the coming struggles. To my way of thinking, the only education worth getting is a radical one. Radical labor education has a long and proud history in the labor movements of the United States and the world. Now after a long period of decline, the time seems ripe for a rebirth and deepening of radical worker education. Let us take advantage of this and redouble our efforts to engage workers in the struggle for a more just and humane society.

---

## References

- Albert, Michael. 1994. *Stop the Killing Train*. Boston: South End Press.
- Albert, Michael and Robin Hahnel. 1991. *Looking Forward: Participatory Economics for the Twenty First Century*. Boston: South End Press.
- Altenbaugh, Richard J. 1990. *Education for Struggle: The American Labor Colleges of the 1920s and 1930s*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Barbash, Jack. 1955. *Universities and Unions in Workers' Education*. New York: Harper.
- Bloom, Jon. 1997. *189 at 75: The Voice of Labor Educators*. Local 189 pamphlet.
- Brecher, Jeremy. 1973. *Strike!* San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books.
- Bronfenbrenner, Kate and Tom Juravich. *Union Tactics Matter: The Impact of Union Tactics on Certification Elections, First Contracts and Membership Rates*. Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of Labor Organizations, no date.
- Bronfenbrenner, Kate and Tom Juravich, "The Impact of Employer Opposition on Union Certification Win Rates: A Private/Public Sector Comparison." Washington, D.C.: Institute for Policy Studies Working Paper No. 113, 1995.
- Bronfenbrenner, Kate and Tom Juravich, *Staying Union: The Dynamics of Union Success in Public Sector Decertification Campaigns*. Washington, D.C.: AFL-CIO Department of Organizing and Field Services, 1995.
- Browne, Harry and Beth Sims. 1993. *Runaway America: U.S. Jobs and Factories on the Move*. Albuquerque, New Mexico: Resource Center Press.

Center for Popular Economics. 1997. *Common Sense Economics*. Washington, D.C.: AFL-CIO.

Cook, Alice Hanson and Agnes M. Douty. 1958. *Labor Education Outside the Unions*. Ithaca, N.Y.: New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations.

Dwyer, Richard E. 1992. "Organized Labor and the Control of Adult Education for Workers: The Ignored Lessons of the Campaign for a National Labor Extension Service." *Labor History* 33(1): 126-145.

Fukuyama, Francis. 1992. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press.

Gapasin, Fernando and Michael Yates. 1997. "Organizing the Unorganized: Will Promises Become Practices?" *Monthly Review* 49 (3): 46-62.

Gettleman, Marvin E. 1993. "The New York Workers School, 1923-1944: Communist Education in American Society." In, *New Studies in the Politics and Culture of U.S. Communism*. Michael E. Brown, et. al. (eds.). pp. 261-280. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Goldfield, Michael. 1987. *The Decline of Organized Labor in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Goldfield, Michael. 1993. "Race and the CIO: The Possibilities for Racial Egalitarianism During the 1930s and 1940s." *International Labor and Working-Class History* No. 44 (Fall): 1-32.

Goldfield, Michael. 1994. "Race and the CIO: Reply to Critics." *Ibid.* No. 46 (Fall): 142-160.

Goldfield, Michael. 1994. "The Failure of Operation Dixie: A Critical Turning Point in American Political Development?" In, *Race, Class, and Community in Southern Labor History*. Gary M. Fink and Merl E. Reed (eds.). pp. 166-189. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Griggs, Clives. 1983. *The Trades Union Congress and the Struggle for Education, 1868-1925*. Sussex, England: Falner Press.

Heilbroner, Robert. 1989. "The Triumph of Capitalism." *New Perspectives Quarterly* 6(3): 4-10.

Hill, Herbert. 1993. "Black Workers, Organized Labor, and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act: Legislative History and Litigation Record." In, *Race in America: The Struggle for Equality*. Herbert Hill and James E. Jones (eds.). pp. 263-344. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

- Horowitz, Roger. 1997. *"Negro and White, Unite and Fight": A Social History of Industrial Unionism in Meatpacking, 1930-1990*. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press.
- Horton, Aimee Isgrig. 1989. *The Highlander Folk School*. Brooklyn: Carlson Press.
- Kerr, Clark, et. al. 1960. *Industrialism and Industrial Man*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kornbluh, Joyce. 1984. *Sisterhood and Solidarity: Workers' Education for Women, 1914-1984*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Kornbluh, Joyce. 1987. *A New Deal for Workers' Education: The Workers' Service Program, 1933-1942*. Urbana, Illinois: University Of Illinois Press.
- Kovel, Joel. 1994. *Red Hunting in the Promised Land*. New York: Basic Books.
- Labor Research Review. 1989. "Solidarity Across Borders." *Labor Research Review* 8(1).
- Labor Research Review. 1994. "Labor and Political Action." *Labor Research Review* 13(1).
- Lester, Richard. 1958. *As Unions Mature: An Analysis of the Evolution of American Unionism*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Marx, Karl. 1977. *Capital*, vol. 1. New York: Vintage Books.
- Montgomery, David. 1987. *The Fall of the House of Labor*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Moody, Kim. 1988. *An Injury to All*. New York and London: Verso.
- Nelson, Bruce. 1992. "Who Controls the Hiring Hall? The Struggle for Job Control in the ILWU." In, *The CIO's Left-Led Unions*. Steve Rosswurm (ed.). pp. 47-68. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- Sims, Beth. 1992. *Workers of the World Undermined: American Labor's Role in U.S. Foreign Policy*. Boston: South End Press.
- Slaughter, Jane. 1996. "History in the Making: Labor Party Forms in Cleveland." *Labor Notes* No. 208: 8-9.
- Smith, Adam. 1937. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. New York: The Modern Library.

Sweezy, Paul. 1964. *The Theory of Capitalist Development*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Yates, Michael. 1994. *Longer Hours, Fewer Jobs: Employment and Unemployment in the United States*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Yates, Michael. 1997. "Does the U.S. Labor Movement Have a Future?" *Monthly Review* 48 (9): 1-20.

Yates, Michael. 1998. *Why Unions Matter*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Yates, Michael. Forthcoming. "Organizing African Americans: Some Economic and Legal Dimensions." In, *African Americans, Labor, and Society*. Patrick Mason (ed.). Detroit: Wayne State University Press.