New York’s Workers Respond to Crisis: Snapshots of Labor in 2001

1. On Sept. 11, Joseph Rabito (of Sheetmetal Union Local 28) led wounded victims to safety as the twin towers fell. Rabito, 44, was on a midtown job when he heard of the attack, and rushed down to the WTC with others to help. He said later that, “I’m very proud that there were tons of building trades people trying to pry their way onto the site to help. I saw what unions are all about—people wanting to help so bad they could taste it.” [http://www.smwialu28.org]

2. The recovery effort begins. A worker from Sheetmetal Local 25 stands amid the devastation at Ground Zero.

3 & 4. Sheetmetal workers from Local 137 take on the task of untangling the wreckage.

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5. Randi Weingarten, President of the United Federation of Teachers addresses the New York State convocation that ratified the “New Alliance” reorganization of the state’s AFL-CIO central labor councils. She is flanked by New York City CLC leader Brian McLoughlin (to her right), and by AFL-CIO National President John Sweeney and NY State AFL-CIO leader Denis Hughes (to her left).

6. “Making a NEW New York: Immigrant Women Reshape the City,” brought together activists from Asian, Caribbean, and Central American immigrant organizations for a day-long conference at Hofstra in April 2001. Lizbreadth Newman (SEPA Mujer) addressed a panel including (L to R): Nieves Padilla (Make the Road by Walking); Monica Diaz (The Workplace Project); Donoteca Mendez (GABRIELA); and Anne O’Byrne (Hofstra U.). The conference was organized by the Center for the Study of Labor & Democracy, New College Women’s Studies Program, and the Hofstra Sociology/Anthropology Dept.

7. The new Labor Studies program at Hofstra was launched at an open house on Oct. 24. Among those present were (Center, L to R): faculty members Martin Melkonian, Sharryn Kasmir, and Gregory DeFreitas (director). The program now offers students the option of earning a B.A. degree with either a major or a minor in Labor Studies. A third non-credit option, likely to be especially appealing to part-time adult students, is a Hofstra Certificate in Labor Studies, awarded after completion of a 6-course sequence.