

Snapshots of Local Labor Activities in 2005



1. The first New York City transit strike in a quarter-century shut down all bus and subway lines on December 20-22. The 33,700 members of Transport Workers Union Local 100 risked heavy fines in the illegal strike to resist the Metropolitan Transit Authority's demands that, for the first time, workers bear part of the cost of pension and health insurance premiums. The TWU leadership agreed to a tentative contract that included wage hikes above inflation and no required pension contributions, but with concessions on workers sharing health insurance costs. In a full membership vote, the agreement lost by just seven votes, forcing the TWU and MTA leaders back to the bargaining table. [photo courtesy of TWU Local 100]

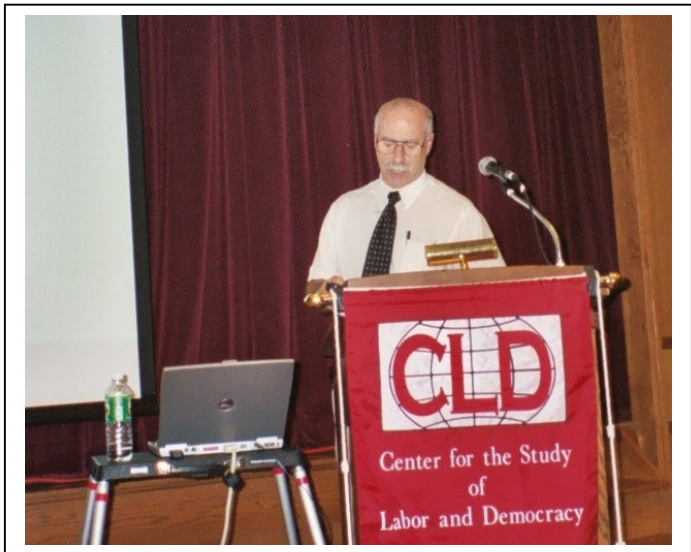


2. NYU Graduate teaching and research assistants struck the University on Nov. 9th to demand their right to continued collective bargaining with the administration. The Graduate Student Organizing Committee (GSOC), the first union for graduate employees at an American private university, represents about 1100 NYU graduate teaching and research assistants and is an independent bargaining unit within UAW Local 2110. GSOC won its first contract in January 2002. But, 2 years later, the Bush administration's National Labor Relations Board overturned the 2000 NLRB ruling that required private universities to recognize and bargain with democratically elected graduate student unions. Once the GSOC contract expired last August, NYU's administrators gave the union 48 hours to accept a new contract stripping away basic rights like that of neutral third-party grievance settlement and arbitration. Once the union called instead for good-faith bargaining, NYU took advantage of the new NLRB ruling to stop recognizing the union. The NYU administration threatened the strikers with loss of their teaching assignments and stipends in the spring semester. In January, NYU began sending letters confirming the threatened work and pay cuts to striking G.A.s, but this too failed to end the strike.

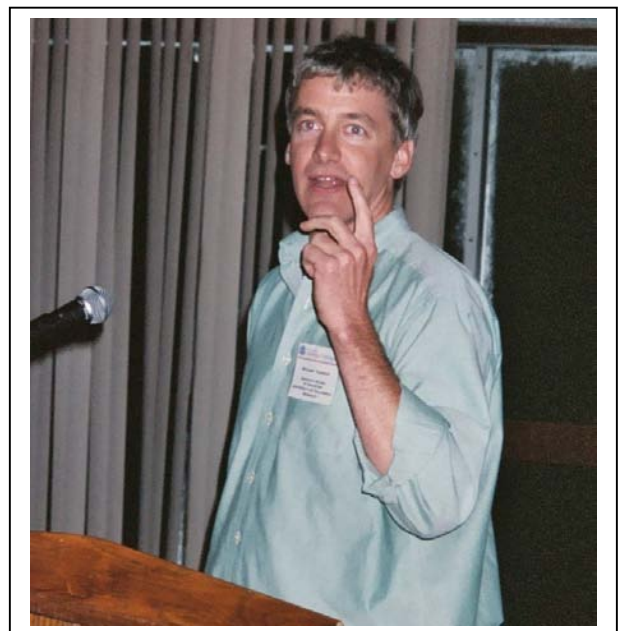
[photo by G. DeFreitas]



3. Dr. Paul Ryan of Kings College, London delivered the keynote address at “Youth Employment in the Global Economy,” an interdisciplinary conference that brought prominent scholars, government and business representatives, and labor activists from a wide range of countries to Hofstra on Sept. 15-16, 2005, to discuss youth job problems and policy alternatives. The event was organized by the Center for Study of Labor & Democracy (CLD), in collaboration with the Hofstra Cultural Center. The co-sponsors were: Hofstra’s Anthropology Dept., Asian Studies, Career Center, the Economics & Geography Department, Honors College, the Labor Studies Program, the Latin American & Caribbean Studies Program, School of Education & Allied Human Services, and the Sociology Dept. [photos by Mark Getman]



4. Dr. Harry Holzer, Georgetown University.



5. Dr. Stuart Tannock, Graduate School of Education, University of California, Berkeley.



6. Nadia Marin (left) and colleagues from the Workplace Project discuss challenges facing young immigrant workers, on a panel moderated by Dr. Gregory Maney (right). [photos by Mark Getman]



7. An overflow audience of students, faculty, and visitors listened at one of the youth conference's public sessions.