



University of Massachusetts Lowell Labor Extension Program

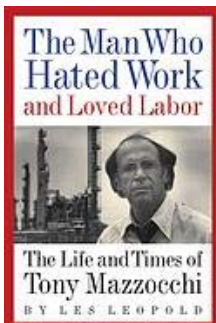
Labor Extension Bulletin

January 2008

This issue of the Labor Extension Bulletin focuses on two recent books about the labor movement. *The Man Who Hated Work and Loved Labor* is a biography of Tony Mazzocchi, a leader of the OCAW, a health and safety visionary and a force behind the Labor Party. Tony was a personal friend and has been an inspiration to me from my early days working at a shipyard in Pennsylvania and doing health and safety with a local COSH group. Tony's life holds lessons for all of us who face sometimes overwhelming odds and who to continue to fight for a better world for working people. *Wars of Attrition* tells the story of a long-term, strategic attack on unions in the construction sector and has a lot to say to all of us about the real nature of the problems we face as we try to re-build the labor movement and as many try to distract us by shift blame to immigrants, Chinese workers and others.

Charley Richardson, Labor Extension Program

The Man Who Hated Work and Loved Labor: The Life and Times of Tony Mazzocchi by Les Leopold



Tony Mazzocchi passed away in 2002 and with him went an energy, passion and vision that the Labor movement needs more of. Tony was a local union officer in the OCAW who rose to be the national union's Secretary-Treasurer, but lost his roots in the day-to-day struggles of working people or his connection to the shop floor.

Tony's life shows us all that it is possible to be strategic and have a class analysis, even during McCarthyism; it is possible to be against nuclear weapons even during the cold war and when you represent atomic workers; it is possible to be pro-environment, even as you represent workers in some of the dirtiest and most polluting industries – and on and on.

Tony never allowed a narrow framing of issues (like jobs vs. environment) to get in the way of what is right for working people. He believed in the rank and file and did everything he could to bring knowledge and discussion to them – even when it wasn't easy. He invited scientists and academics to join the battle, but not to lead it.

As Les Leopold says in this wonderful biography, Tony inspired us all by "...conjuring up a labor movement that didn't really exist, but just might".

"This movement would be militant and green. It would bring about radical changes that would stop global warming. It would give workers real control over the quality and pace of work and over corporate investment decisions. It would champion the fight against militarism and for peace and equality. It would win life enhancing social programs such as free health care. It would dare to create a new political party to counter the corporate domination of the two major parties. In short, it would make good on its potential to transform American capitalism into something much more humane."

This is a book that should be read by all who seek to build such a movement.

Wars of Attrition: Vietnam, the Business Roundtable, and the Decline of Construction Unions by Marc Linder

At a time when many want to blame immigrants for everything that is going wrong, including job loss and deteriorating wages and working conditions, this in-depth history examines the real forces behind the long-term decline in unionization in construction.

The corporate attack on construction unions (and therefore on wages and working conditions for construction workers), Linder shows, started with a labor shortage during the Vietnam War while demand for industrial and commercial construction was rising. As union wages rose, the construction industry responded with a two-pronged, strategic attack.

First, contractors standardized, automated and deskilled the work. Precast structures, modularization and new equipment allowed them to hire large numbers of low-wage workers, supervised by small number of skilled ones, and allowed non-union contractors underbid union jobs.

Meanwhile, unionized contractors had plenty of work in the mid-1960s, so they stopped bidding on large residential and smaller commercial jobs. Nonunion companies filled the gap, developing their capabilities and proving they could do the work competently for less.

The big industrial customers noticed. They started giving work to non-union contractors. By 1981 oil and chemical companies were using nonunion companies 40-50% of the time and the paper industry was building 70-80% of mills with nonunion workers. 20 of the 25 largest construction companies were double-breasting by 1986. All this took place long before immigrants started appearing on worksites in significant numbers.

This is a well-researched book which holds many lessons for anyone trying to understand the larger and long-term strategies that management uses to undercut union labor and undermine the labor movement.

UMass Lowell Labor Extension Program's Spring Series For Union Members, Stewards, Officers, and Staff

Legal Rights of Union Stewards

Led by Robert Schwartz

Thursday March 20, 2008 6:00 – 9:00 PM

Location: UML, Alumni Hall, 1 University Avenue,
North Campus

This workshop will explain such important labor law subjects as the immunity rule, the union right to information, Weingarten rights, and protections for the grievance process. It will also examine the NLRB's "deferral doctrine" and ways to avoid it.

Introduction to the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Led by Robert Schwartz

Thursday March 27, 2008 6:00 – 9:00 PM

Location: UML, Alumni Hall, 1 University Avenue,
North Campus

Many unions have discovered that they can use the FMLA to win grievances for workers who are disciplined for absenteeism and tardiness. It is also important to educate members about their extensive rights to time off to care for ailing family members. This workshop will cover the FMLA as well as the lesser-known Massachusetts Small Necessities Leave Act.

COST: \$10.00 for 1 Session/ \$15.00 for 2

5 or more from the same Union: \$8.00 for 1 Session/ \$10.00 for 2

Materials and Light Refreshments provided.

Books by Robert Schwartz will be available for \$15.00 each

Robert Schwartz has represented unions and employees for more than 20 years. Prior to law school, he organized fellow warehouse workers into the Teamsters Union and led campaigns for rent control in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Mr. Schwartz is the author of: *Strikes, Picketing and Inside Campaigns*; *The Legal Rights of Union Stewards*; *Your Rights on the Job: A Practical Guide to Employment Laws in Massachusetts*; *How To Win Past Practice Grievances*; *The FMLA Handbook*; and *Injured on the Job: A Handbook for Massachusetts Workers*.

What the #!\$* Is Happening to the Economy?

Led by Mark Brenner

Thursday April 30, 2008 6:00 – 9:00 PM

Cost: \$7.00

Location: UML, Alumni Hall, 1 University Avenue,
North Campus

Sub-prime mortgages, the falling dollar, the rising price of oil... What is the economy doing? What's it going to do to us and our unions? What can we do about it?

Mark Brenner is a [New York City](#)-based journalist and labor activist who writes on labor and workplace issues. Brenner works as co-director of [Labor Notes](#), the largest circulation cross-union national publication remaining in the United States.

Brenner joined Labor Notes' staff in September 2005 after leaving a position as a professor of economics at the [University of Massachusetts](#) and the Political Economy Research Institute. Brenner spent several years working with [living wage](#) campaigns around the country, as well as playing a leading role in his union in Massachusetts. He currently covers [SEIU](#), teachers, higher education, and the living wage movement. His writing has also appeared in the print and online versions of [Z Magazine](#), [Counterpunch](#), [Monthly Review](#), the [Metro Times](#), [Black Commentator](#), and in numerous other publications.

Let's Talk About Immigration

Led by UMass Lowell Labor Extension Staff

Thursday May 14, 2008 6:00 – 9:00 PM

Cost: FREE

Location: UML, Alumni Hall, 1 University Avenue,
North Campus

Immigration is already a major wedge issue in this year's election. It's also a crucial issue for the labor movement. Don't miss this rare chance to talk about immigrant workers and the labor movement [from a labor point of view](#).

Please Pre-register by Contacting Sue D'Amore at 978-934-3256 or by email at Susan_Damore@uml.edu