



May 2014 Issue 10
Academic Year 2013-2014

RETIREES NEWSLETTER

Professional Staff Congress
Jack Judd, Editor

psc-cuny.org/retirees

I. THE JUNE LUNCHEON.

We're looking forward to seeing many of you at our 21st annual June luncheon, 12:30 p.m., Monday, June 9th, second floor dining room in the new building at John Jay, 524 West 59th Street. Preceding the luncheon, there will be a coffee hour in the faculty lounge at 10:30 a.m. followed by a report and discussion reviewing the activities and outreach of the chapter over the past year.

The featured speaker for the luncheon is Professor Penny Lewis (Murphy Center), author of *Hardhats, Hippies and Hawks: The Vietnam Antiwar Movement as Myth and Memory* (Cornell University Press).



Vietnam era anti-war buttons

IF YOU HAVE NOT MADE A RESERVATION, BUT WISH TO ATTEND, CALL THE PSC OFFICE IMMEDIATELY AT 212-354-1252.

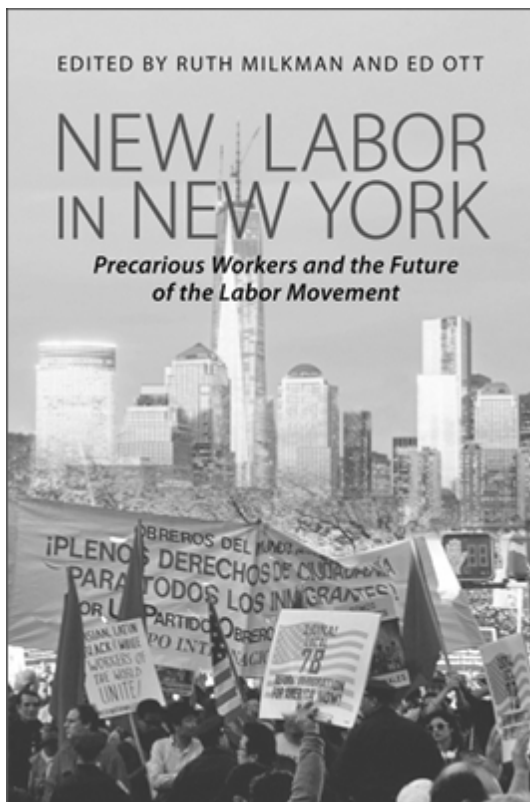
You can find full luncheon details at tinyurl.com/LunchInvite060914 (but at this point reservations are only being taken by phone).

II. PRECARIOUS WORKERS AND THE FUTURE OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Who are precarious workers? Why has this classification of workers become important to organized labor? These questions were the foci of a course at the CUNY Graduate Center, with some students from the Murphy Institute for Worker Education, co-taught by Ruth Milkman and Ed Ott.

Speaking at the May chapter meeting, Ruth Milkman, professor of sociology at the Graduate Center and academic director of the Murphy Institute, described how her students investigated the world of the precarious worker. These workers may be street vendors, taxi drivers, delivery people, adjunct faculty, or freelance contractors.

Students in the course spent two semesters gathering data to complete incisive profiles of precarious workers and the organizations that support them. The students' work was published in a book edited by Milkman and Ott, *New Labor in New York: Precarious Workers and the Future of the Labor Movement* (Cornell University Press, 2014).



Milkman discussed the decline in numbers of unionized workers and the successful efforts of employers to thwart union organization. She pointed to the emergence of worker centers organized by groups like the Taxi Workers Alliance and Vamos, a street vendors group in the Bronx. There are 200 such groups around the country, which organize to promote the welfare of their workers, but are not unions. They are mainly

composed of newly arrived immigrants and, in some cases, reflect the culture of their members.

Organized labor did not initially embrace the new worker centers, and the groups organizing the worker centers have been wary of unions. Over the years, though, the struggle for immigrant rights and the potential for organizing workers have led to greater cooperation. Recently, the AFL-CIO invited the Taxi Workers Alliance to apply for a national charter as a union. Milkman believes that, "the immigrant rights movement is, itself, a kind of labor movement; just as the worker centers are a kind of labor movement."

Resources & Organizing Power

The three movements, organized labor, immigrant rights groups, and the worker centers, have similar goals, and now work together, with "cooperation and synergy," according to Milkman. Yet, a dilemma exists: the new groups use innovative ways to gain media attention and have attracted many new workers, but their resources are limited. Organized labor has resources in terms of funding and staff, but does not command the same type of media attention and has been losing members. Milkman advocates a "marriage of resources on one side and organizing power on the other." Joint efforts are now in "the embryo stage," she said. In ending her talk, Milkman posed the question, "Can the unions support this work in a way that will allow it to grow to a significant scale?"

III. SUMMER SAFETY TIPS

Provided by chapter member Ezra Seltzer

Summer Heat Can Be A Killer:

Exposure to excessive heat may lead to serious illness or death. It is very important to monitor the symptoms of heat stress and take the appropriate action as soon as possible. Particularly susceptible are people with heart disease, diabetics, pregnant women, the obese, the elderly and people using alcohol, drugs or some prescription medications. The environmental factors that affect the amount of heat stress a person faces in a hot area are temperature, humidity and air flow. When exposed to excess heat, the body responds in two ways.



First, it increases blood flow. Blood circulates close to the skin so that heat can be dissipated into the environment. Secondly, it responds by sweating. The evaporation of sweat cools the body. High room temperature makes it difficult for the body to eliminate its own excess heat, and high humidity makes sweating difficult. The body thus

stores more heat. As the core temperature rises, the heartbeat increases. The individual will exhibit symptoms of varying severity. Some of the most common symptoms of heat stress are: loss of concentration, weakness, nausea, headache, giddiness, thirst, muscle fatigue, and fainting.

If you continue working after exhibiting heat stress symptoms, it could be fatal. So get out, loosen your clothing, drink even if you're not thirsty, and seek emergency medical aid if necessary.

Home Security Steps Before You Leave for Vacation.

- Make sure your home is secured.
- Unplug electrical appliances (except refrigerator).
- Notify newspaper service to temporarily refrain from delivering paper.
- Arrange for someone to pick up your mail or have the post office withhold delivery when you are away.
- Lock all windows.
- Leave a key with relatives, friends or neighbors, who are Informed of your itinerary and the telephone number at which you can be reached in an emergency.
- Set a timer to turn lights on and off, or ask someone to do it for you.
- Notify your local police or neighborhood security patrol. Tell them when you are leaving and when you will be back.

The next issue of the Newsletter will be in September, 2014.

Comments and suggestions for future topics in Newsletter may be sent to:
JJUDD18@OPTONLINE.NET