

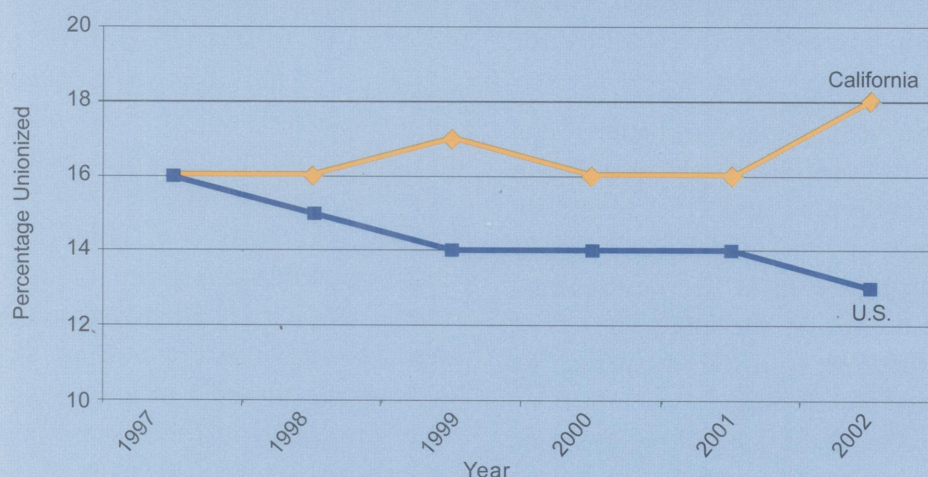
# The State of California Labor 2003

Labor's recent achievements in California and the political and economic circumstances behind them are the focus of ILE's *The State of California Labor* for 2003. Released in October by the University of California Press, this year's volume includes analyses of union membership, recent trends in organizing, employment patterns among immigrants, the link between access to higher education and employment outcomes, innovative achievements in state and municipal labor law, and developments in labor relations.

ILE Director Ruth Milkman and co-author Daisy Rooks begin the volume with a detailed look at the state's unions. "California Union Membership: A Turn-of-the-Century Portrait" offers insights into the remarkable revitalization of organized labor in the state. In 1997 the unionization rate in both California and the United States was 16% of the wage and salary workforce; five years later it had jumped to 18% in California while declining to 13% in the United States.

"California's experience shows that, under certain conditions, labor can overcome the many forces leading to

Unionization Rates in California and the U.S., 1997 – 2002



declining unionization," said Milkman. "Unusually effective organizing tactics and labor's political strength, both locally and in Sacramento, have combined to produce the recent upturn in unionization rates in the nation's most populous state."

Data sources for Milkman and Rooks's analysis include the ILE's 2001–02 California Union Census (CUC) and an ILE analysis of the U.S. Current Population Survey. The CUC, conducted in partnership with the California Department of Industrial Relations

and with the cooperation of the California Labor Federation, collected information on the state's union membership that has not been gathered since 1987, with an 83% response rate from the state's local unions.

Milkman and Rooks report that:

- Unionization in California's public sector is 54%, far greater than the U.S. rate of 38%.
- In California the gender gap in union density is very small: of the state's

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union members, 16.8% are women and 17.4% are men.

- 28.7% of the state's African Americans are unionized, compared to 17.1% of those in the United States as a whole.
- The unionization rate for immigrants in California, 11.7%, is lower than that for U.S.-born workers, 19.7%.
- The gap between the rate of unionization in the San Francisco Bay Area and the Los Angeles metropolitan area has almost disappeared. Union density for the Bay Area is 16.9%; for the Los Angeles area it is 16.5%.

In the volume's second chapter, "The State of Organizing in California," Kate Bronfenbrenner and Robert Hickey present an assessment of recent organizing trends in the state and an examination of the challenges that unions face in their attempts to increase membership.

Tracking National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) elections as well as card check and other non-NLRB campaigns, the authors report that California unions are recruiting new members at a higher rate than unions nationally.

Despite aggressive and increasingly sophisticated employer opposition, Bronfenbrenner and Hickey are optimistic about labor's potential in California. They conclude that "unlike the labor movement in other states, unions in California have a solid foundation upon which to build and a diverse workforce that is ripe for organizing."

Job prospects for immigrant workers is the focus of Frank D. Bean and B. Lindsey Lowell's contribution to the volume, "Immigrant Employment and Mobility Opportunities in California." Drawing on recently released U.S.

Census data, Bean and Lowell examine immigrant employment patterns in an environment of increasing job polarization — the growth of pre-dominantly good and bad jobs with very little new job creation in the middle. They conclude that "immigrants do not in general appear to be stuck in low-end jobs."

Isaac Martin, Jerome Karabel, and Sean W. Jaquez explore the link between economic inequality and access to higher education in a chapter titled "Unequal Opportunities: California High Schools and Access to the University of California." The wage gap between California workers who have a college degree and those who do not has widened, and the authors determine that a degree from UC, the top level of California's public higher education system, can have an important impact on an individual's career. They find troubling evidence that "the students admitted to UC tend to come from an exclusive subset of the state's high schools" — schools whose student bodies are largely children of affluent professionals or largely Anglo or Asian. For schools serving Latino and African American students, or populations with disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, the admission rates are far lower.

In "Innovation in State and Local Labor Legislation," John Logan examines labor's attempts to protect workers' rights

through state and local legislation. Although business has prevailed at the federal level in the fight over labor law reform, California's labor movement has won passage of several innovative pieces of legislation in recent years. Logan details the history of Assembly Bill 1889, the nation's first effective state neutrality law, which prohibits the use of state funds to promote or deter union organizing, and the court challenges that it currently faces. He also examines local labor peace agreements, particularly the pioneering accords developed by the city of San Francisco.

In another chapter, Michael Reich reviews living wage ordinances enacted in California and their impacts. These local ordinances set an hourly rate that is identified as a livable wage for a given locality. In his examination of the living wage law that covers workers at San Francisco International Airport, Reich concludes that such policies can "substantially increase pay and benefits, reduce pay inequality, and improve services, all at minimal cost."

The *State of California Labor 2003* is rounded out with Daniel J.B. Mitchell's review of "Recent Developments in California Labor Relations." Mitchell analyzes collective bargaining agreements in the state, the economic forces driving labor relations, major labor issues in the public and private sectors, and employment-related public policies. ■

## The State of California Labor 2003

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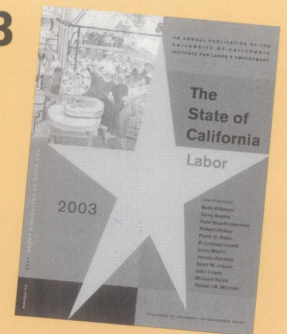
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# Research-in-Brief: Labor Market Intermediaries



Manuel Pastor

How are workers finding jobs in an economy in which employment insecurity and growing inequality are the norm? An ILE-supported study by Manuel Pastor of UC Santa Cruz takes up this question by examining the role of labor market intermediaries (LMIs), institutions or organizations that pair workers with employers, which have become increasingly important in the past three decades.

LMIs exist in many different forms, ranging from temporary agencies and professional associations to union hiring halls and community-based organizations. They can steer workers to high-quality employment or temporary dead-end jobs.

Pastor, working with an interdisciplinary and multi-institutional team of researchers, examined LMI activity in Silicon Valley and Milwaukee, allowing a comparison of the “new” and “old” economies. The

research findings are available in a 273-page report, “Economic Opportunity in a Volatile Economy: Understanding the Role of Labor Market Intermediaries in Two Regions.”

Initially, Pastor expected to find more volatility and greater use of LMIs in the Silicon Valley than in Milwaukee. “Instead, we found that average job tenure was not that different in the two regions, and that the probability of using an LMI was virtually the same in each area,” Pastor explained, noting that job churning — the net effect of job creation and destruction — is affecting low-to medium-skilled workers throughout the United States. Increasing job insecurity makes workers more likely to turn to some type of intermediary in their search for new employment, making the assessment of LMIs all the more important to policy makers and workers alike.

The study also explores the role of social networks in the use of LMIs and the impact of LMIs on health insurance and it compares the services offered by temp agencies to those available

from higher quality LMIs. Policy recommendations include promoting membership-based intermediaries, improving regulations governing temporary work, and developing strategies to help employers improve job quality even as they gain needed flexibility.

Collaborating with Pastor were Laura Leete (Willamette University), Laura Dresser (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Chris Benner (Penn State University), Annette Bernhardt (New York University) and Bob Brownstein and Sarah Zimmerman (Working Partnerships USA). Funding for the study was provided by the Ford, Rockefeller, and Russell Sage Foundations, as well as the ILE. With support from the Institute, the researchers gained access to data from the California Employment Development Department to measure the length of job tenure in the Silicon Valley.

The full report is available at: <http://www.willamette.edu/publicpolicy/lmi/LMI%20Final-May%202003.pdf>. ■

## Recent and Forthcoming Publications from ILE-Funded Research

Gianpaolo Baiocchi, Sundari Baru, and Paula Chakravarty, *Just Getting By: The Experience of Temporary Workers in San Diego's Economy* (San Diego: Center on Policy Initiatives, Oct. 2002).

Philip N. Cohen and Matt Huffman, “Occupational Segregation and the Devaluation of Women's Work across U.S. Labor Markets,” *Social Forces*, vol. 81 (3), March 2003, 881–908.

Robert Fairlie, “Does Business Ownership Provide a Source of Upward Mobility for Blacks and Hispanics?” forthcoming in

*Entrepreneurship and Public Policy*, ed. Doug Holtz-Eakin, Cambridge: MIT Press.

David Fitzgerald, “Beyond ‘Transnationalism’: Mexican Hometown Politics in an American Labor Union,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, forthcoming.

Dana Frank, “Where is the History of U.S. Labor and International Solidarity?” *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas*, vol. 1 (1), forthcoming Jan. 2004.

Paul Frymer, “Acting When Elected Officials Won't: Federal Courts and Civil Rights

Enforcement in U.S. Labor Unions, 1935-85,” *American Political Science Review* 97, Sept. 2003.

Ronnie D. Lipschutz and David Newstone, “Sweating It Out: NGO Campaigns and Trade Union Empowerment,” *Development in Practice*, forthcoming Feb. 2004.

Ruth Milkman and Kim Voss, editors, *Rebuilding Labor: Organizing and Organizers in the New Union Movement*, Cornell University Press, forthcoming 2004.

Sean Ó Riain, “High-tech Communities: Better Work or Just More Work?” *Contexts*, 2002, vol. 4 (1), 36–41. ■

# ILE Launches California Union Leadership School

For many union leaders and staff, “overwhelming” is a word they would use to describe their workloads. To effectively meet the challenges their organizations confront, they need time to reflect, to learn, and to strategize. The ILE, in partnership with the California Labor Federation, created the California Union Leadership School (CULS) with that in mind.

“There’s been a huge need for a long time in California for a top flight, intensive residential union leadership training program,” said ILE Associate Director Peter Olney. “CULS fills that void.”

The school opened on September 5, 2003, at the Asilomar Conference Center in Pacific Grove. The weeklong program was designed to help participants sharpen their skills and build strategic plans for change within their organizations. UC faculty members serving as teachers for the school were ILE Director Ruth Milkman (Sociology, UCLA), Margaret Weir (Political Science and Sociology, UCB), David Card (Economics, UCB), Robert Brenner (History, UCLA), Richard Walker (Geography, UCB), Michael Reich (Economics, UCB), Robin Johnson (Management, UCLA), and Goetz Wolff, (Urban Planning, UCLA). Joel Rogers (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Jeff Grabelsky (Cornell), and Elaine Bernard (Harvard) also taught program sessions. Rounding out the team of instructors were Jane McAlevey and Matt Witt from SEIU, Paul Worthman from AFTRA (retired), Robin Baker and Pam Tau Lee from the UCB Labor Occupational Health Program, Bill Fletcher from TransAfrica Forum, and financial consultant Dan Ringer. Michael Crosby, Director of the



*After a week of intensive learning about the internal and external forces affecting California labor, CULS participants developed strategic plans for change within their organizations.*

Organizing Centre of the Australian Confederation of Trade Unions, enriched discussions throughout the week by comparing and contrasting trade union experiences in Australia and the United States.

A diverse group of leaders and staff from fourteen labor organizations, representing a number of public- and private-sector industries, comprised the CULS student body. Each organization sent a team of two participants.

Art Pulaski, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the California Labor Federation, who played a crucial role in student recruitment, welcomed the participants to Asilomar. “This school is an invaluable resource that will help union leaders meet the challenges they face in an environment that is constantly changing,” he said. “You represent the future of California’s labor movement, and I’m proud that you are part of this first session of the

California Union Leadership School.”

The CULS curriculum is based on the Strategic Choice Framework, which was developed by Professor David Weil of Boston University and the Harvard Trade Union Program. This methodology encourages leaders to evaluate their external environments — the forces at play in labor markets and politics — as well as their internal capacities — staff structure, the number of organizers they have, budgets, how well they communicate with their members, and so on. A key teaching tool used in this process is the case method, commonly used in business and law schools.

The case study narratives used for CULS are based on real-life union dilemmas. Students read each case carefully and then discussed what they would do in each situation using the skills they learned throughout the week.

*Please see CULS, page 7*

# Organizing in Export Processing Zones



Katie Quan

Katie Quan, Chair of the UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education (CLRE), is directing a path-breaking project on union organizing in export processing zones (EPZs). The AFL-CIO's American Center for International Labor Solidarity has provided funds to facilitate an EPZ organizers' conference in Bangkok, Thailand, to test educational materials written by CLRE staff.

Export processing zones are areas, usually in developing countries, in which governments offer special incentives to attract foreign investment

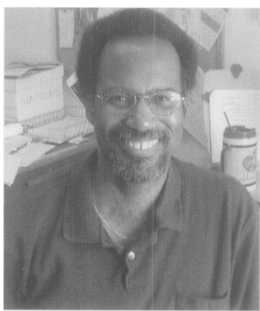
by firms that manufacture products exclusively or predominantly for export.

Labor abuses in the zones are widespread and have been well documented — from gender discrimination in pay, to sexual harassment, to illegal layoffs of pregnant women, to safety and health hazards on the job. When workers in EPZs organize, they are often met with state repression, or, in some cases, host governments attempt to undercut independent labor organizing by establishing pro-company unions.

All these obstacles notwithstanding, in recent years EPZ workers have been organizing in highly creative ways, and have won real improvements in working conditions and made some progress toward gender equality. A team of CLRE

researchers will visit EPZs in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to gather information on successful campaigns by interviewing labor leaders, workers, and community organizers. "The results of this research will help us produce an organizers' tool kit, written in an accessible, popular education format," said Quan. "It will include case studies as well as industry analysis, and it will document the best practices in organizing." In addition to the organizers' tool kit, CLRE researchers will prepare a white paper for the AFL-CIO reviewing the arguments for and against EPZs. It will examine the degree to which EPZs have or have not led to genuine economic development, both from the point of view of local businesses and from that of EPZ workers. ■

## UCB Project on Organizing African American Workers



Steven Pitts

Steven Pitts, UC Berkeley Labor Policy Specialist, is assessing the potential for organizing California's African American workers through a project entitled "Community Based Organizing of Black Workers." A large proportion of the state's unionized African Americans work in public-sector industries, and Pitts notes that there is a "real need to examine the possibilities for organizing Black workers in the private sector."

The current unionization rate of African Americans in the state is 28.7%, compared to 18.5% for whites.

In addition, 74% of nonunion African American workers responding to the ILE's 2001 California Workforce Survey said that they would vote for a union if given the opportunity, compared to 33% for whites.

In conjunction with advisors from unions and community-based organizations, Pitts has put together a series of workshops designed to explore the challenges facing African American workers who want to unionize. The first, entitled "Organizing Black Workers for Power and Jobs," was held at SEIU Local 250 in Oakland on September 8. It featured Bill Fletcher, president of TransAfrica Forum and former assistant to AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. The event attracted over 70 participants from SEIU, ILWU, IBEW, AFSCME,

AFGE, HERE, and IAM and from community groups that have led local efforts for living wage ordinances, job training and job access programs, anti-gentrification laws, and prison abolition.

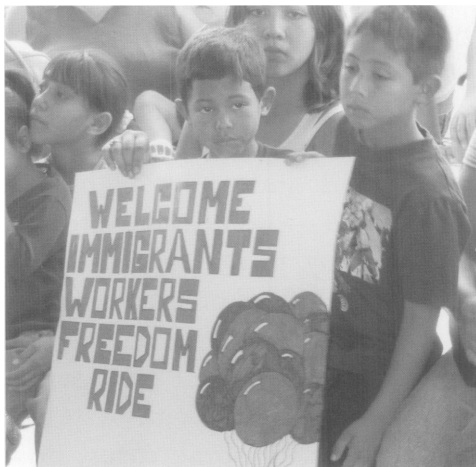
Fletcher moderated a lively dialogue that centered on the weaknesses in labor-community coalitions. "There was a lot of discussion about labor-community alliances and how to strengthen those ties," said Pitts. "We need to facilitate discussion about workplace issues among nonunion members of the community, and about community issues among unionists, in the hope of finding common ground."

A final report on the project will be issued by the UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education in May 2004. ■

# UCLA Labor Center Boards the Freedom Ride

Nearly 900 immigrant workers, union members, and community and civil rights leaders boarded busses to Washington D.C. and New York City between September 23 and October 4 in an effort to call attention to the plight of the nation's immigrants. Buses left from Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, Las Vegas, Minneapolis, Chicago, Houston, Miami, and Boston. During the twelve-day trek the eighteen buses stopped at over 100 cities, towns, and workplaces, where riders attended rallies, marches, community forums, and religious services.

The Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride included several participants from the UCLA Labor Center. Project Director Victor Narro helped coordinate the national legal team for the project, which was inspired by the civil rights freedom rides of the 1960s. Legal training for the 120 L.A.-based riders was held at UCLA's Downtown Labor Center prior to departure.



Photograph courtesy of Belinda Lum

UCLA Labor Center Project Director Carolina Bank Muñoz and Angela Jamison, a UCLA graduate student in sociology, were part of a team that developed a curriculum for use on the buses. "We created materials on civic participation, immigration and citizenship, health and safety, and the labor movement," said Bank Muñoz.

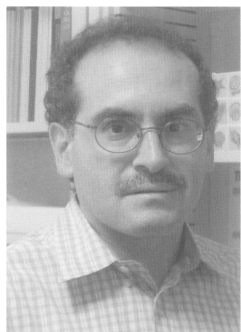
Daniela Conde and Omar Amador, students in the UCLA Labor Summer Internship Program, provided organizational, logistical, and training

support for the Los Angeles contingent.

In a tense standoff in Texas, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) agents detained two buses from Los Angeles on September 27. "They herded us off the buses and put us in detention cells, questioning everyone about their immigration status," recalled Bank Muñoz. "But we exercised our right to remain silent, and after several hours of difficult negotiations and an outcry from politicians, religious leaders, and the community, the INS released us."

The journey's final stop was Flushing Meadows Park, New York, where an estimated 100,000 supporters joined the Freedom Riders in what organizers called one of the largest rallies in support of immigrant rights in U.S. history. "It was a tremendous success," said Bank Muñoz. "For me, an educator, it was inspiring to see the riders make connections between the civil rights movement of the 1960s and today's immigrant rights movement." ■

## Victor Narro Joins UCLA Labor Center Staff



Victor Narro

Victor Narro, a prominent immigrant rights attorney with extensive experience working with unions and community based organizations, has joined the staff of the UCLA Labor Center as a Project Director. He was previously the co-executive director of Sweatshop Watch, 2002-03, an organization devoted to the elimination of sweatshop conditions in

California's garment industry.

"Victor is an experienced, dedicated, and compassionate leader who has been at the forefront of the movement for immigrant workers," said Kent Wong, UCLA Labor Center Director.

Narro will be based at the UCLA Downtown Labor Center, where he will assist with educational programs for unions and community groups. In addition to directing the Colegio, the UCLA Labor Center's Spanish language union leadership school, he will coordinate a series of workshops designed to develop workers' computer skills, raise awareness of immigrant

workers' legal rights, and teach health and safety in the workplace. "It's critical that we invest in worker education in order to help develop the leaders of the future," said Narro.

As the Workers' Rights Project Director for the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles from 1996 to 2002, Narro was an advocate for day laborers, domestic workers, garment workers, and gardeners. He also participated in the creation of the Multi-ethnic Immigrant Workers Organizing Network, a Los Angeles-based coalition of immigrant advocacy groups. ■

"The Strategic Choice Framework gives students a set of tools that allows them to think differently about where their unions are at any given point in time and how specific decisions, even short-term ones, are tied to long-term problems facing their unions and the direction they're trying to go in," said Weil.

"We really put the students to task," said Olney. "They not only spent the week studying and learning, but in the school's last session, the teams were challenged to identify strategic steps that they could take over the next few months to foster change in their organizations." To reinforce this final step, a follow-up session will be held December 5-6. Students will meet in Berkeley to review the plans they made and assess their progress in implementing them.

"Attending the school and interacting with other union folks has given me the tools and inspiration to go back to my local and begin the changes we need to make to build a stronger labor movement," said Conny Ford, Secretary-Treasurer of the Office and Professional Employees International Union Local 3.

Other students were energized by the CULS experience as well. For Neil Struthers, CEO of the Santa Clara/San Benito Building and Construction Trades Council, attending the school was "very important": "I think all union leaders need to recognize that the labor landscape in this country has changed, and we need to understand the forces behind those changes if we are to meet the challenges they pose."

The next session of the ILE's California Union Leadership School will take place at Asilomar on June 6-11, 2004. For more information call Peter Olney at 510-643-7931. ■



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# ILE Grants and Fellowships for 2004-05

The ILE invites applications for research grants and fellowships for funding in the 2004-05 academic year. Proposals may involve exploratory research on topics that have not been extensively studied in recent years; they may be analytical, they may be quantitative or qualitative, or they may be concerned with policy design and appraisal. Applications for projects on any labor and employment topic will be seriously considered, but the Institute will give special consideration to high-quality research proposals that have been developed jointly by university faculty and labor organizations, community-based organizations, or other policy organizations that are working to improve the social and economic well-being of California's working families. Proposals will be reviewed by the ILE's eight-member Research Advisory Board.

Program Category	Application Deadline
Targeted Research Grants, ranging from \$15,000 to \$50,000	Jan. 30, 2004
Small Research Grants, ranging from \$2,500 to \$15,000	Jan. 30, 2004
Collaboration and Dissemination Grants	Jan. 30, 2004
Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships, \$15,000 plus in-state fee remission	Jan. 30, 2004
En-Route Master's and Pre-Dissertation Fellowships for Doctoral students, \$5,000	Jan. 30, 2004
Fellowships for Professional Master's Projects and Theses, \$10,000	Oct. 29, 2004

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