**Not Quite Right:  An Assessment of An Assessment of the Sanders Campaign**

**Mike Miller. May 1, 2020**

**Preface**

Writing recently in *Jacobin*, David Duhalde, a staffer in the Sanders presidential campaign, engages in a critical and thoughtful review of the campaign (“Our Revolution Failed to Live Up to Its Potential. But the Bernie Movement Needs a Mass Organization Now.”  David Duhalde. *Jacobin.* April 28, 2020.)  That such a public review of the campaign has taken place is a good thing.  So is the thought put into this review by its author.  But he makes serious mistakes that must be discussed if the mass organizations that *can be built* in this movement moment are to be built.

In the following textual analysis, Duhalde’s words are in italicized type.  My commentary follows thereafter. But before proceeding, I want to emphasize how important it is that he took the time, attention and care to make this public assessment.

**Socialism**

*A few weeks ago, we had a democratic-socialist presidential campaign with several million donors and over a thousand-person staff. Today, we have no mass organization to carry on the struggle. We can change that but only with Bernie’s help.*

Two points immediately arise.  First, to be more precise Sanders’ platform was a New Deal/Social Democratic one.  The reasons for the distinction are important:  first, it is well within the American experience for that kind of program to become public policy.  The Roosevelt and Truman Administrations both supported such a program, the former with much greater success than the latter. The Lyndon Johnson Administration also supported elements of the New Deal program, though it substituted job training for full employment and its “maximum feasible citizen participation” defused inner-city and rural protest and organizing.

Second, the small “d” democratic component of democratic socialism, at least from all I’ve learned from the democratic socialists I’ve known over a number of years, is that it recognizes the problem of bureaucracy and unaccountability that can accompany distant government bureaucracies; it opposes any concentration of power whether in corporations or government, and; it adds worker-, consumer-, community- and mixed forms of ownership, management and control to state ownership of the means of production—the latter being historically the defining platform of both Communists and Social Democrats.  Indeed, Sanders, throughout his campaign, hearkened back to the New Deal to make his ideas more reasonable to Americans who are suspicious of “socialism”.

That the two are very different was summed up by the Socialist Party’s grand old man, Norman Thomas in his 1936 pamphlet, “Is The New Deal Socialism?”

…I am concerned to point out how false is the charge that Roosevelt and the New Deal represent socialism…and I suspect I have Mr. Roosevelt’s support in this denial… His slogan was not the Socialist cry: “Workers of the world, workers with hand and brain, in town and country, unite!” His cry was: “Workers and small stockholders unite, clean up Wall Street.” That cry is at least as old as Andrew Jackson… I repeat that what Mr. Roosevelt has given us is State capitalism: that is to say, a system under which the State steps in to regulate and in many cases to own, not for the purpose of establishing production for use but rather for the purpose of maintaining in so far as may be possible the profit system with its immense rewards of private ownership and its grossly unfair division of the national income… We do not mean to turn socialized industries over to political bureaucrats…For instance, we intend that a socialized steel industry shall be managed under a directorate representing the workers, including, of course, the technicians in that industry, and the consumers… Our goal…is true democracy. It is we who lead in the fight for liberty and justice...It is we who seek to make freedom and democracy constitutional by advocating a Workers Rights Amendment in the interest of farmers, workers and consumers, giving to Congress power to adopt all needful social and economic legislation, but leaving to the courts their present power to help protect civil and religious liberty.

… Emphatically, Mr. Roosevelt did not carry out the Socialist platform, unless he carried it out on a stretcher. What is true is that when Mr. Roosevelt took office he had to act vigorously…

Much of the Bernie agenda, it should be noted, has enjoyed popular support for some time, though it wasn’t labeled “socialist.” And this is not something new. If you retain the content of the 1970s Black Panther program but use a less militant rhetoric, according to public opinion polling at the time it, too, had support from majorities at that time. I hasten to add what people say they believe in polls, and whom they vote for in elections, are two very different things.

The Sanders campaign made “socialism” a legitimate word in American political conversation.  That’s good.  When it was a bogeyman, anything that the most conservative politician in the country didn’t like could be put on the defensive by labeling it “socialist”.  A democratic people cannot exclude from the policies it considers ideas that come from socialists—of whatever school of thought they might be.  But in my view they must also look at proposals from people who call themselves “capitalists” (even when they don’t own very much capital—which makes the identification rather amusing), as for example the proposals from Elizabeth Warren, Tom Steyer (a billionaire) and Andrew Yang (a former corporate lawyer).

For myself, the central argument of our time is not “socialism” versus “capitalism”. Rather it is small “d” democracy (“the people shall rule) versus elite formulations (common to many who indiscriminately lump Trump’s “populism” with left populism) that imagine the people to be incompetent to rule.  A democratic people should have the opportunity to discuss, deliberate, negotiate agreements among themselves, and decide from among proposals for governance coming from a variety of ideological sources, and have the power for a majority of them to determine which shall become public policy—as distinct from voting candidates who say one thing to get votes and do another once in office. As a nation we are a far cry from that—no matter which of the two parties is governing.

**Mass Organization and Electoral Politics**

Secondly, there is a point far more important than terminology—what is called “socialist” or not.  You cannot build a mass organization out of an electoral campaign if you didn’t have a mass organization before the campaign started.  It is not by accident that this has never happened.

The industrial union movement and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) that gave it a powerful voice did not come out of the Roosevelt campaign; nor did it come out of Norman Thomas’ Socialist Party campaign against Roosevelt.  It was an expression of a confluence between, on the one hand, a social movement that was bubbling up “from below” as workers spontaneously revolted against Great Depression cuts in wages, layoffs, speedups and other indignities, and was aided, agitated and abetted by young radicals and socialists (mostly Communists), some of whom dropped out of college to enter the industrial working class and organize “from within” and others of whom were children of the working class, and, on the other hand (what some like to call “top down”--I don’t think that term fully expresses what happened) the Committee on Industrial Organization which comprised eight international unions that were members of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), headed by the charismatic strategically and tactically brilliant John L. Lewis, President of the United Mine Workers Union, whose miners subsidized with their dues and per capita assessments the salaries of the full time organizers, many of them the aforementioned radicals, Lewis hired to give shape the what was bubbling up from below.  This Committee, in turn, owed its origins to major strikes in 1934 in Toledo, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Minneapolis.  When it broke with the AFL, it became a rival independent labor federation.  (“Committee” became “Congress” when the former officially broke from the AFL.)

Another mass movement that gave birth to mass organizations was the Deep South civil rights movement that began in 1955 with the Montgomery (AL) bus boycott, and gained new impetus with the sit-ins and freedom rides whose leadership and rank-and-file came from predominantly African American colleges, universities and seminaries across the south.  The Montgomery, AL bus boycott led to the formation of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr-led Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).  The sit-ins and freedom rides led to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC or “Snick” as it was affectionately called by its field secretaries (I was one of them) and friends.  Neither of these organizations were birthed by immaculate conception.  Across the south, in NAACP branches and other local organizations, a courageous core of civil rights activists and leaders existed—many of its members World War 2 veterans who had “fought to make the world safe for democracy” and now wanted to bring democracy to the Deep South.  These people, in turn, were nurtured in places like Highlander Folk School, Black seminaries and other safe places that persisted through the McCarthy era and the violent racism of the Deep South that sought to destroy them.

Electoral politics emerged out of these movements and mass organizations—in the case of the CIO in its Political Action Committees (PACs), and in the case of the Deep South in things like the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (AL) and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP). With the passage and enforcement of the 1965 Voting Rights Act many African-American civil rights, religious and community leaders were elected as Democratic Party candidates (southern racists had abandoned it and became Republicans).

**Electoral Campaigns and Social Movements**

*[W]e do indeed have a mass constituency [that] deserves a vehicle to advance the [Sanders] political project in the years to come — that means a formal organization capable of representing and galvanizing a mass movement… This new formation will not include some of the key social movement connections and volunteer-led opportunities that were the core of an “organizer-in-chief” presidential campaign. The Sanders world needs a new formation that will marshal distributed organizers, local grassroots leaders, national surrogates, and others to advance elements to continue the critical mass mobilizations harnessed by the campaign.*

*…*

That’s a lot compressed in a few words.  It needs to be dissected.  First, a large number of voters do not constitute a “social movement.”  There’s much twixt the cup and the lip before the latter can be said to exist.  At the same time, I believe we are in a “movement moment”, largely precipitated by the anger bubbling up from below as a result of the effects of the coronavirus and the disastrous response to it by the Trump Administration.  But the movement that is bubbling up, and the pre-coronavirus organizations that have been leading mass mobilizations such as those of women, immigrants, climate activists and African-Americans, are still a far cry from what happened in either the 1930s or in the Deep South in the 1960s.  At this point, they are largely in their own silos; there is no uniting vision, program or organization.  There are core values, and that is a good beginning point.  But much work remains to be done.

Recall that such hopeful notes were played after the McGovern, RFK, McCarthy, Dean, Kucinich and Jackson campaigns, each of which had an army of volunteers.  Those volunteers initially gathered around a narrow task:  getting the vote out for their candidate.  Accomplishing that task required a “mobilizing structure,” totally top-down in character—*as it should have been* because it was an army in a nonviolent electoral battle whose deadline for victory was election day.  You don’t build democratic, mass-based organizations in the middle of an election campaign.  Jackson and Obama had similar campaigns and made promises about a post-election campaign organization. What seems to be different this time is the intention to form a continuing organization is a real commitment. Bernie’s clear on the importance of a continuing structure. All the more reason for those who are designing it to be clear about what they are creating.

The Bernie organization was an electoral campaign organization that demonstrated you can raise from small donations the funds required for a national campaign, and that you can recruit from mostly white young adults the army of door-to-door campaign workers needed to bring the campaign’s message to voters—augmented by the free social media now available on the internet.  The “organizer in chief” is the leader of the electoral organization.  Period.

***…*** *As Our Revolution’s former political director, I know firsthand that Our Revolution had tremendous promise to be a gateway to the permanent mass working-class formation this country desperately needs.*

Duhalde discusses a number of specific problems that characterized Our Revolution’s development.  Whether his characterizations are accurate or not, I don’t know. I wasn’t there. For the purpose of this discussion, let’s assume they are. They are important to analyzing any organization’s successes and failures.  They are largely addressed to those who already know the campaign fairly well, but beyond the scope of what I intend here.  He thinks that addressing those specifics can lead to a “permanent mass working-class formation…”  For reasons already noted, I doubt it.  The needed “working-class formation” requires of today’s young radicals that they embed themselves in a work or community environment that is entirely different from that of the industrial era, everything from meatpacking plants scattered in remote towns to massive Amazon distribution centers to gig workers at Lyft and Uber to the invisible low-paid workers in high tech and countless other contexts, and in a context where it is relatively easy to shut down and open up in a more corporate-friendly “environment”.  Some of today’s young radicals are doing that—becoming “salts”; many of them are middle-class and white. Whether they will have the radical patience to stay the course and become contemporary equivalents of such 1930s organizers as Richard Lynden (west coast warehouse), Herb March (Chicago packinghouses), William Sentner (St. Louis electrical workers) and the UAW’s Bob Travis remains to be seen.  The danger is that the real work involved in organizing, the relational skills and attitudes it requires, and the patience needed to do the work will frustrate many of these young people, in which case their embeddedness will be temporary, nothing more than a “junior year abroad”—a source of coffee shop stories to tell to friends but not much more.

Equally important, there is no one and nothing on the horizon equivalent to John L. Lewis and the eight unions that formed the CIO.  Forays in that direction by a number of unions remain just that.  Whether a permanent commitment to “organize the unorganized” is forthcoming, or whether some entirely new formation is required, remains to be seen.  Its source, however, won’t be electoral campaigns and the formations that develop around them.

Parallel developments need to take place in civil society, where there is a near-vacuum when compared to either the 1960s or the 1930s.  Catholic liberation theologians and Rerum Novarum followers are now marginal in a Church plagued by sex scandals and led by a conservative body of bishops. (Hopefully Pope Francis will live long enough to change that.)  Mainline Protestantism, where the “social gospel” and Reinhold Niebuhr “Christian realism” were a vital force supporting both civil rights and labor organizing, is a shadow of itself, with most growth being in theologically and politically conservative evangelical, Pentecostal and Holiness churches.  The array of clubs, associations and other voluntary organizations that once dotted the map of low-income and working class White and minority communities is a shadow of what it once was, often replaced by 501(c)(3) “community-based nonprofits” that are dependent upon foundation or other grants, that may deliver useful services but have no participatory membership to insure their accountability to the communities in which they operate.  These, it should be noted, are different from the many issue campaigns in which young people are now engaged. Civil society associations are different from issue campaigns, just as strikes and demonstrations are different from union locals.

**Words, Words**

Duhalde chooses other formulations that I question.  A couple of them:

*…Our Revolution would mobilize grassroots organizers into local formations to advance social movement goals, elect candidates backing the Sanders agenda, and reform the Democratic Party.*

Note:  “*mobilize grassroots organizers*” rather than build mass organizations.  If that is accidental, it reveals a mind-set; if not, it reveals a lack of clarity about what is entailed in organizing—the kind of organizing that is needed.

*“…hundreds of national and grassroots leaders sympathetic to the Sanders agenda;”*

Here are some short takes aimed at bringing clarity into the conversation:

Mobilizers:  people who turn out people to actions or rallies. Mobilizations:  turnouts for a specific, time-defined, events or activities: an election, a rally, etc.

Mobilizing organization:  a cadre-type organization that is relatively small in its membership whose activists are highly committed and disciplined making them capable of “turning out” people far beyond their own number.

Activists:  people who you can rely on to show up, do Jimmy Higgins work, be there when you need them.  They may (or may not) be organizers or mobilizers or leaders.

Leaders:  people with an on-going following.

Movements:  the spontaneous collective activity of people angry at injustices; nobody starts or end them.  Within them are opportunities to both mobilize and organize.

Organizers:  people who build organizations.

Organizations: relatively stable, consistent, purposeful gatherings of people in an ongoing structure.

Mass organizations:  UAW Local 100 at the River Rouge Ford plant when it had tens of thousands of workers is an example; these are continuing, vital, lively, highly participatory organizations that have a rich internal life such that members feel an ownership of, and deep commitment to, the organization.  As far as I can tell, we don’t have any of these around right now, though there are some hopeful signs among teacher, nurses and other unions.  (Whether they are cadre-led mobilizing organizations or participatory democratic ones remains to be seen.)

To take another example of a different kind, Oakland’s largely African-American Allen Temple Baptist Church describes itself as having “over 40 active holistic ministries committed to serving the least, the lost and the left out…[W]e believe we are called to fulfill the mission given to us in Matthew 28:18-20.” Churches, temples, synagogues, mosques and other faith communities across the country are members of “faith-based”, “institution-based” or “congregation-based” (different terms for the same thing) mass organizations.  When the best of them hold “public accountability” sessions with politicians, thousands participate.

To turn a mass mobilization organization into a federation or unitary organization of local branches/chapters/whatever that is internally democratic in character is an extraordinarily difficult thing to do.  And you can’t do it according to the timelines imposed by the every two-year national election cycle.

**Wins and Losses**

*Backing candidates-turned-celebrities and alongside a horse-race-obsessed media put Our Revolution’s endorsements front and center over its other work. Yet its political team never made up more than one-tenth of the staff.*

*But the bottom-up, grassroots-led endorsement process meant that for every amazing victory against the establishment like AOC and Rashida Tlaib, there were many more losses. [emphasis added].**Sanders critics jumped on this fact — often exaggerating the total defeats by lumping local group endorsements in with national ones — to prove that while Sanders could inspire a movement, that movement itself could not win.*

*“Likely victory” was never the top criteria — the mobilization of its ideas via candidates was paramount. But the wins/losses ratio still weakened the image of the political program.*

Elections are won or lost.  You don’t build or educate out of defeat.  Everyday Americans have plenty of experiences of defeat, loss, poverty, low wages, speed-up on the job, segregation, discrimination, oppression and more; another one simply confirms their powerlessness.  In this regard, they are different in their attitude toward politics than young idealists who may stay the course, although they, too, become disenchanted when incumbent power’s recalcitrance to change keeps them at bay.

But the young idealists *are not* *the constituency* of mass organizations, nor do they describe the electorate who must be mobilized in order to win.  The internal fighting that took over and crippled Students for a Democratic Society epitomizes what happens when optimism is not born out by experience.  Ditto with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee after the defeated 1964 Democratic Party Convention challenge to the seating of Mississippi’s racist “regulars”.

The Bernie campaign’s core organizers, mobilizers and activists might assemble to learn from their defeats, and return to the fray better able to win.  But when they re-emerge it will not be in the shape of a “mass organization,” nor even a “mass movement”.  Rather, *and this is as it should be*, if they are successful they will build an electoral mobilization vehicle capable of engaging in voter registration, education and get-out-the-vote efforts that can win local, state and national elections, and put sufficient pressure on elected politicians to pass legislation they promised when campaigning.

They need to carefully consider the form such an on-going organization takes.  Should they merge with the Working Families Party, and pursue a “fusion” strategy (and sponsor initiatives in states that now don’t allow fusion) that allows a party to both run its own candidates and endorse the candidates of another party?  Should they form non-partisan “multi-issue-oriented” organizations that define progressive issues, make clear to the electorate where candidates stand on them, and then turn out the vote in constituencies that support their platform?  Should “rank choice” voting be part of their arsenal? Other?

**Bernie Sanders**

The last times I got as involved in electoral politics as I did in this campaign was as a field secretary for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee for the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) in 1963 (in Mississippi) and 1964 (mobilizing money and support for MFDP in the San Francisco Bay Area so that it could become Mississippi’s official Democratic Party, and during the 1964 Congressional campaign in my home district of reform candidate Phil Burton, who became a major liberal leader in the Democratic Party.  I gave money to the Bernie campaign, put his sign on the front of my house, volunteered to work in his Mission Street campaign office, and argued his merits with friends who earlier in the race when his candidacy was still alive told me they liked what he had to say but he couldn’t beat Donald Trump—their and my major consideration in this race.

Bernie could have dropped out of the race, resigned from the Senate, traveled the country talking with and listening to leaders and volunteers of his campaign, doing the same with a multi-racial and ethnic set of leaders of union locals and civil society interest and identity *membership* organizations and nonprofits, and, if there was a consensus on the idea, taken steps to form a mass-based, social and economic justice committed, member driven and funded, equivalent to the mostly-white and upper middle-class Common Cause or the League of Women Voters.  On the road to a national convention that officially would give birth to such an organization, he would have had to solve his problems with particular constituencies, particularly the African-American community where he was never able to sink roots.  The organization could have been both legislative and electoral in character.

He didn’t do that.  That’s not who he is. He is a senator.  He plays the inside game of assembling votes for positive legislation that he sometimes initiates, sometimes co-authors or sometimes simply signs on for.

The roles of insider and outsider are not the same.  An “inside-outside” strategy is essential to move the country forward on a social and economic justice and environmental sanity program.  We are a long way from having that outside piece in place.  It requires mass organizations as well as electoral and legislative expressions.  Its key electoral goal should be a center-left governing coalition.  As mass organizations develop and/or social movements erupt, such a coalition can be pulled steadily toward an agenda that breaks up corporate wealth and power and guarantees a justice-based floor below which no person is allowed to fall.

Granted its problems and limits (I won’t go into its weaknesses here), the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), has lots to teach. ACORN was an unincorporated association whose members paid significant dues. It grew over a 20-year period into a national force. It had full-time organizers who built multi-issue chapters that were situated in defined neighborhoods where people had existing relationships with one another or formed new ones. Nothing remotely resembling this came out of the Sanders campaign organization.  And I’m not criticizing it for that:  it did what it did very well given the odds against it.  But you can’t turn it into something it wasn’t.  Despite “it’s not me; it’s we”, in fact on the central decisions—like continuing to campaign—it was “me”.  As Duhalde himself says, *We can change that — but only with Bernie’s help.*

To take a step further in my argument, the agenda of a mass-based legislative and electoral organization would probably not give the attention to the internal mechanics of the Democratic Party that Duhalde suggests, for at least two reasons:  initially there isn’t a mass organization capable of enforcing whatever is won; it’s still in the process of widening its support and making it go more deeply in its target constituencies.  Further, these are not the fights to be fought at this time. Rather, the fights now to be fought have to do with substantive issues, not procedural reform of the Democratic Party, however such reform may or may not be crucial to achieving a politics of transformation.

*The future of Bernie Sanders’s legacy is up to him more than anyone. No option is perfect, but some have more clear advantages, especially if one wants to build a pipeline for progressive electoral candidates or advance educational work around issues and public policy.*

This isn’t the voice of a member of a collective leadership body that is engaged in a crucial discussion about the future of their organization.  Rather, it is almost that of a plea to the maximum leader.  Can someone imagine saying of the United Auto Workers (UAW) at the peak of its strength and democratic involvement, “the future of Reuther’s legacy is up to him more than anyone?”  In the mid-1980s International Longshoremen’s & Warehousemen’s Union (ILWU), as Herb Mills has cogently written, Harry Bridges wanted the organization to merge into either east coast International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) or International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) because, Mills writes, he didn’t want another ILWU president to succeed him when he retired; he wanted the union to be his legacy.  But there was a real mass-based organization whose democratically constituted membership rejected this idea—on several occasions.

*At this exact moment, we need Bernie — not us — to unite his base. Only then can our work truly begin.*

Quite a statement!  Bernie is the only one who can unite the base.  I doubt Bernie thinks that way of himself, but it is in the nature of an electoral mobilization organization to have this character of uniting around a political candidate.

**Perspective**

Those who seek transformational change and who recognize that this movement moment lends itself to building mass-based membership organizations need a ten-to-twenty year perspective, not the two- or four-year electoral cycle one.  If the idea of a long march through the institutions is taken seriously, it will involve both new organizations and the renewal of old ones.  In particular, unions must become member-driven participatory bodies rather than benefit societies in which you pay your dues and expect advocacy and services in return—even if they are effective at winning gains at the bargaining table and during the year. And please note:  I mean mass organizations, not organizations whose relatively-passive members are mobilized by a cadre-like leadership body even if I happen to agree with where they stand on issues. In some cases that’s what “social movement unionism” in practice has come to mean; in others, there are important changes bubbling up “from below”.

From my point of view, the major external constraint that should determine the timeline for such developments are, first, the deadline after which the continuing climate change disaster will take a qualitative turn for the worse—some say 2030 (The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ’s recent report gave the world a deadline of 2030 to reduce emissions before global temperatures would rise more than 1.5°C without intervention, at which point climate change will become irreversible—see <[thedailycougar.com/2018/10/24/government-private-corporations-climate-change/](https://thedailycougar.com/2018/10/24/government-private-corporations-climate-change/" \t "_blank)> Others say 2050. I’m not a climate scientist nor do I follow this debate, but caution suggests a strategy aimed at the end of the decade.  The 50-year anniversary of Earth Day should teach us something:  battles were won, but the war is still being lost.  That should suggest a strategic reappraisal that substitutes organizing for mobilizing. Other good benchmarks might be the end of each decade when the census leads to redistricting by state legislatures.

Lastly, my list of characteristics for the most potent people power mass organizations:  multi-issue, not single-issue; multi-constituency (now called “intersectional”), not single-constituency; multi-strategy (both mutual aid and changing the personnel, practices, policies and structures of dominant government, business and large nonprofit organizations—called “institutional change”); multi-tactic, always beginning with efforts to obtain negotiations and ending with negotiations that, in addition to “more and better” (money, benefits, working conditions) *alter the relations of power* in favor of organized people rather than concentrated money. Unless one believes in abrupt ruptural change, the road to transformation is a series of changes in the relations of power that transfer its exercise to “the people” rather than the few. Tactics available for accomplishing such results include strikes, boycotts, slow-downs, sick-outs, work-to-rule, corporate campaigns, nonviolent disruption of business as usual (shop-ins, sit-ins and others), legislative lobbying, and electoral activity—with the last being one among a number of tactics.  (Taking over state functions in the absence of the kind of power that the CIO had at its peak is an invitation to a capital strike followed by a voter backlash.)

These are, indeed, “the times that try men’s and women’s souls.”  There are no quick fixes.  We need the broadest base possible, organized in powerful mass-based organizations paid for by their members’ dues and grassroots fundraising.  We are a long way from being there.

**++++++++++++++++++**

**Bio for Articles**

Mike Miller’s background includes the early student movement at UC Berkeley, field secretary for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (1962-end of 1966), directorship of a Saul Alinsky community organizing project (1967-68), and a number of subsequent organizing projects. His articles on labor and community organizing and politics have appeared in *The Ark, Berkeley Journal of Sociology, Christianity & Crisis, Class Matters, COMM.org, Communique for New Politics, CounterPunch, Dissent, Farmworker Documentation Project, Generations, Grassroots Economic Organizing, International Journal of Urban & Regional Research, Just Economics, the liberal democrat, The Movement, New Conversations, New Labor Forum*, *Organizing, Organize Training Center Publications, The Organizer, Poverty & Race Reports, Race, Poverty & The Environment, San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Examiner, Social Policy, Socialist Review, Shelterforce, Stansbury Forum, Sun Reporter* and *Working U.S.A.*

He is author of *Community Organizing: A Brief Introduction* (Euclid Avenue Press/Milwaukee) and *A Community Organizer’s Tale: People and Power in San Francisco* (Heyday Books), co-author of *The People Fight Back* (Organize Training Center/San Francisco), and co-editor of the recently published *People Power: The Organizing Tradition of Saul Alinsky* (Vanderbilt University Press). He adapted and abbreviated for publication Rachel B. Reinhard’s PhD dissertation *The Politics of Change…The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party: A case study of the Rise and Fall of Insurgency*, and is currently writing *An Organizer's Life: Behind the Slogan*. (Euclid Avenue Press/Milwaukee).

He lectures, mentors and leads workshops in community organizing, and has taught community organizing, urban politics or political science at major universities, including University of California, Stanford, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Notre Dame (Catholic Committee on Urban Ministry), San Francisco State, Hayward State and Lone Mountain College.

He has consulted with labor, religious, broad-based community, interest and identity organizations at the local, regional, state and national level.

As an “on-the-ground” organizer, he worked with public housing tenants on New York’s Lower East side, an African-American community in Kansas City, MO, as lead organizer for broadly-based community organizations in San Francisco, CA, and as staff director of the California Citizens Action League.

A full resume is available upon request.

He directs ORGANIZE Training Center at [www.organizetrainingcenter.org](http://www.organizetrainingcenter.org)