Remembering David Montgomery: Introduction

Peter Winn

The coincidence of *ILWCH*'s fortieth anniversary issue featuring an interview with David Montgomery with his passing led us to open the pages of this special issue to tributes to David and his memory. In sadness, but also in celebration, David Montgomery's family, colleagues, and students contributed their personal recollections and reflections on David's life and work, and on his impact on their own.

This section of tributes begins with a brief biography written by his son, Claude Montgomery, an overview of his father's life and trajectory as a "union organizer, political and civil rights activist," as well as his career as a scholar. Joshua Freeman, a longtime member of the *ILWCH* editorial board and himself a major US labor historian, then pays tribute to David Montgomery as "the leading labor historian in the United States" who "took his readers into the workplace. . .which he saw as central to shaping workers' consciousness and political struggles." This tribute is followed by Michael Hanagan's reminiscences of David as a friend and as a scholar, stressing both the seminal importance of *Workers' Control in America* and Montgomery's "sustaining vision."

Tributes by former students come next. Neville Kirk, who was Montgomery's student both at Warwick in England and then at Pittsburgh, writes a memoir of those heady days of transatlantic labor history and Montgomery's central role in it. Cecilia Bucki, another Montgomery student at Pittsburgh, where she was also the first assistant editor of *ILWCH* (a position similar to today's managing editor), offers an insider's memory of the early years of *ILWCH* as an academic journal of international labor history and of David Montgomery's use of his European and Canadian networks to transform a newsletter into a journal of "comparative essays, research and conference reports, and book reviews" that was at the center of an international dialogue about the New Labor History. Dorothy Fujita-Roney, an early Montgomery student at Yale, praises David as a teacher who taught her to "ask the right questions" and as an inspiring scholar-activist who connected scholarship and teaching about past worker resistance to support for current struggles at home and abroad. Shana Redmond, who was a student at Yale in the new millennium after Montgomery's retirement, recalls David as a generous and powerful mentor who supported her graduate studies and dissertation as much as any adviser and her union organizing as well as any activist. Mae Ngai, a current *ILWCH* board member, unable to be a Montgomery student, learned from both his scholarship and his activism and was inspired by "his understanding of contemporary workers' struggles" and of the central importance of immigrants in those struggles.

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But international tributes to David Montgomery were not confined to those who study workers who emigrated to the United States. Andrea Graziosi, who studied and collaborated with him at both Pittsburgh and Yale, presents a European perspective that stresses David's "commitment to liberty and justice" that "led him to break with Stalinism" and his "enormous sensitivity to the realities of workers' lives." A tribute from the global South follows, in which Michael Hall and Cláudio Batalha recall Montgomery's time in Brazil. David's internationalism and openness to and impact on Brazilian scholars were evident in the semester that he spent teaching at the University of Campinas, where "David's emphasis on the effect of the workplace in shaping consciousness and practice caused a number of those present to rethink what they were doing as historians."

Last, senior editor Peter Winn stresses the importance of David Montgomery as a scholar who "showed us that workers can be the subjects, not just the objects of history," as a model scholar-activist who demonstrated that scholarship and activism can be mutually supportive, and as the defining editor of *ILWCH*, which he reshaped into a "self-consciously international journal." Winn concludes the Montgomery tribute section of this issue by underscoring that, because of the influence of David's writings, teaching, and mentoring, "we are all David Montgomery's students," and that "his vision and his memory" live on in the lives and works of all his "students."

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