
Preface

As the preparations for the reprinting of this book were being completed, members of the Allied Printing Trades of the New York Daily News returned to work after a five-month strike. During the battle the strikers made clear that this was no conventional conflict about wages, even though the owner, The Tribune Company, demanded and would have received substantial economic concessions. Rather, the strike addressed a proposal to strengthen the management rights clause—their demand that the unions surrender their historic voice over many workplace decisions, particularly layoffs and control over working conditions. In the end the workers won—forcing the company to sell the newspaper when it became clear that both public opinion and the organized power of New York labor had successfully reduced circulation by more than two-thirds and advertising revenue to the vanishing point.

In contrast to the sorry history of the 1980s, taken together with labor's victories in several major strikes during 1989–1990, the struggle at the Daily News marked something of a watershed. The unions appeared to do most things right: they reached out to the public with their story; they severely crippled manage-

ment's ability to distribute the paper; they won the support of leading political figures including the governor of New York State and the city's mayor; and, most important, other unions provided strong financial and political support.

Of course, even this dramatic strike cannot be said to have reversed the pattern of decline that has marked U.S. labor's sojourn since the early 1970s. In this sense, regrettably, most of the critical analysis found in *False Promises* still holds. Therefore, I have felt obliged to write only a new introduction to this book so as to provide a brief overview of the blossoming of labor studies since 1973, and to add an epilogue to update the assessment of the fate of the unions and the working class in the past twenty years. The reader of the first book will, unfailingly, observe that while I have not abandoned the grounds for some hope the optimism of my conclusion was somewhat excessive.

In all other respects I have avoided the strong temptation to revise and have preferred, with the exception of some corrections, to retain the historical integrity of the original text.