Working for Peace and Justice
Memoirs of an Activist Intellectual
Lawrence S. Wittner

Working for Peace and Justice provides a lively, colorful account of some of the major social struggles of the modern world, as seen through the memoirs of Lawrence Wittner – an award-winning U.S. educator and scholar who has participated in the peace, racial equality, and labor movements from the early 1960s to the present.

Beginning amid the bloody, anti-Semitic pogroms of late nineteenth century Eastern Europe, the book recounts Wittner’s Brooklyn boyhood, the cross-fertilization of ideas and activism during his student days at Columbia College, the federal government’s spying upon him, his political purge and blacklisting as a young faculty member, and his subsequent work as an activist intellectual. Important portions of this story relate to his antinuclear activism, as well as to his leadership role in the Conference on Peace Research in History (renamed the Peace History Society) and in America’s largest peace organization, Peace Action.

Along the way, there are fascinating encounters with prominent individuals, such as Norman Thomas, William Appleman Williams, Michael Harrington, Cesar Chavez, the Unabomber, Robert J. Lifton, Randy Forsberg, Helen Caldicott, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and David Horowitz. There are also vivid descriptions of picketing the Kennedy White House against nuclear testing, working as a civil rights volunteer in Louisiana and Mississippi, teaching at an African American college and at the socially élite Vassar College, organizing democratic socialist activism on the community level, coordinating solidarity work for America’s largest higher education union, being arrested as part of the Free South Africa movement, collaborating with peace-oriented intellectuals in Gorbachev’s Soviet Union, and leading the annual march of thousands of antinuclear demonstrators through the streets of Hiroshima.
Larry Wittner has been -- and remains -- a great union activist. Read this book and you'll learn what Solidarity really means!

— Bill Ritchie, President, Albany County Central Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO

Larry Wittner’s engaging and important memoir reminds me of why his work, his scholarship, and his activism have made me proud to be an American historian. It is a record of democratic social struggle, as well as a gift to those in the next generation who will have the courage and ambition to follow his example of working for a better world.

— Martin J. Shervin, winner of the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for biography

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