

## ALBERT SHANKER INSTITUTE

### DEMOCRACY AND WORKER RIGHTS: A DISCUSSION ON LABOR'S APPROACH TO CHINA

April 6-7, 2006  
Omni Shoreham Hotel  
Washington, DC

#### SPEAKER BIOS

#### **Why labor's approach to China requires a democracy strategy Dinner Session, April 6th**

**James Mann** is an “author-in-residence” at the Foreign Policy Institute of Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies. Before that he served as diplomatic correspondent and foreign affairs columnist for the *Los Angeles Times* and headed its Beijing bureau from 1984 to 1987. His work, which includes the prize winning book, *About Face: A History of America’s Curious Relationship with China from Nixon to Clinton*, and many articles for the *Atlantic Monthly*, *New Republic* and *Washington Post*, concentrates on U.S. policy toward China across decades and presidents.

**Andrew Nathan** is chair of the Department of Political Science at Columbia University and author of a number of books on China’s leaders and on human rights in China. He also writes on China for such journals as *World Politics*, *Daedalus*, *The China Quarterly*, *Journal of Democracy*, *Asian Survey* and *The New York Review of Books*. Nathan also serves on the editorial boards of several of these publications. From 1995-2000, he was chair of the Advisory Committee of Human Rights Watch: Asia, on which he continues to serve as a member. He is also on the board of Human Rights Watch: China. His current research involves collaborative, survey-based studies of political culture and political participation in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and other Asian countries.

## **Labor's role in Hong Kong and on the Mainland**

### **First Session, April 7th**

**Han Dongfang** is a former a railroad worker who, a month before the 1989 Tiananmen Square uprising, helped to found the Beijing Autonomous Workers Federation. The federation played a crucial role in the pro-democracy protests at Tiananmen Square. As a key protest leader, Han was arrested and imprisoned during the post-Tiananmen crackdown. During his time in prison, he was deliberately exposed to prisoners with tuberculosis and contracted the disease. In 1992, in response to heavy lobbying from the international labor movement and western governments, he was allowed to visit the U.S. for medical treatment. Following surgery and additional treatment, he was refused re-entry into Mainland China. Han has chosen to remain in Hong Kong to continue to work for labor rights. He continues to promote labor rights in China, both as the director of the *China Labour Bulletin* – an organization that promotes independent and democratic union organizing in China – and as a broadcaster for Radio Free Asia. It is estimated that his broadcasts on worker rights in Mainland China have a listening audience of approximately 40 million.

**Lee Cheuk Yan** is General Secretary of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions, an independent confederation with 70 affiliates representing 170,000 members. Lee has been a labor and democracy activist since his time as a university student and started his labor career as an organizer for the clothing workers union. Lee is also a Hong Kong Legislative Councillor. In his capacity as a Legislative Council member, Lee represents the interests of Hong Kong's independent labor movement, and not a political party. He is also vice chair of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, an organization founded after the Tiananmen Square massacre. Lee participated in the 1989 Tiananmen Square democracy protests and is one of the few Hong Kong residents blacklisted from entering the mainland for supporting the workers and students.

**Jeff Fiedler** is the President of Research Associates of America, which is the former Food and Allied Service Trades Department of the AFL-CIO, a constitutional department of the federation. The RAA works with both AFL-CIO and Change to Win unions. F.A.S.T. is best known for its comprehensive campaign activities and its "Manual of Corporate Investigation". It specializes in conducting in-depth research into companies for union organizing and bargaining fights and developing strategies and tactics to employ in those fights. Fiedler has also served as a member of the AFL-CIO Executive Council committees on Immigration, International Affairs, Organizing, and Strategic Approaches. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, among his other memberships. In 1992, Fiedler co-founded the Laogai Research Foundation, an organization devoted to studying the forced labor camp system in China. When the Foundation's Executive Director Harry Wu was detained in China in 1995, he coordinated the public campaign to win his release.

**Owen E. Herrstadt** is the Director of Trade and Globalization for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. He develops and implements union strategies to confront the realities of globalization, and has built relationships with unions in other countries. He has also been deeply involved in the debate over the relationship between labor standards and trade. The Machinists' Union represents 750,000 workers in more than 200 basic industries in North America, including major manufacturing and aerospace firms such as Boeing.

**Why a policy of “no contacts” with the All China  
Federation of Trade Unions matters  
Second Session, April 7th**

**Herb Magidson** has been a vice president of the American Federation of Teachers for more than 20 years. He began his union work as a high school chapter chairman in the United Federation of Teachers in New York City. In 1969, he moved on to become an assistant to then UFT President Albert Shanker. Since that time, his union career has spanned officerships of the New York State United Teachers, the New York State AFL-CIO, the Jewish Labor Committee, and pension and health insurance plans servicing union members. Today he is chairman of the AFT's COPE/Legislative Committee and has previously chaired the Democracy Committee and the AFT Futures II Committee. Mr. Magidson also serves as a member of the Albert Shanker Institute's Board of Directors.

**Barbara Shailor** was appointed by AFL-CIO President John Sweeney in 1996 to oversee and direct the federation's international work. She is currently Executive Director of the Solidarity Center, the international affairs arm of the AFL-CIO, which conducts programs to support trade unions in 55 countries around the globe. Prior to assuming her current post, Shailor was Director of the AFL-CIO International Affairs Department. During the course of her AFL-CIO career, she has led the American labor movement's effort to ensure that worker rights and core labor standards are recognized in trade agreements and the multilateral institutions. Prior to accepting a position with the AFL-CIO, Shailor worked for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW). Ms. Shailor is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, as well as numerous labor and foreign policy advisory committees.

**Debbie Schneider** is the Director of Global Organizing Partnerships at SEIU, a position created in 2004. She has been with SEIU for 22 years, starting as an organizer, then becoming President of a national union within SEIU for office workers and a Vice President of SEIU. She worked for 4 years as chief of staff for the SEIU's Midwest region. Her job in global organizing is to work with global union federations and partner unions in other countries to coordinate organizing and efforts to raise worker standards in multinational corporations.

**Staphany Wong** is a Researcher/Campaigns Coordinator for the ICFTU/GUF/HKCTU/HKTUC Hong Kong Liaison Office, or IHLO. Founded in 1997, shortly after Hong Kong's reunification with China, the IHLO is the Hong Kong Liaison Office of the international trade union movement. Its mandate is to support and represent the international trade union movement in Hong Kong and to monitor trade union and worker rights and political and social developments in China. Ms. Wong has extensive experience in the area of China and worker rights. Prior to joining IHLO, she was a researcher for the China Labour Bulletin (CLB). CLB was founded in 1994 in Hong Kong by Han Dongfang and actively promotes independent, democratic union organizing, and the protection of labor rights and standards in mainland China.