

**NEW**

issue of

# ***Regional Labor Review***

ARTICLES IN THE NEW ISSUE INCLUDE:

- ***Will New York's Job Growth Crash in a National Slump?***
- ***Latina Women Organize Immigrant Workers***  
*Interviews with Organizers of UNITY Housecleaners Cooperative*
- ***New Policies that Work for the Working Poor***  
*Special Report by the Working Committee on New York's Low-Wage Work Force*
- ***Local Union Activism in the Past Year***
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widespread criticism of the unfairness of tax cuts so

Real estate sources speculate that new office or residential construction appears more likely.

While service and trade positions have grown, the generally higher-wage manufacturing sector continued to bleed jobs, losing another 2 % over the year. Although much of the current national slowdown reflects a manufacturing recession in the Midwest and South, the industry's shrinkage in New York has been underway for many years. Far more recent has been the halt to job growth on Wall Street, on Madison Avenue, and in lower Manhattan's Silicon Alley. The shakeout in high-tech firms has brought a wave of layoffs at both small dot-com firms and the Internet subsidiaries of large

and underemployment rates by gender, race, Spanish Origin, age, and immigration status for the 20 center cities of the largest metropolitan areas and the suburbs of all metropolitan areas, as well as New York City and Long Island. To produce large enough samples to permit reliable statistical estimates of these geographic and demographic subsets, we pooled the most recent three months (the last quarter of 2000) of raw CPS household data, obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The jobless rates in the first, leftmost column of the table reveal that New York City's recent growth has finally lowered its quarterly unemployment rate down to the nation's big-city average. However, only 56 % of the city's adults are employed, and only one-fifth of its teenagers – job-holding rates far below the national norm.

Most of New York's major racial and ethnic groups appear to have enjoyed reduced joblessness in the recent past. But sharp inter-group differences persist: African-American and Latino unemployment is still at 8 %, over twice as high as that of non-Hispanic whites. And the differences are stark when we calculate the broader measure of "underemployment." About 13 % of blacks and 12.6 % of the city's Latinos are underemployed, compared to just over 5 % of whites.

[TABLE 3 about HERE]

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The coming year promises to be a challenging one for unions, both locally and nationwide. Immediately after his own de facto appointment to the Presidency by the Supreme Court, George W. Bush began reappointing his father's administration and putting fellow oil executives in charge of national economic policy. When these worrisome early moves were followed by his nomination of Linda Chavez for Secretary of Labor, labor leaders were quick to voice their concern. Chavez' nomination quickly collapsed after she belatedly admitted that, for two years, she gave free room and board and spending money to an undocumented Guatemalan immigrant. While Chavez tried to excuse her action as charity, the fact that her houseguest also performed household chores raised the possibility that Chavez had violated both immigration and employment laws.

Elaine L. Chao was rushed in that same

policy advocacy institute. She sits on many corporate boards and is married to the conservative

agreement, because that's where unions have far less leverage.”<sup>5</sup>

New York City building workers mobilized as seldom before last spring to create a credible strike threat. They were guided by the new leadership of SEIU Local 32B-J, radically revamped since the downfall of autocratic leader Gus Bavona

the hard-ball negotiating stance of their long-time hero, Mayor Giuliani. Having agreed to a 2-year wage freeze in 1995, only to watch suburban police salaries grow even higher, the NY Patrolmen's Benevolent Association expressed outrage at the city's offer of just a 2.5% annual raise. Some demonstrators drew attention to the city-suburb pay gap by holding signs reading: "To make ends meet, I mow a Nassau cop's lawn!" The PBA sought a 39% raise over two years, which it defended as necessary just to bring city police salaries up to the level of those in Newark.

An especially hard-fought contract battle was finally settled on Long Island in December. Over a year after CSEA was elected by the majority of 445 hospital and nursing home workers at Long Beach Medical Center to represent them, management finally agreed to a first contract with the union. It includes a wage increase of 2%, added to the hourly rate, effective July 1, 2001. The agreement calls for wage reopeners to decide further increases each contract year. One of the most important provisions involves health insurance. Soon after the union won the election to represent hospital employees, hospital management imposed new health insurance fees on newly unionized staff that were far higher than those paid by non-union employees. CSEA responded by filing charges against the hospital with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the state Office of Occupational Safety and Health, the state Department of Labor and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. In December, the NLRB ruled that the hospital illegally forced union members to pay

twice as much for health insurance as non-unionized hospital workers were paying. Under the terms of the new contract, management has agreed to compensate workers for the amount they were overcharged. In addition to the salary increase, the contract preserves the pension plan, retains guaranteed health insurance coverage and binding arbitration for contract issues, calls for mediation for disciplinary issues, calls for recognition of seniority for layoffs, recalls and job postings; ensures no loss of leave time for current workers, recognizes union shop stewards, and provides an agency shop for new employees. The new contract went into effect on January 1 and runs until March 31, 2005.

Union organizing also recorded some notable progress locally. NYU graduate student teaching assistants won a key ruling from the NLRB's New York region office. In a first for private universities, the board held that the TAs were indeed workers and had the right to organize into a union. The ruling was immediately contested in court by the NYU administration. But by year's end, NLRB's national headquarters upheld its New York affiliate's decision. When the election results were finally made public, they revealed a union win (619 voting yes, 551 no). The UAW has been leading the long effort to win representation of the 1700 graduate assistants, who routinely teach classes and grade papers. Their counterparts at public universities like CUNY won the right to join unions some years ago.



In April, two card-check unionization victories were won by Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, Local 6 in Manhattan. At the Manhattan East Suite Hotel, 111 workers won recognition as a HERE bargaining unit, as did 160

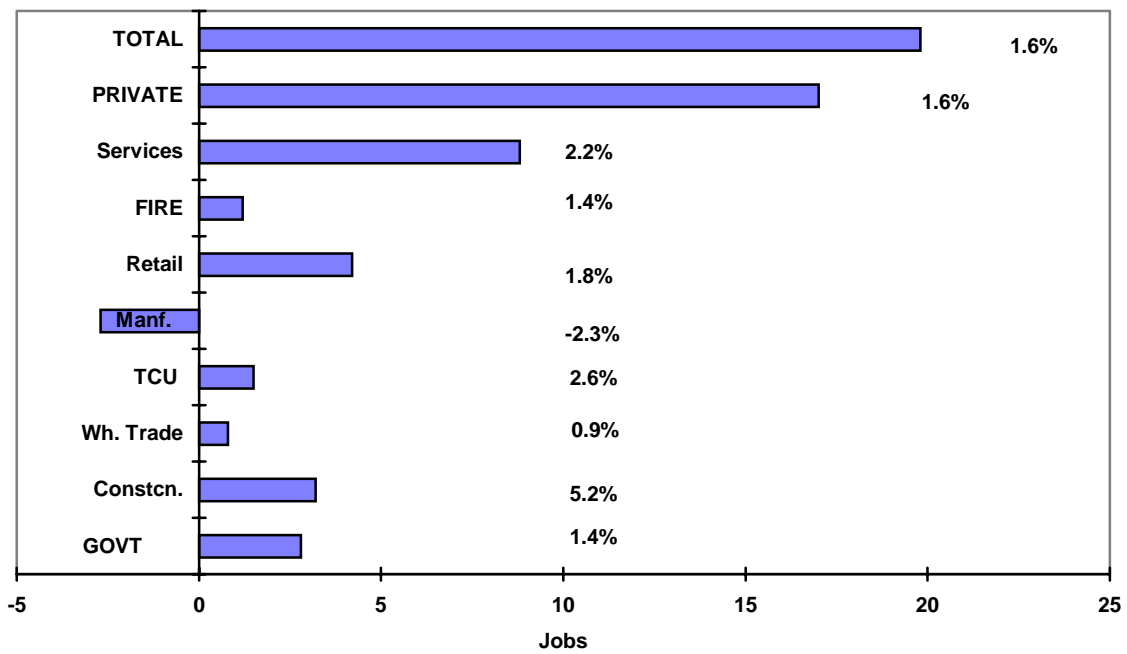
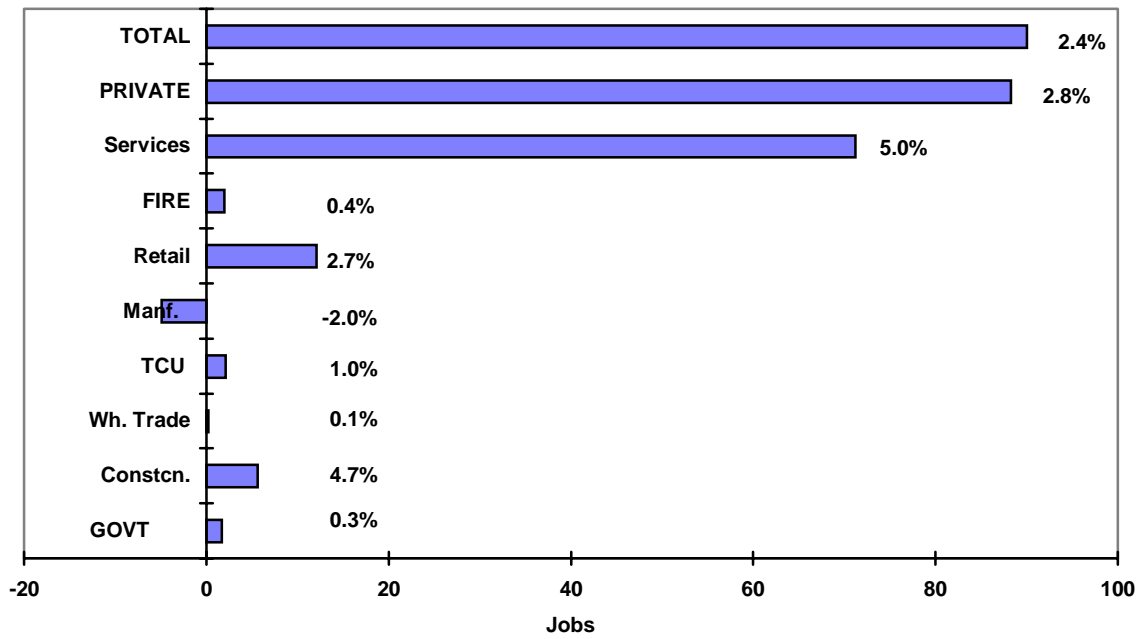
Emporium with violating minimum wage and overtime laws. Under the terms of the settlement, the workers will receive \$3 million in back pay. The workers were aided by their new union representatives at RWDSU Local 338, and by the

[TABLE 4 about HERE]

	<u>Dec. 2000</u>	<u>Dec. 1999</u>	<u>% CHG</u>
U.S.	132852.0	130952.0	1.5
NY State	8802.5	8643.7	1.8
New York City	3800.5	3710.5	2.4
Nassau-Suffolk	1247.8	1228.0	1.6

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Source: Establishment data ( not seasonally adjusted) from NY State Dept. of Labor.  
Note that these data reflect regular revisions made by the Dept. of Labor.



Source: NY State Department of Labor. FIRE = Finance, Insurance, Real Estate; TCU = Transport, Communications, Utilities.  
 Year-to-year changes, not seasonally adjusted.

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	<u>All Ages</u> <u>16 &amp; Up</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>White,</u> <u>Non-Span</u>	<u>Black,</u> <u>Non-Span</u>	<u>Spanish</u> <u>Origin</u>	<u>Teens,</u> <u>16-19</u>	<u>Foreign</u> <u>Born</u>
NYC	5.4	5.2	5.6	3.2	8.2	8.0	19.0	4.7
Big Cities	5.3	5.6	5.1	3.8	8.7	5.4	15.4	4.6
Nass/Suff.	2.6	2.0	3.4	2.1	2.9	4.0	6.8	7.0
Suburbs	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.6	4.9	4.6	10.8	3.5

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	number	%	number	%	number	%
Total Population	8,008,278	100%	1,334,544	100%	1,419,369	100%
Single Race	7,614,319	95.1	1,306,248	97.9	1,390,185	97.9
White	3,576,385	44.7	1,058,285	79.3	1,200,755	84.6
Black/African Amer.	2,129,762	26.6	134,673	10.1	98,553	6.9
Asian	787,047	9.8	63,140	4.7	34,711	2.4
Native American	41,289	0.5	2,112	0.2	3,807	0.3
Pacific Islander	5,430	0.1	400	0.0	484	0.0
Other Race	1,074,406	13.4	47,628	3.6	51,875	3.7
2 or more races	393,959	4.9	28,296	2.1	29,184	2.1
Total Population	8,008,278	100%	1,334,544	100%	1,419,369	100%
Hispanic	2,160,554	27.0	133,282	10.0	149,411	10.5
Non-Hispanic	5,847,724	73.0	1,201,262	90.0	1,269,958	89.5

Source: 2000 Census of Population estimates from U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census Factfinder* (Washington, DC: Census Bureau, March 2001).

Note: "Single Race" refers to those persons who identified themselves as being in only 1 racial category. Census 2000 was the first census to also permit respondents to self-identify as belonging to "2 or more races." Spanish origin is an ethnic, not racial category, so Hispanics may be of any race.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Kahn, "Treasury Choice Varies from Bush on Tax Outlook," *NY Times* (1/18/01): p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Dept. of Labor, *Metro Area Employment and Unemployment: December 2000*.

<sup>3</sup> Fiscal Policy Institute, New York's Working Families Still Waiting for Prosperity, *FPI News* (9/2000); and Working Group on the NYC Low-wage Labor Market, *Building a Ladder to Jobs and Higher Wages* (NY: Community Service Society, 2000). See the summary of the latter study in this issue of *RLR*.

<sup>4</sup> Steven Greenhouse, "Senate Panel Gives Warm Reception to New Labor Nominee," *NY Times* (1/25/01): p. A20.

<sup>5</sup> Simon Roper, "New York's Labor Market Hits a Low," *NY Times* (1/25/01): p. A20.