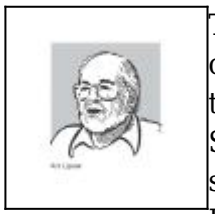
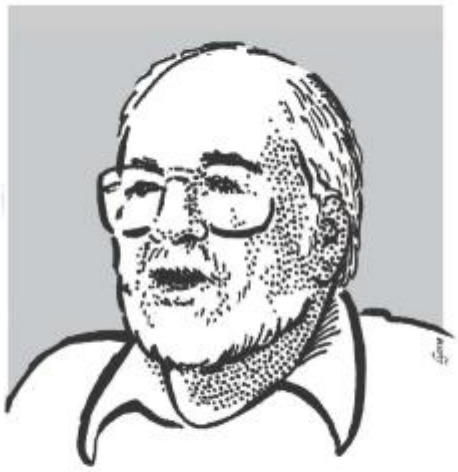
Art Lipow

written by Bogdan Denitch | July 21, 2016



The democratic left is poorer today for the loss of a longtime active comrade. Arthur Lipow, a former member of the editorial board of *New Politics*, died this year on January 6, aged 81, his wife Gretchen by his side. Arthur grew up in Southern California and attended high school in Pasadena. He received his BA in sociology from UCLA in 1955. He then studied under Professor Seymour Martin Lipset at UC Berkeley, where he received a PhD in political sociology in 1969.

Arthur had been an active militant since the 1950s when he joined the Young Socialist League (YSL), which was connected to Max Shachtman's Independent Socialist League (ISL). He participated in the third-camp magazine *Anvil* as well as the YSL's publication *Challenge*, which was part of the ISL's newspaper *Labor Action*, edited by Hal Draper and arguably the best socialist newspaper of its time.



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When both the YSL and ISL united with the Socialist Party (SP), Arthur entered the leadership of the newly merged organization. Arthur moved to New York City in the early 1960s and was very active in the SP local, working with Michael Harrington and myself among others. We met every Friday evening at an open local forum on 14th Street. The old-time SPers stupidly stopped the meetings in order to lessen the influence of Shachtman and Draper within the party. This helped lead to Shachtman's move further rightwards and a political break between Hal and Max. Arthur followed Draper into the Independent Socialist Clubs of America, a new third-camp organization. Eventually he joined the Democratic Socialists of America, where I remain an honorary chair.

Arthur taught at a number of institutions of higher education, the last of which was Birkbeck College and the Institute of United States Studies at the University of London. He published four books: *Authoritarian Socialism: Edward Bellamy and the Nationalist Movement*; *Political Parties and*

Democracy; *Neither Capitalism nor Socialism: Theories of Bureaucratic Collectivism* (co-edited with Ernest Haberkern); and *The Other City* (co-edited with Susanne MacGregor). In England he was a member of the Labour Party, an active participant in European Nuclear Disarmament, and a founder of "Charter 88," the British constitutional reform movement that proposed a Bill of Rights for Britain.

Upon retiring in 1998 Arthur returned to California. Together with Gretchen he co-founded the Alameda Public Affairs Forum in 2004 and the Center for Global Peace and Democracy in 2007. He was also active in the Green Party.

Arthur was a natural teacher and gifted researcher. He also had a gift for lifelong friendship, as we were friends for half a century. I greatly miss him.

Footnotes