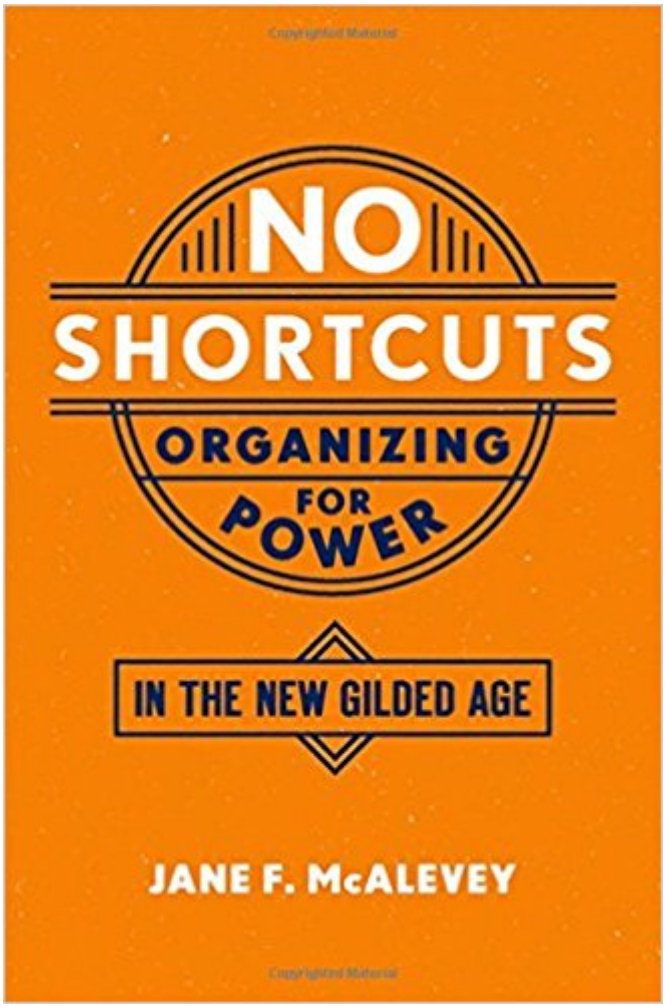
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No Shortcuts: Organizing For Power In The New Gilded Age



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Synopsis

The crisis of the progressive movement is so evident that nothing less than a fundamental rethinking of its basic assumptions is required. Today's progressives now work for professional organizations more comfortable with the inside game in Washington DC (and capitols throughout the West), where they are outmatched and outspent by corporate interests. Labor unions now focus on the narrowest possible understanding of the interests of their members, and membership continues to decline in lockstep with the narrowing of their goals. Meanwhile, promising movements like Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter lack sufficient power to accomplish meaningful change. Why do progressives in the United States keep losing on so many issues? In No Shortcuts, Jane McAlevey argues that progressives can win, but lack the organized power to enact significant change, to outlast their bosses in labor fights, and to hold elected leaders accountable. Drawing upon her experience as a scholar and longtime organizer in the student, environmental, and labor movements, McAlevey examines cases from labor unions and social movements to pinpoint the factors that helped them succeed - or fail - to accomplish their intended goals. McAlevey makes a compelling case that the great social movements of previous eras gained their power from mass organizing, a strategy today's progressives have mostly abandoned in favor of shallow mobilization or advocacy. She ultimately concludes that, in order to win, progressive movements need strong unions built from bottom-up organizing strategies that place the power for change in the hands of workers and ordinary people at the community level. Beyond the concrete examples in this book, McAlevey's arguments have direct implications for anyone involved in organizing for social change. Much more than cogent analysis, No Shortcuts explains exactly how progressives can go about rebuilding powerful movements at work, in our communities, and at the ballot box.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"McAlevey's decades as a labor and community organizer means that she knows what organizers do, or should do. This book lifts the lessons McAlevey takes from that craft into the intellectual realm of power and politics. This book is for anyone who wants a democratic society in which ordinary people share power." -- Frances Fox Piven, author of Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Change America "Jane McAlevey is a deeply experienced, uncommonly reflective organizer. In No Shortcuts, McAlevey stresses the distinction between mobilizing and organizing and examines how systematic conflation of the two has reflected and reinforced the labor movement's decline over recent decades. More than a how-to manual for organizers, No Shortcuts is a serious, grounded rumination on building working-class power. It is a must read for everyone concerned with social justice in the US." -- Adolph Reed, Jr., Professor of Political Science, University of Pennsylvania "Jane McAlevey is one of the few analysts of social movements today who takes class power and class struggle seriously. McAlevey understands their ineluctable concreteness and force from years of organizing democratic unions that have effectively battled powerful corporations. This is a book for citizens and activists--but also for students and scholars of social movements--who want to understand how the world can and has been changed for the better." -- Jeff Goodwin, Professor of Sociology, New York University "Whether it is Black Lives Matter, climate change, feeling the Bern, or worker rights, success hinges on the ability to build real and sustainable power. Jane McAlevey gives us both a practical guide and a set of underlying principles to understand how organizing matters more than any other available strategy to grow power, and, what it means to organize. A must read for anyone hoping to create a better world." -- Dan Clawson, Professor of Sociology, University of Massachusetts at Amherst "For those of us grappling with the near-overwhelming difficulties of the 'how-to' of changing our workplaces, communities, and society, No Shortcuts is an invaluable resource." --Jacobin"The heart of No Shortcuts is composed of four case studies that show how those unions still committed to organizing have managed to do it. Some of this, like her treatment of the Chicago Teachers Union, will be familiar, but there is much that is new. For instance, her account of the heroic United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) campaign to organize a sprawling Smithfield Foods pork plant in the small town of Tar Heel, North Carolina a story that went largely unreported because of a gag order imposed on the union uncovers one of

the most inspiring episodes in recent labor history." --New Labor Forum"No Shortcuts outlines some of the reasons for the decline of trade union power in recent decades, but crucially it also offers solutions. This is undoubtedly one of the best books written in recent years on trade unions and should be considered required reading for anyone with an interest in tackling the decline of the labour movement." --Ruairi Creaney, Freelance Lefty

Jane F. McAlevey is a Post Doctoral Fellow in the Labor and Worklife Program at Harvard Law School. A longtime organizer in the environmental and labor movements, she is the author of "Raising Expectations (and Raising Hell): My Decade Fighting for the Labor Movement" (Verso).

The problem with a dark age is you aren't even aware of the knowledge you have lost. I have been anticipating this book for months as the culmination of Jane's studying and collecting the powerful organizing (not mobilizing!) strategies of an era when working people won real economic victories in this country.No Shortcuts is an excellent companion to Jane's memoire "Raising Expectations and Raising Hell", but where Raising Expectations relies on her own story to illustrate fighting strategies, No Shortcuts draws on a broad range of struggles from past and present.I am not a union organizer, but these strategies are relevant to anyone interested in building high-participation organizations of everyday people capable of fighting and winning against the bosses and 1%.There is a lot of disinformation and misunderstanding out there regarding what people are of capable of and how to unlock that potential. These skills are not innate but they can be taught. It will not happen spontaneously but we can make it happen through planning, analysis and face-to-face connections.Buy, share and teach No Shortcuts in your organization today!

A very powerful message that I would not have had without Ms McAlevey's thoughtful insights. Our collective path forward in these very troubled times are succinctly outlined here, and now we need to use this information going forward to affect needed changes in our society. This is also an excellent companion to her previous work "Raising Expectations (and Raising Hell)" where her knowledge of national union movements, people and places is evident because it was a first person experience, she was there. No Shortcuts addresses the huge cultural shift in America where mistrust for almost any establishment governmental figure is matched by the growing influence of powerful corporate business leaders. It outlines what we must do if we truly care about the legacy that we leave behind and for the sake of our children's future.No Shortcuts: Organizing for Power in the New Gilded Age

Gets the difference between mobilizing groups for social change and organizing to seize political power. Persuasively argues that what the left needs is more organizing to win battles, and to discover and nurture natural leaders who know the difference between strategy and tactics. An enlightening book for people of any age who have entered politics or are thinking of entering politics in the age of Trump and the revival of fascism in the USA.

Very good book discussing the needs of the labor movement our current times

This is a great addition to discussions around organising and community power. McAlevey makes a bold argument, backed up with case studies and analysis. Very well researched and lots to chew on.

Great examples of organizing! Brings hope to our nation’s situation!

Great book, highly recommended

Given the November 2016 election results, it’s hard to imagine a book that is more prescient - and timely - for those concerned about justice. McAlevey shares her keen understanding of what makes for change: real worker power and movement-ownership, as distinct from the more-common displays of faux-power: mobilization, staged media events and the like.Though sharp and unrelenting in her criticism of today’s movement, McAlevey also shares a hopeful view of what we need to do to fight for a just society.

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