

A letter from David North to the New York Times on the obituary of Dave Van Ronk

18 February 2002

The following letter was sent by David North, chairman of the World Socialist Web Site International Editorial Board and national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party of the United States, to the New York Times .

February 12, 2002

To the Editor:

Your obituary of Dave Van Ronk (February 12, 2002) made no reference to one essential element of the life of this immensely gifted and important artist—that is, his politics. During the seminal and most productive years of his life, Dave was active in the socialist movement. In the mid-1960s he participated in discussions with representatives of the Trotskyist Fourth International and was a founding member of the Workers League (predecessor of the Socialist Equality Party).

In later years Dave's politics veered in an anarchist direction. But to the end of his days Dave retained his revolutionary idealism. He despised the commercialization of art and political conformism, both of which Dave considered incompatible with truth and creativity. His art was embedded in a profound identification with the struggles of the oppressed and exploited.

David North

National Secretary, Socialist Equality Party



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