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cluded, find ourselves working overtime to compensate for the loss of production at your place.

Historically, workers confronted with such cutbacks in production—whether or not they belonged to a union—have often resolved to share whatever work was available, regardless of seniority. The legal services office where I worked in the 1980s did this when President Reagan cut our budget by 20 percent. Without touching the compensation of secretaries, who were underpaid to begin with, all the lawyers reduced their work-week to four days. A group of visiting nurses, whom my wife and I helped to organize an independent union, did likewise. And in a book Alice and I edited, *The New Rank and File* (2000), Mia Giunta tells how women workers of many nationalities in a Connecticut electronics plant that Mia helped to organize adopted the same practice.

In a shutdown or cutback situation for a fellow worker in another workplace owned by the same employer, I can express solidarity unionism by refusing overtime. (The collective bargaining agreement may mandate overtime, or be silent. Each situation will present a somewhat different tactical challenge.) Hopefully I won't act all by myself. When our group becomes stronger, we may be able to strike in your behalf should you decide to hit the bricks. Our slogan then would be "If you go, we go."

I think workers' democracy means improvising such small steps of resistance as workers can take without excessive danger of being fired. I think it means trying to learn from what is going on around us. It means, I believe, affirming with students and workers in the streets that another world—a qualitatively different world—is possible.

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par-ticipants a sense of how widely particular outcomes are desired.

In Ortiz's opinion, the Zapatista movement does not resemble other guerrilla movements. The movement it most resembles is the civil rights movement in the United States in the 1960s.

Conclusion

To respond to this new movement, to take part in it helpfully, to give it leadership in a direction promising results, requires those interested in workers' democracy to start thinking outside traditional boxes. If we pursue only traditional models—for example, waiting for trade unions (however democratic they may become) or Marxist vanguard parties to make the revolution—we may be waiting a long time. By contrast, workers who act on their own initiative to refuse overtime or to take part in a wild-cat strike speak of their sense of liberation, their experience of literally getting "outside the box" represented by the plant and the daily routine.

I advocate an alternative perspective that I call "solidarity unionism." It asks workers to reach out to other workers *horizontally*, rather than relying on higher bureaucratic levels of the unions to which they may belong. It proposes that workers seek ways in which they can begin to act together without waiting for approval from their international union or even their local union. It suggests that, as needed, they form their own organizational structures outside of (or, as in the case of a stewards' council, overlapping with) traditional unions.

For example, suppose I work in a plant owned by a company that operates another plant in which you work. The company discontinues a shift in your plant, and you and your colleagues begin to experience layoffs. The workers at my plant, me in-

form associations called "ejidos" and to acquire land as a community that no individual could sell.

The third historical force was the Second Vatican Council and Catholic Liberation Theology. Base communities were formed—*Mayan* base communities, in which there was a "marriage of traditions." The key demand that emerged from this confluence of traditions (we were told) was for autonomy, that is, self-admin-istration by the indigenous according to traditional law, "uso de costumbre." When Marxists showed up in Chiapas in the mid-1980s, a movement formed by these forces was already in exist-ence. The movement influenced the Marxists, we were told, more than the Marxists influenced the movement.

The way it works in an individual village is as follows. The village may be wholly "autonomous" (the word the Zapatistas use to describe themselves), or it may have some autonomous families and some families loyal to the PRI.

In the assembly of the autonomous, trusted individuals are asked to perform certain full-time functions; for example, as storekeeper or as a worker in a health clinic or a school. These persons "lead by obeying." Someone else cultivates their cornfields so they can perform their new tasks. The store, the clinic, and the school serve all the families in the village, even those that are pro-PRI.

The Zapatista communities make joint decisions by a representative process. Each local assembly of the "autonomous"—whether it is composed of all or some of the families in a particular village—is open to persons above a certain age. Each assembly comes to a consensus and sends delegates to the next level. The delegates are bound to be spokespersons for the decisions of the local assemblies they represent.

It is an honor to be chosen as a representative, just as it is an honor to be chosen as a storekeeper or teacher. Consensus is sought at every level. A "straw vote" may be taken to give

Conventional definitions of union democracy are too limited to encompass the broad majority of people in and outside unions who are struggling for control over their workplaces. In particular, denotation of U.S. labor law and trade union perspectives of union democracy are far too narrow to give workers participatory power. Thus the concept of union democracy must be reinterpreted to include workers of all kinds (unionized workers, nonunion workers, and farmers); protection of the rights to strike, picket, and slow down; and the demand for worker-community ownership. This article examines two recent examples of workers' democracy: the Serbian revolution of 2000 and the Zapatistas' ongoing struggle in Chiapas, Mexico.

What kind of democracy do workers need? Those who answer, "Union democracy," generally mean by that term the free exercise of rights protected by Title I of the Landrum-Griffin Act, together with the right to elect union officers and ratify contracts by referendum vote of the rank and file. (A referendum vote is protected by Title I only if provided in the constitution and bylaws of the union to which the com-plaining worker belongs.)

"Union democracy," thus defined, is critically important for the one worker in eight who belongs to a union. The right to speak your piece at a meeting, to belong to a caucus without retaliation, to circulate leaflets and petitions, and to run for office represent labor law equivalents to many of the rights protected by the First Amendment.

Even for the worker who belongs to a union, however, union democracy understood in First Amendment terms does not encompass all the democracy that a worker needs. Labor law in the United States as expressed in the National Labor Relations Act as amended (otherwise known as the Labor Management Relations Act) has a number of features that are found in few other countries and that are a threat to democratic values.

In the United States, federal labor law as interpreted by the National Labor Relations Board and the courts provides that:

1. In a given appropriate bargaining unit, only one union shall be the "exclusive" representative in collective bargaining of those who work there.

2. When a union becomes the exclusive bargaining representative for a unit, and the collective bargaining agreement negotiated by that union so provides, all members of the unit must pay dues or equivalent fees to the union. Typically these dues or fees are "checked off" so that the money never passes through the worker's hands on its way to the union.

3. If a grievance-arbitration procedure is negotiated as part of the collective bargaining agreement, workers covered by the contract are understood to have agreed not to strike or engage in other forms of collective self-help (whether or not that prohibition appears in the contractual language) except, perhaps, in the case of a safety and health problem that threatens imminent bodily harm.

4. Once a union has been recognized, it may "waive" (give up) its members' fundamental right to engage in "concerted activity for mutual aid or protection" otherwise guaranteed by Section 7 of the act. Workers who engage in strikes, slow-downs, and even picketing in disregard of this prohibition may be discharged by the employer and will have no legal redress. Almost all union contracts in the United States give up for the duration of the contract at least the right to strike.

To my mind, the four constraints just enumerated take away much more democracy than any federal law such as Landrum-Griffin can give back. It is a sad fact that in our country the worker who does *not* belong to a union or whose union has not yet achieved recognition may have more legal protection to engage in the classic forms of working-class self-activity—strikes, slow-downs, and picketing—than has the union member.

native villages, traveled all over Mexico meeting with popular organizations such as the network of independent trade unions, the Frente Auténtico del Trabajo (FAT).

2. The Zapatistas are not nonviolent in any traditional sense. But neither are they a traditional Latin American guerrilla movement. Without giving up either their arms or the principle of armed struggle, they have carried on for the last five years an essentially nonviolent resistance.

For example, the Mexican government has sought to build roads into the Lacandón jungle, which is the Zapatista stronghold. The government claimed that this plan was to help farmers get their produce to market. The real reason, obviously, was to be able to move soldiers and military gear into the area.

At the western edge of the jungle is a village named Amadór. During the summer and fall of 1999, the soldiers seeking to build the road were met each day by a *cordón* (a picket line) of women from Amadór. Since many of the soldiers were indigenous, the women appealed to them to recognize their true interests and to put down their weapons. To prevent this dialogue, the government played music through loudspeakers.

After Vicente Fox became president, he announced the abandonment of a number of military bases in Chiapas. The first base to be abandoned was at Amadór.

3. When my wife and I briefly visited San Cristobal, Chiapas, in 1999, we talked with Teresa Ortiz, who for years has worked with indigenous communities in the area. She was completing a book of interviews titled *Never Again a World Without Us: Voices of Mayan Women in Chiapas, Mexico* (2001). She told us that in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, three historical forces prepared the way for Zapatismo. The first was Mayan tradition, according to which, she said, "Everything is done through assemblies." The second was the Mexican Revolution of 1917, which declared a right to land. No one was supposed to own more than a certain amount. Poor people were authorized to

bia's out-put of electricity, declared an indefinite general strike. The general in charge of the armed forces, and police from the Interior Ministry, showed up at the mines on Tuesday, October 3, and Wednesday, October 4. The miners adopted a dual strategy. On the one hand, they removed vital parts from the mine ma-chinery and challenged the soldiers to mine coal with bayo-nets. On the other hand, they summoned 20,000 supporters from nearby communities. The police held their ground but made no arrests. The next day, Thursday, October 5, hundreds of thousands of people in Belgrade—forty miles away—seized the parliament and the state TV station, and the police in Kolubara melted away.

The Kolubara strike was coordinated not by a "trade union" but by a "workers' committee." All over Serbia, following Vojislav Kostunica's accession to power, local committees of workers displaced hated factory managers. I realize that a cynic might say that this was a transition from socialism to capitalism, not the other way around. But surely Serbia also shows us that fundamental social transition, revolution, remains possible in the twenty-first century, and that neutralizing the armed forces by mass nonviolent direct action on the part of workers and their supporters can be a critical component of the process.

Mexico 1994 to Now

The Zapatista movement in Mexico for indigenous self-determination seems extraordinary in at least the following ways.

1. Without participating in electoral politics, the Zapatistas have ended seventy-one years of uninterrupted government by the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI. How have they done this? One critical component is a vast effort at popular education. Mayan peasants, who had never before left their

Thus, "union democracy" should be understood in a much broader manner than has been the practice of those mainly con-cerned with union elections. Union democracy requires protection of the worker 's right to engage in self-activity and self-organization from below, even when these activities are not approved or are even bitterly opposed by union officials.

Participatory Democracy for Workers, Too

But we have thus far only scratched the surface of the worker's need for democracy. What does democracy mean when a company unilaterally decides to close a plant? Labor law protects the company's action by excluding investment decisions from the so-called "mandatory subjects of bargaining." This means that a union that seeks to ensure in its bargaining that a given workplace—or all workplaces represented by the union—will not be closed during the duration of the contract cannot legally insist on such language.

Moreover, like the no-strike clause present in most contracts, in almost all contracts the union agrees to a "management prerogatives clause" that expressly gives management the right to close plants, transfer work, get out of any particular line of busi-ness, go to Mexico, or whatever the company may in its infinite wisdom decide to do with the surplus value that workers produce. (Example: The largest employer in the Youngstown area is Delphi Packard, which makes electric assemblies for vehicles. In 1980, the company had 15,000 workers in the Youngstown area and no workers in Mexico. Now it has 4,800 workers in Youngstown and 80,000 in Mexico.)

Is this democracy? What do we mean by democracy anyhow? The Port Huron Statement adopted by the Students for a Democratic Society in 1962 advocated a "participatory democracy," whereby the "individual [would] share in those social

decisions determining the quality and direction of his life." Is closing a plant such a decision? Of course it is: Ask the young worker forced to leave his or her community of origin in order to find work; the middle-aged worker with a mortgage, children ap-proaching college age, and no transferable skills; or the older worker, as at Enron, worried about whether his or her pension and (especially) health care benefits are still there. No kind of decision in our society has a greater impact on the lives of individuals than corporate decisions to shut down facilities, to relo-cate production, to merge, to declare bankruptcy, and the like. If the democracy we say we believe in is participatory democracy, workers must have a voice in such decisions.

I am not talking about adding an international union officer to a corporate board of directors, nor do I have in mind requir-ing the company to give a sixty-day notice of what it has unilaterally decided to do. Workers (and their communities) must have an effective veto. When a company decides that it no longer wishes to make steel in, say, Youngstown or Cleveland, the workers of that community must be given an opportunity to do the job themselves. For such an imagined right to be made real, there must be a public source of funds permitting public entities to exercise the same right of "eminent domain" with respect to an abandoned industrial facility as they routinely exercise with respect to abandoned residential structures. In Anglo-American law, exercise of the right to eminent domain requires payment of fair market value. Absent the financial assistance to make such a "taking" possible, the right itself is only a cruel hoax.

Still, we have not gone far enough. A society in which workers can acquire the plants that their employers abandon, and run the plants themselves, is not the society in which we presently live. Socialism in one steel mill is not going to happen. What can happen in one steel mill—as at Weirton Steel in West Virginia, where workers engaged in an employee stock ownership plan—will not be socialism or workers' democracy either. To have a society in which workers can realistically come to view a facility as "theirs" because they mix their labor with it over a long period of time and securely look forward to working there until retirement, there must be deep structural changes. Democracy, it would appear, is going to require revolution.

But what kind of revolution? And how can it happen in a way that will not destroy democracy in the process? The twentieth century offers many cautionary examples as well as many hopeful ones.

Democracy and Revolution, Marxism and Anarchism

The new movement for change emerging in the Lacondón jungle of southern Mexico, and in the streets of Paris (in 1995), Seattle, and Quebec City, is a movement that draws on *both* Marxism and anarchism. The Marx it looks back to is the author of *The Civil War in France* (1990) about the Paris Commune of 1871. The Lenin to which it relates is the author who, in *State and Revolution* (1993), demanded that all power pass to improvised central labor bodies known as soviets.

Where can we find examples of this libertarian socialism in practice? And what is the role within it of workers' democracy?

Serbia 2000

In fall 2000, Serbia had what can fairly be called a nonviolent revolution. A political movement won an election. When the incumbent regime initially refused to recognize the election results, an outraged populace poured into the streets. On the evening of Friday, September 29, the coal miners of the Kolubara region, who produce the coal required for half of Ser-