

Unions and Democracy

Wednesday December 6, 2006

I. Introduction: democracy, solidarity and civil society

1. The Problem
2. Civil Society

II. What are Labor Unions?

1. The conventional view of unions in America today
2. An alternative view: Unions as basis for more equal power
 - (1) Economic power
 - (2). Political power
 - Organic solidarities
 - Organizational capacity

III. The Historical Trajectory of the U.S. Labor Movement

1. Historic hostility to unions: unions as restraint of trade.
2. The problem faced by union organizers before 1930s
3. Breakthrough: New Deal Reforms
4. Basic process by which a union gets formed since the 1930s.
5. Erosion of Rules after WWII
6. Current Strategies to undermine unions
7. Result: near collapse of union movement.
8. Political consequences of the decline of unions