

II – Bibliography of Mexican labor – review essays.

Maria Cristina Bayon. El sindicalismo automotriz mexicano frente a un nuevo escenario: una perspectiva desde los liderazgos. Mexico: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) and Juan Pablos Editor, 1997. 207 pages. Notes, bibliography.

Maria Cristina Bayon's book represents an important contribution both to the study of the automobile industry and to the more general discussion of the nature of Mexican labor unions. Bayon's book opens with a detailed discussion of the state of the Mexican auto industry, and then moves to a fascinating discussion of the state of the Mexican auto workers' unions, based largely on interviews with local union leaders.

Mexico's auto industry is central to the country's economy, Bayon explains. In 1994 Mexico ranked 12th among 15 countries which produced 92 percent of all cars. Mexico has 20 assembly plants in 11 states, 500 autoparts plants, and 1,000 distributors. Between 1990 and 1995 the auto industry invested more than seven billion dollars in Mexico. The industry represents 10 percent of the Mexican gross national product, and in 1994 generated 35 percent of manufacturing export and 18 percent of total exports. Auto exports are second only to petroleum in their importance to the Mexican economy. The Mexican auto industry is dominated by foreign multinational corporations such as Ford, General Motors, Volkswagen and Nissan. The only important Mexican company is Dina.

Bayon explains that Mexican auto workers have no national auto workers' union, but rather find themselves divided into company or plant unions which keep workers

isolated. Bayon delivers a scathing criticism of Mexico's "corporative" labor unions such as the Confederation of Mexico Workers (CTM) which are controlled by the Institutional Revolutionary Party and the Mexican government. Bayon shows how these authoritarian unions, working with the government and the employers, made it nearly impossible for Mexican workers to resist the restructuring of the national economy and of the auto industry during the 1980s and 90s.

During those years employers in Mexico introduced new technologies, and new forms of work organization such as quality circles and team concept. But without genuine labor unions to negotiate these issues, Mexican workers found that they were expected to work harder, for longer hours, and at a faster pace while accepting lower wages. The few more democratic or independent unions could not fight alone, nor did they have an adequate strategy to do so. The result has been that the auto workers remain weak, divided, unable to win higher wages and with unions that have little presence in the plant.

Bayon describes how the old, authoritarian unions allied with the PRI declined during the 1980s, and how the corporations succeeded in imposing a unilateral relationship, dictating terms to the unions. Her alternative is the creation of a new more democratic union movement, with both national and international ties; strong independent unions which take up the issue of productivity, and negotiate cooperation in improving productivity, as a way of creating a really bilateral relationship between the corporations and the workers.

While having learned much from Bayon's description, we reject her prescription. We would suggest there is another alternative: a radical, democratic labor movement which fights to suppress competition through national and international cooperation, while at the same time striving to take control over production, quality and decision making away from management. The long term goal of the labor movement should not be a bilateral union-corporation relationship, but a different unilateral relationship, one where working people democratically manage a collectively owned and controlled economy.

Anyone interested in either the auto industry or Mexican labor unions should read this very informative and important study.

Charles Bergquist, Labor and the Course of American Democracy: U.S. History in Latin American Perspective. New York: Verso, 1996. Tables, illustrations, photographs. Recommendations for furthering reading. 209 pages. \$20 paper/\$60 hardbound.

Charles Bergquist's Labor and the Course of American Democracy: U.S. History in Latin American Perspective brings together five essays dealing with the relationship between the U.S. and Latin American all organized around the theme of the centrality of labor. The author puts the issues of democracy, social equality, and internationalism at the center of his discussion, arguing for democratic reform, and I think it would not be far wrong to call this a social democratic interpretation of U.S.-Latin American history.

Rejecting both laissez-faire capitalism and Leninist Communism, Bergquist argues for a more democratic and egalitarian relationship between the people of the United States and those of Latin America.

Bergquist's book, outlined below, also represents an attempt to bring a more interdisciplinary approach to both U.S. and Latin American history, arguing that ultimately one cannot be a very good historian of the United States, without taking Latin America into account, and visa-versa; similarly he contends that one would be a better diplomatic historian by also doing labor history simultaneously. Finally Bergquist suggests that academic historians should write in such a way as to make their scholarly writings more available to the general reader.

Bergquist has organized this book around the literature; these are essays in historiography. Certainly Bergquist knows this classic literature inside out, and does a terrific job of presenting the material, as if one were listening to him in a seminar. His historical arguments about the U.S. and Latin America with their emphasis on the centrality of economic issues and the relationship between domestic and foreign economic and political issues, I think, mostly correct. His comments on the weaknesses of U.S. labor history in incorporating the issue of imperialism are right on target. Unfortunately, I think, the tone of the book is liberal, academic and edifying rather than radical, popular and engaging as it might have been.

While this book has a very compelling central question--the relation of workers and unions to foreign policy and their impact on U.S.-Latin American history--the author tends to deal with these questions in very broad and general way that seems more informed by the debates of the 1960 or 1970s than those of the 1990s or the coming millennium. Bergquist, for example, does not explore the centrality of the conflicts between the labor bureaucracy and the workers, the importance of alliances between workers and the social movements, or the significance of the changing character of labor around the world as it becomes more female and more multicultural almost everywhere. Contemporary issues--control, gender, globalism, post-modernism--are quite literally tacked on to the book's last few pages, rather than being integrated into the discussion.

In each of the first four essays, Bergquist organizes his discussion around a critical review of important works on Latin American history. The first essay, "The Paradox of American Development," dealing with the role of race in U.S.-Latin American history, takes off from Samuel Flagg Bemis's The Latin American Policy of the United States (New York, 1943) and Eric Williams's Capitalism and Slavery (Chapel Hill, 1944). In this essay, Bergquist argues that Bemis's book, while in many respects the best introduction to the subject, was based on racial, climatic and cultural assumptions, assumptions successfully challenged by Williams who focussed on exploitative economic relationships.

The second essay, "The Social Origins of U.S. Expansionism," uses Walter LaFeber's The New Empire, "the best single study of the origins of U.S. imperialism," as it's spring board, but then turns to look at Democratic Promise: The Populist America by

Lawrence Goodwyn (1976), Workers' Control in America by David Montgomery (1979), and Segmented Work, Divided Workers by David Gordon, Richard Edwards and Michael Reich (1979). In this essay Bergquist argues that LaFeber's political, economic, and intellectual history made the case for the centrality of imperialism to the maturing U.S. economy, but that U.S. labor historians have tended to ignore that argument. Labor historians should have shown how U.S. workers' struggles both shaped and were shaped by the rise of U.S. imperialism, but instead tended to ignore the issue.

Bergquist suggests that Philip Foner's "orthodox Marxist-Leninist interpretation" could be a partial corrective to Goodwyn, Montgomery, Gordon et al, but Bergquist believes that Foner, like Lenin, is too much of an economic determinist. Bergquist also criticizes David Brody, who saw how labor struggles led to imperialism, but could not understand how imperialism led back to labor struggles. Bergquist argues that imperialism affected many aspects of U.S. society--such as industrial growth and immigration--but that imperial domination in the Americas also gave the U.S. elite the resources and the confidence to face down the challenge from labor unions and socialists. Perhaps because the questions discussed here are close to my own interests, I particularly liked this essay.

The third essay, "Latin American Revolution, US Response," uses liberal Cole Blasier's The Hovering Giant (1976) and conservative Jeane Kirkpatrick's Dictatorships and Double Standards (1982) to show how U.S. historians have emphasized security issues over economic issues. (He mentions Jorge Castaneda's Utopia Disarmed as a Latin American version of the same sort of argument.) Bergquist argues that U.S. hostility to Latin American revolutions had more to do with threats to U.S. corporations' economic interests than challenges to U.S. security concerns.

The fourth essay dealing with cultural criticism seems rather out of place in this collection focussing diplomatic or labor history. Bergquist organizes this chapter around a critical review of Ariel Dorfman's and Armand Mattelart's How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic (1971, 1975). Chilean Marxists Dorfman and Mattelart, influenced by the Frankfurt School and a radical version of dependency theory, had argued that Donald Duck spread "racist and ethnocentric values that reinforce and perpetuate an exploitative capitalist world." (119) Bergquist contends that Dorfman and Mattelart give a reading of Donald Duck which is "intellectually misleading, politically suspect, and fundamentally undemocratic." (121).

Dorfman and Mattelart, says Bergquist, never ask: Why was Donald Duck so popular? Bergquist contends that cartoonist Carl Barks's genius was to show the democratic struggle of Donald and the nephews against the authoritarian and acquisitive Scrooge. Donald's nephews Huey, Dewey and Louie symbolized "rebellion against authority" and that gave the cartoons and comic strip its appeal. By following the Frankfurt School and dependency theory, Dorfman and Mattelart recognized the imperialist message, but missed the democratic content of Disney and his ducks. From this Bergquist draws the conclusion about dependency theory: "The nationalist capitalist reformers among them placed their faith in a cadre of technocratic bureaucrats, the

Marxists in vanguard political parties. Both groups exalted the role of state power and neglected the idea that truly democratic organization of society must emanate from participatory institutions in the workplace and the local community." (157). Long live Huey, Dewey and Louie and their participatory-democratic-anarchosyndicalist commune! (I always like those ducks.)

In his final chapter, Bergquist set his historiographical method aside, writing a straight forward essay about the history of the U.S. labor movement. Influenced by David Brody among others, the essay describes the apparent rise and definite fall of U.S. labor in since World War II. Unfortunately Bergquist did not turn to Stanley Aronowitz, Kim Moody, Staughton Lynd or others who might have helped him also describe the way in which the employers and labor bureaucracy took control of the unions from the workers. In this final section Bergquist mentions very much in passing issues of gender, globalism, and post-modernism and alludes to the "new labor history," though by that he seems to mean the "old new labor history" of Thompson and Gutman. Unfortunately, Bergquist really has little to say about gender or globalism, topics which could have enriched his arguments throughout. (Those interested in picking up where Bergquist leaves off might try Kim Moody's new book Workers in a Lean World: Unions in the International Economy [New York: Verso, 1997].)

Some general readers might be attracted to this book, but unfortunately Bergquist did not follow his own advice and write for the general reader. While the book is quite very lucidly written, it is not a popular presentation. This is an historians book, organized around historiography, and its real appeal should be to graduate student for whom it provides an intelligent and insightful commentary on a dozen important books in Latin American studies. I would think it difficult to use this book with undergraduate for whom it would be too dry; there are few stories here. U.S. labor and social historians could read the second chapter profitably, and should take its arguments to heart. Major research libraries should certainly acquire this book for their collections.

David Brooks and Jonathan Fox, eds., Cross-Border Dialogues: U.S. Mexico Social Movement Networking. La Jolla, Calif.: Center for U.S. Mexican Studies, University of California San Diego, 2002.

Journalist David Brooks and professor Jonathan Fox have put together a remarkable collection of 19 essays in some 440 pages that represents the distillation of almost 10 years of experience in cross-border organizing since the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). These valuable essays by journalists, academics, and activists dealing with labor, the environment, migration, human rights, and citizens coalitions describe, discuss and evaluate the most important organizing work across the U.S.-Mexico border. Whether the issue is the Zapatistas, or the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras, every essay is well informed and intelligently critical of the cross-border experience. Many of the authors have themselves been participants, activists, and leaders of these movements, while others are outstanding intellectuals committed to the fight for democracy and social justice across the border line. Everyone of these authors is an expert in his or her area and every essay provides not only a wealth of information, but

important insights into the cross-border organizing experience, sometimes accompanied by considered judgments and recommendations for future work.. Of particular interest to the readers of this electronic magazine will be “The Authentic Labor Front in the NAFTA-Era Regional Integration Process” by Manuel García Urrutia M. We cannot recommend this book too highly to those involved in Mexican, cross-border, or international issues. These essays, too many to deal with individually here, allow those of us involved in the international solidarity movement to see where we have been, what we have done poorly and done best, and where we might yet go. We give you the table of contents of Cross-Border Dialogues below:

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About the Contributors

James D. Cockcroft. Mexico's Hope: An Encounter with Politics and History. New York: Monthly Review, 1998. 435 pages; tables, notes; index.

Jim Cockcroft has written over a score of books which have educated a generation or two of Americans about Mexico, Latin America, and Latinos in the United States. He began his career brilliantly with the Intellectual Precursors of the Mexican Revolution: 1900-1913 and has periodically punctuated his work with some major revision of our understanding of Mexican history. Fifteen years ago Cockcroft published what was at the time the best historical analysis of Mexico available: Mexico: Class Formation, Capital Accumulation and the State (New York, Monthly Review, 1983). Over the years I recommended it scores of people as the most comprehensive and compelling explanation of the economic, social and political forces that shaped Mexico. But now I will have to recommend a new and better book.

Cockcroft—having written a dozen books in the meantime—has returned to write a new, and yet more comprehensive and compelling synthesis: Mexico's Hope: An Encounter with Politics and History. What began as a re-writing of the earlier book became an entirely new work, one which incorporates not only recent scholarship, but also reflects the impact of new social movements, particularly those of indigenous people and women. This is a history of Mexico informed by the struggle of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) and by the women who work in the maquiladoras on the U.S.-Mexico border. It is a history of the Mexican people in all of their diversity.

At the heart of Mexico's Hope is Cockcroft's view that capital accumulation, class struggle, revolution and reaction have driven Mexico's history as he traces it through the conquest, the colonial period, the Bourbon reforms, the Independence struggle, the Reform, the Porfirian dictatorship, the Revolution, and now through the era of neo-liberalism. This is fundamentally a political-economic history, a Marxist history, which sees capitalism and its combined and uneven development as the driving force of Mexico's 500 years of history. In Cockcroft's history ordinary men and women engaged in the daily struggle for survival not only shape their own lives but also shape Mexico and its history. But they do so not simply as they wish, but within the context of Mexico's particular development, in many ways a distorted development, the legacy of Spain's relative backwardness, a series of unfinished revolutions, and a failed great leap forward into the neo-liberal future.

But what strikes me as particularly original about Mexico's Hope is Cockcroft's integration of an historical materialist analysis (which he had done so well in his earlier book) with feminist and indigenist perspectives, creating a new synthetic understanding of Mexican history. In Mexico's Hope women and Indians have become integral to the texture of life, to the history of the country, to questions of power and politics as they so seldom appear in other histories. While maintaining his convincing Marxist analysis of

Mexico's economic development, Cockcroft has also written a multicultural and gendered history of Mexico which responds to the contemporary problematic.

Yet, above all, this book is a good read. The political- economic, indigenous and women's viewpoints are not just juxtaposed, they are analytically integrated in a vigorous prose. Clearly and forcefully written, accompanied by 17 tables, and with extensive notes, Cockcroft's Mexico's Hope represents the most sophisticated history of Mexico available to the general reader. Mexico's Hope will no doubt become a standard in Latin American and Mexican history courses, but labor unionists, human rights workers, social movement activists, and anyone interested in our nearest neighbor should buy and read this book. University, high school and public libraries should add this book to their collections, for it will find many readers.

Maria Lorena Cook. Organizing Dissent: Unions, the State, and the Democratic Teachers' Movement in Mexico. University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996. Photographs, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. 359 pages.

The teachers' movement, it could be argued, has been the single most important labor movement in Mexico in the last twenty years. The movement in the teachers union (el SNTE), Mexico's largest labor union, began in the mid-1970s and came to involve tens of thousands of teachers in marches, demonstrations, sit-ins (plantones) strikes, and myriad other forms of confrontation with their employer, the Secretary of Public Education (SEP). These were usually struggles for higher wages and better benefits, but above all for union democracy.

Over a period of fifteen years rank and file teachers in the state of Chiapas and Oaxaca, and to a lesser degree in other states, as well in Mexico City, succeeded not only in creating a mass movement, but more remarkably in an authoritarian regime such as Mexico's, in creating an on-going national rank-and-file organization, the National Coordinating Committee (la CNTE) of the teachers union. La CNTE succeeded in winning control of the Chiapas and Oaxaca state organizations, and later played a key role in bringing down the dictatorial regime of Carlos Jonguitud Barrios, head of Vanguardia Revolucionaria, the political machine that controlled the union.

Maria Lorena Cook, assistant professor at the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University, asked, "How was this possible?" And in response to that question has written an excellent account of this important rank and file labor movement. Most studies of social movements or of labor reform movements ignore or neglect the importance of the movement's own organizational structures, procedures and values, but Cook puts those issues at the very center of her study. What makes this book important is its emphasis on the democratic self-organization of the teachers movement as essential not only to its survival, but also to the achievement of its goals of democratizing the union, and--at least for some of its members-- the larger goal of democratizing Mexican society.

After the excellent introduction come two chapters which some lay readers may find tedious. The first two chapters show the origins of this book in her dissertation, and review half a dozen theories of social movements, particularly in authoritarian societies. The point of those chapters seems to be the truism that workers take advantage of differences between the government, the employer, and the union bureaucracy to advance their cause.

However, Cook goes on to tell in a quite readable and interesting style the important history of this movement, beginning with the struggle of indigenous bi-lingual teachers in the early 1970s, through the organization of la CNTE in 1979, to the great teacher mobilizations of the early 1980s, and finally the overthrow of Jonguitud Barrios and Vanguardia in 1989. (The history is told in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 7.)

The heart of this book, however, is Chapter 6, "Sustaining the Movement: Democracy as a Survival Strategy," in which Cook argues that democracy became central to the teachers movement. Cook makes a valuable contribution by specifying the democratic structures, procedures and values that this movement created.

La CNTE itself was a "coordinadora" a "loose network of regional dissident movements in state and federal locals of the SNTE." (145) La CNTE consciously decided not to attempt to form a rival independent union--a strategy adopted by some other union reform movements in this period--rather la CNTE defined itself as an opposition current within the official union, fighting for the right to elect its own local leaders. La CNTE's strategy was usually moderate and legalistic, but based on constant mobilization of the membership to pressure the employer and the state. The movement's central demand became the members' right to control their own local unions.

How did it happen that la CNTE adopted profoundly democratic procedures and values? First, the teachers knew what they were against: the dictatorship of Jonguitud Barrios and his political machine Vanguardia. They were opposed to the dictator and that made them democrats at least in theory. Second, since Jonguitud Barrios and Vanguardia represented the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) inside the union, the teachers decided they wanted la CNTE to be independent of political parties. Political organizations, mostly Maoists, Trotskyist, and Communists (usually acting under the cover of some caucus name) were permitted to operate within the CNTE, but those groups had only one vote, compared with five for each of the "struggle committees" made up of rank and file members. (147) Thus la CNTE took advantage of the political groups' analyses and strategies, without necessarily being controlled by them. "Most of the time the existence of political factions within the movement had a positive impact," says Cook. (250) Perhaps because the PRI and Vanguardia were centralized organizations, la CNTE adopted the form of a decentralized coalition.

Since this was a movement which constantly mobilized the teachers, the basic organizational form of la CNTE was the local "struggle committee" or regional "central councils of struggle," extra-legal forms of organization not recognized by the union statutes. There might also be "municipal struggle committees" and strike committees, and

"brigades," teams of teachers who carried information and support to other areas. La CNTE's members demanded that they be consulted and have a vote on decisions, and they felt that leaders should not be fully trusted.

By the mid-1980s both the Chiapas and Oaxaca rank and file movements succeeded in winning control of the state conventions and the executive committees. How did they then attempt to democratize the union? First of all, la CNTE did not disband as a rank and file organization, feeling that the struggle committees and councils would continue to play an important role, even though the reformers now had control of the official structure. They decided to have two structures, one legal and official, the other legal and unofficial. In the event they lost control of the state-wide local, they would still have their parallel organization.

Second, they made changes in the official structure as well. Most important, the state-wide assembly became the ruling body, rather than the smaller state executive committee. The state-wide assembly schedule was changed so that it met once a month or more often if necessary, and the assembly was expanded to include not only the official representatives, but also rank and filers from the coordinadora. Individual offices were replaced with collective commissions, to spread the knowledge and the responsibility. Also rank and filers were incorporated into these collective commissions along side elected officials, to keep everybody honest.

The membership demanded the right to make decisions. In the state assembly itself, delegates were required to take the debate back to their local areas before voting and adopting a decision. This process of "consulta" or consulting with the rank and file was essential to la CNTE's vision of democracy. Delegates to state assemblies often had to produce an "aval," a document proving that they had actually consulted with their members and were representing their position. "It was this daily practice of discussion and decision making that was at the root of the new political consciousness movement leaders wanted to instill in union members." (228)

In addition to looking at union organization and procedure, Cook also looked at the role of women and ethnic minorities in this process of building a democratic movement. Though indigenous bilingual teachers had been among the earliest activists in the contemporary teachers union movement, the Indians seldom became the leaders of la CNTE. "Teachers from the Mixe, Mixteco, and Triqui regions of the Sierra Juarez became the foot soldiers, but never the officers of the emerging movement," writes Cook. (233) In part this came from the condescension of other Indians: "In spite of the indigenous ethnic background of most teachers in the state, urbanized and more highly educated Zapotecs, Mixtecos and mestizos in the teachers' movement tended to treat members of the indigenous teachers' coalition with a high degree of paternalism." (234) Nevertheless, Cook argues that some of the democratic qualities of the Chiapas and Oaxaca movements may have come from indigenous traditions of democratic self-government.

Similarly, while women make up a majority of teachers, or a very large minority in some states and more rural areas, few women were found among the rank and file leaders, at least initially, this despite the fact that women played a key role in mobilizations. "In spite of this large presence of women in the union, the representation of women in leadership positions at both local and national levels has been highly disproportional in favor of men," Cook found. (235). However, Cook also found that women's participation in leadership grew, apparently as a result of the movement's generally democratic practices.

Cook argues that despite such weaknesses, the movement created a democratic collective identity which united men and women, primary and secondary school teachers, bilingual indigenous and urban teachers. Moreover, the teachers developed a sense of identity with the parents, students, the community, and other workers. Cook argues that not only was their a movement identity, but also a "greater class consciousness." (243)

While this was an impressive movement, it was not without its faults and weaknesses. One weakness, Cook explains, was its neglect of educational issues such as pedagogy and curriculum. Mostly concerned with wages, benefits, and union democracy, the teachers spent little time on their professional concerns. Also, while teachers and parents might appear to be natural allies, sometimes the teachers' job actions, strikes, demonstrations and meetings meant that in certain periods they spent little time teaching, leading to friction with parents.

In 1989 la CNTE played a key role in organizing huge teacher demonstrations in Mexico City which brought down Jonguitud Barrios. But, Cook points out, la CNTE failed to provide leadership at that crucial moment. Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari succeeded in installing as the new union leader Elba Esther Gordillo, a member of Jonguitud's Vanguardia, and a person whom some believed to be responsible for the assassination of a la CNTE activist. Gordillo then successfully divided la CNTE's leadership, winning some of them to join her new executive committee, while isolating others. La CNTE split into several rival currents, while the rank and file demobilized.

Ironically by 1990 the union had become more democratic and more independent of the PRI, but the union also became closer to president Salinas, and became part of the model union federation he was sponsoring which advocated higher productivity and flexibility. Salinas, it could be argued, had successfully used la CNTE to help unseat Jonguitud--an old dinosaur who would have resisted Salinas's "modernization" of labor union contracts and attitudes--and replaced him with Gordillo who was a more pliant union official. (She is now a leader of the Foro group of unions and at this moment, as head of FNOP, playing a key role for the PRI in the up-coming elections.)

Cook's book leaves us with a number of questions. First, if these groups succeeded in building such strong democratic organizations, why in the end did the teachers fail to control their leaders, many of whom made deals with Gordillo and the PRI?

Second, why did leaders formed by such a movement make such deals? What was the role of the Maoists, Trotskyists, Communists, and of the National Democratic Front (FND) which became the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) in the deals with Gordillo? What was the relationship between the democratic social movement and the political reform movement and various self-conceived revolutionary movements? Perhaps the greatest merit of Cook's book is that it leads us to want to know more and understand better.

This book takes a place in studies of the teachers union alongside Susan Street's Maestros en movimiento: Transformaciones en la burocracia estatal 1978-1982 (Mexico: CIESAS, 1992) and in general Mexican labor studies is in a class with Kevin J. Middlebrook's important The Paradox of Revolution: Labor, the State and Authoritarianism in Mexico (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1995). Anyone interested in Mexican labor today should get and read this book.

Dale Hathaway. Allies Across the Border: Mexico's "Authentic Labor Front" and Global Solidarity (Cambridge, Mass.: South end Press, 2000. Notes, index, graph. 267 pages.

Dale Hathaway, a community activist and professor of political science at Butler University in Indianapolis, has written a readable, useful account of Mexico's most politically important independent labor union federation the Authentic Labor Front or FAT. Hathaway sets his history of the FAT in the context of the new movement's fight against corporate globalization, a movement in which the FAT has played an enormously important role. Based on interviews with FAT leaders and activists, original documents, and a wide-array of secondary sources, this is both a good read and a reliable historical account.

The book opens with the Battle of Seattle in November 1999 and closes with a discussion of the importance of international solidarity in the era of globalization. Using that as the framework, Hathaway not only tells the story of the union, but also places it in the context of the Mexican labor and political system, of economic globalization, and of the new movements for international labor solidarity. In doing so, he has written a book that is essential reading for Canadian and U.S. labor union activists, and for all of those interested in the Mexican labor union movement.

The FAT was founded in October of 1960 as a Christian labor union, inspired by Roman Catholic social teachings. The union established itself in Leon, Guanajuato, then Mexico's shoe manufacturing center and soon spread to the garment shops in Irapuato. From there the union spread to Chihuahua in Northern Mexico, the home of several of its current leaders.

The early FAT leaders such as Nicolas Medina and Antonio Velazquez found that they had to fight not only the employers but also the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM) and the Mexican labor authorities, all of whom colluded to defeat the new independent labor union.

During the late 1960s the combination of Liberation Theology, the student movement of 1968, and the working class upsurge known in Mexico as the "worker insurgence" transformed the FAT into a secular, militant labor union. In the 1970s the FAT fought for contracts in auto-parts plants such as Spicer, but also developed a radical syndicalist ideology based on the notions of workers' democracy and self-management (or autogestion as it is sometimes called).

During the economic crises of the 1980s, the FAT like other unions came under pressure to enter into productivity partnerships with employers like Sealed Power. While the FAT attempted to bargain from as democratic and strong a position as possible, still the union's experience with such programs was mixed at best.

In the 1990s, the FAT became an important leader of forces fighting to develop an independent labor union movement and ties of international labor solidarity with unions in Canada and the United States. The FAT participated in the union forums of the early 1990s, and joined the independent labor federation, the National Union of Workers (UNT) where it played a leading role as a voice for workers' democracy.

In addition to organizing labor unions, the FAT also organized peasants and farmers in its campesino sector, organized cooperative ventures in the cooperative sector, and brought together low-income community people in its colonos, or neighborhood sector. In addition the FAT has been a leader in organizing and empowering women to take leading role in their communities, their workplaces and in their unions. Finally, the FAT has been pillar of the Mexican Network on Free Trade (RMALC), an alliance of labor and environmental groups that fought against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

When social struggles by Mayan peasants in Chiapas and bankrupt farmers in Zacatecas and Jalisco erupted in the 1990s, the FAT worked with both the Zapatistas and el Barzon (which grew to be a large, national organizational or debtors) in their movements for social justice for the rural producers. But more than any other Mexican labor organization, the FAT has sought out alliances with Canadian and Mexican workers. In particular, it created a strategic organizing alliance with the United Electrical Workers (UE) to support organizing efforts both in Mexico and the United States. The mutual and reciprocal relations between those two unions have become a model for labor unionists in North America and around the world.

Hathaway's book will be must reading for U.S. and Canadian unionists, and for all of those working for international solidarity as an alternative to corporate political domination and exploitation. Clearly and directly written, this book is readily accessible for all audiences. Professors of political science, economics, labor studies, and Latin American studies will want to use this book in classes with both undergraduate and graduate students.

Donald C. Hodges. Mexican Anarchism After the Revolution. Austin:

University of Texas Press, 1995. Notes, index 251 pages.

Donald C. Hodges is the author of several books on the politics of Mexico and Nicaragua, founding editor of *Social Theory and Practice* and professor of philosophy and political science at Florida State University. Many readers will have read several years ago Hodges' and Ross Gandy's interesting book Mexico 1910-1982: Reform or Revolution?

Mexican Anarchism After the Revolution claims to be a history of anarchism in contemporary Mexico. But in reality this book is really two things. The first half of the book is a biography of Ruben Jaramillo and a political history of his radical movement in Morelos from the 1930s to the 1960s. The second half of Hodges's book is a fundamentally confused and confusing essay on Mexican political theory and leftist organizations. Let me take up these two parts of the book in that order.

What is new, interesting and valuable in this book is Hodges's account of Ruben Jaramillo's peasant movement in the state of Morelos. Using interviews with participants and previously unpublished documents, Hodges has written an important chapter in Mexican social history and political movements.

The story is a fascinating one which goes back to the beginning of the 20th century. William O. Jenkins, an American, became the owner of the gigantic Civil and Industrial Company of Atencingo, Puebla, not far from the old Zapatista territory in Morelos. Jenkins who also managed this sugar plantation was a despot who sometimes used pistoleros or gun thugs to control the peasants and sugar mill workers.

Jenkins's employees, Celestino Espinosa Flores, his wife Dolores Campos de Espinosa (Dona Lola), and their son Rafael Espinosa Campos organized the independent, underground Sindicato Karl Marx, to fight Jenkins and the company. When Celestino died and Rafael was murdered by Jenkins's thugs, Dona Lola continued to lead the labor union. Eventually Dona Lola and the union successfully pressured the Mexican government which eventually wrested 115,000 hectares of land from Jenkins in 1934, and his last 8,000 hectares in 1938. Jenkins held on to the sugar mill, and in 1945 his gunmen killed Dona Lola.

The organizers and activists in the Karl Marx union included followers of the anarchist Ricardo Flores Magon and members of the Mexican Communist Party. One young man who became active in the movement was Ruben Jaramillo, who would later gain national attention as the leader of a broad movement for land reform in Morelos. Jaramillo, originally influenced by Flores Magon, became at various times a Communist, a mason, and a Methodist preacher, but throughout remained a leader of the peasant land reform movements of Puebla and Morelos.

In 1943 Jaramillo recruited peasants, including former Zapatistas, to a radical land reform movement, and published the "Plan de Cerro Prieto," to explain the rebellion. After a failed attempt at armed uprising, Jaramillo organized the Agrarian Labor

Party of Morelos in October 1945 and ran as its candidate for governor, and lost. In 1952 Jaramillo and his Agrarian Labor Party joined the Federation of Peoples Parties that supported Gen. Miguel Henriquez Guzman in his campaign for president against the official candidate of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). Two years later in March of 1954, Jaramillo led an uprising, attacking the village of Ticuman. The movement was suppressed, and Jaramillo was jailed, but later released under an amnesty granted by President designate Lopez Mateos in 1958.

Still Jaramillo did not give up his organizing activities. In February of 1960, Jaramillo organized a series of peasant land seizures which came into conflict with the interests of politically connected businessmen. Not only had Jaramillo threatened the economic interests of leaders of the PRI and big business, but he had also expressed sympathy for Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution, and threatened to embarrass the Mexican government by asking for funds from John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress. The state was no longer prepared to put up with him. In 1962 Jaramillo, his wife and their three children were kidnapped and then murdered at the ancient city of Xochicalo by Mexican Army officer Jose Martinez, who was supported by head of the state judicial police Heriberto Espinosa.

In this book, Hodges explores the political biographies of Jaramillo and his associates, and publishes the previously unknown Plan of Cerro Prieto. The story is a good one, but unfortunately Hodges's explanation and interpretation of events is not. Hodges, who sees Ruben Jaramillo as an anarchist, attempts to make Jaramillo the bridge between the anarchism of Ricardo Flores Magon and the Mexican new left of the 1960s and 70s which he also sees as anarchist. But the problem is that the facts of Jaramillo's biography simply will not bear the weight that Hodges wants to put on them. Jaramillo, an inspiring radical, appears to have no consistent ideology as his wanderings between the masons, Methodism, Mexican nationalism and Communism clearly indicate. And he was certainly not an anarchist as his membership in several political parties, participation in elections campaigns, and calls for the nationalization of property would indicate.

The problem is that, as we see in the second half of this book, a panorama of Mexican political theory and practice, Hodges uses the word "anarchism" to mean any radical political theory or leftist organization which appeals to him. For Hodges, "anarchism" means simply, "What I like" or "What I support." And Hodges likes all sorts of political theories and social movements which he then defines as anarchist. These include the genuine anarchism of Ricardo Flores Magon, the radical peasant communalism of Emiliano Zapata, the peasant rebellions of Genaro Vazquez and Lucio Cabanas in the 1960s and 70s, the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the Stalinist Communist Party's so-called "third period" from 1929 to 1935, Mao Tse-Tung's Communism of the Long March of the 1930s and the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s, Trotskyism, the Mexican terrorists of the September 23 Communist League, and finally, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN). For Hodges, all of these different movements become expressions, albeit not always complete expressions, of what he calls anarchism. So the reader will not think I am exaggerating, led me give a few examples of Hodges's interpretations:

*Hodges writes that the National Liberation Movement led by former Mexican president Lazaro Cardenas represented "the legacy of Ricardo Flores Magon." (p. 81)

*"...the Cuban Revolution contributed to reviving vestiges of Magonism latent in the [Mexican Communist] Party." (p. 86)

*Lucio Cabanas's Revolutionary National Civic Association "...qualifies as 'anarcho-Castroite' [sic] because of its reliance on direct action and struggle for a new social order." (p. 103)

*"In adopting Guevarism as their credo, [Lucio] Cabanas and [Genaro] Vazquez unknowingly committed themselves to a philosophy of guerrilla warfare with an anarchist dimension." (p. 105)

*"Most of Mexico's leaders in urban guerrilla warfare eventually joined the umbrella organization, the September 23 Communist League. They also subscribed to its unique mix of anarchist and communist themes." (p. 130)

*"Maoism stand out among the heterodox marxisms as having the greatest affinity for anarchism." (p. 139)

*"The anarchist character of the popular defense committees [such as the Chihuahua Popular Defense Committee] should be evident." (p. 146)

*"Like the guerrillas in neighboring Guatemala, the EZLN embraced a Maoist strategy with a strong dose of anarchism." (p.193).

In a chapter on anarchist political theory, Hodges suggests that Spanish anarchist Abraham Guillen, Trotskyists Jose Revueltas, Manuel Aguilar Mora, and Adolfo Gilly, the Catholic theologian and philosopher Jose Porfirio Miranda, the communist philosopher Enrique Gonzalez Rojo, the Viennese priest and educator Ivan Illich, and the socialist publisher Manuel Lopez Gallo all somehow contributed to the Mexican anarchist current. Hodges ends his book with a postscript on the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) and the Chiapas Rebellion of 1994 in which the Subcomandante Marcos and the EZLN, which Hodges likes, are also defined as anarchist.

This blurring of all intellectual and political distinctions is both bad history and bad political theory. Hodges wants to argue that throughout Mexican history there has been a significant anarchist undercurrent which reappears in all moments of crisis to provide inspiration to revolutionary movements. The problem is that this is simply not true. If anarchism means anything, it means a rejection of political parties and the state. Anarchism was a revolutionary theory of Proudhon and Bakunin, of Kropotkin and Malatesta which stood for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, religion and the state.

But anarchists rejected the organization of political parties as the means to do so. Strongest in Eastern and Southern Europe, and particularly in Italy and Spain, anarchism became an important ideological current in Latin America, including Mexico.

In Mexico anarchism was introduced in the mid-19th century, and perhaps became the dominant radical current by the early 20th century. Ricardo Flores Magon, his Mexican Liberal Party and his newspaper Regeneracion evolved from liberalism to anarchism, and played an important role in the opening phase of the Mexican Revolution. But during the course of the Mexican Revolution the nationalist forces succeeded in absorbing and neutralizing both the Mexican Liberal Party and the anarcho-syndicalists of the House of the World Worker in Mexico. Anarchism then virtually ceased to exist as a political current, Hodges claims notwithstanding. The partial survival of anarchist ideas in the movements in Morelos in the 1930s or among a few Communist Party members even later is interesting, but does not have the significance Hodges wants to attribute to it.

Mexican anarchism was more or less eliminated from the Mexican political spectrum during the 1930s by the rise of nationalism and Stalinist Communism, never to reappear as a significant force. Certainly other Mexican political currents such as Stalinist Communism, Maoism, and Trotskyism were all in different ways utterly antithetical to any genuine anarchist theory or political movement. All advocated building political parties, struggling for state power, and attempting to build some new kind of state. Nearly all believed in creating a parliamentary political party and participating in elections. None of this could be farther from anarchism.

Most disturbing to me, however, are the ethical and political issues raised in the book. Several times Hodges expresses his admiration for Mexican revolutionary groups which engaged in kidnappings and assassinations. At times Hodges seems to delight in this use of such violence which he calls "direct action." Hodges seems to miss the point that these groups some of which were inspired by Che Guevara's foco theory, turned to kidnapping and violence as a substitute for the organizing of peasants or workers, as an alternative to building social movements for democracy or social justice. Such "direct action" violence was the antithesis of a genuine mass revolutionary movement such as had occurred, say, during the Paris Commune or the Russian Revolution.

In this book Hodges explains that he himself re-joined the Communist Party in 1968, apparently thinking it important to locate himself in the current of anarchists working within the Communist Party. (p.189) In his own mind, Hodges justified his membership in the Communist Party in terms of his support for the Cuban Revolution, and his anarchist principles. But Hodges joined the Communist Party to support Cuba just at the moment that Cuba supported the Soviet Union in the violent suppression of the Czechoslovakian reform movement. Communism was from the 1930s to the 1960s a world movement which included the murderous dictatorships of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China and Vietnam. One has to wonder, and to ask Donald Hodges, what kind of anarchism is this?

Edward C. Lorenzo. *Defining Global Justice: The History of U.S. International Labor Standards Policy*. Notre Dame, Indiana, 2001. Pp. x, 318. Index.

Edward C. Lorenz's Defining Global Justice gives us the first attempt at a broad overview of the history of the role of the United States in the International Labor Organization. Based on an impressive command of a wide variety of sources, this well organized and clearly written account explains how the social gospel movement, progressive era reformers, academics and attorneys, feminists and consumers, and labor unions attempted to shape an international organization that could establish standards to protect workers around the world.

Lorenz explains how organizations such as the American Association for Labor Legislation and the National Consumer's League worked to influence ILO policy. His particular strength lies in showing the role of policy makers, political leaders and ILO officials. One such figure is Republican Party Progressive and former New Hampshire governor John Winant, who would eventually serve as ILO director. Lorenz shows how Winant's empirical approach provided leadership to the ILO between the 1930s and 1950s.

Yet, while he starts with a story about exploitation in the Mexican maquiladoras, and writes from a position of sympathy with workers, Lorenz's approach to analyzing the history of the U.S. and ILO—and most important what to make of that history—prove inadequate. Lorenz cannot break with the Cold War framework that focuses on the role of the U.S. and the struggle against Communism. He writes about the Soviet's state-controlled labor unions and lack of workers' rights, but fails to mention the role of the AFL-CIO in backing the State Department and the CIA in thwarting radical nationalist and leftist labor movements in developing countries. Not surprisingly then, Lorenz praises George Meany as a genuine populist leader of the labor movement who advanced humanist ideals, rather than seeing him as partner of the U.S. State Department and American corporations.

Lorenz believes that the progressive coalitions of earlier eras, and Meany's struggle with the ILO in the 1970s, prove that dedicated populists working within the framework of American political pluralism, and committed to the ILO's tripartite structure, can force governments and corporations to take workers' rights into account. The message would seem to be that coalitions of labor bureaucrats, reform-minded capitalists, and political liberals could make workers' rights a reality today. Yet, he himself recognizes that the ILO, while establishing standards as lofty ideals, has never been able to meaningfully enforce them.

What might make for meaningful change for workers on a world scale? In passing Lorenz alludes to the theory that the ILO owes its very existence to the strength of European socialism and the Russian Revolution. Such a theory, which would focus our attention on class struggle, offers another more fruitful way of understanding and fighting for workers' rights. Toward the end of Defining Global Justice, Lorenz mentions the Battle of Seattle in 1999 where radical youth, environmentalists, and labor unions forced

the shutdown of the World Trade Organization meeting. That kind of struggle—magnified a thousand fold—would lead to some meaningful changes in workers rights. The future lies not in political pluralism and tripartite arrangements, but in class struggle.

Kevin J. Middlebrook, The Paradox of Revolution: Labor, the State, and Authoritarianism in Mexico, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, 463pp.

Kevin Middlebrook's new Paradox of Revolution is one of the most thorough studies in either English or Spanish of the relationship between the Mexican state and the labor unions. Paradox of Revolution provides a history and analysis of Mexican labor from the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) through the inauguration of Ernest Zedillo (1994). Middlebrook, director of research at the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, of the University of California at San Diego, deals with the major Mexican government sponsored or "official" labor federations the Regional Confederation of Mexican Labor (CROM) and the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM) as well as several the major industrial unions. At the center of Middlebrook's book stand detailed studies of the railroad and auto industries and unions, with particular emphasis on the attempt to create independent unions in those sectors.

Perhaps the most interesting and important chapter in Middlebrook's book is chapter six, "Labor Politics and Import-Substituting Industrialization: From Maintenance to Labor Insurgency," which is a fascinating study of the successes and failures of the independent and democratic currents which appeared in the Mexican labor movement from the late 1960s through the 1970s. At the center of this chapter is his analysis of the democratic movement among workers in the auto industry. Middlebrook asks, how did this movement arise and what was its impact?

Middlebrook argues that in the early 1970s the rapid growth of automobile manufacturing plants overwhelmed the Confederation of Mexican Workers's (CTM) system of representation and control, the plant delegate (delegado de planta). When plants changed from assembly to manufacture, or when the size of the workforce grew suddenly, the CTM's plant delegate system broke down, and workers began to demand new and more democratic systems of representation. The democratic movement among autoworkers became generalized throughout the auto industry in the early 1970s.

Middlebrook notes that "union democratization in the automobile industry did not necessarily improve workers economic welfare." (237) Whether or not there was improvement in wages and income depended on other factors, such as the nature of the company and plant. But often, because the new more democratic unions were "more inclined to strike" they did win higher wages.

Where rank and file groups took power, they "substantially increased opportunities for worker participation in union affairs." (237) And, "Democratically elected union officials generally proved more assertive than their predecessors in defense of members' interests, both in the resolution of individual and collective demands within

the firm and in grievance proceedings before state agencies such as the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS) and labor conciliation and arbitration boards." (239)

Middlebrook describes how "Changes in workplace labor-management relations were among the most important consequences of union democratization in the automobile industry." (240) Rank and file reformers took more control over hiring, and attempted to eliminate the use of casual and temporary labor. The democratic union movement won contracts with better job security provisions. Workers took more control over the production process. And workers improved in-plant grievance procedures. Perhaps most important, where rank and file workers democratized their local unions, they called more strike and created more alliances with other workers and social movements. (240-54)

Yet, union democratization did not necessarily end corrupt and criminal practices in the unions such as theft of union funds or job selling. And newly elected democratic union leaders sometimes used the "exclusion clause"--a clause used to expel "disloyal" members from the union and requiring management to fire them from the workplace--against critics or opponents of the new leadership. (240) Anyone interested in the fight for union democracy and workers' power in the plant and in society will find Middlebrook's account of the democratic movements in the auto industry in the 1970s to be of great interest.

The rank and file movements of the 1970s were nearly all eventually defeated by the employers and the state, and those that remained nearly disappeared in the wake of the industrial reorganization and political changes of the 1980s and 1990s.

Middlebrook also analyzes that industrial reorganization of the 1980s and 1990s under Mexican presidents Miguel de la Madrid and Carlos Salinas de Gortari, showing the ways in which the state-sponsored labor unions failed to find ways to defend the interests of the working class.

In looking to the future of Mexican labor, Middlebrook is rather pessimistic. He sees a major trend of the decline of manufacturing in central Mexico, and the movement of industry to north-central and northern Mexico, areas dominated by anti-union employers--a trend which does not bode well for workers. At the same time, the CTM and other union federations have proven incapable in the 1990s of coming up with a coherent program to defend workers' interests. The official unions and even the independent unions have not been successful in building alliances with other social movements, or in creating a new political party to represent their interests. Middlebrook sees "the main problem is the concentration of political power in the state administrative apparatus." (326) Proposed labor law reform "is likely to be strongly shaped by the growing influence of business interests in Mexican politics." (327) A rather bleak picture.

But as Middlebrook argues in conclusion, "The prospects for preserving organized labor's role in the workplace and in national policy making and for promoting democratic regime change in Mexico would both be enhanced if the removal of major

state controls on labor participation occurred in conjunction with the democratization of the labor movement." (328) The fight for union democracy is central.

Throughout this book Middlebrook relies not only of union records and contemporary newspaper accounts, and a wide range of secondary sources, but also makes use of government records, such as those of the labor boards. Middlebrook's new book will become required reading for specialists and a standard reference for experts in the field for years to come. Because of its academic style, however, the book is not likely to readily accessible to the lay reader or the union activist.

While a major contribution to our knowledge of the Mexican labor movement, Paradox of Revolution has a number of problems, and fails to deliver on several of its promises. First, Middlebrook has organized his book around a theory he calls "post-revolutionary authoritarian rule." He writes on the opening page of his book: "The paradox of social revolution is that popular mobilization and socioeconomic transformation most commonly eventuate in a new form of authoritarian rule." (1) Middlebrook's theory of "post-revolutionary authoritarian rule" is not as convincing to me as several other theories of Mexican authoritarianism and adds little to his often interesting account of the labor movement. The theory is a superfluous scaffolding that would have been better dropped. Perhaps more important politically, Middlebrook's theory strikes me as a rehash of the "iron law of oligarchy" found in Robert Michels Political Parties written at the opening of this century. All movements for social change culminate in new dictatorships--so why fight for social change? There is a conservative thrust to such an outlook.

To show the usefulness of his "post-revolutionary authoritarian rule" theory, Middlebrook promises that Paradox of Revolution will be a comparative study, comparing Mexico's state-labor experience to other countries, most important Nicaragua and the Soviet Union. But there is not really much comparison. Middlebrook, who devotes such detailed attention and conscientious study to Mexican unions, gives a rather swift and shallow overview of developments in Nicaragua and the Soviet Union, which is completely unsatisfying. The comparative parts of this book would have been better omitted.

Second, Middlebrook says he is trying in this book to overcome the problems of "state-centered and society-centered" analyses of Mexican labor. By this he means explanations which focus on state control of the unions, and other explanations which focus on union or worker opposition. This is an important debate about the degree to which governments and employers control people, and the degree to which people are capable of resistance, that is the degree to which they are really autonomous. Middlebrook argues, quite correctly, for a dynamic and dialectical resolution to the problem, that is that the state tries to control and the unions and workers do resist, and the interaction between the two makes history.

But if you are going to show that people resist state and employer control, then you have to show us some people, and unfortunately Middlebrook has written an

institutional history in which real human beings seldom appear. In the entire book there is not one portrait of one union activist or leader, hardly one word from a worker about her experience, not one description of an important strike. Middlebrook might have profited from the use of historical documents and oral history to give life to his account.

Finally, and this is the most important point, Middlebrook revises the existing theory of Mexican labor unions, rejecting the theory that Mexican unions are "corporatist," that is incorporated into the one party-state. In a long note (note 82 found on page 341), Middlebrook explains that he rejects the use of the word "corporatist" because he feels it has lost its explanatory power and because the corporate explanation tends to emphasize the role of the state. While Middlebrook has relegated this to a footnote, this is no small matter, but rather represents an important break with many other students of the Mexican labor movement.

In the 1960s and 70s, a group of young Mexican scholars developed a "corporatist" analysis of the relations between the Mexican state and the unions. (Among the best known: Arnaldo Cordova and Juan Felipe Leal.) They chose the word "corporatist" which comes from the lexicon of Mussolini's fascism, to emphasize the state's control over workers' unions and peasants' organizations. In the Mexican corporatist system, the state-party (the PRI) not only took control of the unions through legal procedures, but the PRI also forced the unions to become part of the ruling party, and involved itself intimately in the life of the unions. The very use of the word corporatist in Mexico implied two things: first, that Mexico's state control of unions was authoritarian or totalitarian, and second, that therefore the corporatist system should be overthrow. Democracy could not be achieved without the destruction of the corporatist party-state-union system. The very use of the word corporatist with its fascist connotations suggested a revolutionary attitude toward the Mexican one-party state dictatorship.

The problem is that while Middlebrook rejects the corporatist argument, Middlebrook has no theoretical substitute for it, but instead emphasizes what he calls "the labor movement's dependence on a broad range of state-provided legal, financial, and political subsidies." (p. 30). That is, the state provided a legal structure which recognized the official unions, the state gave them economic aid and provided jobs in the establishment. While all of that is true, as a theory it is less complex, less compelling, and less subtle than the best of the corporate theorists of labor. Corporate explanations of the unions, at least the most sophisticated ones, showed the ways in which the state controlled unions through the use of force, through cooptation, through political and union structures, through common ideology, through economic programs, and through the development of overlapping personnel and activities. (Alberto Aziz Nassif, El Estado Mexicano y la CTM (Mexico: Ediciones de la Casa Chata, 1989, #32).

Kevin Middlebrook seeks to redress the balance state-centered analyses, and wants to show that unions and workers had a certain latitude for action within the authoritarian system. While that desire to show the complexity of the system and the relative autonomy of unions and workers may be a needed corrective, ultimately I think

one has to conclude the system remains fundamentally "corporatist." While workers in Mexico have struggled heroically--teachers, auto and rubber workers, steel workers, brewery workers and many others--the state and its official unions have kept the upper hand. If anything the official unions have become more rigid, more authoritarian, more reactionary, and less genuinely unions. (There are of course exceptional cases of opposition currents and democratic movements.) Though we may wish for another conclusion, in all really important matters--union recognition, strikes, wage policy, broader economic policy, and political action--in the last analysis, the state-party still controls the official unions.

The Congress of Labor (CT) and the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM) controlled by the PRI remain fundamentally phony-unions, more transmission belts for government policy than expressions of workers' needs and desires. A genuine democratic rank and file movement from below would not only overthrow the existing union bureaucracy, but in effect destroy those government structures and create genuine labor unions and federations in their place. Such democratic and independent unions would reach out to other social movements and would tend to create a political force and probably a political party. If workers and peasants succeeded in creating genuinely democratic and independent unions and broad alliances, they would threaten the very existence of the Institutional Revolutionary Party. The corporate analysis implies that the state's corporate control of the labor unions deserves to be overthrown by a democratic movement from below, and that posture, attitude and analysis remain fundamentally correct.

In any case, Middlebrook's Paradox of Revolution is an impressive work of scholarship and analysis and will likely be a standard work in the field for years to come.

Devon G. Peña, The Terror of the Machine: Technology, Work, Gender and Ecology on the U.S. Mexico Border (Austin: University of Texas, 1997). Notes. Bibliography. Map. Tables. 460 pages. Hardback \$45, Paper \$19.95.

Devon G. Pena's The Terror of the Machine: Technology, Work, Gender and Ecology on the U.S. Mexico Border could be called the anarchosyndicalist, eco-feminist study of the maquiladora workers and their communities. Sometimes fascinating and often irritating, this book ultimately disappoints the reader because it touches on a dozen important issues and never satisfies our curiosity about any of them. In particular while advocating democracy, autonomy and workers' control, it doesn't address key questions concerning democracy in the movements and organizations it studies. Yet in the course of this long, meandering read, one learns a good deal about the maquiladoras and the way they work.

Pena informs us that this book about the mostly female maquiladora workers of Ciudad Juarez represents thirteen years of both field and library research. Most of Pena's field research appears to have been conducted during the early 1980s, though he apparently returned to do some more interviews around 1990. In the course of reading we learn that this research resulted in a funding raising proposal, a dissertation, and finally

this book published in 1997. Throughout the book one senses big gaps between 1982, 1990 and 1997 which Pena does not fill or bridge, and which contribute to the reader's sense that there may be crucial omissions in the events.

The author tells us his thesis quite clearly in his opening pages: "Maquila workers, despite the terror of the machine, are capable of thinking for themselves, of inventing alternatives to capitalist production/destruction, of creating cooperative forms of organization that link workplace democracy with ecological sustainability....The maquila workers of Mexico's northern border are also challenging the assumptions of the dominant Western paradigm of progress and industrial development by taking a stand for an alternative to mass production and assembly-line work." (12) Pena suggests at various points that he sees the maquiladora workers' organizations as models of democracy and autonomy.

Then Pena goes on to tell three major stories intended to demonstrate and substantiate this thesis. None of these stories has been told clearly or completely so that it is left to the reader to figure them out. Let me give you the rundown.

One story deals with the shop floor struggles of the mainly women maquiladora workers and the ways in which they construct informal shop floor organizations and engage in work-to-rule campaigns and slowdowns, what Mexicans call tortuguismo or going as slow as a tortuga, a turtle. To tell this story Pena presents a detailed account of maquiladora work organization, and a fascinating picture of worker resistance. Pena tells us that the workers' shop floor organizations developed into work stoppages and wildcat strikes, reaching a high point in the early 1980s with the creation of a network of workers' councils and the organization of an independent union which led a wildcat strike at the Acapulco Fashions company. Unfortunately, Pena never discusses the workers' councils, the independent union, or the strikes, so we have no way of assessing and evaluating many of his assertions. One wonders why Pena who spent so much time on analyzing shop floor organization spends virtually no time analyzing strikes and union organizations.

In the course of his discussion of the workers' organization in the maquiladora industry, what he calls the "subaltern struggle," Pena puts forward two quite contradictory views, one inspired by a kind of eco-feminist anarchosindicalist vision, and others more characteristic of typical trade unionism or perhaps socialism in its Mexican nationalist variant. For example, compare these two statements. First, Pena writes, "Maquila workers have consistently demonstrated good sense by circumventing formal mediation and opting instead for the underground struggle, which is organized as direct attacks on technological, bureaucratic, and social forms of control. In the real of subaltern struggle, workers can dispense with the ever elusive strike permit." (107) By this logic, workers around the world would have wisely avoided organizing labor unions or labor parties, since such formal workers' organizations nearly always require some sort of permit. But, at only a few pages later, Pena writes, "With work stoppages, the terrain of struggle can expand to include the workers' communities, unions, political parties, and the state." (127).

The latter statement seems more like the reality with which I am familiar, but unfortunately Pena never addresses the important and interesting questions this process raises. Should workers organize or join unions? If so should they form independent unions or join the unions of the one-party-state? What should be the relation of unions to political parties? Should workers and unions join political parties, and if so which one? The government party or an opposition party? And which opposition, left or right? Most important for someone with Pena's apparent sympathies, how can workers establish democratic controls over their own organizations and their leaders? We know that these were very real questions for the leaders and activists of strikes in the maquiladoras in the 1980s, but Pena avoids these issues at his peril, as we learn in the second story.

The second tale concerns Guillermina Valdes and COMO. In one sense the book could be called an institutional history of COMO, the Center for the Orientation of Women Workers (COMO) of Ciudad Juarez. However, we only piece together the history and structure of COMO very incompletely and inadequately in the course of Pena's narrative. In the early 1960s Guillermina Valdes de Villalva, the charismatic leader of COMO for over twenty years, went to the University of Michigan where she studied the theories of Paolo Freire and Erich Fromm. She then returned to Mexico and in 1968 she and a group of left-wing social workers founded COMO as a women's social service center which helped women maquiladora workers. Those workers engaged in many strikes and work stoppages, and if we are to believe Pena, COMO was at the center of many of these movements.

But while it was under the leadership of Valdes for twenty years, COMO also did many other things. COMO sought and got funding from the Inter-American Foundation (IAF) established by the U.S. Congress in the 1960s, which gave COMO almost half a million dollars in 1978-1980. COMO also got funding from the Friedrich Ebert Foundation of the German Social Democratic Party which funds many labor organizations in Mexico. When Valdes experienced a religious conversion, COMO did too, and developed a close relationship to the Roman Catholic charismatic St. John the Baptist Community. Later COMO established ties with the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and got funding from the Mexican government. One has the impression that those ties to the PRI and the government were what made it difficult for COMO to take a position opposing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) as some independent Mexican unions did. Finally, after Valdes left to take an academic job at the College of the Northern Border (COLEF) and then died in a plane crash in 1991, the center's leadership was taken over by her daughter Luchi Villalva. (Much of the biography of Valdes and the story of COMO is buried in the footnotes.)

As this story unfolds, one wonders just who Valdes and her left wing social worker associates were. Were they the members of some Guevarist or Maoist group as anyone who knows Mexico would suppose? What was the organizational and political relationship between COMO and the workers' informal organizations and the more formal groups such as the independent union? How did workers feel about the ties to U.S. government philanthropy, German social democracy, Roman Catholicism and to the PRI?

Pena suggests that the ties to the PRI were not significant, but his answer did not satisfy this reader. Did the workers have democratic organizations to control Valdes or later her daughter Luchi Villalva? Could the workers be autonomous as long as they were dependent on COMO and Valdes? Pena not only does not seriously address most of these questions, but throughout the telling of the story acts as an apologist for Guillermina Valdes who was his friend and mentor.

Pena's third story has to do with SOCOSEMA, the Cooperative Society of Selectors of Materials. In 1975 a group of pepenadores or scavengers who had been living and working in the Juarez garbage dump formed the SOCOSEMA cooperative. COMO supported the SOCOSEMA cooperative, which Pena argues became a model of working class democracy. "SOCOSEMA's organizational structure is actually reminiscent of that of the worker factory councils of Antonio Gramsci's Italy," writes Pena. (228). Calling upon mutualist traditions and their experiences in the comadre networks, the 28 women involved became the real leaders of the total of 203 members of the cooperative. Pena claims that the scavengers' cooperative represented the original recyclers, and developed an "ethnoscience" of recycling aimed at sustainable, environmentally benevolent development. He writes "...their experience with recycling comes precisely from their location outside the consumer markets and the logic of capitalism." (234)

I don't doubt that the scavengers established a democratic cooperative, and that women played a leading role in it. But as he does throughout this book, Pena exaggerates with his comparisons to the Italian workers' council movement of the 1920s which involved hundreds of thousands of workers whose near revolution precipitated Mussolini's fascist backlash. Also the suggestion that garbage pickers are somehow outside the consumer market or the logic of capitalism simply ignores the reality that the scavengers are the bottom feeders of the consumer market, the end of the capitalist food chain. Pena seems to have forgotten that he told us that they had originally established the cooperative as a condition of bidding on the scavenging concession. The cooperative began as a workers' business in competition with capitalist scavengers. Pena also forgot that he mentioned that somehow the tiny coop of the poorest workers purchased a \$2.5 million recycling plant and a fleet of twenty large trucks. But he never explains where they got the money. I suspect that if the money didn't come from a bank it came from the PRI-government, but in any case it came from that world of consumerism and capitalism.

One key idea of the book is what Pena, following Valdes, calls "transference methodology," the idea that maquiladora workers could transfer their skills and working knowledge to other branches of production and to the community. Pena contends that the maquiladora workers developed not only manual skills, but also technical skills which increased production in the factory, and social skills learned in the struggle against management; both the technical and social skill could be transferred to other productive and social areas. Pena suggests that after the decline of the workers strikes of the early 1980s, for example, some of the workers' skills were put to use in the development of the scavengers' cooperative. This is an interesting idea, but Pena did not convince me that it actually happened on any important scale.

Pena's original study of the maquiladora workers in Juarez in the early 1980s makes up most of the book. The author has appended a chapter on Mexico under de la Madrid and Carlos Salinas and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). He discusses all the contemporary organizations engaged in the struggle against NAFTA, neo-liberalism, and the transnational corporations (COMO does not figure among them) providing a useful if somewhat superficial overview. The final chapters of the book also discuss environmental matters and models of sustainable development.

What really bothers me about this book is that Pena doesn't want to ask the hard questions about the relationship between the workers' movement in the plants, the cooperatives, the COMO organization, and Guillermina Valdes. As an advocate of a kind of workers' control model myself, I feel that Pena has an obligation to ask how workers can control or might control their own organizations. His failure to do so makes this book ultimately frustrating and disappointing.

Vincent C. Peloso. Work, Protest, and Identity in Twentieth-Century Latin America. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Books, 2003. Pp. xx, 348. Bibliography. Notes. \$65 cloth; \$23.95 paper.

Vincent C. Peloso has put together an excellent collection of 16 essays (including the introduction) dealing with labor and social movements in eleven Latin American countries. Written by thirteen historians and two political scientists from universities in Canada, Puerto Rico and the United States (surprisingly there are no Latin American-based scholars represented), these essays examine Latin America's labor history in the twentieth-century through the triangular prism of what has become the Holy Trinity of all contemporary studies in the humanities and social sciences: class, race, and gender. If the old labor history focused on trade unions and leftist parties, and the new labor history looks at how race and gender complicated issues of class, party and politics, then these essays represent the best tendencies toward synthesis of the best elements of old and new.

These essays or chapters from recently published books represent some of the finest scholarship in the field. Most of these essays focus on labor unions while placing them in broader social contexts. Jeffrey D. Needell's "Rebellion against Vaccination in Rio de Janeiro" and Anton Rosenthal's "General Strike in Montevideo" discuss two important events in the early twentieth-century history of Brazil and Uruguay. Needell broadens his focus to show the way in which workers, labor unions and political parties became involved in middle class and elite struggles for power, while Rosenthal narrows the focus to show how the streetcar workers' jobs put them at the center of urban social networks. Catherine LeGrand's fine essay "Colombian Bananas, Peasants and Wage Workers" show how in the mid-twentieth-century peasants could sometimes become proletarianized, but how under other conditions, workers could be come transformed into peasants. Norman Caulfield's "Labor Control in the Declining Mexican Revolution" shows how Mexican elites, the state, and the United States worked to create the corporate system dominated by the "charros," and how those charros were challenged by the railroad workers strike of 1959.

Thomas Miller Klubock's "Copper Workers and Popular Protest in Chile" argues that workers' leftist traditions and organizational networks led the movement for democracy in Pinochet's Chile. He shows how a strong labor and left movement, joining with students, the urban poor and women, was key to the democratization movement. Klubock's essay suggests that workers, unions and left political parties belong at the center of labor history. Anthony W. Pereira's "Brazilian Workers and Democracy" discusses the possibilities of the Brazilian labor unions and left parties bringing social democracy to Brazil. He suggests that Lula will not run again, that the Workers Party probably would not win, and that real social democracy doesn't have much of a chance at the moment. An interesting essay in 1995, it seems quite out of date now that Lula is president.

Some of the essays approach the working class through studies of demography, ethnicity, law or religion. Alejandro de la Fuente's essay "Immigration and Race in Cuba" and Miguel Tinker-Salas's "Races and Cultures in the Venezuelan Oil Fields" both look at the ways in which ethnic and cultural diversity complicated, but did not thwart, working class organizing, the rise of class consciousness, and political struggle in those two countries in the early twentieth century. David S. Parker's "Laws Against a 'Working' Middle Class in Peru," examines the ways in which law was used to define social class and weaken broader class solidarity in the 1920s and 1930s. Michael F. Jiménez's "Looking Ahead: Workers and Radical Christianity" really looks back at the relationship between political economy, social struggle, theology and the social practice of Catholic religious and lay activists between 1950s and 1980s.

A couple of these essays were more problematic or less successful. María del Carmen Baerga's "Women and the Right to (Needle)Work in Puerto Rico" looks at divisions between factory workers and home workers. She attempts to give voice to unheard women workers engaged in homework. Yet, though employers had paid to bring homeworkers to testify at government hearings in favor of this worst sort of exploitation, she takes the women who spoke there as authentic voices of working women. Marc Becker's essay "Race, Gender and Protest in Ecuador" reads more like hagiography than history. He praises of four Ecuador women, two from the Indian communities and privileged classes who worked together for women's and Indians' rights. All were Communist Party members, but the party and its politics during the years of the 1930s and 1940s (a period of zig-zagging party lines) remains unexamined. Rachel May's "The Human Details and Argentine Militancy" is a short, engaging personal essay that muses about the relationship between repression, leftist ideology, and everyday human life and its little details. The book concludes with a review essay by Kenneth M. Roberts about several books on Latin American labor published in 1996.

Leslie Salzinger, *Genders In Production: Making Workers In Mexico's Global Factories* (berkeley: University Of California Press, 2003). Notes, Bibliography, Index. 217 Pages.

Leslie Salzinger's book *Genders in Production*, contains informative chapters, intelligent observations, and significant insights, but may still be disappointing to those who concern themselves with workers' rights, labor unions, and more generally with human rights on the Mexican border. Salzinger distances herself from the reformers and radical critics in the academic and intellectual world, downplays or ignores worker rights issues, and minimizes the labor union question which is central to an understanding of the maquiladora worker and her (or his) plight. Some who might otherwise be interested in her investigation will find her book either inaccessible or a turnoff because of its frequent use of what many will find a pretentious and obscure post-modern literary language. Finally, the way in she writes about herself in the introduction and conclusion of the book will strike many as the academic's self-indulgence: at points she seems to say, this book is not about maquiladora workers, this is a book about me.

Salzinger's book is based on fieldwork conducted from 1991 to 1993 in Ciudad Juárez, in which she herself worked in three maquiladoras and took ethnographic notes on her coworkers and managers. There is a great tradition of such writing, based on researchers and writers sharing the workers' conditions and attempting to understand and interpret the workers' life to the world. While sociologists and anthropologists refer to this as "participant observation" and usually trace its origin to the work of Bronislaw Malinowski with the Trobriand islanders, in the area of labor studies it can be argued that the founder of the field was the French philosopher Simone Weil.

Weil may be said to have established the contemporary literature in this field and to have set a high standard for the author's intellectual preparation, powers of observation and empathy, and social commitment. In 1934 and 1935 Weil worked in two French factories, one of them a Renault auto plant, and kept diaries of her experience, wrote letters to friends, and published articles which were later collected as *La Condition Ouvrière* first published in French in 1951 and reissued in 1972. Weil's essays were first translated into English and published in the United States by Dwight McDonald's *Politics* magazine in the 1950s. At professor of philosophy, a student of Karl Marx's writings, and a member of an independent revolutionary socialist group, Weil focused her analysis on the male or female worker's relationship to the machine and to capitalist production. Her writings suggested that workers could only achieve real fulfillment as human beings if they ended the system of worker enslavement to a machine and to capitalism.

Since then, others have followed Weil into the factory, taking with them their empathy and their social conscience, among them Salzinger's colleague Michael Buroway who worked in plants in both the capitalist West and the Communist East, where he found exploitation and alienation in labor under both systems.

The academic at work approach has also been used before in studies of the maquiladoras on the U.S.-Mexico border. In 1978 and 1979, María Patricia Fernández-Kelly, worked for two months in a garment factory in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, then conducted surveys and in-depth interviews of workers in the maquiladoras and later wrote her book *For We are Sold, I and My People: Women and Industry in Mexico's Frontier* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983). Fernández-Kelly became

one of the pioneers of studies of the maquiladoras and export production zones generally, examining capital's exploitation of women workers. Writing at a time when women made up as much as 85% of the workforce, she used labor studies and gender studies approaches to examine the way in which capital created the category of women's work as a particularly undervalued and super-exploited element of the workforce. Unfortunately her book did not deal much with the issues of worker resistance or labor union organization. Nevertheless, Fernández-Kelly's book was ground-breaking at the time, not only because of the way she situated female labor in the contest of global capital, but also in large part because of the empathy she showed with her subjects in discussing issues like the intensity of the work or sexual harassment on the job. We may say that it was her empathy with her fellow workers that place Fernández-Kelly in the Weil tradition.

Leslie Salzinger's book both falls into this tradition—and turns against it. Salzinger's experience of working in the maquiladoras in Ciudad Juárez gave her an opportunity to see things from a worker's perspective if not exactly through a worker's eyes. She has many interesting and important observations about how management creates the women workers, or at least a vision of the women workers it wants. Salzinger looks at how different plants with different managers and different social and gender compositions look at women and men in different ways. Readers will find most useful her descriptions of management's strategies for controlling workers.

Salzinger, however, neglects, minimizes or downplays discussions of worker resistance, labor union organization, and worker rights issues. She has little to say about the company's forced pregnancy examinations, an issue repeatedly raised by women's and human rights groups. She mentions women's labor organizing efforts, but only in passing.

What readers will not find in this book is any theory or alternative vision. Salzinger explicitly rejects the socialist and women's liberationist perspective of Annette Fuentes and Barbara Ehrenreich in Women in the Global Factory (Boston: South End, 1983). Salzinger tells the reader she has no answers, only questions. (Salzinger, *Genders*, 164.)

Finally, one might wonder how Salzinger could write a book on Juárez, published just this year, and not take advantage of the opportunity to say a word in her introduction or conclusion about the almost 400 women of Juárez who have been murdered in the last few years. An author, writing on women workers in Juárez, has an obligation to speak to the outstanding issues facing them. Why didn't she?

Salzinger's book about how corporations and management "create subjects," that is manufacture the women they want as workers as well as the products they sell for profit, makes an important point, and explores it as some length and with some complexity and subtlety. But it minimizes the equally important point—no, the more important point—that women workers in struggle against management through their informal work groups, their women's support groups, and their labor unions make themselves as subjects as well. Such women have the power to make themselves the

subject not only of power in the workplace, but also of power in their societies, and a new power in the world. (1)

Notes:

1) We might also note that women workers in the maquiladoras have also told their own stories in ways that not only share their experiences, but also suggest a critique of the industry, the employers, and sometimes the unions. See for example: Sandra Arenal, *Sangre Joven: Las Maquiladoras por Dentro* (Mexico: Editorial Nuestro Tiempo, 1986) and Norma Iglesias Prieto, ed., *Beautiful Flowers of the Maquiladora: Life Histories of Women Workers in Tijuana* (University of Texas Press, 1997).

María Xelhuantizi-López, *Democracy on Hold: The Freedom of Union Association and Protection Contracts in Mexico* (Washington, D.C.: Communications Workers of America/CWA, 2002), 128 (8x11) pages, end notes.

Maria Xelhuantizi-López's *Democracy on Hold* represents one of the most important contributions to the study of the Mexican labor movement in the last several years. One of its greatest strengths is that it provides extensive quotations from a variety of sources, giving the reader a clear sense of the debate.

While the book would be important in any case, it takes on additional significance because it represents the view of Francisco Hernández Juárez, head of the Mexican Telephone Workers Union (STRM) and one of the three co-chairs of the independent National Union of Workers (UNT). As Xelhuantizi-López writes in her introduction, he is "the intellectual author of this project."

What makes Xelhuantizi-López's book so important, is that she puts the "protection contract" at its center. Such contracts, which protect employers from genuine labor union organization in Mexico, may represent as much as 90% of the 600,000 registered union contracts in Mexico. Moreover, Xelhuantizi-López argues that it was the Mexican "corporatist" system, a system of state-control over the labor unions that gave rise to the "protection contract." Her book traces some of the history of the Mexican state, the ruling party, and their relationship to the labor unions, explaining how the state created the corrupt, violent system of corporatism and employer protection.

Without a doubt, "corporatist labor unions" and "protection contracts" stand at the center of any discussion of Mexican labor unions, as I argued in my own study about 10 years ago. (Dan La Botz, *Mask of Democracy: Labor Suppression in Mexico Today* [Boston: South End Press, 1992].) Xelhuantizi-López directs our attention to the central fact of labor relations in Mexico, and makes some suggestions for solving the problem. Yet, while this book represents an important contribution to the current debate, I would disagree with its underlying argument and its prescriptions for the labor and political movement.

Diagnosis and Prescription

Xelhuantizi-López's argument-that is to say Francisco Hernández Juárez' argument-is that the rise of "corporatism" and "protection contracts" produced both bad labor unions and bad corporations or bad capitalism. Mexico is not as efficient, productive, wealthy and prosperous as it might be because the state and its corporatist labor structure with its protection contracts distorted Mexican development. Unions became state-run, corrupt, violent and worthless for workers. Companies became inefficient, unproductive, uncompetitive and therefore unable to globalize.

As she writes:

Corporative labor was the alternative to unionism and entrepreneurship that the belligerent groups of the political and economic oligarchy found to insure their permanence and continuity, but also to articulate themselves with a global capitalist movement that was aggressive and challenging to them and against which such factors as nationalist, revolutionary and patriotic demagoguery served to protect and legitimize them. Today the result of all this is a backward bourgeoisie, incapable of globalization and having long-range vision, always ready to submit to multinational capital interests. (122)

The Problem of Partnership

What is to be done? The answer, she suggests, is to create healthy labor unions that can work with the corporations to produce good contracts that represent a miniature version of a social pact. As she writes, "The collective bargaining agreement is, in essence, a micro social pact." (2) This argument suggests that the labor movement and its political allies might also enter into a social pact with capital at the national level. The fundamental basis of Hernández Juárez' argument (as expressed through his amanuensis Xelhuantizi-López) is that labor and capital can and should enter into partnership. The goal of this partnership is to raise productivity so that capital can compete more effectively and really be successful at globalization.

The argument raises a number of questions. Can and should labor and capital be partners? Will capital be willing at this moment in history to enter into social pacts? Should the goal of the labor movement be to help corporations be more competitive in the world struggle between corporations and national capitalists that is called globalization? Or do unions have another mission?

Pacts and Partnership Today?

In certain ways the proposal for bilateral contracts and national social pacts may be attractive, especially at a moment when in general the labor movement and the working class at home anywhere and abroad everywhere is going to hell in a hand basket. Many would like to return to the world of the thirty-year period from 1945 to 1975 when the big industrial labor unions and the Democratic Party in the United States, the Social Democrats in Europe, and the Communist Parties in the former Soviet Union and the Eastern block were able to provide a system of social welfare which offered workers

some protection from the storm-even as they all three opposed a democratic social transformation to create a more equitable society. With labor unions and the left in retreat everywhere-except Brazil perhaps-we can understand the desire to return to a (somewhat mythical) past of social pacts. But capital seems little inclined to enter into them, when it can produce a profit from the new flexible, non-union, politically eviscerated working class that it has created in the last 25 years.

Even if healthy bilateral contracts and social pacts were possible at this moment, should unions help to make their corporations and countries more competitive, when that really means that they work to defeat other corporations and other countries in the world market? Rather than being a partner with capital, shouldn't labor propose its own project for the reorganization of society not to make corporations successful, but to create an economy, a society, and a polity that benefits all working people, and ultimately all of the world's people? Shouldn't workers develop their own program to save the world from the mess its in? Doesn't that mean that workers have to develop their own program to resist the corporation and the governments they control that now run the world? Doesn't that mean not partnership but a class struggle by workers against capital?

Hernández Juárez: Looking for a New Partner

No one will find it surprising that Francisco Hernández Juárez wants partnership. He began as the militant, leftist leader of mostly women telephone workers in the early 1970s, and rose to become general secretary, the top officer of the Mexican Telephone Workers Union. But by the late 1980s he had joined in partnership with Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the Mexican president who carried out the opening of Mexico to the world markets and the privatization of Mexico's national industries. When Carlos Salinas wanted to privatize TELMEX, the Mexican Telephone Company, Hernández Juárez supported him in exchange for protection for telephone workers' jobs. But the privatization of TELMEX was a key moved in the general privatization of mines, railroads and other industries that cost the jobs of tens of thousands of other workers, destroyed unions, and weakened labor contracts.

In those years, a friend of the president, and a member of the executive committee of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, Hernández Juárez argued for a new model of unions, working with the new private employers to create more productive enterprises. But then came the invasion of new telecommunications competitors, most of them owned by foreign capital, and Hernández Juárez and his union found themselves being ground down by the competition.

Hernández Juárez and the UNT: Which Way Forward?

Chastened by those experiences, Hernández Juárez took his allies in the labor movement--mostly employees in modern high tech industries, such as the flight attendants--and their labor federation FESEBES, and moved to ally with Mexico's more independent and democratic unions as well as with more conservative unions which were increasingly critical of the Congress of Labor. Joining with the Union of Workers at the

National Autonomous University (STUNAM) and the smaller but significant federation the Authentic Labor Front (FAT), as well as with the much larger Social Security Workers Union (SNTSS), he helped to create the National Union of Workers (UNT). The UNT has proven to be a genuinely independent labor federation, sure that it must build unions separate from and different than those of the Congress of Labor (CT) and the Mexican Confederation of Workers (CTM) long controlled by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and now beholden to president Fox of the National Action Party (PAN).

But the question is on what basis will the UNT create a new union movement? Will it try to work in partnership with corporations? Or will it attempt to organize workers in the long and difficult task of building a working class alternative to the savage capitalism Mexican workers have faced? Will the UNT embrace Hernández Juárez' project of partnership? Or will some sector of the Mexican labor movement put forward the notion the project should not be partnership with capital, but a labor project of democratic socialism?