

# SOLIDARITY IS MORE THAN JUST A SLOGAN

While we gather here today to express our outrage at the lock-out of our brothers and sisters at Four Continents Books, we should keep in mind that what is happening there is part of something much larger as well. By refusing to stop doing business with Four Continents, the Soviet government has shown an indifference to the fate of the strikers that is only a small taste of the brutality with which it treats its own workers. We see, then, that there is little difference between Russian bosses and American bosses, especially when workers begin to demand what is rightfully theirs.

So it only makes sense that working people in the East and the West have interests in common and should act in solidarity with each other's struggles. To make this effective we need organizations and movements that give us a chance to air our feelings and opinions on our common problems. Such organizations should embody the truest spirit of rank-and-file democracy, from the shop floor to the international level. They should be responsible to their own members only, and not to bosses or politicians of any stripe.

The problem often comes up, however, that those who claim to be acting in our interests get in the way or betray us. In our own union, District 65, the leadership talks a lot about rank-and-file control of day-to-day union affairs but keeps the real decision making to itself, often behind closed doors. When brothers and sisters in the shops have tried to wage militant struggles against runaway shops, lay-offs, etc., only too often the leaders have told them to be "moderate" and not "to risk our jobs", as if they weren't at risk already. Those who challenge this state of affairs at union meetings are simply labeled "disrupters" and "slanderers" without the questions they raise ever really being answered.

It should be clear by now the here, as everywhere else, workers need new organizations to push their cause forward. We should begin by talking in our shops, discussing the problems we face and the possible solutions at hand. It is a long road ahead to win what we really want, but if we are to go anywhere, we must begin now. At the end of this road, however, lies a better life for us and our brothers and sister around the world, whether in the U.S., El Salvador, South Africa, Poland or Russia.

--L.W.G. members in District 65

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