**The Labor Movement Must Help to Build Zones of Mass Based Power**

A Solidarity City must become a zone of working-class power connecting the labor movement in the areas to a labor-community base, consciousness and strategy that mobilizes mass based power in the economic and social institutions in the area that empowers the working-class and that begins to establish an independent working-class political base.

Over the past 30 years, the U.S. South has become a major region of the U.S. and global economy concentrated with major manufacturing industries, agriculture, banking and direct investments from corporations based in other countries.

The South continues to be the U.S. region with the least union density. The state of New York has more union members than all of the Southern states combined. The South has the largest concentration of the anti-labor/worker right-to-work laws, most that were enacted during the period of racist Jim Crow whose main intent was to maintain the segregation of the working-class to weaken the power of unified action.

The U.S. labor movement has greatly decreased in membership since the 1947 passage of the Taft-Hartley Act and its section 14-b Right-to-works. As the global economy began to restructure using technology to increase the rate of production and accumulated profits, there was also an increase in the strategy to attack the labor movement and pro-union consciousness.

Employers demanded cuts in wages, higher worker premiums for health benefits, longer work hours, temporary workers with no benefits, elimination of stable pensions and other concessions. Corporations also make demands on cities for greater tax breaks and other incentives with the threat of plant closers and relocation to the U.S. South or other countries, causing major hardships on cities like Detroit forcing them into bankruptcy and subjecting the people to serious hardships like water shut-offs.

The U.S. national labor movement now sees the importance of organizing labor in the South. The passage of a resolution to Organize the South at the AFL-CIO 27th National Convention in September 2013 is testament that there is a consciousness among organized workers that if the South is not organized then the U.S. labor movement is in serious danger of demise as a social force for workers.

This focus by the U.S. labor movement offers important opportunities for indigenous efforts by local unions, worker organizations and worker committees to organize labor in the South. However, it also poses major dangers if the business unionism methods that deny real rank-and-file democracy and mobilization; that promotes labor-management cooperation strategies; raids other unions; that support U.S. imperialist wars against other countries and finance governments that colonize and oppress people; and that depends on financing corporate controlled political parties as the way of trying to change labor policies.

Steps for building Solidarity Zones

1. Identifying and mapping out the territory of the zone – what workplaces and the corporations they are part of, the leading employers in the chamber of commerce; the area community, civic and faith based organizations; local unions, worker organizations and worker centers; community radio stations.
2. Develop the map and an educational program, workers school to train worker leaders about building working-class power, including identifying targeted workplaces from the map.
3. Each union and worker organization assign 2 members a month to focus on developing the zone – contacting organizations, leafleting at workplaces, building support for organizing campaigns.
4. Develop a newsletter reporting on and assessing labor and community actions.
5. Convene Zone Assemblies quarterly to report on activities, form working groups for special projects and to elect representatives to participate in meetings with representatives developed out of other Solidarity that take up statewide issues and plan for a Statewide Southern Workers Assembly.

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