

Solidarity Unionism

Rebuilding the Labor Movement from Below, Second Edition

Staughton Lynd • Illustrated by Mike Konopacki
Introduction by Immanuel Ness

Solidarity Unionism is critical reading for all who care about the future of labor. Drawing deeply on Staughton Lynd's experiences as a labor lawyer and activist in Youngstown, OH, and on his profound understanding of the history of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), *Solidarity Unionism* helps us begin to put not only movement but also vision back into the labor movement.

While many lament the decline of traditional unions, Lynd takes succor in the blossoming of rank-and-file worker organizations throughout the world that are countering rapacious capitalists and those comfortable labor leaders that think they know more about work and struggle than their own members. If we apply a new measure of workers' power that is deeply rooted in gatherings of workers and communities, the bleak and static perspective about the sorry state of labor today becomes bright and dynamic.

To secure the gains of solidarity unions, Staughton has proposed parallel bodies of workers who share the principles of rank-and-file solidarity and can coordinate the activities of local workers' assemblies. Detailed and inspiring examples include experiments in workers' self-organization across industries in steel-producing Youngstown, as well as horizontal networks of solidarity formed in a variety of U.S. cities and successful direct actions overseas.

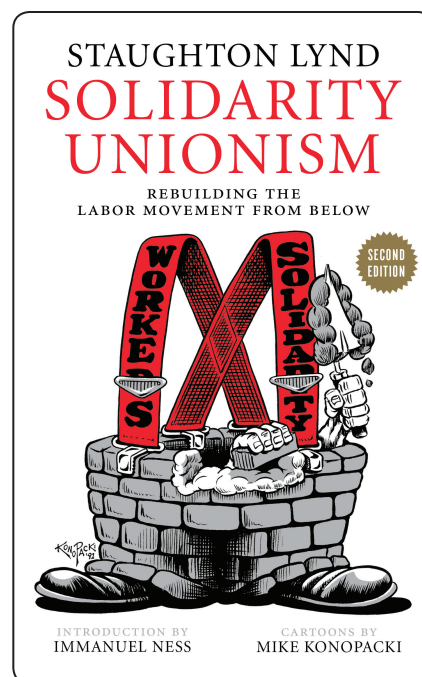
This is a tradition that workers understand but labor leaders reject. After so many failures, it is time to frankly recognize that the century-old system of recognition of a single union as exclusive collective bargaining agent was fatally flawed from the beginning, and doesn't work for most workers. If we are to live with dignity, we must collectively resist. This book is not a prescription but reveals the lived experience of working people continuously taking risks for the common good.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Staughton Lynd practiced employment law for twenty years in Youngstown, Ohio. He was also lead counsel in a lawsuit seeking to block US Steel's closure of all its Youngstown-area facilities, and together with his wife Alice represented retirees in a number of industries seeking to retain or reclaim their promised pension and health care benefits. Together, Staughton and Alice edited a collection of oral history interviews with workers titled *Rank and File*, now in its fourth edition. Additionally Staughton edited *We Are All Leaders*, which brought together articles by a number of young scholars exploring various past instances of solidarity unionism.

Immanuel Ness is a political economist who specializes in labor unions and professor of Political Science at City University of New York. He is editor of *WorkingUSA: The Journal of Labor and Society* and author of numerous works including *New Forms of Worker Organization* (PM Press). He was a worker and union organizer in the food, maintenance, and publishing industries.

Mike Konopacki is a political cartoonist from Wisconsin, specializing in labor issues. He is co-author and illustrator of Howard Zinn's graphic history *A People's History of American Empire*.



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◆ **PM PRESS** ◆
P.O. Box 23912 • Oakland, CA 94623
www.pmpress.org
info@pmpress.org
(510) 658-3906

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