

# On a problem for workplace democracy and its solution via a workers' dictatorship

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ECPR General Conference 2024

# The plan

- 1 Democratizing workplaces: the debate

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- 2 Democratizing workplaces: a problem

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- ① Democratizing workplaces: the debate
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- ① Democratizing workplaces: the debate
- ② Democratizing workplaces: a problem
- ③ A scheme tackling similar problems
- ④ Transposing that scheme to the corporation
- ⑤ Normative justification

# Democratizing workplaces I

An accepted position in the philosophical debate:

Workplaces are unjustifiably undemocratic and should be democratized

# Democratizing workplaces II

Broadly two paths to democratization:

- 1 Relatively minor changes: rule-of-law type protections (Anderson); transforming a liberal market economy towards a social-democratic kind of system



# Democratizing workplaces II

Broadly two paths to democratization:

- 1 Relatively minor changes: rule-of-law type protections (Anderson); transforming a liberal market economy towards a social-democratic kind of system
- 2 More radical proposals: Novel institutions that give more power to workers. Property-owning democracy, Ferrerras's two-chamber system etc.

# A blind spot

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- institutional designs are very focused on the legal sphere: What laws to pass to improve things
- much less attention to (roughly) the sociology of the workplace
- perhaps a position like top-down legalistic liberalism? (Cf. B. Williams's critique)

# A problem: the social complexity of democratization

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- but capitalists will have no interest in democratization
- it is, per definition, a scheme to limit their control
- but we might need their cooperation in democratization: skills, assets, knowledge etc.
- or at least their non-sabotage!

# Standing on the shoulder of giants



Figure 1: The giants

# A prototype for a solution?

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The dictatorship of the proletariat was conceptualized to tackle (a version of) this problem!

- a transitional institution to secure the revolution
- using the instruments of the bourgeois state
- temporarily retaining an unjust state to enable transition to justice

# A rough sketch for a solution

A workers' dictatorship in the business corporation!

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- using the instruments of the undemocratic corporation

# A rough sketch for a solution

A workers' dictatorship in the business corporation!

- a transitional institution to secure democratization
- using the instruments of the undemocratic corporation
- temporarily retaining a somewhat undemocratic state to enable democratization



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- dictatorial competencies for a worker-elected council
- using the existing powers of the corporate board(s) and the hierarchy below it
- the temporary disenfranchisement of capitalists
- the task of securing cooperation, establishing independence for the workers and protecting against sabotage
- a strong mandate to work towards its own superfluity

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- outside of that: a normative problem of justice and coercion! (Cf. Stanczyk 2012)
- a practical problem of state support

# Justifying a solution

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- 1 Self-liberation

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Three dimensions of justice in transition:

- 1 Self-liberation
- 2 Just rule
- 3 Public willing

# Final remarks

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- the accessibility question



# The end

Thank you for your attention!