

# Bargaining for the Membership in 1996: the Union's Journey

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The Voice of

JANUARY 1996

## NEW DIRECTIONS

UAW National Edition

Clawed by the CAT

### Caterpillar Workers Vote Down Union-Busting Contract ...But Still Must Return To Work

On Dec. 3 1995 the 17-month Caterpillar strike ended. For months prior to the strike's conclusion, rumors had circulated throughout the UAW and the labor movement that CAT was lost. According to Camron Austin, a CAT strike activist in Decatur, "It was apparent the International Union was retreating because strike rallies weren't being held, no new strategies were being implemented, even the Strike Bulletin was discontinued. From what we could gather, the International Union wouldn't even ask or accept help from the newly-elected officials of the AFL-CIO." Austin hastened to add that Solidarity House's lack of organized support was in contrast to the CAT rank and file's energetic efforts to bring the strike to a successful conclusion.

This membership determination was shown just before the strike ended when the CAT ranks voted overwhelmingly against the proposed settlement. Overall, the proposed settlement was rejected by an 81% to 19% margin. At those plants most active in the strike, the no vote was even larger: 97% in Peoria, 93% in Decatur and 94% in York. Yet in spite of these vote totals, the International forced the strikers back to work. Membership response to Solidarity House's failed leadership ranged from fury to extreme despon-

dency. Joe Vasquez, President of Local 1415 in Denver, was so depressed over his International rep's hard-sell tactics and Local 1415's consequent acceptance of the contract that he committed suicide.

The terms of the 6-year deal negotiated by the International spell surrender. CAT got everything they wanted:

- lower wages for new hires
- wider use of part-time and contract employees
- alternative work schedules
- the company no longer has to keep a minimum number of employees
- elimination of full-time committeepeople and the establishment of a limited numbers of hours for

handling grievances

•no reinstatement of the 150 workers fired during the in-plant phase of the struggle

•a "Standards of Conduct" code that even the NLRB has said is illegal; the code destroys workers' first amendment rights inside the shop and gives management greater flexibility in firing workers.

Although the recall of strikers has just begun, CAT management is already playing hardball. Using the "Standards of Conduct" code, the company has suspended key strike activists and elected union officials for a variety of arbitrary reasons - for instance, for the

*Continued on page 8*

### New Life in Local 2324

On October 24th the new Executive Board of Local 2324, clerical and technical employees at Boston University, was sworn in. The 9-person Executive Board was part of a reform slate put together by NDM NOC co-chair Eily Leary. The slate's decisive victory -- it was a 60% sweep -- demonstrates that the problems and frustrations faced by rank and file members in the production core ring true with office workers as well. Non-traditional members are now the majority of the UAW and it is important that the NDM agenda be relevant to this growing sector.

The slate's victory was the result of a simple formula: an issues-based campaign, a diverse core group much larger than the nine person slate, advance planning, and above all, a combination of hard work and democracy.

Although Boston University is a relatively new Local, it has the same problems as many of the long-established UAW locals in the core sector: no accountability and limited communication with workers: little democracy -- union meetings only at contract time; inactive committees; stagnant leadership with a "my way or the highway" attitude; and no strategy for tackling technological change and the resulting speed-ups, downsizing and the use of part-time workers.

The reform slate's campaign was based on these issues. The election results show that the campaign struck a chord with the membership.

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Local 1097

Royal Young  
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Retiree Representative

Erwin Baur  
Local 306

Regional Representatives

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Tom Smith  
Reg. 1C - Lo. 599

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New Directiolls

## A New Directions~Resolution on the proposed - Merger of the UA~ Steel Workers and Machinists

Note: The resolution below was passed at New Directions' seventh annual National Conference in Detroit, Oct. 27-29

The merger of the UAW with the Steel Workers and Machinists can produce a reinvigorated, stronger union, incorporating the best features of each union, or it could result in a massive bureaucracy that unites the three unions at their lowest common denominator. The merger can result in a dynamic new union that is genuinely responsive to the membership's needs and their input, but only if it is structured to be militant and thoroughly democratic.

New Directions will strongly support or vigorously oppose the merger, depending on the details of the proposal.

New Directions will support the merger if it is:

1. Submitted to membership vote in each union for ratification.
2. Provides for direct membership election of International officers.
3. Spells out clear commitment to significantly intensified organizing, with guarantees of appropriate financial support
4. Maintains existing UAW practices and procedures regarding
  - a. Membership voting on al contract ratification
  - b. Age 65 retirement policy for International officers and staff
  - c. A Public Review Board and Ethical Practices Code
  - d. Strike fund and strike benefits at UAW levels
  - e. No dues increase beyond present UAW level
5. Guarantees participation of women and minorities at all levels of leadership and staff.

*Resolved that* New Directions attempt to organize meetings of rank and file members of all three unions involved in the merger, in order to discuss the merger process as it relates to union structure and bargaining policy positions.

### NEW LIFE

*Continlled from page 1*

This relationship with the membership was needed, since the local's "old guard", IU1der the direction of Region 9A's Sub-Regional Director, campaigned on "experience" and made use of union slush flU1ds to defeat to defeat the slate. Even after the slate's victory, the old guard continued their old ways: they raided the treasury and spent more than 1/3 of the local's entire budget.

However, in spite of this adversity, Local 2324's new Executive Board has expanded local democracy, activated committees, placed union expenditures under membership scrutiny, and latmched the largest non-contract mobilization of BU workers in the last 8 years.

NOM-type unionism may require a struggle, but it works--for the membership .•

A labor Notes School  
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# The Spirit of New Directions Influences the Labor Movement

The national UAW New Directions Movement has been in existence since 1989. We have had victories and also defeats. Throughout all this, our most basic belief has been that the UAW cannot rebuild itself without more membership control of the union. Too many of the UAW's top leaders have been away from the plant floor for so long that their strategies for how the union should operate have become stale. This staleness has repeatedly put the union at a disadvantage when negotiating with management. The results of this lack of creative strategies have devastated us: weak contracts, the loss of plant floor rights, assaults on our benefits, excessive speedup, cooperation programs that injure us, and no new ideas for fighting job losses.

Because of the UAW's downhill slide and the weakened state of organized labor in general, slowly but surely NDM's message has been heard - and not only on the plant floor. As stated in the National Organizing Committee's report to NDM's '95 convention, the work of NDM activists may sometimes "feel frustrating" but that doesn't change the fact that "NDM's impact on the UAW and the labor movement has been important. The new UAW administration's talk about reducing worktime to create jobs and about supporting greater worker solidarity - as in the 3 union merger - have been part of the NDM agenda since its beginning."

Such changes in UAW attitude have been reported by the media. As the *Los Angeles Times* has reported, Yokich's depiction of himself as "a fiery street fighter and savvy strategist" represents an effort on his part to speak, as New Directions has done, to the rank and file's frustrations with its enfeebled union.

Although there is some evidence that Solidarity House plans to be more flexible than Wilder Bieber with regard to democratic debate within the UAW, this evidence is far from conclusive. In many Locals members are still harassed for the "crime" of questioning union policies. NDM certainly will support any efforts that the Yokich team makes to promote open dialogue in all the union's Locals. However, New Directions will not sit back, idly waiting for this to happen. We will continue to push for important bargaining and shop floor issues, constitutional concerns, and union democracy. When Solidarity House actions deserve credit, we will give them credit, as we always have done; however, when the International makes mistakes - as in the Caterpillar defeat - we will analyze those mistakes. As everyone knows, we are living in troubled times. Just as in society at large, so within the labor movement people are looking for ways to empower themselves and to get better leadership. For us in the UAW, our union's health depends on having serious rank and file dialogues about the main challenges facing the UAW. Only such dialogues can produce the new strategies necessary for confronting the problems that face us. As Richard Trumka, the newly elected Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO said after his election in New York in October, "Internal union debate does not tear a union down; it raises a union up!"

Trumka was supported in his bid for the AFL-CIO Secretary Treasurer position by Solidarity House. When Trumka made his remark about the value of internal union debate, UAW President Steve Yokich, who was in the audience, applauded.

The spirit of change is in the air. The elections for the top leadership of the AFL-CIO this fall in New York were an example of this.

They were the first open elections in that organization's history. These open elections didn't just happen by accident. They came about because of a combination of factors: (1) serious tensions had developed among AFL-CIO leaders because the federation was growing steadily weaker and (2) rank and file discontent with the federation's lack of vision threatened to turn the federation into an organization that was incapable of convincing its members to do anything. In the end, after months of internal AFL-CIO debate and maneuvering, Lane Kirkland was forced to step down from the AFL-CIO presidency and (in the words of the New York Tiffies) "a group of insurgents won control of the federation" at their autumn convention. The attitude of insurgency on the convention floor was shown by people raising placards that proclaimed "Change!" and wearing t-shirts that announced the need for the labor movement to heed "new voices."

Like Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) and other rank and file-based reform movements in the labor movement, NDM can be proud of the role it has played over the years in promoting the current pro-reform climate within the labor movement.

However, we are not naive. Although we believe that some of the recent events within both the UAW and the AFL-CIO offer signs of hope, we also have seen indications of a continued lack of vision. The most dramatic example of this lack of vision was the failure of both the UAW hierarchy and the new AFL-CIO leadership to do *anything* of significance to mobilize organized labor in support of the CAT strikers and the locked-out Stalwart workers in the warzone in Decatur. Given this failure, it is clear that the signs of possible improvements in UAW and AFL-CIO policies will only bear fruit if the rank and file pressures its leaders. As the NOC's convention report states with regard to the AFL-CIO, "a wide spectrum of progressive voices must be included in developing the AFL-CIO's new plans" if the federation's new leadership is to make good on its promise of greater activism. The fact is that in many AFL-CIO unions, the so-called "pro-change" leaders are at best ambivalent about how much they believe in change. They have adopted reform platforms not because of a deep commitment to reform, but because they know that their memberships will no longer listen to them unless they accept those platforms. Under such circumstances, only rank and file pressure can guarantee that reform efforts are not derailed by officials whose commitment to "change" is opportunistic rather than principled.

Similarly in the UAW, not everyone who talks about change is really committed to change. Consequently, in all our actions we must promote union democracy and open dialogue. The goal of such activities is to produce, through plant floor discussion, concrete tactics for rebuilding our union. Putting such tactics into action is the only way we can determine which of our leaders are truly willing to stand with us as we struggle for change. Whether or not UAW officials support the bargaining demands listed on p. 5 of this newsletter will be one indication of how they relate to the rank and file.

NDM's agenda is a rank and file agenda. This is why we are committed to working in coalition with all rank and file and union officials who support programs for developing a stronger union. 8

# BARGAINING FOR THE MEMBERSHIP IN 1996

## Turning the Union Around

The evidence that the UAW has lost its way is everywhere. Living agreements have undermined our plant floor rights. Lean production has increased speedup and layoffs. Labor-Teamwork programs have created a bureaucracy of appointees, some of whose jobs entail working with management to discipline workers. Additionally, joint practices have (1) forced union officials to spend more time at union meetings and less time on the plant floor serving the membership, and (2) corrupted too many union officials by giving them special privileges, including opportunities to make or receive "kickback" money. As a result of such examples of the degeneration of the UAW's principles and ethics, pattern bargaining has collapsed, workers are whipsawed, and workplace standards have deteriorated. Given such realities, our 1996 agreements must

**Start** the process of disengaging the UAW from union-destroying jointness and partnership programs.

**Require** that, like all other union business, all joint fund expenditures be subject to membership notification, debate and vote.

Like other unions, the UAW is at a turning point. We cannot afford to continue the concessionary mindset that has stripped the union of its ability to provide the membership with the job and income security that we are entitled to. Nor can we afford the kind of lackluster bargaining vision that led to the recent CAT defeat. At a time when the Big 3 are making more money than ever and sales are fairly stable, UAW negotiators must go to the bargaining table with an irreversible commitment to stop the contract losses that have devastated us for 15 years. The time is now.

President Yonkers presents himself as a militant protector of workers' rights. Such rhetoric has little impact after CAT. The 1996 contract negotiations with the Big 3 will be his last chance to back up his tough talk with the vision and activism needed to re-ignite our union. Otherwise, the Big 3 will win more concessions and our economic security and plant floor rights will further deteriorate.

In preparation for the 1996 national negotiations, *New Directions* offers the following bargaining program, which was approved at our October 1995 National Conference.

### END TWO-TIERED WAGES

The current two-tiered wage and benefit system is a disgrace to union principles. The practice of requiring new employees to start at 70% of the wage rate of seniority employees, then forcing those new workers to wait 3 years to achieve parity, makes a mockery of a principle the UAW once took seriously: equal pay for equal work. Additionally, the two-tier system destroys union solidarity by pitting one generation of workers against another.

Tiered wages must be abolished if we are to build solidarity in our workplaces.

### COLA ON PENSIONS

Pension security is another aspect of promoting solidarity between different generations of UAW members. Without pension security, a person's retirement years can be ruined by serious financial woe. To avoid this problem, our UAW International reps, top Big 3 executives, Congresspeople, and government employees are all given COLA on their pensions. Yet the rank and file UAW member does not receive COLA on her or his pension. This is an outmoded and unfair policy that must be changed. If UAW staff negotiators can protect themselves with COLA on their pensions, the time has come for them to safeguard all UAW retirees with similar COLA protection.

There is no question that the Big 3 can afford COLA on pensions in 1996. Profits are at record levels as are executive salaries -- GM's top guns have received giant salary increases over the last year.

With a significant number of our members either retired or about to retire -- there will be 200,000 additional retirees by the year 2003 -- COLA on pensions is an extremely urgent issue. Also, with the UAW retiree population increasing so rapidly, the time has arrived to provide retirees with a seat on our bargaining teams.

### SHORTER WORK TIME WITH NO LOSS IN PAY

The pattern of excessive overtime in Big 3 plants is unfortunately becoming the norm -- and not just in auto. In 1995, American manufacturing workers put in more hours on the job, at less of a cost to their bosses, than did manufacturing workers in every other industrialized country in the world.

It has been estimated by UAW analysts that if U.S. autoworkers worked only 40 hours per week, over 88,000 jobs would be saved or created. However, instead of a 40-hour workweek in auto, excessive overtime has contributed to the loss of over one-half million jobs in our industry since 1979. Meanwhile, over recent years in Europe, autoworkers at Ford, Chrysler and GM have created jobs by winning contract provisions that reduced worktime with no loss of pay.

It is time for the UAW to get serious about fighting for a shorter workweek in U.S. plants. In addition to excessive overtime, "alternative work schedules" that are based on the three-crew, 10-hour, 4-day-week model are designed to eliminate jobs. Such Big 3 tactics are essential to the companies' aims of downsizing, job-cutting and lean production.

Given these realities, our 1996 contract efforts must

include demand that move towards a shorter work week. We must:

- Eliminate all mandatory overtime
- Divert overtime penalties, which currently fund joint committees, to other sources -- for instance, such monies could be used to create tuition benefits for dependents or retirees, or a separate SUB fund to bring injured workers to full pay, or to assist community projects
- Restore Paid Personal Holidays in order to reduce worktime
- Phase out alternative work schedules
- Phase in 3-shift, 7-hour, 5-day work weeks (the 35-hour work week with no loss of pay)

### HEALTH CARE

Health care is a basic human right. Over the years the UAW has fought for "lifetime" health care for active and retired workers. We will not tolerate in the 1996 National Agreement negotiations any company attempts, through cost shifting, to strip our members of their health benefits or their freedom of choice with regard to those benefits. Furthermore, the UAW must win contract language that *improves* members' health care benefits. In a wide range of areas -- including ambulance coverage, HMO services, coverage for specific maladies and medical costs, and the expansion of eligibility for surviving spouses and dependents who are not eligible for pensions -- existing benefits must be reviewed and upgraded.

All company efforts to erode health benefits, no matter how apparently minor, must be contractually prohibited. No cost shifting; no elimination of one's choice of personal physician, hospital or clinic; no placing of new restrictions on previous benefits are acceptable.

### SOURCING/OUTSOURCING

Outsourcing and subcontracting have caused the disappearance of thousands of UAW jobs, often without union resistance. Past contract sections in which the companies have promised to make an effort to limit outsourcing have been flawed by weak language and loopholes. The end result has been massive job losses. For all practical purposes the UAW leadership, to the detriment of the membership, has been drifting for the last 15 years from contract to contract without any policy or contract criteria for combating outsourcing.

Meanwhile, the Big 3 have pursued an aggressive campaign of relocating work to cheap labor markets outside the country as well as to domestic non-union shops.

Another problem is when assembly work is relocated to lower-wage UAW shops right here in the States and the UAW claims a victory for keeping the jobs in the family. The UAW should respond to such situations not by taking credit but by developing strategies for upgrading workers' wages and benefits in those lower-wage plants. There is no "victory" when UAW members earning different wage rates are forced to compete with each other over jobs.

Another problem facing UAW members is that the companies are increasingly using outside contractors to do janitorial, construction, maintenance and warranty work. Continued subcontracting will eliminate Apprenticeship programs, which provide a way for members to upgrade to the best UAW jobs.

The only solution to the outsourcing problem is to place it into the hands of the membership. Outsourcing must be made a strikeable local issue.

## ADDITIONAL DEMANDS

*Note: The following bargaining demands represent additional areas of concern that the members of the National Organizing Committee consider particularly important.*

### STOP THE INHUMAN COSTS OF LEAN PRODUCTION

Lean production has taken a heavy toll on working men and women. Thousands of jobs have been lost, injury rates have skyrocketed from speedups and consolidations, and even deaths have resulted as the lines of demarcation have been eroded between skilled trades classifications, thereby forcing skilled workers to perform tasks for which they have not been adequately trained.

Our 1996 agreements must contain language that protects injured workers against loss of pay. Automakers must be required to accept full responsibility for work injuries by paying injured workers weekly supplements that raise those workers' pay to SUB-pay level.

### WAGES

While top management rakes in gigantic salary increases, workers struggle to stay even. Profit sharing, signing bonuses and COLA minus diversions are no substitute for annual wage increases, particularly since increases fold into our base rate and thereby increase our pensions, life insurance, etc. Although both production and skilled workers have been hurt by the loss of our annual wage increases, skilled trades workers have been hit the hardest.

In our 1996 national agreements we must:

- Restore the annual 3.0% pay increase and fold-in COLA on a quarterly basis

- Start new hires at full pay and benefits after 90 days

- Reinstatement of the skilled trades and production wage inequity fund and give a special wage increase to skilled workers so they can gain parity with outside skilled tradespeople

### FAIRNESS IN THE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

The Apprenticeship Program has historically been a way to reward seniority production employees for years of hard work. It is the vocational ladder for autoworkers. Recently, however, the power of the Apprenticeship Program has been weakened as veteran workers, many of them women and minorities, are passed over while open slots in the program are given to low-seniority workers who are the children of management personnel or local or national union officials. This anti-seniority trend in the Apprenticeship Program has been reinforced by the adoption of new program guidelines.

In 1996 our contracts must establish guidelines that use affirmative action and seniority to guarantee fairness in the Apprenticeship Program's selection process.

# The Choice: Real Unionism or Dead Unionism

On a Saturday night at the end of last October, UAW Local 174's union hall was packed with press operators, newspaper writers, auto workers, community supporters, and delegations from out-of-state unions. The crowd spilled out the doors into the parking lot. The people there that night were preparing to participate in a 2 a.m. picket line in front of one of the newspaper buildings that was being struck by newspaper workers from the Detroit News and Detroit Free Press. Although the crowd was excited about picketing, no one viewed the picket as a lighthearted event. On a few previous occasions, unprovoked police had gone wild and thrown picketers to the ground, beating and kicking them. Why did the police do this? One reason is that they were paid to do it. The Gannett Company and Knight-Ridder, the corporations that own the two newspapers, have given \$600,000 to local police departments to cover overtime costs for sending police to night-time strike activities.

Such corporate maneuvers have pushed many Detroit residents to view the newspaper strike as a classic battle between ordinary people and corporate giants. As a result, on that particular Saturday night hundreds of people forgot about their personal convenience (dates, partying, etc.) and crammed into a UAW Local 174's union hall to support the striking newspaper workers.

Among those present were NDM members in town for the New Directions Convention. At one point the crowd gave a roar of approval to Dave Yettaw, president of UAW Local 599 in Flint, Michigan and a New Directions co-chair, as he and others from his Local presented a check for more than \$5000 dollars to the strikers. The money had been raised the day before during a rank and file solidarity collection in Flint at Buick City's plant gates.

After handing over the check, Yettaw spoke briefly to the crowd. He stressed that it was incumbent upon organized labor to find a way to transform the kind of solidarity that was in the room that night into a national movement to fight for working people's rights. Making reference to the Million Man March that had been held recently in Washington, he suggested that the time had come for labor to also make Washington take notice. He said that to do this the labor movement

had to organize a coherent program, mobilize the rank and file and go to the nation's capital with a million or more people, "not to beg for anything, but to scare the politicians - with our numbers and our organizing capacity - into listening to us."

Yettaw's concern that labor was in need of revitalization was echoed by other unionists. Also there that night were some locked-out workers from the A. E. Staley corn-sweetener plant in Illinois. One of them, a friendly, bearded man with a southern twang in his voice, spoke to the crowd in a down-home way about how corporate greed was killing American values. There was something about this man's simple, direct way of talking that made people pay close attention to what he said. Listening to him speak about the need to fight back against the nation-wide assault against workers and their families, the people in the hall knew that this was what unionism was all about: this moment, this energy, this solidarity, this willingness to stand side by side as we fight in unity for our rights.

People gave him a rousing ovation when he was done.

At the time, neither that man, nor his audience, nor the 760 other locked-out Staley workers knew that less than two months later, just before the end of the year, Staley's workers would be sold out by the Paperworkers International and forced back to work with a concession contract that reduced health and safety protections, expanded the company's

outsourcing rights, introduced 12-hour shifts that will rotate from days to nights every six days, and provide no amnesty for fired or suspended workers.

What makes the Staley defeat particularly grating for the workers, who had been locked out since 1993, is that from the very beginning of their conflict with the company their position had been weakened by ill-advised union policies. For instance, as part of a pre-1993 union-management "information-sharing" program, Staley workers had taught management the ins and outs of how to get the best results from some of the plant's complex machinery. Management later used this information, which had been given to them in good faith by well-meaning workers, to train the strike-breakers who replaced those workers during the long lock-out.

The Staley workers nonetheless fought back with a shrewd combination of democratic decision-making, careful planning and militancy which won the admiration of other unionists and concerned citizens across the country. As part of a plan to put pressure on the A.E. Staley Company's business contacts, the workers won a major victory when, after a months-long campaign, they forced Miller Brewing to cancel its contract with Staley. The workers were on the verge of winning a similar campaign against Pepsi when the Paperworkers International sledgehammered the Local into settling. The workers also organized marches, performed civil disobedience, and trained

*Continued on page 7*



Continued from Page 2

some of their members as "road warriors" - men and women who traveled around the country in an effort to build ties with other unions and economic justice groups. The man who spoke at UAW Local 174's union hall on that Saturday night at the end of October was one of those road warriors - a solidarity-builder, a believer in people, an example of what is best about the labor movement.

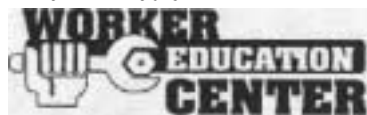
Looking back at that night and what has happened since then to CAT workers and Staley workers, Dave Yettaw's call for a Working People's National Day of Protest echoes even more loudly now than when he originally made it. If the labor movement does not unleash the energy of its own members, it cannot rebuild itself. Something is clearly wrong when, as is currently the case, so many rank and file unionists nation-wide are struggling in creative and daring ways for economic justice, only to be sabotaged by their own leaderships.

The choice before us is dead unionism or real unionism. Dead unionism can be found in the executive councils of many of today's biggest unions. Real unionism can be found in the hearts and minds of the rank and file.

# New Strategies For Victory

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"New Strategies For Victory"



The New Directions Worker Education Center Holds Solidarity Schools throughout the Country. The Schools cover a wide range of issues, including labor history, solidarity through diversity, organizing, In-Plant strategies and coalition building. Upcoming schools will be held at:

- New York, March 28-31, 1996
- Madison, Wisconsin, June 13-16, 1996

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## 1 - - - - NEW DIRECTIONS CLEARINGHOUSE - - - -

UAW New Directions is putting together a clearinghouse to distribute literature that pertains to the NDM platform.

This clearinghouse will be based in Flint, MI, and operated by New Directions Region I-C members. Our first mailing is scheduled in March.

A \$10.00 donation will be used for mailing, copying, and supplies. If you are interested, fill out this form and mail it with your check to:

Tom Smith, Chair  
UAW Region I-C New Directions  
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## What We Stand For:

New Directions is a grassroots movement within the UAW. We stand for democracy, accountability and solidarity. We believe our union can regain its strength and social commitment, that the UAW's tradition of responsible service can be restored.

We are committed to rebuilding our union from within. We are from all sectors of the union - Auto, Parts, Ag-Imp, Aerospace, Public sector, Clerical- pulling together for the benefit of our total membership.

"crime" of having a 3-year-old union sticker on a tool box! As of the New Year, approximately 40 former strikers have been disciplined under the conduct code. Since these disciplines are not covered by the grievance procedure (no appeal, no progressive discipline), management's freedom to penalize workers is almost dictatorial; whether you lose a day's pay or are permanently terminated is entirely in the company's hands. According to Larry Solomon, President of Local 751 in Decatur, "It's like torture in the first degree."

Clearly, the union, if it is to recapture any of its strength at CAT, must develop a plan for fighting the company's use of the new conduct code to suspend and dismiss workers. For such a plan to be successful, the International will have to do what it has not done previously: be guided by the commitment and vision of the CAT membership, who during the 17-month strike were the strike's most conscientious strategists, organizers and builders of community-labor solidarity.

As the CAT strike recedes into the past, UAW members and other unionists have been left with a number of nagging questions - How did the CAT strike turn into such a disaster? How do we explain the wide gap in vision between the International leadership and the leaders and members at the local level?

In an effort to answer these and related

look for the next *Voice of New Directions...*

Starting with our next issue, the Voice will be revamped, and will cover Chrysler, Ford, GM, and non-traditional sectors, as well as important events throughout labor. If it's important to UAW members, we'll write about it!

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questions, union activists have already uncovered a pattern of International miscalculations that contributed to the defeat at CAT.

1. When the strike was called, sales were slow, inventories were high (9 months), and the union had made a prior agreement that exempted from the strike those critical workers who made replacement parts for CAT equipment. As Larry Solomon said, "When you've got a six shooter you put all six bullets in it." That's exactly what the company did. Unfortunately, the International's ignored this and launched the strike without adequate preparation.

2. Many union analysts see the CAT failure as an outgrowth of the union's labor-management cooperation strategy. By buying into "competitiveness" long before the strike, the union helped CAT to globalize, downsize, subcontract out work, implement new work rules, and push members to rewrite job descriptions in order to make the company more "efficient." This process of giving the company what it wanted put CAT in the catbird's seat. When the strike was called, the company used its previously won power to muscle an unprepared Solidarity House.

3. The union refused to accept an offer from the UAW's most talented in-plant strategist, Jerry Tucker, to develop a winnable in-plant strategy at CAT. Over the years, Tucker's successful use of in-plant strategies to fight management while simultaneously re-

fusing to be baited by them into unthought-out strikes has won rum renown as one of labor's most creative organizers.

4. The International ignored offers from CAT workers around the world to help striking U.S. CAT workers by globalizing the struggle against the company.

5. The International made no sustained effort to build union-community coalitions during the strike. For instance, no public information campaign was launched and no plans were developed for getting municipalities to stop buying CAT equipment because of quality problems. One local union official called the CAT strike the "Stealth Strike" because months would go by without Solidarity House organizing any media coverage, strike-support events, etc.

The loss at CAT has forced the UAW to take a long hard look in the mirror. The defeat cannot be written off as if it was "inevitable" because organized labor is currently "weak." There was nothing inevitable about the loss; instead, it was traceable in good part to very specific International UAW mistakes, a number of which are listed above.

The UAW cannot afford to repeat the errors that led to the CAT loss. In Solidarity House over recent years, there has been too much big talk and too little creative thinking, too much grandstanding and too little respect paid to the rank and file. We are a union in need of rebuilding itself and we cannot do that if we do not increase internal union dialogue, develop well-thought-out bargaining positions, and formulate practical but innovative strategies for countering the companies' war on workers.

Since this past summer when he took office, UAW President Steve Yokich has talked, sometimes in fiery tones, about making the UAW stronger. We agree with that spirit. Unfortunately, many labor analysts believe - and we concur - that the Yokich administration failed its first big test: the CAT situation. We can still move forward, however. But to do this requires the development of new strategies that are built on the knowledge of those who are most familiar with what goes on in our plants: the rank and file.

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