

Teamsters for a Decent Contract

TDC ORGANIZER

A Bulletin for TDC Activists

#1

March 13th

The next big step for TDC and for the whole contract fight is March 13. TDC is calling for demonstrations in all cities. As CONVOY #3 reported, the employers are on the offensive. We want to serve notice that the rank and file knows what it needs and will fight. The TDC demands are our answer to the employers. The demonstrations and rallies held on the 13th show we will back them up.

In other words, whatever Fitzsimmons does, the rank and file will not sit still for the employers' outrageous attacks on living and working standards. Naturally effective actions around the country can also put the pressure on Fitzsimmons to bring home the bacon.

To do these things the actions must be successful and well-organized. Naturally, not every place can turn out hundreds on March 13, but all can work to turn out the maximum number. Fitz and the employers will be watching. This means we have to put the March 13 action above any other plans. It also means the actions should be as similar to each other as possible all across the country, so that it will be clear that we are all in this thing together.

The message of March 13th--Given the hard-nosed position of the employers, our message on March 13 can be summarized by three ideas: NO RETREAT IN 1976 MASTER FREIGHT AGREEMENT OR LOCAL SUPPLEMENTS; REJECT ANY CONTRACT THAT DOESN'T MAKE PROGRESS ALONG THE LINES OF THE TDC PROGRAM; NO CONTRACT - NO WORK - READY TO STRIKE.

To get the March 13th action going in your city or town, the following steps should be taken:

1. Pick a suitable site for a demonstration and/or rally. We suggest that the site be clearly directed against the employers; for example, an area of town where there are a number of big freight barns.
2. Plan a short outdoor demonstration or march by these barns or other location.
3. The march should end at a truck stop, cafe, or restaurant in the area, where an indoor rally can be held--remember it will still be winter in many places. You can usually rent all or part of a cafe, or a back room.
4. Organize wide-spread distribution of the leaflet for March 13th. Quantities of this leaflet will be sent to you. It is particularly important to leaflet the big company barns, including UPS. Make sure to leaflet the barns you plan to demonstrate at or near--if that is your plan.
5. GO to the biggest barns in your town to talk to the people there about showing up on March 13th. No leaflet can substitute for personal contact.

6. Be sure to stress March 13th at any TDC or UPSurge meeting between now and the 13th.
7. Notify the local press, radio and TV of the date, time, location and purpose of your action. See your TDC "Organizers' Handbook" for details on notifying press and media. In notifying the press, be sure to stress that your action is part of a national day of actions across the country organized by TDC and UPSurge nationally.
8. Get the action announced on radio stations and shows that make public service announcements.
9. At the action itself, groups from the various companies should carry a banner or sign indicating their company. For example, "McLeans TDC says no retreat in 1976," or "CF workers say no sell-out," etc.
10. Try to pick local speakers that represent different groups of workers in the industry. For example, a speaker who is a road driver, one who is from UPS, a city driver or dock worker, and maybe a woman clerical worker.
11. The speakers should stress that the employers are trying to force worse conditions on us, that they are resisting a real wage increase, and that they are pushing us into a fight. We need to organize for that fight through TDC and UPSurge.
12. A couple of places are already planning to hold parties after their demonstrations/rallies, on the night of March 13th; probably a good idea for everybody.

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### Barn Organizing

Every movement needs a strategy, a set of priorities, an idea of how best to organize. We know that a lot of the weaknesses of teamster rank and file movements in the past stemmed from lack of strong organization. The 1970 wildcat often failed to protect its most active participants because it was not well organized locally and had little or no national organization. TURF (Teamsters United Rank and File) which was started after the strike, also failed to establish a real national organization.

Since TDC started last summer, we have learned a lot about how to organize. We learned the importance of national communication. To help solve that age-old problem, we started CONVOY--now as a bi-weekly, in March to become a weekly. We learned that even a contract movement needs local organization, so we encouraged TDC'ers in local areas to set up actual chapters and choose local steering committees. In most areas these steps have helped get things going.

In recent weeks, a number of chapters have tried a new level of organizing which could make TDC the strongest rank and file movement that the IBT has ever seen. In Cleveland, Tannersville, Pa., and Los Angeles, TDC'ers have started organizing from barn to barn. Here's how it's done:

1. Hold a meeting at each barn and explain the TDC program and goals. Everyone active in TDC works in or out of a barn, office, warehouse, or Hub. It is a small thing to call a meeting of your fellow employees. You can get TDC'ers from other barns to help--having meetings at one or two barns at a time.
2. The next step is to get two or three people at the meeting to volunteer to take regular charge of distributing CONVOY, getting petition signatures, keeping fellow employees informed of events, organizing your barn for March 13th, and being prepared for a strike in April.
3. Some one (or more than one) from the barn should attend all city-wide TDC meetings, so that there is city-wide coordination of activities and city-wide communication in case there is a strike. It is even a good idea for some one from each of the big barns to sit in on the local steering committee meetings.
4. When you've got your barn organized, take some CONVOY's and go to the barn nearest you. Find someone there who is interested and help them organize their barn. Chances are you already know a lot of the people from the barns closest to yours, so it's no big deal.
5. The best place to hold the barn meeting is a nearby cafe or restaurant. Bring CONVOY's, petitions, and other TDC literature. Have one or two people who have been active in TDC for a while explain what it is all about. Take questions and discussion. Toward the end, see if you can get a couple of the workers from the barn you are organizing to volunteer to take charge of their barn.

A movement based in the barns, warehouses, offices and hubs, with good city-wide coordination, and good national communications will be a powerful movement. Yet, it takes only a little effort for each of us to organize those we work with every day. Even a small committee of TDC activists in a barn can make all the difference in the world. But time is running out. There is less than 6 weeks until April 1st. Let's get down to it right now.

Write us and let us know what you are doing or if you need help.

Yours truly,

Ken Paff  
Secretary-Treasurer, TDC