

Dear TDC Activist,

We know that right now all of you are busy getting your co-workers to turn down this thoroughly inadequate contract. Through the efforts and organization of TDC--what people like yourselves were able to do--we prevented this contract from being even worse.

Formed only last summer, TDC was able to create enough pressure to force the first official nationwide Teamster strike. The union's top leadership, reluctant to go out, spent most of it's time organizing the strike against us. They tried to get trucks rolling as soon as possible and bulldozed us back to work with no ratified contract. TDC found that though we were strong enough to force the strike, we did not have the organizational strength to direct it or force our full program onto it.

But this does not take away the major gains the rank and file movement had made in this fight. We now have some basic organization, we have a network of militants nationwide, we have a solid means of communication--CONVOY, we have linked up activists within some of the major freight companies. In short, we have the beginnings of a real ongoing organization that can continue the fight begun this contract.

But a contract fight is not the same as the fight ahead of us. The employers' attack on our living standards and working conditions will continue every day, on the job and off. The failure of the Teamsters union to defend us against this assault will be felt in many ways not related to the contract.

The TDC was formed with a specific goal in mind--to organize around this contract. We can build on that base, but we must give serious thought to the next steps. We will need to create a much more solidly organized, better financed group capable of ongoing work in a day to day effort on the local level, yet linked to a national Teamster-wide movement to rebuild the union. We must build a new group which goes beyond TDC and which can survive the long term task of seriously challenging, and successfully defeating, the present leadership of the IFT.

The enclosed document represents a perspective, program, and organizational plan for such a group--Teamsters Union, Teamsters for a Democratic Union--we don't even have a name for it yet. This is not a final proposal at all. It is being circulated only among a few key TDC activists to read, think about, and comment on. It is not a public document.

We would like you to think about this document seriously. We welcome your comments and criticisms. Write us at TDC, P.O. Box 99133, Cleveland, Ohio 44199 or call (216)6410753. In fact, people from TDC may be calling you to talk over your ideas about it. In some cities we hope that people can visit with you and go over the plan in some detail. We will be calling and visiting throughout the month of May.

Our idea is this: we want to discuss this document as thoroughly as possible with people like yourselves who have been active in TDC. Then we will call together a meeting in Cleveland on June 6 of those who are really interested in building an ongoing Teamster rank and file group. We are hoping that anywhere from 30-50 people would be involved in this meeting. They would discuss, change, and finalize a document which could then be used as a call to found a new national Teamster rank and file organization. A founding convention could then be held later in the summer, probably late July or early August. This group would be a working body that would be active in planning for the convention where the actual organization would be formed, it's administration and steering committee selected, and it's work begun.

Please read this over with some care. Think about it carefully. Let us know what you think. We will be in touch with you about your ideas and recommendations.

JUST TO LET YOU KNOW WHAT'S IN THESE  
WORKS. HAVE SENT THIS TO BOJAK, HART,  
McNELLY, McLAUGHLIN, SACKTON, & MILLER IN THE  
BOSTON AREA AND CHRIS PAV PAVIA UPS.

In Struggle for a Better Union,

Ken Paff

*Mike J.*

## PERSPECTIVE AND PROGRAM FOR AN ONGOING RANK AND FILE UNITED TEAMSTER ORGANIZATION

### RANK AND FILE POWER IS THE ANSWER

Today, rank and file Teamsters face a challenge and we have no choice but to take it up. The employers are attacking our living standards and working conditions, and in the face of this attack, our union leadership does NOTHING. Those who claim to lead us are failing us. We—the rank and file—must lead the fight to protect our jobs, our conditions, and our rights.

Most of us don't know how, in the 1930's, the Teamsters Union was built. It was done with a mass rank and file movement that inspired tens of thousands of truck drivers who were dedicated to their union. They had a committee of 100 rank and file Teamsters to lead the big strike of 1934. No clever bureaucrats or slick lawyers did it. Rank and file power did it!

But that union is no more. It has been taken over and turned into a sellout spineless organization run by and for the power and profit of a few officials at the top. The union we, the membership, once built has been destroyed. And the union we do have will not, indeed it cannot, do the job.

### TODAY'S CHALLENGE

The economy is in a mess. Inflation and unemployment accompany recessions and recovery alike. The trucking employers' profits are up—Barron's projects an 8-10% growth rate for the industry in 1976—but our recently negotiated COL formula will leave our buying power in 1979 still behind 1973. Tens of thousands of Teamsters are still out of work even though the industry is picking up steam.

The trucking industry is no longer dominated by thousands of small outfits. As the big employers grow—through mergers, changes of operations, consolidations, and take overs—they cost us jobs. When Spector bought Hennis, they merged terminals in 23 cities and three hundreds of Teamsters out of work. When Yellow took over Republic, 230 jobs were lost in Chicago alone.

And those jobs that are not lost are made harder. The big companies "streamline" their operations by lowering our working conditions. While they get fatter profits, we get "flexible" work weeks, elimination of bid runs, more casuals, more unsafe equipment. They play one terminal or one area off against another to take away conditions already won.

In the freight industry, United Parcel Service is the model. UPS squeezes every possible drop of work out of its 60,000 Teamsters by semi-military regimentation. Big freight companies eye UPS' giant profits and are running to copy their labor practices. And UPS is pushing even harder. It is now replacing all inside full-time workers with part-timers.

This aggressive employer assault will intensify in the next few years. Those of us who aren't at the unemployment office will be working for UPS-style outfits...unless we ORGANIZE TO STOP IT! Now! That is what our movement is all about!

### THE TEAMSTERS UNION: A DOG STORY

Not so many years ago our union was considered tough. When it barked, the employers jumped. But that old dog doesn't bark anymore. It sleeps curled up at the bottom of the employers' bed. Top Teamster officials make over \$100,000 a year and think and act like the employers and crooks they golf with. They agree that the problems of the employers, not those of the membership, are the important ones. They help the trucking industry out all they can, get paid handsomely for it, and then come back and tell us it is all for our own good.

It is Teamster officials who allow mergers and changes of operations that cost us jobs. It is Teamster officials who let the companies re-write our contract through the grievance procedure. It is Teamster officials who negotiate sub-standard riders that force down our wages and conditions. It is Teamster officials who fail to protect drivers who refuse to drive unsafe equipment or dangerous overloads. It is Teamster officials who ignore the power of the rank and file, but tell us to elect this or that politician through DRIVE if we "really want to get something done." It is Teamster officials who brag of the growth of our union, but who do this only by organizing factory, office, and government workers into sweetheart deals and sub-standard agreements.

Now when the dog at the bottom of the employers' bed barks, it is at us, not the companies. The Teamster leadership does not have the same interests as we do anymore. Those who now lead this union have proven their incompetence and cowardice towards controlling the employers. They use the power of the union to intimidate and divide us. They openly steal our money. They do not defend us, but defend themselves against us. And with the employers moving to cut us back, push us harder, and pay us less, we will have no choice but to fight back and defend ourselves. It is up to the only people who have the need and the capability to wage that fight successfully—you and me—the rank and file Teamster.

### TDC/UPSurge—A GOOD BEGINNING

For the first time in many years, a national rank and file movement has emerged in the Teamsters. We could no longer afford to sit back quietly and take it! That is why the TDC formed and grew into a national force in just a few months. That is why UPS workers now have a real movement going in UPSurge.

We were able to force Fitzsimmons to up his demands and we prevented a much worse sellout than was planned. We forced the union to call the first national freight strike. We weren't able to hold people out nationally against a sellout, but we made a start at a national movement that will be able to do just that. As Business Week magazine reported,

...the traditionally monolithic union must pay increasing attention to the dissident elements. The union has had rebellious locals over the years, but any attempt to form a unionwide rebel movement has had no more impact than a butterfly alighting on a trailer truck. Now the union's tight rein may be wearing thin. Two rank and file groups, Teamsters for a Decent Contract and the affiliated UPSurge, an organization of United Parcel Service workers, were formed last summer and gathered enough support to force Fitzsimmons to take a harder line in bargaining...dissatisfaction with Fitzsimmons will continue to bubble up at freight terminals and in trucking barns and probably cause problems for the operators.

Fitzsimmons knows this too. That is why he attacked us at all three meetings of local officials in Chicago before and after the contract talks. A national campaign has been launched to attack the rank and file movement. The Teamster big shots know how important this movement is and how it could end their whole game. So does the ATA. So does UPS which has tried to intimidate and fire UPSurge. **When it comes to fighting the rank and file, the union and the companies are in it together.**

### HOW WE WILL WIN

We must now take seriously the job of rebuilding that union we once had. This will mean solid organization and ongoing work. It will mean a lot of responsibility on all our parts. But most importantly, it will mean a correct strategy. The companies and the union officials will do everything in their power to confuse and derail our efforts. We won't get where we want to go if we head up blind alleys or wander aimlessly down the wrong road. **We must rebuild the Teamsters union from the bottom up and it is only rank and file power that can do it. We are the union and we must democratically control it to serve our needs.**

It is a big job and tempting to try short cuts to this goal. People sometimes want a "savior" to do things for them. It might be a new face in office who will make things right. But it just doesn't work that way. Many good guys have gotten into office, but they accomplish very little. Last year a reform slate won all the seats in Local 667, Memphis. Now the president is just another Fitzsimmons man. Once people get into office they get a lot of pressure and a lot of unexpected "opportunities." Some are corrupted. Some simply knuckle under to very real pressure from above.

**The only answer is pressure from below--an active rank and file movement that is dedicated to a clear program, holds its leaders responsible to it, and that advances leaders as part of the movement to rebuild the union. We must take union elections seriously, but the important point is not just winning the office, but in organizing the membership to control it's officers and electing officers with a serious commitment to the movement which made their election possible.**

Others look for their "savior" in judges or politicians who will "set things right" for us. These efforts fail because judges and politicians respond to power and pressure. They are not neutral. The TDC was party to a suit to win a separate vote on our supplements. The suit was against the IBT, but there at the table was the head of the employers association. William Usery, the Secretary of Labor, sent a note supporting the IBT. Opposed to this unholy alliance of the Teamsters union, the employers, and the government were seven rank and file Teamsters. No matter what the merits of the case, we were bound to lose.

To win we had to have a strong enough and well organized enough force to convince the judge that it was wiser to go against the union, the companies, and the government than against us. **We can be that strong, but only if we actively organize and do not passively sit back and expect others to solve our problems for us.** Relying on the courts and politicians keeps us passive, dependent on "their" expertise, and forever fund raising for legal fees. Rank and file power isn't built that way. Of course, we may need to go to court sometimes to defend our movement, but we cannot see court suits as the main way we will win gains and build our organized power. That will only happen in the day to day struggles on the job and within the union.

These two strategies--electing some few good men to office and relying on the courts and politicians--are blind alleys that have led other rank and file movements, like TURF, nowhere. We have to rely on the only person who really has the interest and the need to rebuild our union: John or Mary Teamster!

### A NEW KIND OF UNIONISM

What we need is a new kind of unionism to meet today's challenges. Rank and file unionism that fights for us, not the companies. We have to start looking out for ourselves and begin to use the union to fight a successful battle against the attacks of the trucking employers.

**We need to fight on a local basis right in the workplace.** We must organize to make a difference. Winning small victories will be the best way to convince our fellow Teamsters that it pays to organize. We must fight to win grievances locally by demanding better stewards and then backing them up on the job. We must elect our own BA's and put the heat on them through publicity in local newsletters. We must link together active people in different terminals so we can become aware of problems as soon as possible and fight them together throughout the whole local. By organizing we can make our locals more democratic. By organizing we can create beach heads of rank and file power. But isolated these small pockets cannot survive.

**We need to organize within the major companies.** Gains within one terminal or local will be wiped out if we do not spread them. The companies continually re-negotiate the contract to lower standards. By fighting throughout the system, we aim to raise the standards to the highest level. When they plan a change of work rules, change of operations, or a merger, we need to be able to defend our jobs and rights at every affected terminal.

**We need to organize nationally within the union.** We need to link up our local chapters and active members across the country. We must stand together on regional and national contracts and beat back efforts like the "flexible" work week plans where playing us off against one another is the major employer and union tactic. We will need to fight together for democratic control of the International, the chance to get rid of Fitzsimmons and his whole corrupt machine.

**We need, above all, rank and file unity.** They try to divide us between road and city, black and white, office and dock, men and women, freight and UPS, truckers and other Teamsters who work in factories, food processing plants, hospitals, etc.

**Unity means an end to second class citizenship in this union for hundreds and thousands of Teamsters. Many**

Teamsters work for sub-standard wages in sweatshop conditions. Their locals are the least democratic and most corrupt. Their officers then vote in Fitzsimmons and Co. at the convention. We must encourage and support the rank and file of these locals to end second class citizenship in this union. Together, and only together, we can throw Fitzsimmons and his friends out of office.

Unity means that we take up the fight to eliminate all forms of discrimination in our union and the industries it organizes. We must back all efforts by women, blacks, and other minorities to overcome the conditions of low pay, job insecurity, and crummy working conditions that come from past discrimination by the employers. This means raising the sub-standard contracts up to the highest levels and it means breaking down the barriers to employment and advancement in those relatively well off sectors of our union. We do this with the clear understanding that it is the employers, not other Teamsters, who have been responsible for this discrimination and it is they who must pay for it.

Unity means that we stand against all victimizations and firings. It means we stand against any attempt by the companies or the union officials to dictate our policies or leadership by singling out anyone's political views. Anyone who red-baits divides and weakens our movement. Our movement is open to rank and file Teamsters of any political views so long as they are ready to organize for our program and abide by the democratic decisions of our members. We have perfect confidence in the rank and file to make their own decisions and choose their own leaders. This is our democracy, too often denied to us.

Unity means solidarity with the United Farmworkers of America. The Teamster big shots want to force thousands of farmworkers into the Teamsters under phoney, sweetheart agreements. This lines their pockets with dues money and provides them with more phoney locals and votes to control us. The farmworkers are beating the growers and Teamster goons with one thing: rank and file power. They should be our allies.

We stand for an all out fight to win RANK AND FILE POWER! We must begin on the local level to build chapters that work on a day-to-day basis and can challenge the do-nothing officials and get rid of them. We need rank and file slates that will stand for our movement and fight for our full program. We need people willing to organize their local as part of this movement, as a model to others about how to rebuild the union. When we are able to have whole locals join the movement and link together, we will be able to rally thousands and thousands of Teamsters in an all out fight to beat Fitzsimmons and his pals in the ATA.

This is a big job, but for those of us watching our jobs and conditions being eroded away, there is no choice. It is a matter of survival. We will rebuild the union to serve our needs, or increasingly, we will become slaves to a union/company machine that will work us, use us up, and throw us away. THE CHOICE IS OURS AND WE MUST MAKE IT NOW!

## OUR PROGRAM

### FOR A FIGHTING UNION

1. All contracts to protect jobs and job security. For a shorter work week--32 for 40. Stop use of casuals. Stop loss of jobs in mergers. For a lower pension age with full COL protection. Organize brokers under uniform conditions--stop non-union brokers.
2. Fight for safe and decent working conditions. End slavery for road men--voluntary dispatch after 40. Stop "flexible" work week plans. Bring all conditions up to the highest level.
3. For a grievance procedure that includes Innocent Until Proven Guilty and the Right to Strike at the Local Level.

### FOR A DEMOCRATIC UNION

4. For direct election of all officers, from shop stewards and BA's up to the International General President. No officer to receive more than one salary, or be paid more than those he represents. No special pension plans.
5. Monthly meetings in all locals with full democratic rights. Right to vote on separate supplements. Right to ratify contracts at meetings before returning to work (if on strike). Democratically controlled union publications that inform the members.
6. End political corruption that joins our union with gangsters and rotten politicians. Use our union's power with one day strikes and other demonstrations for winning our rights in Congress or stopping anti-labor bills. End all corruption in our pension funds.

### FOR RANK AND FILE UNITY

7. End the second class citizenship of sweetheart locals. All contracts brought up to the highest levels.
8. Make our union fight for equality. Stop discrimination against women, blacks, other minorities.
9. Support the United Farmworkers of America. Stop the raid by Teamster goons.
10. Build a national rank and file movement that will fight for this program. Re-build our union from the bottom up to serve our needs.

## AN ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN

1. We should establish a national membership organization and hold a membership drive. Membership to be \$5 per year. All Teamsters, wives and/or husbands, are eligible to join. All have equal rights to attend meetings, run for office, vote, etc.

2. We should build local chapters in cities or individual local union jurisdictions with elected steering committees to organize them. Chapters should be active in local issues, grievances, local contracts, and publish local newsletters or newspapers as organs of the organization.

3. We should establish divisions for various companies and/or trade jurisdictions as part of the organization. For

Instance, UPSurge would be the UPS division of the group.

4. There should be yearly national conventions where policies are discussed and set, and where a National Steering Committee is elected.

5. The National Steering Committee shall organize the group between conventions, choose administrative officers, direct national campaigns, and manage national finances.

6. All members, chapters, and divisions shall follow policies agreed to by the organization at its convention and through its steering committee. They may also set their own activities, projects, raise funds for their own divisions and chapters as long as they are in accord with the group's overall policies.

7. All officers and spokespersons for the group shall be responsible to the body that elected them. No one shall use the organization for personal gain.

8. Members of the group who run for union office shall run as candidates of the organization dedicated to building rank and file power and supporting its program.

9. A firm financial system must be worked out, with all finances accounted for in monthly reports. A financial pledge system shall provide funds in addition to those raised by the \$5 membership fee.

10. A short, democratic constitution shall be drawn up based on these principles to guide the organization and make sure it continues as a democratic rank and file movement.