

LRA'S ECONOMIC NOTES

LABOR RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
145 West 28th Street
New York, N.Y. 10001-6191

Vol. 60, Nos. 7-8

July-August 1992

What Needs To Be Done For Labor To Flourish

Part one of an LRA forum on the future of labor.



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To reclaim popular support, to energize and expand its own base, and to act more forcefully in national politics, organized labor should:

Develop a labor-led strategy of industrial renewal focusing on worker

Support A New Political Party

training and work reorganization. Advance this strategy through productivity bargaining centered on it. Get beyond job-control adversarialism without selling out.

Throughout the labor movement, promote the "organizing model" of unionism and "community unionism." Also, break down the distinction between certified shops and everywhere else by supporting "minority unionism" in non-certified settings. Give minority union members workplace-directed services (not just credit cards!). They will immediately expand union membership and reach, and provide a base for future organizing.

Hold direct general membership elections of the lead officers of the AFL-CIO. This will energize and help unite members, and draw public attention to the labor movement as the only

truly democratic, mass-based, membership movement in the country. To get better coordination within that movement, promote merger and strategic consolidation among affiliate unions.

Aggressively publicize a short "bill of rights for working Americans" summarizing labor's political goals. Support a new political party to achieve these goals. Remain friendly with Democrats also supporting them by offering them "cross" nomination on the ballot line of this New Party, but run your own candidates (including lots of union members) where you can win.

Be prepared to accept a split in the AFL-CIO over this strategy. Unity without purpose is meaningless, and time is running out.

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