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ANNOUNCING THE PUBLICATION OF PART II OF THE LABOR TRAINING SERIES:

PLANT CLOSINGS AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE: A GUIDE FOR UNION NEGOTIATORS

by Anne Lawrence and Paul Chown.

Faced with widespread job losses among their members, many unions today have placed job security at the top of their bargaining agendas. **Plant Closings and Technological Change: A Guide for Union Negotiators**, by Anne Lawrence and Paul Chown, just released by the Center for Labor Research and Education, is a practical manual for union negotiators responsible for bargaining contract language designed to prevent layoffs and provide benefits for workers who lose their jobs.

The problem of plant closures is stunning. The federal government does not count shutdowns directly, but estimates based on private research data show that over four million jobs a year were lost in the early 1970s as a result of plant closings and runaway shops. For every ten large manufacturing plants open in 1969, three had closed by 1976. Since then, tens of thousands more workers, many of them unionized, have joined the victims of plant closings.

Technological change also poses a major threat to workers' job security. The development of the microprocessor, or "computer on a chip," has made possible an unprecedented transformation of the workplace. **Business Week** has estimated that within the next decade, new technology may radically change as many as 45 million jobs, half of them now unionized. As many as 25 million jobs may be completely eliminated.

Of course, for every job lost through technological change or plant shutdowns, others are created elsewhere in the economy. But often it is not the workers--and unions--who lose out who are gaining jobs and members in the growth sectors.

Faced with widespread plant closings and technological change displacement, many unions have sought through collective bargaining to check further layoffs and lessen the hardship for those who are already out of work. Provisions such as advance notice of shutdowns and layoffs and restrictions on management's rights to close plants, transfer work, and displace or downgrade workers are increasingly being used by unions to prevent or postpone layoffs. For workers who lose their jobs, unions are seeking improved severance pay, extension of health care benefits, transfer rights, and retraining assistance.

Plant Closings and Technological Change is designed for use by union negotiators responsible for bargaining contract language on these and related topics. The book is organized by type of contract clause, such as advance notice or severance pay. Each section contains an introduction to the major bargaining issues and a checklist of items negotiators may wish to cover. The manual then provides samples of actual contract clauses recently negotiated by unions in a variety of different industries. Model clauses, included for each topic, may be used by negotiators in framing their own proposals for contract bargaining.

The samples and models provided convey a sense of the range of issues being negotiated today by innovative unions in response to the problems posed by disinvestment in American industry.

Some highlights of the contracts Lawrence and Chown discuss include:

- ◆ Several major national agreements, including master contracts in the auto, rubber, electrical, and packinghouse industries, now require the employer to give six months' advance notice of a plant closure. One local of the Bakery Workers has won an 18 month advance notice clause in local negotiations with a company which had shut down several facilities.

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- ♦ The Rubberworkers' new contract with Goodyear gives the union the right to explore with the company all possible means of averting a closure. If these attempts are not successful, the agreement requires the company to meet with the union to negotiate the manner in which the shutdown is carried out.
- ♦ The Communications Workers now require the telephone company to provide the union with six months' advance notice of any major technological change which will affect workers. And Bell cannot use any new technology to monitor worker performance from remote locations.
- ♦ Some unions have won outright bans on plant closures. The Food and Commercial Workers won an 18 month moratorium on all plant shutdowns by Armour and Company, and the Autoworkers persuaded Ford and General Motors to agree not to shut any facilities for two years because of outsourcing.
- ♦ The new contract negotiated by the UE and IUE with General Electric requires the company to pay at least two weeks' pay per year of service in severance pay to workers with 15 or more years' seniority who are laid off in a plant shutdown.
- ♦ The Rubberworkers' contract with Goodyear extends medical benefits for laid off workers for two years after a plant closure.
- ♦ General Electric's contract with the IUE and UE agrees to reimburse workers laid off in a plant shutdown up to \$1800 for retraining expenses at an accredited school or skills center.
- ♦ In the printing trades, the Typographical Union has set up a joint committee at many newspapers to administer training during the shift from traditional to automated composing rooms. Any issues the committee is unable to resolve will be referred to arbitration.

These, and over a hundred other contract clauses, are discussed and quoted in detail in this manual.

Obviously, collective bargaining alone cannot solve the problems of job loss facing American workers and their unions. But it can offer creative solutions to many problems associated with disinvestment and unemployment. **Plant Closings and Technological Change** is a useful, detailed guide for union negotiators seeking to expand contract language to protect job security and guarantee benefits to those who lose their jobs as a result of plant closings and technological change.

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Plant Closings and Technological Change may be ordered from:
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