

Survival is the Name of the Game or is It?

The Role of the United Auto Workers in
Bowling Green, KY

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I would like to thank all those who spent time with me discussing the role of local 2164--Eldon Renaud, Jr., Roger Matthews, Eddie Jefferson, James Walker, Don Watson, Norm Catt and Dale Jakel. Their insights were invaluable and the paper could not have been written without their input.

May the future be kind to all its workers who work so hard.

For the wretched of the earth, there is a flame that never dies. Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise.

This paper is dedicated to those who have not only survived, but have done so in their own way and on their own terms.

The tapes (6) and items generated by this project will be placed in the Folklife Archives housed in the Kentucky Building on the campus of Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky.

"The times, they are a changing" has become our new national anthem. No longer, however, is it just part of America's pastime. Rather, it has now become a known and celebrated fact. People everywhere reveal in its hypnotic melody. It guides our actions and it controls our destinies.

Yet, we are not passive agents in this game of change--unknowing and unwitting. We are players and we have accepted the rules of this game, for the good of all. Change and conformity have become the American way. Oftentimes, the results are less than satisfying. But guided by an inner strength, we move on--some by manipulation, others by mediation and still others, by a successful combination of the two. It is important to remember, though, that our public image reveals only that which we wish others to see--not necessarily that which we wish others to know.

When presented several months ago with the tasks of researching and writing about the role of the local union in Bowling Green, Kentucky, I did not have to look far. The United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, local 2164, offered an excellent case study. Representing workers at General Motors Corvette Plant, the union is the largest and most active in Bowling Green.¹ Left primarily to my own devices, I gathered basic information, personal observations and in the process, gained a better understanding of the complex interplay between time and place. The following is a summation and interpretation of my findings. After all, this union's history is

still being written.

In order to put the material into a more easily understood context, a brief introduction to the union as a larger entity is necessary. On February 11, 1937, after six weeks of the "most critical labor conflict of the 1930's,"² General Motors signed an agreement recognizing the UAW as its official bargaining agent. From the beginning, the union chartered its own course and seemingly answered to no one. Founded two years earlier, the UAW's notoriety was gained "through its connection with General Motors."³ The ability and power of this union, often predicated on tenuous grounds,⁴ made for a long and constant struggle marked by varying degrees of change and conformity. Today, this notion is clearly evidenced in the UAW's continuing relationship with General Motors--most noticeably on the local level.

We must never forget that workers' gains are not provided by generous companies--they are gained the "old fashioned way"--they're earned--through negotiations, sometimes strikes--but always through solidarity.⁵

The words seem fitting for a union which prides itself on numerous concerns and commitments, from helping the individual to creating a better society.⁶ The "best" representation, for the American worker, is achieved through a network of international, national, regional and local unions. While each makes its own history, the successful functioning of one is, nevertheless, still dependent on the successful functioning of all. The same is true for the individual, who depends on support from his/her brothers and sisters. The result is an unending interplay between these levels, unbeknownst to those involved. One's

actions, thereby, carry a much greater meaning. "To harness and use the considerable role of labor for the common good, requires an understanding of social organization and human behavior in our whole society."⁷

Recreation, socializing and political action, also component parts of the UAW's superstructure, present an excellent way for understanding this union's history. In fact, these crucial parts are found throughout its entire network, always playing a sustaining function. Setting out to fulfill the promise of an American Democracy, the UAW instead ended up characterizing our "less than ideal" society.⁸ For better or worse, its local unions carry forth both this message and its "proper" meaning.

The local union is the individual member's point of direct contact with his/her union; its performance is the basis on which the worker judges not only the local but perhaps, the national union and the labor movement as a whole.⁹

Today, there are 1,187 UAW locals--155 of which represent General Motors.¹⁰ As potentially one of many, Bowling Green's Corvette Plant is able to distinguish itself. It is a distinction recognized by both the UAW (in a larger sense) and General Motors, for it involves a product that lends status to both. Bowling Green serves as the setting--designated as the only place in the world where Corvettes are manufactured. While the viewpoints of union and corporation differ, the aims remain the same. A product that both can be proud of acts as the tie that binds. Perhaps, though, too much time has been invested in "perfecting the craft."¹¹

To fully articulate the role of local 2164, one must understand

its past, present and probable future--noting, however, that one easily fades into and imbues the other. Beginning with the closing of the Corvette plant in St. Louis, Missouri in December 1979 and its subsequent move to Bowling Green, with work force in tow, I will address the various strategies which developed to cope with this changing situation. With time, these strategies have become attainable and profitable. The future gives way to a peaceful coexistence, in which the struggle hardly seems worth the effort.¹² Bowling Green has offered change and a reason for "hanging together."

Corporate actions regarding the closing of a plant can take a variety of forms.¹³ In the case of the Corvette plant, however, the decision to move was definite. The move came during a time when the profitability of the American auto companies was in danger.¹⁴ Control is said to then become a major concern when profitability is somehow threatened.¹⁵ Sociologists, who have analyzed the effects of this particular relocation, suggest this change has allowed management to "augment its power over labor."¹⁶ While initially this statement seemed to be accurate, the present analysis indicates the avoidance of conflict by both sides--thereby, establishing a relationship in which workers serve the best interests of corporation and union. The success of one depends heavily on the success of the other.

Despite the problems faced by the auto industry as a whole in the latter 1970's, General Motors was setting production records at its huge St. Louis assembly plant. By early March, the work force employed numbered over 10,000. By mid-March,

though, General Motors was announcing its plans for moving Corvette production to another facility. Nine months later on December 13, the decision was finalized.¹⁷ The reasons, given publicly by General Motors, for the move dealt with issues of environmental pollution, modernization, space and economics.¹⁸ The "real" reasons, however, pointed to the strained relations between labor and management.

Essentially, St. Louis Local 25 was considered an extremely powerful union. Backed by a substantial membership, its most important advantage was the plant's mode of multi-line production. "When one line wanted a concession from the company, General Motors was forced to give in or see its entire St. Louis operation close."¹⁹ The Corvette assembly line played a crucial role. Not only did the car occupy a unique position within the corporation, but it was selling so well that a threatened strike only increased the union's power.²⁰ Consequently, labor was viewed as a problem that needed solving.

Bowling Green provided workable solutions. The move, as interpreted by workers, was designed to bust the union.²¹ While the work force previously knew the benefits of a strong union, it was much harder to establish a union in a low-wage, non-union area such as Bowling Green.²² The change presented new opportunities for workers who literally had no other choice. Faced with a prior layoff situation or the need to support their families, over 936 workers transferred. Signing away their seniority rights in St. Louis, they were in Bowling Green to stay.²³

Workers were not in the position to question management's

methods. They were simply grateful for a job and the security it brought. Other changes were readily accepted. After all, the move had occurred rather quickly for most and the process of readjustment had only begun.²⁴ The modernization of the plant brought changes in production, such as the practices for creating spare time and the system of relief on the line; the in-plant rules which became more ambiguous and the means of job classification.²⁵

Many workers wound up with different jobs, ones they were not trained for or had not previously done. Seniority was no longer the prime consideration. The union simply took a backseat. Criticisms were leveled. Attempting to cope in a new environment, though, the workers remained committed to the principle of unionism.²⁶

While General Motors initial intent may have been to bust the union, the workers were left stranded in the middle--between the union with its hands tied and the corporation always with an ulterior motive. Yet, these workers were equally important to the existence of both. This fact did not go unnoticed for long. However, the workers themselves were too preoccupied with more relevant matters to pay close attention. Apparently, they caused quite a stir within the community.

The relocation of major companies in Bowling Green was nothing new.²⁷ But of all those companies, only General Motors came with its own work force. Emotionally drained from deciding whether to transfer or not and facing the difficult process of moving, the workers were not prepared for Bowling Green's less than enthusiastic

welcome.

The St. Louis area was large and heterogenous. Nobody cared there where you worked. You just worked at one of the many factories.²⁹ The entry of General Motors into Bowling Green, however, was celebrated with much fanfare. The reports of high wages and the promise of jobs by General Motors to city officials offered substantial encouragement to unemployed area residents.³⁰ General Motors, though, neglected to mention its agreement with the UAW.³¹

Problems continued to mount and when no jobs were offered to locals, the incoming St. Louisians were blamed.³² Formerly one of many, the workers were quickly labeled "outsiders." Working for General Motors became the key to how others treated them and how they came to see themselves. It became their identity and their stigma. Through open displays of hostility, the locals made their feelings known.³³ The workers turned toward each other for help, something formerly not done. In the process, their relationship with one another changed substantially.³⁴

By this time, the union was becoming more involved. Though formally recognized by General Motors and chartered on March 4, 1981, the union could do little without a local contract and general election. The first union officials had been appointed and nothing was being done.³⁵ Rising quickly through the ranks, however, was a young maverick, Eldon J. Renaud, Jr. Unemployed by General Motors in St. Louis, he came to Bowling Green with the Union's presidency in mind. In a general election in September 1982, he became "the worker on the line that got to be President."³⁶

The image of the union and its workers, nevertheless, did not

improve immediately. Before Renaud's election, in August 1982, union employees walked off their jobs when union and management failed to negotiate the plant's first local contract. Employees work under both a national contract, governing salaries, pensions and fringe benefits and a local contract, dealing with job classification and seniority right.³⁷ Lasting nine days, "the agreement gave both the union and management a substantial document to refer to in settling grievances."³⁸

In September 1984, a second strike followed in which Corvette workers were part of a selected strike across the United States to protest local bargaining issues with regard to the national contract. In 1984, there was another brief strike in negotiating the second local contract. The third contract, always a charm, was approved without a hitch in 1987. The long, hard struggle had officially ended.³⁹ Today represents the beginning of a new era.

Actually, a relationship between General Motors and the UAW, based on mutual interests, had already developed before the relocation to Bowling Green. In the late 1970's, the UAW reached an agreement with General Motors to end their "Southern strategy."⁴⁰ General Motors, in turn, would work with the union to support worker involvement programs. Employees were strongly encouraged to participate and become involved in the operations of the plant.⁴⁷ The reasons for working together were clear: "Good labor-management relations are needed if the company's success is to continue."⁴²

Further proof can be found in the words of General Motors'

President, F. James MacDonald, during the dedication of the plant. "The days of an adversary relationship are gone. We are going to have to develop an atmosphere of mutual respect, mutual goals and mutual dedication."⁴³ All three principles, noting the new found corporation between management and labor, were also outlined in the stated objective of the Corvette organization.⁴⁴ The "confrontational" atmosphere between labor and management in St. Louis was replaced with a "more mature" approach in Bowling Green. The directives of both, formerly separate, became one.⁴⁵

The next step in the joint ladder of success involved correcting the "image" problems that threatened to harm both. By recognizing the importance of the individual and community responsibility, General Motors really had nothing to worry about. The union, though, sustained an interest in improving their image, while creating a joint image in a cleverly veiled likeness of the powers that be. One way of creating a "positive" image involves concentrating on the interests of the community. General Motors and Local 2164 are showing all the right moves.

In order to offer support to a community which had also undergone change, the union and plant reserved fifty out of five hundred jobs for area residents when the second shift was added at the plant in October, 1984. The gesture was well-received.⁴⁶ As Renaud stated, "the jobs were set aside in an effort to avoid further friction between workers and laid-off area residents."⁴⁷ Friction initiated by General Motors was glossed over by the union--which needed a quick image adjustment. Out of the plant's current work force of 1,116, only 50-60 are area residents.⁴⁸

Not to fear. The commitment to community is still being stressed and in many ways, has become a key concept in the union's and plant's game plan.⁴⁹ Acceptance is sought not through the individual's affiliation with local churches and charitable organizations, but instead through the maintenance of a proper "image."⁵⁰ While the workers seem to manifest genuine commitments to their involvements,⁵¹ the interests of the union and plant seem to be more self-serving. As Renaud volunteered, "Image is very important in a conservative community, one has to be on at all times. In order to get anything done, I cannot be a liberal."⁵² For those who abide by the rules, the whole of Bowling Green acts as their attentive audience.

The political situation within the union also emphasizes that the individual maintain an image in keeping with "union interests." This statement seems particularly ironic when contrasted with Renaud's insistence that there is "no typical union member."⁵³ He himself applied to the International's Executive Board to change the policy for electing shop committeemen and alternates. Instead of every three years, these individuals are elected yearly (most have been continually reelected) to ensure the best means of representation.⁵⁴ "We are interested in the best local, we can get."⁵⁵

Renaud speaks candidly about the importance of various factors needed for the union's success. Individuals, he feels, must be educated on an on-going basis.

If they're growing, then the union is growing with them. If people aren't going to learn, then we don't need them. I put people in a position [a union-appointed job] to see what

they're gonna do. They have to prove themselves.⁵⁶

Success, he outlines, comes with the willingness to work, donate time and with one's vital interest in the people and their concerns. Personal greed and selfishness are not tolerated.⁵⁷

Those who have opposed Renaud (through antagonistic means) or have simply not served in the "best interests of the union" are discredited in a number of ways. Generally, they are branded "outsiders" based on their actions.⁵⁸ Oftentimes, it is only a matter of the executive board not offering their support. When election time arrives, explains Renaud, they quickly fall under scrutiny and are not elected (or reelected, whatever the case may be). Others are simply removed from the job--always with a reason.⁵⁹

The union membership seems to support these decisions. What concerns me, however, is why Renaud seemed so bent on convincing me that he has continually done the right thing. He was so concerned with discussing those whom he couldn't or hasn't yet convinced. Elaborating upon his attempts to create a better understanding of the union, he pontificated: "If you do a good job, you don't have to be political."⁶⁰ Why then did he define everything politically, always in terms of the "union's best interests"? And moreover, what does this phrase really mean?⁶¹

The individual, separately and collectively, serves as the union's and plant's main concern--for it is to the membership that both must turn for approval. Any discussion of layoffs is couched in terms of the efforts that have been undertaken to "try to get people work."⁶² Despite the low attendance at union

meetings, I was assured that members always know what is going on. Committeemen walk their district everyday and there is no question that they "know" their people. The more they do for their people, the more support they have.⁶³ Members know all aspects of the union's financial dealings. The union, in turn, should do "everything it can to help its people."⁶⁴

The joint training program, conducted by both management and union, is designed to meet the needs of its people (but the interests of all). Generally, a program of this type begins on the international level and slowly finds its way down into the local. Local 2164 began implementing this program in December, 1987. Materials to be used in this program and subjects to be addressed must meet the approval of General Motors and local union representatives--with all decisions made jointly.⁶⁵ The program instructors are then free to develop the approved material in a manner that best suits them.⁶⁶

Like conduct in the union and plant, the program is very structured. Following a rigorous schedule, classes begin at 6:12 in the morning and end at 2:42--with a lunch break from 11:00-12:00--everyday of the week. Individual classes offered follow a set schedule (dependent on a daily regime) until all workers have been through. The program operates on a budget of a million dollars and takes six to eight weeks to develop. Participation is voluntary and classes are scheduled with a proportionate number of hourly (union) and salary (management) workers in each class.⁶⁷

The program serves as a forum for airing problems and expressing opinions. In the process, "better working conditions

are created."⁶⁸ Participants are given firsthand knowledge of how the union and General Motors operate. They also have the benefit of getting to know their fellow workers better. Those with whom I talked found the program to be extremely helpful.⁶⁹ Little do they realize, however, the degree to which the program influences their decisions--with respect to both union and management. Classes, after all, involve "every aspect of the worker's life."⁷⁰ If the classes are accepted and the materials and subjects go unchallenged or unquestioned, the management and union have proven their ability to "work together." In fact, their job has become that much easier.

The direction of future relations between General Motors and the union rests heavily on the potentiality of Quality Network. Instituted by General Motors (but claimed as a joint effort), the program concentrates primarily on three areas: improving customer satisfaction, quality and productivity. In doing so, General Motors places a greater emphasis on something once the sole concern of the union--the people. The union, in turn, is becoming more involved in all aspects of the car business.⁷¹ Expressing the union's philosophy, its president comments: "The only way to get people back to work is by selling cars and the only way to do that efficiently, is to ensure the best quality and make the customer satisfied."⁷² Local 2164 has already approved the program and is excited about its possibilities.

Technology takes a backseat to the workers--who are to become "full partners" in the business. Continuous improvement in all areas is sought.⁷³ The local President queried about

this future stated:

This undertaking will help in every aspect of our plant. The international will get along better with us, they will realize we are not out to get them... We will maintain an outspoken leadership. If something needs to be changed, things will just be worded a little differently. With quality comes job security.⁷⁴

If one thing is certain, the Corvette's future is being carefully ensured.

Endnotes

¹There are eight other manufacturing plants which are Union represented in Bowling Green. The Corvette Workers constitute half of all the union workers. Kentucky Department of Economic Development Division of Research and Planning, Resources for Economic Development: Bowling Green (Bowling Green: Bowling Green-Warren County Chamber of Commerce, 1985).

²The weapon which the UAW used to force the hand of General Motors was the controversial sit-down strike. Instead of the customary refusal to come to work, the sit-down strike was a refusal to leave work. This success paved the way for the UAW to make rapid strides in the auto industry. Marten Estey, Unions: Structure, Development and Management (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1981), p. 28.

³The connection is long-term and notable. Ibid., p. 29.

⁴The bargaining power of individual unions depends on the economic conditions in their particular industry or occupation and in the last analysis, on their ability to conduct an "effective strike."

⁵Eldon Renaud, Jr., ed. President's Report in the Assembler (local union newsletter), to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the UAW, 1985. Files of Local Union 2164, 802 Lain Avenue, Bowling Green, Kentucky.

⁶This ideology is expressed in all UAW union publications and is reinforced in the local's newsletter. Many locals have also published histories. "We are people, all kinds of people... but because we are UAW, we are in one important respect not like any other people. We in the UAW are believers -- believers in justice; believers in the capacity of men and women to remake their world according to their moral convictions... We had made civil rights and human rights our vital concern." You and the UAW: Local Union Leadership and Membership (Detroit: UAW Education Department, 1986, pp. 2-3.

⁷Estey, p. 48.

⁸All image and no substance.

⁹Estey, p. 50.

¹⁰Interview with Eldon J. Renaud, Jr., Offices of Local Union 2164, Bowling Green, Kentucky, 23 February, 1989 (Tape 1).

¹¹The close relationship between UAW and General Motors is apparent in the interviews I conducted and in the recent literature of both.

¹²In one of our interviews, Renaud made reference to the fact that the workers took certain things for granted because they no longer knew what it was like to struggle.

¹³plants can close completely at one point in time or gradually reduce operations over a period of years. Multiplant firms also can shift operations and/or capital from one facility to another. Finally, corporations can move plants from one area to another, with or without the transfer of workers between them." John Zipp, "The Hidden Costs of Capital Mobility: Identity at Issue," p. 1. This paper was made available for my own use. It is part of a study conducted by sociologists from Washington University in St. Louis who examined the entire process of the Corvette plant's move to Bowling Green. In-depth interviews were conducted with fifty of the workers who transferred.

¹⁴"The auto industry and auto workers are in the midst of the gravest period of difficulty since the 1930's." The reference back to these early years is interesting -- especially in light of the changing relationship between General Motors and the UAW. John Zipp, "Plant Closings and Control Over the Workplace: A Case Study," p. 6.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁶While his argument is very plausible, I think that the UAW and General Motors now realize how much they need one another. The objectives of both can no longer be separated, Ibid, p. 4.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 9.

²⁰Zipp suggests that although labor relations may have been a problem elsewhere for General Motors, problems in St. Louis were perhaps worse and had more serious consequences for production than any other GM plant.

²¹Zipp's evidence supports this assumption.

²²Zipp, "Plant Closings and Control Over the Workplace: A Case Study," p. 11. This initial workforce was also composed of workers from California, New York, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Illinois and Georgia. Interview with Eldon J. Renaud Jr., 23 February 1989 (Tape 1).

²³Ibid. and Zipp, "The Hidden Costs of Capital Mobility: Identity at Issue," p. 3.

²⁴Zipp, "Plant Closings," p. 11. Workers had little time to prepare for the move -- forty percent reported that they had two

weeks or less advance notice.

²⁵The practice in assembly line work of creating spare time is known as "working back down the line." This became impossible. General Motors changed from a "tag" to a "mass" relief system. Before, the line would be moving constantly. Now, the line ran faster to make-up for down time. In Bowling Green, there are no set plant rules--only a "code of conduct" which stresses individual responsibility. The process of change is incredible. Zipp, pp. 14-18.

²⁶The union claims that their role in the handling of job classification was minimal. The question, though, is why weren't they looking out more for the interests of the worker? Zipp, pp. 19-21.

²⁷Other companies such as Holley Carburetor, Union Underwear and Firestone have relocated here. The difference was that they employed local residents. Zipp, "The Hidden Costs of Capital," p. 3.

²⁸The inadequate time to prepare for the move and the fact that St. Louis was a depressed housing market made it hard for workers to sell their homes. In addition to this financial drain, it was difficult for the wives of Corvette workers to find jobs. Zipp, "Plant Closings", pp. 11-13. Even today, the effects of this relocation are apparent. More than one hundred workers still travel back and forth between St. Louis and Bowling Green. Interview with Joint Training Staff, Vo-Tech School, Bowling Green, Kentucky, 28 February 1989.

²⁹Zipp, "The Hidden Costs of Capital Mobility," p. 6. This fact was mentioned often during my interview with the joint training staff.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹As part of the 1979 International Agreement between GM and UAW, St. Louis workers had transfer rights to Bowling Green. The union's position and involvement in the entire relocation process seemed rather dubious. Zipp, p. 2.

³³As indicated by Zipp, and reiterated by the Joint Training Staff, these actions were not committed by all members of the Bowling Green community. Instead, "it took only a few before we perceived it to be the entire community." In this instance, the perception was more important. Interview with Joint Training Staff, 28 February 1989.

³⁴Zipp, "The Hidden Costs of Capital," p. 13. An instructor on the joint training staff, James Walker, assessed the changing relationship between the UAW and General Motors. The people of Bowling Green did not distinguish between hourly and salary workers. We all worked at GM. This sense of a common identity

brought us closer together. Roger Matthews, another joint training instructor, makes a distinction. It was previously thought that all management was against the union. In truth, it is only upper management. This comment is especially invaluable when considering the present situation. Interviews with Joint Training Staff, Vo-Tech School, Bowling Green, Kentucky, 28 February 1989. Informal Interview with Joint Training Staff, Vo-Tech School, Bowling Green, Kentucky, 24 February 1989.

³⁵Zipp, "Plant Closings," p. 21. and Interview with Eldon J. Renaud Jr., his residence, Bowling Green, Kentucky, 1 March 1989 (Tape 4).

³⁶Joe Ward, "Union leader has traveled bumpy road to success," Courier Journal, November 17, 1986, pp. C-1 and C-2. Quote is taken from Interview with Eldon J. Renaud, 23 February 1989 (Tape 2).

³⁷Park City Daily News, August 12, 1982, article from vertical file located in The Kentucky Library, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky and Park City Daily News, August 15, 1982, article from vertical file (Warren County -- Business) (listed under General Motors).

³⁸Park City Daily News, September 16, 1984, article from vertical file.

³⁹"History Presentation of Local 2164," Joint Training class currently being taught, p. 9. Concessions were granted by GM with regard to the 1987 local contract. However, the process seemed to be less problematic.

⁴⁰General Motor's "Southern Strategy" involved moving its plants to non-union, low-wage, cheap labor areas. Interview with Eldon J. Renaud Jr., 23 February 1989 (Tape 1).

⁴¹Park City Daily News, August 11, 1981, article in Kentucky Library's vertical file.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Park City Daily News, August 10, 1981, article in Kentucky Library's vertical file.

⁴⁴ The dedicated objective of the Corvette organization is to provide a work environment and quality of work life in an atmosphere of trust and open communication that will result in product pride, recognition of individual involvement and accomplishment, community responsibility, high quality and competitive cost. Zipp, "Plant Closings," p. 15.

45"Cooperation rather than confrontation was the new watchword." Ibid., p. 16. Furthermore, the union has become more image conscious.

46In mid-October, 1984 a second shift was added lasting only until April, 1986. I think the gesture was well-received for a number of reasons: employment of some area residents showed at least a beginning concern for the community; General Motors and the union could point to their continuing involvement in the community with churches, organizations, etc.; there is a concentrated effort on the part of both to find employment for those workers who were laid off when the second line closed. Park City Daily News July 23, 1984, article in Kentucky Library's vertical file. For further information on finding those who were laid-off, consult Interview with Eldon J. Renaud, Jr., 23 February 1989 (Tape 1).

47Park City Daily News, July 23, 1984.

48Interview with Eldon J. Renaud Jr., 23 February 1989. (Tape 1).

49The notion of community, discussed in terms of Bowling Green but also in terms of the General Motors-UAW community, is apparent throughout my interviews.

50In a discussion of the city government's plans to raise the occupational tax, Renaud states: "They incorporated our plant into the city just to get the occupational tax. Why should only we pay? We don't see any benefit." Interview with Eldon J. Renaud Jr., 23 February 1989 (Tape 1).

51The workers seem to be working hard for acceptance. Interview with Joint Training Staff, 28 February 1989. Informal Interview with Chris Reynolds, Waffle House, Bowling Green, Kentucky 3 April 1989. The plant and union, however, in their interviews, literature and directives seem to push the importance of acceptance. Workers, I am afraid, are buying into this system.

52Interview with Eldon J. Renaud Jr., February 1989 (Tape 2).

53Ibid., Tape 1.

54Ibid. This union is one out of only three or four UAW locals which has this election process.

55Ibid.

56Ibid. Those persons appointed to a full-time or part-time union appointed position are chosen by Renaud and the chairman of the Bargaining Unit. For further information on the structure of this local union and the names of those involved, consult

Interview with Eldon J. Renaud Jr., 23 February 1989 (Tape 1) and Interview with Eldon J. Renaud Jr., 1 March 1989 (Tape 4).

⁵⁷Interview with Eldon J. Renaud Jr., 23 February 1989 (Tape 1).

⁵⁸Word travels by way of the union grapevine. Renaud confided, "It is a political organization. So that people that are outspoken against me, I am certainly not going to put in a position of leadership." Interview with Eldon J. Renaud Jr., 1 March 1989 (Tape 4).

⁵⁹Interview with Eldon J. Renaud Jr., 23 February 1989 (Tape 1) and Interview with Eldon J. Renaud Jr., 1 March 1989 (Tape 4).

⁶⁰Interview with Eldon J. Renaud Jr., 23 February 1989 (Tape 2).

⁶¹For the most part, I do not think the workers realize the politics involved -- furthermore, exactly whose politics they are.

⁶²Interview with Eldon J. Renaud Jr., 23 February 1989 (Tape 1). There have been three lay-offs. January, 1986 - 200 workers; April, 1986 - 321 workers; January 1988 - 300 workers. "Employment figures depend on the production schedule, and the schedule will depend on consumer demand." Park City Daily News, March 11, 1980, article from Kentucky Library's vertical file.

⁶³Interview with Eldon J. Renaud Jr., 1 March 1989 (Tape 4).

⁶⁴Interview with Eldon J. Renaud Jr., 23 February 1989 (Tape 2).

⁶⁵Informal Interview with Joint Training Staff, 24 February 1989.

⁶⁶All classes are voted on by the local membership (see course evaluation included), Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid. Both the union president and the plant manager are there to kick off the program. They also come every Friday at 1:00 to answer any questions the workers may have.

⁶⁹Informal interview with Chris Reynolds, 3 April 1989 and Interview with Joint Training Staff, 28 February 1989.

⁷⁰See list of sessions offered.

⁷¹Interview with Eldon J. Renaud Jr., 23 February 1989 (Tape 1).

⁷²Ibid. The current president of the UAW is Owen Bieber.

⁷³Hence, the Worker's Joint Training Program.

⁷⁴Interview with Eldon J. Renaud Jr., 1 March 1989 (Tape 3).

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