



TEACHERS FOR A  
JUST CONTRACT  
*Not just an opposition, an alternative.*

www.teachersforajustcontract.org

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## The Truth Behind Our Two Vacation Days

In the 6/22 agreement, we regained the two vacation days before Labor Day. Those days mean a lot. UFT leaders hope we'll be so excited we won't see that *they gave back too much*.

### **We Gave Back Money**

UFT leaders committed us to 1.08% worth of givebacks in the 2009 contract. (0.58% was supposed to come from reducing the interest rate on the fixed TDA. But that legislation did not pass by the deadline.)

### **Pay Cut for Future Members**

Their take home pay will be cut by 3% from their 10<sup>th</sup> to their 27<sup>th</sup> year because of their increased contribution into the pension fund.

### **We Lost Professional Development on DoE Time**

This affects teachers who started in the past five years who have the "professional" instead of the permanent license. NY State requires them to do 175 hours of PD every five years to renew their license. Because the agreement did not create two PD days after Labor Day, these colleagues now must do the PD on their own time, possibly at their own expense.

Finally, in exchange for making the day after Labor Day a non-instructional day to prepare for students, elementary and

middle school teachers will have to do the equivalent of one extra day of instruction next June in place of a PD day.

Until 2006, we came back the day after Labor Day. The return of students varied from the next day to the next week. Then, in the 2005 contract, the UFT leadership negotiated away two vacation days for a 1.08% pay increase. Now, we are going to give back the 1.08% pay increase, plus more givebacks! UFT leaders say this is a victory. We say this is one more bad deal the UFT leadership is trying to portray as a win. More ominously, it shows that with the current contract ending in October, the UFT leadership is already setting a course of givebacks. Both UFT leaders and the City are sure to point to the current economic crisis and tell us we have to pay for it. UFT leaders have already made the argument that a worse deal could have been forced upon us. That's true only because our leadership has no plan, or desire, to organize us to defend ourselves.

But economic troubles don't inevitably spell defeats for organized labor. The worst crisis in U.S. history, the Great Depression, was a decade of unmatched gains and growth for US unions and their members. In 1934, general strikes in Minneapolis, San Francisco and Toledo won good contracts and forced the federal government to pass the National Labor Relations Act in 1935, requiring employers

to recognize and negotiate with unions. The Congress of Industrial Organizations was formed, and it organized mass production industries like tiremaking and auto with militant sit-down strikes. These tactics weren't legal, just like a teachers' strike would not be legal today. But public support for strikers was so great that political officials did not dare enforce laws against them. By 1940, union membership had quadrupled in the U.S.

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Even in our present crisis, some unions are showing they can win victories against the odds thanks to militant tactics. After their employer was forced into bankruptcy, the workers at Republic Windows and Doors in Chicago occupied their factory. This first led to severance pay and then to the reopening of their factory. When their factory was also threatened with closing, garment workers at Hartmarx, inspired by the Republic workers, voted for their own factory occupation. Their campaign has also succeeded in keeping their workplace open.

Our present UFT leadership, the Unity Caucus, used a strategy of givebacks long before this recession began. We are working longer and harder, with fewer rights and protections, than twenty or even ten years ago. When we get bullied and harassed, union officials talk the talk, but do nothing. The rubber rooms are packed, and the number of ATRs is skyrocketing.

The UFT needs new leadership. Weingarten's anointed successor, Michael Mulgrew, is just another Unity clone and more of the same. UFT elections next spring will give us the opportunity for a true alternative. Teachers for a Just Contract, in coalition with the Independent Community of Educators and other groups, is running James Eterno, a longtime teacher and Chapter Leader at Jamaica High School, for UFT President. *To volunteer for this campaign, or for more information, you can email us at justcontract@yahoo.com, contact us by telephone at 212-831-3408, or send the coupon below to Teachers for a Just Contract, POB 1346, Bronx, NY 10471.*

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