

SHOULD WE JUMP THE A.U.C.E. BOAT?

WHERE SHOULD WE JUMP TO?

--HERE'S A LIST OF QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT OUR UNION ,  
AND ABOUT OTHER UNIONS,  
WE'D BETTER CONSIDER CAREFULLY BEFORE WE LEAP-----

- 1) How democratic is the union?  
How much input does the membership have into union policies? Are the officers elected? Are the staff reps/business agents who represent us elected? Can they be recalled and by whom? Are delegates to union conventions elected by local members or are they appointed? Most of this information is available in the union constitution and bylaws.
- 2) Does the union bargain for other groups that are similar to us?  
What are the collective agreements like for other workplaces organized by the union? (You'll likely be surprised to find that we have a very good contract).
- 3) Would we form our own local or be part of a composite local?  
Would we negotiate as a local, or as part of composite or joint negotiations? (negotiations for a whole sector or region).  
If we were part of a composite local, could we bargain our own collective agreement?
- 4) Who controls the negotiations?  
Is it an elected committee from our union, or someone assigned to negotiations? Who draws up the bargaining proposals? Who decides if a contract is to be accepted by the union? Do all issues go to a vote of the membership?
- 5) What kind of assistance will we get from union officers and representatives for grievances?  
How often can we expect to see the union rep/staffer? Will we have to hire our own staff as well?
- 6) What is the dues structure?  
How much are the monthly union dues? Where do the dues go?
- 7) Is there a strike fund?  
How is it built? Is there a policy concerning strike pay? Who, what circumstances determine if we get strike pay?
- 8) Is the union affiliated with any labour central?  
Is the union affiliated with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) or the Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU)?  
Does the union belong to the B.C. Federation of Labour? (or B.C. Council of the CCU).
- 9) What kind of educational programs does the union offer its members?  
Are there shop steward training programs? women's programs? occupational health and safety programs? How often are educationals held? Are they in local or provincial schools? What about outside educational activities--can the union send members to other classes/workshops/conventions?
- 10) Does the union give financial or other support to any political parties?  
Who decides if the union contributes? Is the support conditional or unconditional?
- 11) Does the union have policies and negotiated clauses on issues of concern to us?  
What are the policies/contract clauses on equal pay for work of equal value, maternity leave, technological change, hours of work, sexual harrassment, wage controls. . .

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