1. We have learned that workers and community residents are the same people and share the same concerns, a lesson whose application has blurred the lines between community and workplace organizing. That mixing of two seemingly divergent strategies has led to dramatic victories against corporations. The collaboration between the SEIU Justice for Janitors Campaign and the community-based Coalition to Clean up Silicon Valley to win a union agreement from Apple Computers is but one example.

2. We have learned that an emphasis on cultural expressions of racial and ethnic identity are important both for the internal cohesion of an organization and as handles for organizing.

3. We have learned that organizing efforts that apply a clear economic and gender analysis can bridge interests of American-born people of color and new immigrants.

4. We have learned that no target is unassailable and that successful campaigns can be designed that both hold government accountable and confront corporate policies.

5. Finally, we have learned that organizations do not have to sacrifice analysis and leadership development for effective action. Organizations that survive consistently emphasize the roles of community members in conducting community based and institutional research, and in communicating with and recruiting members and allies to the organization. These activities, traditionally considered as arenas for professional staff rather than grassroots members, require a commitment and plan for flexible leadership models that can strengthen our capacity for direct action.

With these understandings in our repertoire, we can turn our attention to new strategies that will polarize the system and allow us to insert ourselves where we are least expected.

I can hardly close this editorial note without a word about language. While "Third World" has been replaced with new terms as a way to describe people of color around the globe, it has its roots in a cultural revolution that peaked in this country in the 1970s. The Center for Third World Organizing's use of the term places us historically, reminding us of a time when people of color all over the world claimed for themselves a common political identity. From common experiences of colonialism and exploitation also grew the most outstanding movements for self determination in this century, led by people of color and fueled by the notion that we were a world-wide force acting in solidarity.

The term "third force" has an even longer movement history. During World War II, as Black workers first came into factory jobs in the North, they were forced into the worst jobs. Attempting to protest their work conditions, they found themselves subject to a series of racist strikes by white workers upset with the limited achievements of their Black co-workers. Squeezed between the oppressive force of the factory owners and the aggressive racism of organized white workers, many Black leaders advocated the formation of Black workers into a Third Force, one that would fight for universal economic goals but would always see the defense of the race as a necessary parallel to economic and political organizing. This concept has always been important in communities of color.

THE ACHILLES' HEEL

Racism has ever been the Achilles' heel of progressive politics in the U.S. In the workplace, in the community, in identity-based organizations and — as Nick Alexander's article in this issue shows — in the student and solidarity movements, racism has undermined our best organizing and activist efforts.

For CTWO, the notion of being a third force of people of color places us outside of the traditional notion of racial politics as solely a Black/white phenomenon, and outside the framework of a politics based on the stultifying dichotomy of "left" and "right."

Claiming a position as a third force carries heavy weight. We have to defend a racially polarized position that also insists on political unity. We have to get beyond the defensive posture we have adopted in recent times, and once again take the offensive. We must develop new strategies to deal with a radically changed world, once in which the old methods no longer work.

In the end, ***Third Force*** is both a departure and a return for us: a departure from the notion of "minority trends" and a return to independent, purposeful action. We hope the magazine will help communities of color to organize, develop leadership, broaden their bases of information and contacts and build alliances with other progressive communities. We welcome your ideas, comments and submissions to further our collective mission.

Sun-Tzu's words are as relevant now as they were when he wrote them thousands of years ago.

Quite simply, our remaining task is to "weigh the situation — then move."

—Rinku Sen

words & action

NEW YORK CABBIES START ORGANIZING DRIVE

It may transport some people to other places, but for many new immigrants to New York City the yellow cab is a ball and chain on wheels, the shackles of the urban sharecropper. For a down payment of $90, a licensed cabdriver gets to lease a rickety vehicle. If he or she survives the twelve hour shift in the Big Apple's treacherous traffic, they might end up with sufficient cash to cover the lease price and take enough home to live on. While making millions for the owners of the cab fleets, the drivers have no rights or benefits as workers, are not considered legally to be "employees," are not represented by any union or association and are victimized daily by violence and robberies from their fares and shakedowns by the city taxi commission.

This litany of complaints brought together drivers, labor activists and two Asian advocacy organizations (the Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence and the South Asian Alliance for Action) to form the Lease Driver's Coalition (LDC). The LDC's goal is to organize the city's cabbies, most of whom are people of color.

According to the city's Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC), as of April 1992, 89% of recently licensed yellow or medallion cab drivers are immigrants, the overwhelming majority from the Third World. 41% are from South Asia, mostly Pakistan, India and Bangladesh.

In the summer months of 1992, during the industry's slow season, the original members of the LDC hit the bricks to bring in new members and conducted a survey at several taxi garages and gas stations. The results of the survey indicated that — after the low wages (drivers take home, on average, $45 for a twelve-hour shift) — the biggest issue among

the drivers is the exposure to violent crime and burglary. With few installed safety devices such as partitions or two-way radios (which are illegal in cabs), a yellow cab driver is more likely to be killed on the job than a beat cop on patrol in a drug zone. Twenty-seven cabbies were killed between 1987 and 1991 in New York City, and for the past several years there has been an average of three reported robberies each day.

In September 1992, the LDC began organizing to address the safety issue. Outreach continued, with the goal of getting the City Council to mandate equipping cabs with emergency one-way radios that would give the police the cab location and medallion number when activated. Education on cab driver rights to worker's compensation and other benefits is also part of the campaign.

Soon after the campaign began, however, the LDC was forced to mobilize its energies to protest a mass firing at one garage, which was coupled with a violent attack on one of the garage's drivers. Nine drivers working for the Susan Maintenance Garage were fired because of their association with the LDC. The garage owner himself, Malcolm Rattner, is alleged to have attacked one of the fired workers. The LDC has organized a series of demonstrations at Susan Maintenance, and has been demanding Rattner's indictment on criminal charges.

Taxi drivers are notoriously difficult to organize. It is a high-turnover profession without a stable worksite where workers can be reached on a regular basis, and there are few models for organizing multi-ethnic, multi-racial immigrant labor groups. The LDC, which has resumed the safety campaign, is trying to put together an organizing project that will reach the cabbies both as workers and as people of color. At the same time, the coalition has been able to mobilize support from different communities by simultaneously making the issue one of violence against people of color and of labor rights. A big challenge is going to be figuring out a way to give the workers enough support so they will feel secure enough to fight for better conditions.

— Milyoung Cho

"A yellow cab driver is more likely to be killed on the job than a beat cop on patrol in a drug zone."

OPERATION DESERT SCAM

Even for those cynics who have a hard time believing that the "New World Order" is anything more than a flimsy cover for the same old military adventures, Operation Restore Hope seemed the right thing to do. What could be a better use of the U.S. Marines than to bring food to starving people in Somalia?

Religious leaders, normally opposed to the use of force to resolve conflict, figure that disarming the "gun-happy" Somali people and protecting aid workers from marauding warlords falls within the guidelines for a "just war." Jesse Jackson and other prominent African-