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NOTE: The deadline for reports and discussion documents is
November 30. Reminders have been mailed out.

THE POLITICIZATION of the TDU

by Steve Z. (N. Y.)

The recently concluded convention of the TDU was a reasonable success in terms of size, morale, and its evident impact on IBT rank & filers.

At the same time, the convention revealed some serious weaknesses in our functioning. One of these revolves around the question: to what extent does our work in IBT reflect the increasing need to politicize our work which is felt and acknowledged by all of us?

A summary answer is that in this respect our work left much to be desired. In fact, in one area, we experienced a serious depoliticization of both the convention and our newer cadres.

The Patrick Case

The invitation to Patrick touches upon the core of our rank & file conceptions. Our politics revolve around the centrality of the ranks independent of the bureaucracy. The UMW has now passed through a 4 year period in which this strategy was on the agenda. The need for a balance sheet of this experience is not only necessary but easily demonstrated to a convention of rank & filers. Thus, a key proposal made to the TDU convention was for a campaign around the election of officers. We all favor the ranks electing IBT officers. But the balance sheet would show that despite the election of officers by the UMW ranks, and despite the extensive democratization of the union, the miners have in fact just suffered still another great defeat -- through the defeat of the most recent wildcat -- precisely at the hands of the reformist union bureaucrats they elected. Is there a lesson in this? Our conclusion, of course, is that formal democracy is not enough; that unattached to class struggle policies and a vigorous rank & file, procedural democracy will end up with more of the same old crap.

The reformist-minded worker at large has hardly learned this lesson. For most it is still "find a better leader". Even a convention of rank & filers, such as TDU, has an understanding of the role of the ranks which is still understandably ambivalent and primitive -- inevitable in a period of relatively little class motion. This being the case, the indispensable need for rank & file leadership, and the limits and dangers of liberal bureaucrats, could be made much clearer to the delegates by showing what happened in the mines -- by demonstrating to these rank & filers the real lessons of the past 4 years.

Harry Patrick fits into this picture. His invitation implicitly placed the "success" of the UMW struggle in the forefront of the TDU convention. Its relevance was clear to everyone. Under the circumstances how was it possible to make no allusion to the fact that he was part of the machine that betrayed the rank & file? Patrick has no record of public or private support for the wildcats. In fact, during the convention weekend, to more than one of us he explained at length, in private, why he opposed the wildcats, why they were wrong, etc. These are facts which any Marxist could have anticipated -- which IS documents did anticipate. These facts could have been used to deepen concretely the understanding of the necessity of the independent role of the ranks and the need to place no confidence in reformist bureaucrats.

Instead, we invited Patrick, as honored guest speaker, and he proceeded, inevitably, to muddy the waters. Not being a fool, he knew what to say in the situation. From the podium he implied that he approved the walkouts. "They were legitimate strikes, not wildcats". The "question and answer" format is such that it was difficult to contradict him.

Even worse is the fact that ^{one of our} leading speakers, in effect, helped Patrick conceal his line on the wildcats. Our speaker, referring to Fitzsimmons as one who is admired by the capitalists and politicians because "he doesn't let the ranks run riot", then added, "unlike you, Harry". This strongly implied that Harry had no objection to the ranks "running riot", which in turn implies that Harry supported, or at least tolerated the wildcats.

The format even allowed Patrick to appear to be for a labor party (in response to a question from the floor by an unknown delegate). In fact, he was no more for a labor party than any DSO leader would be "if the Democratic Party doesn't meet our needs".

In short, a bureaucrat was allowed to use our platform and even, at the end, to be voted in as an honorary member of TDU, at the urging of ^{our} leaders.

To many of us the fact that the convention responded well to Patrick was a sign of the wisdom in inviting him. In fact the opposite is the case. The fact that the convention responded well is just a sign that most of those present did not know the facts about Patrick; that we did not help them to know the facts; and that they have not fully absorbed, internalized the independent role of the ranks, nor the ease with which "democratic" charismatic bureaucrats betray. In short, they have not learned the lessons of the UMW. And we, instead of helping to break these illusions, inadvertently helped instead to strengthen them.

It is in this sense that the convention welcome to Patrick was really a defeat for our politics, and a set back to our goal of raising the consciousness of these leading rank & filers, to the extent that can be done at a convention, through an exchange of views. We allowed him to blur the line between rank & file and bureaucrats, and even to cloth himself in the banner of the rank & file.

There were many ways in which the real lessons of the UMW and Patrick could have been raised. There might have been a panel including ourselves and a leader of the wildcats! Even a leaflet or clear article in WP would have been helpful. The tactical possibilities are endless. Instead we chose precisely that method which was most damaging to and obscuring of our politics.

The Right to Strike

One expression of IS policy to the rank & file has been to support the right of stewards, with the approval of their ranks, to engage in strike action. In fact, until 1970, even the IBT allowed stewards the initiative to call 24 hour strikes (though now all strike decisions are in the hands of the teamster conferences).

Many of us were therefore surprised when a resolution came to the floor locating the right to strike in the local officers.

A ^{P. from Detroit} delegate objected and amended the resolution along the lines the IS favors. But the chairman, ^{K. from Cleveland} objected to the amendment and defended putting the right to strike in local officer hands. His reason was that anything else would open the union up to all sorts of law suits (i. e. would "endanger" the union treasury). This, of course, is the standard line of union officials.

Fortunately, the chair was defeated, and the amendment passed.

Racism

Building a black cadre is central to our politics, especially through our union work. Nevertheless, at a meeting before the convention it was decided that if the ISO tried to push a resolution on the Bakke decision, we would move to table to the steering committee. It was not, of course, that we would disagree with the resolution's content. Rather,

the ground given for tabling was that (1) we did not wish (quite correctly) to convert the convention into a resolutionary experience, and (2) we felt the race issue would be raised at the convention through concrete cases from the workplace.

But these objections are plainly invalid: (1) Clearly, once the issue was raised, it would be extremely awkward to move to table -- the blacks quite correctly would not "understand". Instead of planning to table, we should have pre-empted the issue by moving to raise it ourselves.

(2) The fact that discrimination issues would be dealt with concretely is hardly a substitute for a Bakke resolution, since a dialogue on job discrimination would, as in fact it did, take place only in a workshop attended by a tiny fraction of the convention, and by precisely that fraction (blacks and radicalized white teamsters) which needs it least. (3) Avoiding a resolutionary convention does not mean avoiding an issue so central to black politics today -- since the Bakke decision represents the policy of affirmative action in the most concrete and universal way.

What happened then was that we surrendered a chance to raise this vital politicizing issue. For, as things turned out, the resolution did in fact almost come up at the end of the convention, at the initiative of one of our own black members. But in the name of "no time" it was tabled, with the evident encouragement of K. who was in the chair. It would have been child's play for an experienced chairperson, in collaboration with others who understood the importance of the issue, to have arranged that it should be considered, and that the convention would even welcome it.

The imperative need for the Bakke resolution was amply demonstrated by the clear racist response of a top TDU leader. He objected to Blacks' right to a caucus and threatened to form a white caucus in response. (The objection that people learn through experience and not resolutions has merit, of course. But it certainly does not apply as strongly to the advanced layer of workers -- those at the TDU convention - otherwise, why bother with socialist propaganda or analytic material at all?)

Political Action

Political action is central to the strategy of the labor bureaucracy today, and has been especially so since the end of World War II and the consolidation of the bureaucracy. We, of course, are also for political action. Next only to the ranks' illusions in reformist bureaucrats, are their illusions in the Kennedys, etc. How then can we have let the convention totally ignore the question, especially since the teamster leadership's political ties are even more notorious and vicious than those of most labor leaders?

Was even a cautious, exploratory, introductory effort impossible? Not even a panel or workshop to begin introducing the question into the life of the TDU? Not even a panel to discuss "all sides" (invite a prominent Democrat, a DSOCer?, etc.) The audience's positive response to Patrick's demagoguery "for" a Labor Party was evidence enough that the issue could at least be openly discussed.

There was an even more innocent opportunity. A month or so ago TDU sent to all members a multiple choice questionnaire, which was marked by its narrowness and missed opportunities. Under the format of a questionnaire, it is easy to ask questions about things like Kennedy, Labor Party or Workers Party, Bakke, ERA, and God forbid, even socialism or at least socialists. "After all, we're only asking questions raised by the members". And if, as is likely, some of the answers proved surprising and of value, they could have been publicized as "facts", a real poll of TDU teamster opinion.

The Problem of Secondary Leaders

A highlight of the convention was certainly the participation of the Canadian teamsters. It was good that we were able to bring them. But their participation did raise some problems which were overlooked, and which could well be serious on another occasion.

Vlahovic and his associates are secondary leaders in the union. It is a reflex among socialists, an incorrect, but understandable one, to identify secondary leaders automatically as bureaucrats. Clearly this is not the case. We will have many elected officials in our ranks, many secondary leaders one day. For, when an upsurge does occur, many of the incipient, unhardened secondary leaders are perfectly capable of responding and becoming agents of the ranks instead of the machine. And, if they are politicized, of remaining with the ranks even in a bad period.

But if we can be prone to an ultra left error with respect to secondary leaders, even the best rank & filers are clearly prone to the opposite error. They are often blind (and even choose to be blind) to the fact that reformist leaders, especially when the ranks are not in motion, exhibit an organic tendency to quickly become bureaucrats.

These rank & filers do not understand that even when leaders do not wish to submit, the reform unionist is likely to remain a prisoner of bureaucratic tradition and modes of operation. He simply does not know any better, has not learned any better, and cynically can not conceive anything better -- never having experienced it fully.

For all their virtues, Vlahovic and associates do not appear to be particularly conscious of the problem of secondary leaders in a bureaucratic climate. The course of response to the attacks by Fitz which they outlined in their speeches was a conventional, bureaucratic court fight. Without rejecting this aspect of any fight, we, of course, would place the emphasis in the fight on direct rank & file action.

It is of significance that Vlahovic said nothing of these methods, and that it was one of us who brought to the attention of the convention that, in fact, the ranks had responded to the attack on their leaders in "our" way, by direct action, and, that such actions were indeed not only necessary, but the only real road to victory.

Our comrade's speech was an excellent example of how we can, and in this case did, intervene to intensify awareness of our strategy in the concrete, and take it beyond abstraction. (It suggests, too, how WP should treat a case such as Vlahovic.)

Solving the Politicization Problem

It is a truism among us that our industrial cadres provide, among other things, an important corrective to the conduct and life of a political organization such as ours. At the same time it is equally understood that the industrial wing of a socialist movement, being under constant pressure to adapt to conservative outside forces, has to be under constant corrective pressure from the "political" wing of the organization.

In the case of TDU, unfortunately, that pressure has, as far as one can tell, been missing. In each case discussed above, the EC approved the line followed by our TDU comrades. In that sense, the EC shares the responsibility for the political weakness evident at the convention.

But the EC made some contribution of its own to the depoliticization. For example, take the special Teamster insert of the convention issue of WP (#224). On the whole it was a good job. But this issue carried an article on Patrick and the UMW which hailed the wildcats, but failed even to mention that these reformist bureaucrats, Patrick included, had tried to break the strikes! Instead, it referred to the falling out among the reformist leaders (not their betrayal), implying that that was one element in weakening the rank & file struggle. Another source of the weakening, said the article, was the disbanding of MFD (but no mention was made of who did the disbanding -- Miller and Patrick). The errors in this article are compounded by the fact that a previous issue (#221) had announced that TDUers would be taking pointers from Patrick. Which pointers?

This is not the place to discuss the reasons for the EC's failure to correct the IBT fraction's weakness in implementing the IS goal of politicizing our work.

But the dangerous consequences of this failure have never been more evident or so pressing.

The serious errors admitted by the EC over the past year have shaken its confidence, prestige and, inevitably, its capacity to lead. When we add the set backs in other areas of our work, and the recent split, the result has been a situation in which the entire morale of the IS is almost totally dependent upon the success of TDU (instead of depending on politics for sustaining its morale -- a must especially for a small organization). Any serious setback to TDU, on top of the others, would therefore have a devastating political effect upon the organization as a whole.

Under these conditions, with so much riding on the outcome, it is all the more important that the EC give the fraction the political assistance it needs. The failure of the EC to meet this responsibility may make for peace in the family in the short run, but it will, and is, sowing dangers for both the TDU and IS which can be explosive in the not too distant future.

September 26, 1977

THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN PORTUGAL
Submitted by Ken B, Chicago Branch

The following is taken from a pamphlet by Noel Ignatin called "No Condescending Saviors". Ignatin used to be one of the leading Maoist-Stalinists in this country, but has now come to the view that all the bureaucratic Communist countries are state capitalist. His pamphlet is published by Sojourner Truth Organization, P.O. Box 8493, Chicago IL 60680 and is available for \$1.

The IS once intended to discuss the questions of the nature of the Communist Parties in advanced capitalist countries, but never undertook the discussion. Now with the possibility of the CP in France entering the government and the Italian CP supporting the Christian Democrats in Italy the question is taking on a new importance.

I believe the following is the correct analysis of the Portuguese CP. However, our IS literature never had a sharp position on the matter, and WP tended to treat the CP as simply left reformist.

Nothing reveals the dangerous consequences of the confusion regarding the Communist Parties more clearly than the events in Portugal. In that country, following the April 25, 1974 overthrow of the fascist regime by a group of young officers in the Armed Forces Movement, there arose several different forces contending for power:

First were the forces grouped around the new-born Socialist Party, headed by Mario Soares; these were the elements who hoped to see Portugal evolve as a traditional, western European bourgeois democratic state, based on private property in the means of production. This was the sector supported by the U.S. and the principal forces of European capitalism.

Second was the revolutionary proletariat seeking to establish its direct power in society and expressing its will, in a not-yet-clearly-distinct manner, through the Workers' Commissions, Workers' Councils and a group in the armed forces, Soldiers United for Victory. No single party was hegemonic within the proletariat. The Party of the Revolutionary Proletariat most completely identified itself with the independent revolutionary aspirations of the workers.

Third was the Communist Party, dominant in the trade unions, and the largest party among the workers. The Communist Party represented neither of the above-mentioned forces, nor did it represent a vacillating, compromising element between them. It had its own independent policy, which it pursued throughout the stormy events of the next two years and is pursuing today. And what was that policy? Simply put, it was a policy aimed at the creation of a new Portugal, without private ownership of the means of production and with the Party as the administrator of the new state and manager of the state-owned property: in other words, a regime similar to that which exists in any of the eastern European states today.

In order to accomplish its strategic aim, the CP must achieve two things: first, it must expropriate the property and crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie; second, it must restrict the scope of the mass working class movement and bring it under the control of the Party. And it must accomplish these tasks under the special conditions prevailing in Portugal: namely, that while the bourgeoisie had been dealt a severe blow with the fall of fascism, it was stronger than the working class; and also that the Party itself was a mass party and therefore necessarily responsive to various currents within the working class.

It was the need to balance various conflicting tasks and pressures that was responsible for the seemingly contradictory turns in policy. But tactics have always been subordinate to the overall goal.

When the fascists were first overthrown and CP leader Cunhal returned to Portugal to assume a post in the provisional government, various analysts around the world dismissed him as a "revisionist" committed to the parliamentary road to socialism. But when he came out with statements minimizing the importance of elections and calling on the army to continue to exercise power, and then when the CP twice took to the barricades to bar fascist attempts to overthrow the new regime, these same analysts were left with no explanation.

Several of the Maoist groups characterized the CP as "social-fascist," meaning socialist in words, fascist in deeds. But what kind of fascist is it that takes the lead in demanding full, unconditional independence for one's own colonies, as the CP did in regard to Portugal's African territories or fights for land reform, as it is doing in Portugal itself?

Both theories — the "revisionist" and the "social-fascist" — failed to explain the behavior of the Portuguese CP during the post-revolutionary crisis.

On the other hand, the CP was not a consistently revolutionary party. It had seized power in the trade union movement by simply moving into the offices and had used its authority to oppose strikes aimed at higher wages, on the grounds that they would jeopardize the country's economic position. And it opposed the formation of the Workers' Commissions and Workers' Councils, which were non-party mass organizations of direct democracy, as it likewise opposed the formation of any groups within the armed forces that ran counter to the Armed Forces Movement of the rebel officers. And even while opposing one or another conservative measure of the different provisional governments, it always maintained a presence in the government.

These various maneuvers of the Party can be explained in only one way: the Party was, and remains, a vigorous opponent of the existing capitalist regime and a serious contender for power; but the regime it strives to establish is not the "free association" spoken of by Marx. In its efforts to attain its goal, it must utilize its influence in the government and in the mass movement to crush the traditional bourgeoisie, must use exactly the same influence to prevent the working class movement from getting out of hand, and must accomplish these two contradictory tasks without losing its base of popular support.

But then don't these various considerations determining CP policy offer tremendous possibilities of support to the working class movement which exists outside of CP control? Of course they do, and the revolutionary movement in Portugal has taken advantage of that fact. Thus, for instance, when the CP took to the barricades against the fascists, the revolutionary left joined it; when the CP defended itself from the attacks of the fascists and the church, the left joined in the defense; when the CP opposed the rightward drift of the sixth provisional government, the left was on the same side.

On the other hand, when the CP opposed strikes or opposed the Workers' Commissions (and later tried to take them over), the left fought against it. The policy of the left toward the CP in Portugal is what is meant by the working class maintaining an independent stance in the political struggle.

By contrast, those groups which claim to be followers of Mao Tse-tung thought were blinded by their unreasonable hatred for the CP, so that they joined together with the CIA-backed Socialist Party against the CP in the unions, and joined in with the fascist mobs that were burning down Party headquarters in the northern cities, on the grounds of "opposing social-fascism."

The Maoist groups are unable to analyze the role of the CP and unable to arrive at a proper stance in relation to it, because they, like the CP itself, are motivated by the theory which sees the rule of the vanguard party as equivalent to proletarian power. They differ from the Communist Party only in the particular foreign country to which they look as a model.

THE TEAMSTER WORK IN QUESTION - Dan L.

Several documents have appeared recently which raise serious questions about the Teamster work--particularly the Right to Vote Campaign, the TDU invitation to Harry Patrick, and the TDU Convention itself. This paper will answer the questions raised by those documents.

Question - Doesn't the Right to Vote Campaign teach workers to rely on the government? Isn't it a substitute for mass action?

Answer - The whole purpose of the Right to Vote Campaign is to mobilize Teamsters for mass action. The campaign was a "handle" on how to organize mass, union-wide action to dump Fitzsimmons and get the membership the right to vote. A suit against the union bureaucracy provides a way to get the members that right to vote on union officers that seems like a real possibility, that is credible. It gives the members a reason for mass action. There will be no mass action if people don't actually feel they have a chance of winning. No one ever said "rely on the government". On the contrary, TDU members know the government will only move on something like this if there is mass action--petition campaigns, demonstrations, resolutions at local meetings, mass distribution of literature, etc., and the use of the public media.

Question - But doesn't that just make TDU a pressure on the courts which are capitalist institutions?

Answer - Every act of the working class until the socialist revolution will simply be a pressure on the ruling class and its institutions. The point is how to put as much pressure as possible on them. TDU is pursuing the right course, it is urging people to organize, mobilize, demonstrate, petition.

Question - But aren't the courts capitalist institutions? We don't want them making decisions about our lives, do we.

Answer - The courts are capitalist institutions, and they do make decisions about our lives all the time. Congress is also a capitalist institution, and it makes laws about our lives. Is any one in the IS against trying to force the Congress to make laws that are to the advantage of the workers? No, we have never been, not since Marx supported the 10-hour day laws in England in the 19th century. Do the courts make laws? Yes, through the power of interpretation. Do we want to force them to interpret the law in favor of the workers? Of course we do. For example, we want to force the courts to rule in our favor by defeating Bakke.

Question - But isn't this bringing the capitalist courts into the unions which are workers organizations?

Answer - The capitalist courts are already in the unions. It is true that the unions are organizations fought for and won by the workers, and in that sense workers organizations. However, they are also creatures of the capitalist society and state. The unions exist by virtue of capitalist laws passed by the capitalist government--Wagner Act, Taft-Hartley Act, Landu-Griffin Act. The government has the power to know how every penny of the unions' money is spent, the salaries and expenses of the union officers. The government limits the power of the union in its collective bargaining, defining what may and may not be bargained. The govern-

ment limits the unions' right to strike. The government sets the rules for union elections, including terms and some procedures. The government is already in the unions in all of these ways. The government already has the power--the question is, how to organize workers to get power for themselves.

Question - But won't this just teach the workers to have faith in capitalist institutions, like the courts and congress? Won't it teach them to have faith in the capitalist institutions and the capitalist system? Won't it just appeal to their most conservative instincts?

Answer - If that were the case, we could never organize anything until workers organizations challenged capitalist institutions with dual power, or until the socialist revolution. Everything we win would simply prove that the system works.

But we believe that every victory won through mass action will convince the workers that they can win from the bosses. We believe that it will increase the self-confidence, self-organization and combativity of the workers.

If we operated along the lines implied in your question, we would have to get out of the unions as well. After all, while not capitalist institutions in the same sense as the congress and the courts, unions are also part of the capitalist system. As Lenin said, union politics are capitalist politics. Because unions are based on an acceptance of the wage system and the class struggle. The union contract is a capitalist institution--after all one signer is a capitalist. The same method could be used to say that every time we win a better contract--we only prove that the capitalist system works. Or everytime we reform a union, we only prove the system works. With that method we would be totally disarmed. The point is with every victory we prove the workers can win.

Question - But don't campaigns like this which use a court suit appeal to the reformist minded workers and turn off the militant rank and filers, particularly those who are the potential recruits to the socialist movement?

Answer - The "reformist minded worker" and the "militant rank and filer" are the figments of someone's imagination. It is very hard to find in the real world that looks like these cartoons.

For example, take two of the Teamsters we recruited in Chicago. Both had been involved in organizing to pass the Javits Bill (later the Pension Reform Act, ERISA). They had been in a group called TRUTH (Teamster Ranks United To Help) which had the passage of this bill as one of its main activities. It also endorsed some Republican candidates for office (Carey of Attorney General). The main activities were letter writing campaigns to Congressmen, testifying before Congressional committees, and some demonstrations in support of the hearings and the bill.

But the group was also active in organizing to reject the tanker drivers contract, though it was against a strike. One of these men was involved in a militant wildcat strike that saw him fired and black-listed. He ran for union office in his local. He later worked with us in a group in his local, then helped found TDC, joined TDU.

He has taken the employers and the union to court several times. The other fellow is a notorious militant, fired and rehired almost weekly for his grievances and his militant attitude toward the employer. We believe these people are typical of the union activists who tend to be both rank and file militants and reformers. Both of these men joined the IS--though one quit around the time of the faction fight.

Question -- But then how do you explain the differences between, on the one hand, PROD or the Concerned Members and, on the other hand TDU?

Answer - It is true that there are differences. But many PROD members are also shop floor militants. And the Concerned Members were some of the most active members in the Detroit freight wildcat. There is some element of truth in the distinction, but it is a question of emphasis. There is certainly no wall between reform and rank and file militancy.

There will be a tendency for these two currents to converge, as rank and file militants realize that their shop floor victories must be consolidated at the level of union power in the Local and eventually in the International. And reformers will come to see that they must have a militant shop floor base that can enforce their reforms and deal with the employers.

We want to show workers that they must have a shop floor organization--but that that is not enough. They must also have a union political machine. And eventually a political party to deal with the government.

If there were militant who said "to hell with the courts and the bureaucrats", we would have to argue with them that they must learn how to use the courts and the bureaucrats--in the interest of rank and file power.

Question - About the bureaucrats...Aren't all bureaucrats moving to the right in this period? becoming more conservative? Don't they all ultimately defend capitalist profits?

Answer - There is some truth in the generalization that the bureaucracy is moving to the right, but only part of the truth. The bureaucracy is moving to the right in the sense that a good part of it rejects the shop floor struggle, believes strikes are a thing of the past, and looks towards legislative solutions rather than a fight with the employers.

But that is only part of the process. The bureaucracy is also under going a sorting out politically. Under the pressure of the unfolding crisis and the employers' offensive, a political spectrum is being created that shades from socialists to right-wingers. Eventually poles will develop at each end of this spectrum.

The sorting out results from many factors. Sometimes bureaucrats move left simply to protect their own self-interest, their dues base, their job. Some times they move due to a commitment to a political ideal. But in this period they are moving, changing, sorting out.

For example, Sadlowski and Balanoff are to the left on a political spectrum of the bureaucracy. Either they are moving left or are showing left positions that they have long held. Sadlowski took left

positions without much organized rank and file pressure (but his campaign was an expression of rank and file discontent'). A Sadlowski victory would have represented real gains for the rank and file with regard to the ENA (the no-strike deal signed by Able) and with regard to union democracy. UAW bureaucrats like Oginsky, Weisman and Runnels lurch leftwards from time to time, willing to oppose the UAW International on occasion, to come out for a shorter work week proposal, etc. Harry Patrick moved left--willing to speak at the TDU Convention, willing to associate with a rank and file group with socialists in the leadership though he comes from a union where red-baiting is vicious. Patrick re-evaluates the dis-banding of Minders for Democracy (MFD), etc. And some of the Vancouver TDU militants consider themselves "socialistic" in the sense of the Canadian New Democratic Party.

This doesn't mean these are wonderful guys. Under the pressure of the ranks, under the pressure of the employers offensive, under the pressure of an unfolding social crisis people change--even bureaucrats. We don't have to like them, trust them, or agree with them. But we have to understand them. And we have to understand when it makes a difference whether a bureaucrat is conservative, liberal, left, etc. The stronger the rank and file movement gets, the more impact it will have on these bureaucrats. The more the rank and file movement will have to make deals with them on specific issues.

You can even go farther. Once Eugene Debs, one of the greatest American socialists was against unions, against strikes, a Democratic Party state representative and part of the Democratic Party machine. He changed. Some of the bureaucrats will change, maybe not today, or even tomorrow. But one day some of them may not only move left, but may become revolutionary socialists.

Question - Are you saying that we approve of working with bureaucrats?
Isn't that the opposite of our rank and file approach? Isn't that the opposite of organizing from below?

Answer - We have only one rule for our work: whatever advances the self-confidence, self-organization, and combativity of the rank and file movement. Sometimes an alliance over specific issues with a bureaucrat will do that.

For example, rank and file groups in which we were involved made an alliance with UAW bureaucrats like Oginsky to organize the Coalition for a Good Contract (CGC). We had agreement on specific issues which would advance the ranks. The alliance made CGC seem to UAW members like a more credible movement. CGC never took off the way TDC did--but the method was correct.

TDU might well have made an alliance with Pete Karagozian, Business Agent for Local 299, and his supporters in the Concerned Members regarding the Local elections. TDU and CM could have divided up the positions on the executive board slate, running a joint slate with TDU reserving the right to put out its own campaign literature (if necessary). Had it come off, this might well have been the best course for the 299 elections.

In the United Steel Workers, we participated in the Sadlowski campaign. It was the expression of rank and file discontent with the ENA. A Sadlowski victory would have meant real gains for the rank and file both in terms of union democracy and militancy. A small but real move

ment developed around the Sadlowski campaign. Because of our role in that campaign, a few of our members are better positioned to play a part in the struggles that are developing in steel, for example regarding the question of imports.

In every one of these cases an alliance with a buraaucrat --Oginsky, Karagozian, Sadlowski, Balanoff-- either did or could have advanced the rank and file movement.

Question - Let's go back to Harry Patrick, since you mentioned him a while ago. Why did TDU invite Harry Patrick to the TDU Convention and why do you think that was correct?

Answer - The TDU leadership wants TDU to be a mass organization, and that's right. Eventually TDU should be the opposition in the Teamsters union, a credible alternative to the collaborationist, corrupt, incompetent leadership of the Teamsters today. The goal for TDU today is to become big, broad, deep. TDU must recruit hundreds and thousands of Teamsters, many from more backward social elements. TDU has to become influential, powerful.

The TDU Convention was seen as part of the process of making TDU bigger, broader and more powerful. The invitation to Patrick by TDU was also part of that process. Patrick is the representative of a movement that won many of the things that TDU is fighting for. The MFD of which Patrick was one of the leaders succeeded in throwing out the gangster regime of murderer Tony Boyle. They democratized the union, wrote a new constitution that is the most democratic in the union movement. They opened up the UMW magazine to the rank and file and its opinion. They put working miners in the leadership of the union. And then they went on to win the biggest contract in the history of the UMW. Having Patrick present showed the rank and file Teamsters that if you organize and fight you can win. People become active in a movement because they think they can win. Patrick was living proof that the union can be reformed.

But there were other reasons as well for inviting Patrick. It also drew the parallel between TDU and the MFD. It's important that TDU be seen as the parallel to MFD--not the same, but a happening of the same importance. That's the same reason that TDU leaders considered inviting Ed Sadlowski. Both Patrick and the MFD and Sadlowski and the Steel Workers Fight Back (SFB) are seen as the movement in those unions. TDU must be seen as the movement in the IBT. Patrick's presence helped make the parallel.

Question - But isn't Harry Patrick a bureaucrat?

Answer - As surely as the Pope is a Catholic and Lenin was a revolutionary. What's the point?

Question - But then isn't it bad to invite him?

Answer - We always have one criteria and one alone for what we do and how we evaluate the labor movement. Does it advance the rank and file.

Harry Patrick's appearance at the TDU convention helped convince Teamsters that if they organize, they can change their union. It

helped give them a sense of their own power, their own ability to change the union and their relationship to the employers. If helped advance the self-confidence, the self organization and the combativity of the ranks. That's what counts.

Question - But Harry Patrick has done a lot of bad things in the past. He helped sell the Boyle Contract in 1971. He sold the MFD contract in 1974. We thought both of those contracts should have been rejected. He has refused to support the wildcaters. Some of our members think he is a scab and a betrayer. Wouldn't it have been better to have had him on a panel where one of the TDUs or a rank and file wildcat miner could have taken him apart?

Answer - Are Harry Patrick's mistakes of the past the main point for today? Or is his willingness to advance the rank and file struggle of Teamsters members the main point? The main point is the latter, that he was willing to help the Teamster rank and file. Are we mainly interested in showing the mistakes in his past especially when he seems to be changing his mind on a lot of things today, or do we think it is more important that he works with TDU?

Question - But what about having had a rank and file miner speak on the panel with him, to criticize him? Or having a rank and file miner speak instead?

Answer - It's not the main point, but would you be a guest where the host was going to crucify you?

The fact is that Harry Patrick refused to lead the wildcats, even told the wildcatters to go back to work. But he never attempted to break the strikes. In fact he refused to pay the salaries of the goons that Miller sent into the wildcat areas and may be charged by the union executive board for that, or so rumour has it.

Many of the wildcatters are Harry Patrick supporters. In fact the leaders of some of the biggest wildcat areas like District 17 are part of Patrick's network. They couldn't come up on stage and criticize him.

Question - But what about some of the other miners?

Answer - Some of the wildcatters are supporters of Leroy Patterson, the worst of the UMW bureaucrats, the man who was the real choice of the coal operators (employers) and of the steel workers union bureaucracy, part of the old Boyle machine. In fact, when the union was threatening to discipline Patrick--Patterson led a 1 wildcat in support of Patrick. You see, it just isn't all that simple.

The only miners who might have been attracted to speak and criticize Patrick would have been from the Miners Right to Strike Committee, a small group dominated by the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), which is quite sectarian.

The main point is that Patrick represented a victorious rank and file movement. The main point was not to criticize him.

Question - But aren't we the "left wing" of the labor movement, don't we have a responsibility to criticize the labor movement and even the rank and file movement from the point of view of our socialist politics.

Answer - It is certainly true that we have a responsibility to be critical of the labor movement from the stand point of our socialist politics.

However, we have an even greater responsibility--to give leadership to the workers movement at whatever level we are involved in it, whether the shop floor, the local, the International, or even the labor movement as a whole.

While we by no means control or dominate TDU--we do influence it and play a key role in providing political and organizational leadership. We can't merely be the critics of TDU, for if we don't attempt to play a leadership role in it...who will? The point is to give left leadership to it, not merely to be left critics.

If we stand outside the movement as its critics, either someone else will step into the vacuum of leadership, or the movement will collapse.

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Question - But shouldn't Convoy have criticized him?

Answer - You mean TDU invites the guy to the convention, he makes a big speech. He supports TDU, he advances the Teamster ranks. He draws the parallel between MFD and TDU. And then Convoy attacks him? Not for what he is doing today--since today he is helping to build the rank and file movement by supporting TDU--but for what he did in the past? Does that make sense?

Question - But surely Workers Power should have criticized him. After all, doesn't Trotsky say that we should tell the truth to the workers?

Answer - But the truth is that Patrick helped to build TDU by speaking at the convention. That's the truth. That's the main point. Is it the function of WP to run the rap sheet on every union bureaucrat? If so we can quit because the Spartacist League already has that concession. The truth that must be told to the workers is that Patrick helped build TDU.

Another point, some of our members are also TDU members. One of our members sells a copy of Convoy to a Teamster. The headline says-- "Leader of Reform Movement in the Mines Endorses TDU". Then the same member sells a copy of Workers Power to the same Teamster with the headline "Scab Bureaucrat Pulls Wool Over Eyes of Teamster Ranks". Particularly since some of our members are influential in TDU, this would be confusing to our members and our contacts. And it would not be telling the truth. Because the truth is that the IS approves of Patrick's role at the TDU convention, and of the TDU decision to invite him.

If, of course, Patrick were to sell out the miners in the coming contract, or if we were dealing with an article about the mines, Patrick would be criticized.

Question - What about Patrick's speech? Some of our members say he was pulling the wool over the eyes of the IBT ranks.

Answer - Patrick talked about fighting the companies, organizing the rank and file, maintaining an on-going rank and file group after taking power in the union, about the legitimacy of the wildcats since the companies forced them by breaking the contract, about the evils of red-baiting, the evils of the Democratic Party and the need for a labor party. He also talked about the important role women play in the movement. He said all the things that our members usually say--only with a lot more weight and authority because he spoke as the leader of a reform group that had won, that had succeeded in taking power in the International union.

He said all the things we would want a union leader to say. Should TDU have told him to keep his mouth shut?

Question - But he isn't really for a labor party, is he?

Answer - Who knows? Tomorrow he could be a Republican. But at the TDU convention he said that he had worked to elect Carter, that he was disillusioned with Carter and the DP, that he thought working people needed their own political party.

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Question - OK, maybe Harry Patrick didn't "depoliticize the TDU Convention", but why weren't there more resolutions on Bakke, on the ERA, on Black Caucuses? Doesn't that prove that those Teamsters who are in other political groups who attended the convention and introduced such resolutions are more radical than us?

Answer - Remember, the TDU leadership wanted the TDU Convention to accomplish a certain job. It was to make TDU big, broad, deep, influential, powerful. The Convention was to be the beginning of this. The Convention was to launch campaigns that would appeal to broad masses of Teamsters--the Right to Vote Campaign, the Pension Campaign, the jurisdictional campaigns (road, carhauler, grocery, UPS).

This TDU Convention was not meant to be a revolutionary convention. TDU already has a platform passed at the last convention. This convention was to launch campaigns to reach the masses of Teamster members.

Question - But then did TDU just ignore questions like racism?

Answer - No. For example, the TDU workshop on discrimination was set up in such a way that it would show the real fights TDU is involved in. It was to have a person involved in a shop floor fight against discrimination, another individual involved in a union battle against discrimination, and finally a third union member involved in a court fight against discrimination. The whole point was to show activity, to organize for campaigns.

But in that workshop some people did just what the critics of the TDU work would have had IS members of TDU do. Some radicals came in with a resolution to change racial discrimination to racism. They were being critical. That became one of the "big issues" of the work shop. It may have been very "radical" but it was a bust.

Question - But didn't TDU leaders, including some IS members, really squelch discussion on these issues both in the workshops and at the final plenary session.

Answer. - No. The last session was not very good, there is no denying that. It was very poorly planned. It did not leave nearly enough time for discussion. There should have been better discussion of all of the important issues that came to the floor, especially of the implementation of the campaigns to build and broaden TDU, of the ways to make TDU bigger, broader, a mass organization. And on questions like Bakke. But the session was poorly planned. A couple ISO members tried to make that session even more of a problem by introducing screwy procedural motions. The chairman did a very fine job of conducting a difficult situation. But it was bound to cast him in a poor light; dozens of rank and filers clamoring for the floor for their particular interest with a few minutes left to complete minutes.

Question - OK, I guess I'll have to think some more about these questions I had about the TDU Convention, the Right to Vote Campaign and Harry Patrick's speech. But I've got one more question.

Answer - Shoot.

Question - Where do these criticisms of the TDU work come from?

Some of them are very serious criticisms that imply that the IS is a reformist and not a revolutionary organization. Others imply that the IS is in crisis because the IBT work is having a devastating effect.

For example, JB says, "the court suit is seen as a substitute for mass action". She is implying that the TDU is encouraging the rank and file to rely on the government. And that the IS approves of TDU's decision. If the IS approves of substituting the capitalist government for the activity of the ranks--then we are heading down the wrong path.

And Steve Z. says, there was "a serious de-politicization" of the TDU Convention and that that has a "devastating political effect" upon the IS.

Why do IS members have opinions like these, so different from the majority of the group?

Answer - For a long time the socialist movement in this country was isolated from the working class--say from 1951 to the late 1960's. The IS tried to keep the ideas of revolutionary socialism alive. But in isolation from the working class, these ideas sort of lost touch with reality. We developed principles, lists, rules, programs, but with no experience with the class struggle. Some of our members seem to have forgotten that we have, really, only one basic rule--whatever advances the rank and file.

There's another thing too. The IS during the period that it was trying to keep socialist ideas alive dreamed of a "new era of labor revolt", of a coming "working class upsurge", of a new "workers movement". And we tried to imagine how it would look and how it would act. Well, now it's here, or at least it's beginning. And it doesn't match up with the movement we imagined, and that makes a lot of our older members nervous. In stead of being part of the real movement that's taking place, they want to find that imaginary movement that exists only in their minds.

These criticisms come from that section of the group that doesn't understand that the movement is here in its beginnings, and that their job is no longer to keep socialist ideas alive--but to give socialist leadership to the new movement.

The Teamster committee after serious debate favors the idea that TDU go to court to try to get the IBT constitution changed to provide for direct election of national officers (instead of by delegated convention), and that there be a national campaign around this. This recommendation represents unquestionably a new development in IS politics. It is a step which could have a bearing on many other situations in and out of the labor movement. Correct or not, it deserves the fullest open discussion in the IS. The limited consideration of the issue that has occurred has been confined to the teamster fraction. But questions with such far-reaching political implications need to be considered and understood by the whole organization.

The issue of the courts is an inseparable part of a larger whole--our attitude toward the state (such as "troops to Boston" or "injunctions against the Fascists"): when and how can we use the state directly (say, if we are elected to office) or indirectly (by using the courts, NLRB, Landrum-Griffen, etc.); when do we participate in functions of the state (such as running candidates)?

The starting point, but only the starting point, for answering these questions clearly rests with our theory of the state, which we view as the agent of the ruling class. As a result, we generally urge a policy which avoids dependence upon the state. We fight for the working class and its institutions to retain their independence from the state. We insist upon the direct organization of the workers, and direct action, as the basic strategy for defending the working class and winning gains.

Of course, if we forget that this is just the starting point of our politics, not the end, we can all too easily fall into ultra-left practices. The classic case of this is the ultra-left refusal to participate in elections on the grounds that such participation only helps the capitalists maintain their ideological and political hegemony. It is generally understood among us that under certain conditions elections can and should be used by revolutionaries, although with a full understanding of how they can be used and what their limits are. The point is that the actual application of our principled attitude toward the state depends upon integrating it with a higher principle: does it aid or hinder the class struggle? Will it serve to mobilize the masses into direct action, or will it demobilize them? Since this is the primary question to be answered, our decisions will rest upon a specific analysis of each situation. For there are indeed situations in which the contradictions of capitalism can be taken advantage of through using the state. And we need never hesitate to do so if, on balance, the working class will gain from it.

How about TDU going to court to try to win direct election of top IBT officers, and the campaign around this? Will this move the class struggle forward?

The dangers of court action are well known to most IS members. In the first place, court actions tend to demobilize the class. This is because they tend to be seen as a substitute for direct rank and file organization and action, an alternative method for the same goal. It is difficult to organize the rank and file, but getting a lawyer is easy. And, as we know, there is a very strong tendency among rank and filers in the IBT to go to court to solve their problems, exactly because they do not see organizing the rank and file as a viable alternative. For this reason IS members working in IBT have made it a top priority to convince workers that court suits are not the way forward. Convincing them of this is one key to convincing them to organize and struggle. It is obvious, in this context, that pursuing a strategy of going to court will only encourage the rank and filers' illusions that the state machine is a neutral arbiter between capital and labor. Such a viewpoint is a dead end, because, as we know, we can rarely expect to win a court suit in the

interest of the rank and file. For these reasons, we have always in the past distinguished the TDU strategy, which is based on the self-reliance of the rank and file, from the PROD strategy, which is based on the use of the courts and congress to solve the workers' problems.

Are there, however, overriding considerations which make court action, in this case, on balance principled and justifiable as a means to build the class struggle: Two related explanations are being put forward to justify a court case to get direct election of officers and a national campaign around this. (1) TDU can use the court case as a focus to mobilize the rank and file. Moreover, it can integrate new TDU members by giving them a practical task which they can successfully accomplish and thereby build the movement. (2) TDU can win the court case. On this basis, better conditions will thus be created, opening things up for rank and file struggle in the union.

(1) The Court Case as a Way to Mobilize the Rank and File

Those who justify the court suit mainly do so on the grounds that it can mobilize masses while the case is in progress and simultaneously involve and develop TDU activists. Yet, it is extremely doubtful if this is realistic. Teamsters know that signing the petitions in support of a constitutional change in the IBT constitution for direct election of officers will not actually win such a change. No one predicts a titanic mass struggle coming out of the petition campaign which can shake the IBT headquarters. Short of this, the only way the teamsters themselves can change their constitution is at the next IBT convention in 1981. This means that the court suit, whether intended or not, must end up as the primary action, the only procedure that can really win the goal. The "mass action"--petition campaign, stickers, etc.--is supportive of, and subordinate to, the main action in the courts. Whatever we say, therefore, the campaign will be in fact propagandistic. Because teamsters know that the petition campaign cannot have any real effect, they will not mobilize behind it, although a good number may sign a petition. They will say, justifiably, "It's the court suit that's going to be decisive here. Why get excited about petitions?" In short, "precisely because" the court suit is seen as a substitute for mass action--and this is usually (not always) the way court suits are seen--it will be very difficult to use it to mobilize. (By the way, if it is admitted that the campaign is mainly propagandistic, why tie it to a court action. Why not build it around a more central issue, like the right to strike?)

Can this court suit provide a way to integrate into TDU those who have already come around TDU, for example in cities where there is not yet a strong TDU core of experienced activists? Can the campaign around the suit and in favor of direct election of officers show them that TDU is a dynamic force and provide something that they can concretely do to build TDU and the broader movement? Almost certainly not, precisely because it will not create mass mobilization or excitement. Because the petition campaign, etc., will not get an enthusiastic response from the mass of the teamsters (for the reasons stated above), it will not convince those around us of the viability and vitality of a national movement, which is supposed to be the whole purpose of the campaign. This is because the main thing such new people need to be shown is that the rank and file will move, that building a rank and file movement is possible.

Some have argued in favor of mobilizing behind this court case by saying it will build TDU because court suits are popular with teamsters. These people say "We'd rather have a big, dirty TDU than a small pure one." But those who argue in this way, trying to be realistic, are actually being impractical. They think that by being less "ideologically pure" with regard to court cases TDU will get stronger support. In fact, there is a close connection between the ideas you build around and what you can build and to what extent. Court suits are 'popular' just because so many

teamsters doubt that the rank and file can get organized. So when we organize around a court suit we are organizing around that sentiment among teamsters which favours an alternative strategy to rank and file organizing. Few of those who support TDU because it runs a court case can be expected to become TDU activists, TDU organizers. Certainly the court suit will not activate them. All it can do is "organize" a passive base for TDU, much like PROD's. But how does this build TDU-- when what is required is precisely people who are willing to break from the dominant ideas of rank and file ~~power~~ impotence and the strategies bound up with this.

In this respect, the petition campaign around the court suit is in sharp contrast with the struggles against the employers through which we have primarily built TDU and will continue to build it. There will continue to be such struggles in this period, because of the intensifying employers' offensive, altho these struggles weill generally be isolated and difficult to win. It is out of such struggles that workers get the confidence in the fighting ability of their brothers and sisters, so that they can also see it's worth fighting themselves. It is in such struggles that they can win things that directly affect them. For this reason, it has been through fights versus the employers--above all TDC, but also the Detroit wildcat, the Carhazers strike, the IA beer strike, the Schneiders strike--that we have been able to recruit our hard-core TDUs. ; This is no accident. In a period like this one, when masses are generally not in motion and when the immediate outlook for winning struggles is not great, it requires people with more than the average amount of fighting spirit and vision to take on the bosses, and particularly to devote themselves consistently to rank and file organizing which they know must put them up against the bosses. This is not to say that union reform fights cannot build TDU. They can, and they are necessary. But we should not overrate their potential, and most especially when they are tied to a court case.

But, it may be said, TDU still needs something around which to cohere nationally. What have we got to lose? It's quite true that a coordinated national campaign would be highly desirable, if we could pull it off successfully. But this can't be built on just any basis. And in this case there's actually plenty to lose. Suppose, as we should expect, there's not much in the way of mass mobilization behind the petition campaign. This will possibly demoralize those ^{who} might otherwise be won over to a full commitment to TDU. Those rank and filers for whom this campaign represents their first real attempt at TDU organizing will be particularly vulnerable. At the same time, if the mass mobilization fails, this just leaves the court case as the only way to win. The result may well lead workers to conclude that the courts are all that they have left, altho that's realistic given the apparent "apathy" of the rank and file. ~~At the same time, committed TDUs who were drawn in under the assumption we would have nothing to do with the courts could be turned off... or even be won to the court strategy and thus perhaps to PROD itself, because they see that even we are no longer depending on the rank and file. This is especially dangerous, since we know that it is those rank and filers who want to wage an irreconcilable fight against the bosses, who say "to hell with the courts and the bureaucrats", who are most likely to want to join the I.S., to see the need for a struggle for socialism. In the last analysis, we have always based ourselves on the self-reliant rank and file movement, because its dynamic and direction is toward socialism. In a period where it's absolutely essential to recruit indigenous workers to the party even in order to build the rank and file movement, we can least afford to lose sight of the connection between the sort of ~~rank and file organizations we are active in~~ rank and file organizations we are active in and our potential for building I.S.~~

Trying to Win the Court Case With the Goal of Opening Things Up

The fact is that even our lawyers doubt we can win the present court case to get direct election of ISE officers. But suppose they thought we might be able to win, would this justify taking this route? Would winning this case provide better conditions afterwards for rank and file organizing? Certainly not in any direct way. Even if the courts were to declare that there must be direct elections of national officers, TDU does not at this point have the strength to run a rank and file candidate. This would mean, at best, the election of a liberal alternative to Fitzsimmons. Given the make-up of the

IET, the large number of gangster-dominated and especially sweetheart locals, an election would probably not even get a very liberal bureaucrat. Thus, by first winning the court case and then having a liberal ~~run~~ run and get elected, i.e. at second remove, we would finally perhaps create better conditions for rank and file struggle. Still, we should not have any expectation that even if we were successful both in winning the court case and in dumping ~~Fitz~~ that this would unleash mass action. Things might loosen a bit. But we should not entertain the ~~the~~ illusion or encourage others to think that the whole bureaucracy would be seriously splintered, in the sense that it would become much less effective in keeping down the rank and file. ~~Marxism~~ For keeping down the rank and file is the one thing upon which all wings of the bureaucracy are united in this period--including the reformers such as Miller, Sadlowski, etc; for they all agree that in the crisis the working class cannot be allowed to threaten profits.

But worst of all, there is a logic to such a union reform strategy, as the development of PROD, if nothing else demonstrates. It means the central focus must be on going to the courts, going to the state. All else must be subordinated to this. This might indeed require deals with various sorts of people, such as liberal attorneys influential in the democratic party and the government, for these people have a much better chance of getting a favorable decision than we do. Winning a court case might even require relegating direct action to a subordinate role. For at times, it could easily conflict with the demands of winning the case. "Don't rock the boat," might be the refrain of our "representatives" near the court (congress). "If you want to win, play it cool, don't turn off the judges (congressmen, etc.)." There is, moreover, a further logic. Why confine this strategy to teamsters? Why not apply it to all our areas of union work, e.g. the UAW?

Indeed, it is important that we remind ourselves of the nature of organizations like PROD which consistently base themselves on a strategy of going to the state, to the courts, and congress. We have always seen such organizations as representing the liberal bureaucrats and second level bureaucrats (and their allies in the democratic party, etc.). This is because using these methods is appropriate only to certain goals and broader ideals, but not others. What court suits and congressional action can conceivably do--i.e. under certain conditions, in certain periods--is "clean up" the union. But as the government-backed cleanup in the Mineworkers Union showed, what these methods cannot accomplish is crucial to note: (1) fight the employers; (2) mobilize the rank and file. Thus, the PROD strategy is based, above all, on the notion that good unionism equals honest and formally ~~and~~ democratic unionism. A formally democratic union with honest officers will provide good service to the rank and file through "fair collective bargaining." It is for this reason that the ~~the~~ PROD strategy naturally involves above all an electoral strategy, as well as a court strategy. It is no accident that ~~in~~ both the Miller election campaign in UMW and the Sadlowski election campaign in USW were based upon an alliance with the liberal lawyer Joseph Rauh. The slogan of all these reformers might well be "Clean up the union and elect honest officers".

Of course, this idea obviously expresses the ideology and methods of the liberal bureaucrats and out bureaucrats in general. It is self-serving for these bureaucrats because it looks to clean up the union without the risk of organizing the rank and file--thus the reliance on the courts and congress. It is self-serving also in that it looks to honest officers to carry on the fight for the membership against the bosses--thus the tactic of electing good officers, not rank and file organizing. However, ~~however~~, because it relies on the interconnected strategies of state intervention and the election of reformers, the bureaucrats' approach is ineffective for winning gains for the rank and file. In the first place, it would be wrong to assume that the courts or the government will necessarily step in to "clean up the unions" in this period, if there's any danger that doing so will open things up for the rank and file. In the 1950s, congress could even pass a Landrum-Griffin bill which actually contains clauses that might favor rank and file democracy (alho of course it is basically anti-labor). At that point there was little danger ~~that bringing rank and file organizing~~ for of a potentially explosive situation--

--it was precisely the period of consolidation of the bureaucracy. But, today, in this period of employers' offensive--especially in teamsters, where the organization of the employers is not as well developed as (say) in auto or steel, where the bureaucracy is much less effective than in the other big unions, and where there is embryonic rank and file opposition--the courts and congress may very well be much more reluctant to intervene, unless they can get some assurance that the rank and file can be controlled. Secondly, and more significant, even the most honest leader cannot win substantial gains for the ranks, and must capitulate to the employers' offensive, unless there is a well-organized rank and file behind them.

True, no one to our knowledge has as yet put forward the view that we should go to court on a regular basis, as a strategy for TDY. Yet, this is the inherent fall-back position of those who argue today that we should use this particular court case for direct election of officers, as a way to open things up afterwards. It is because the strategy of using the courts (and congress) is organically connected to a strategy which looks to the liberahand second-level bureaucrats that it poses an especially great danger to IS politics today. For at this moment, our organization is far from clear on our established analysis of the rightward tendency of all elements within the bureaucracy in this period (lacking strong and independent rank and file pressure in the opposite direction), and thus of the meaning of our rank and file strategy as a whole.

The Case of the Miners

Possibly, some will justify the use of the court case by TDU by referring to the fact that Miller and the Miners for Democracy used the courts. Miller went to court to get a federal intervention to try to insure a fair election. What do we say about this?

Was going to the courts the correct way for the rank and file to try to get a fair election. It would have been the IS Position, almost certainly, had we been in the mines, that the miners would not rely on the state to get a fair election. There already existed a strong rank and file movement. We would have fought to get that movement mobilized to demand and win the right to have rank and file supervision of the elections. Possibly--and this is worth discussing--if rank and file mobilization proved impossible, one had failed, we might then have fallen back on the courts to try to make sure of a fair election. But we could not have put it forward, ~~was~~ as did Miller et al, as the primary tactic to win a fair election. Even if we had gone with a court case at some point, we would have had to point out the terrific dangers involved. No doubt the miner themselves, with their long experience of being hurt by state intervention in strike after strike especially during the 1940s would have made the point for us.

Did going to court mobilize the miners? Clearly this did not happen. There was already an existing rank and file movement, coming out of the oldcat strikes over safety, the Black lung organization, eetc. It was this movement and its explosive potential which frightened the capitalist class, creating the conditions for Miller to run and for the court suit to win in the first place. Not vice-versa. Mass mobilization continued after the election of Miller, and was no doubt helped by the elimination of Boyle through Miller's election. Yet, it needs to be emphasized that from the point of Miller's election, the bureaucrats sought to confine the focus of the ongoing movement to internal constitutional reform, while the rank and file had to go up against Miller et al in order to carry on their primary struggle in wildcats against the ~~bosses~~ bosses.

It should be clear that court actions are not barred to revolutionists under all circumstances. The main point is that trying to use a court case to build a movement will usually be counterproductive and de-mobilizing. Especially in the context of an already ongoing movement on the other hand, it may sometimes be necessary to use the courts. The purpose will be to get something specific done, when we see no other choice. In such a case, court action will generally supplement, not substitute for mass mobilization, and we will state loud and clear that we can't count on the courts. The recent case of Pete Camarata is a good example. When Pete was suspended by the union, our first and primary tactic was mass organization vs. the bureaucracy in his defence. But it would have been foolish in this case to refrain from using the courts also. Preventing Pete's expulsion was of overriding

importance for the ~~xxx~~ ongoing movement, and getting him reinstated outweighed the negative effects of going to court. Even so, we should not underestimate the de-mobilizing effects of going to court in this instance, and also the illusions which were sown by Pete's victory in court.

It is impossible to cover all possibilities here. But one final case should be mentioned where we might very possibly support going to court. That is, when a movement has been defeated, but when there are important goals which could still be concivably won in the courts. This is one of the bases on which we supported Stan Weir's case against Harry Bridges. The bureaucracy had already done the dirty work of destroying the movement. All that was left was the possibility of protecting the residual interestsoof the defeated few in the hope that they could survive to fight another day.

LOOKING AT HARRY PATRICK
by Ken B., Chicago

I had a chance to speak to Harry Patrick recently, and think his comments should be made available to the entire organization. Before meeting him I felt we should have given him critical support in the last Mine Workers' election and TDU was correct to have him come to its convention. I had been told by one of our leading ISers that Patrick may have publicly made comments against the recent Health Benefits wildcat, but privately he supported the strikers. I felt I wanted to know more about what his stance really was in the recent wildcats.

Patrick made it very clear that he was opposed to the recent wildcats from start to finish. He said he had pointed out how the Trustees were going to cut the benefits in the last days before the elections but no one had listened to him. Further he had pointed out how the coal operators and union trustees had several times before switched Pension Fund money over to the Health and Welfare Fund.

Patrick said the wildcat was self-defeating since it cut off more money to the Fund and the only time something could be done about it was when the contract expired in December. The companies were too strong to be hurt by the wildcats (they are almost all owned by the oil, steel and utility companies). When asked how things would be any better in December he had no answer. He said that when the thousand wildcaters came to Washington DC he didn't go out to meet them, but when they came to his office told them the only thing they could do was go back to work. He told me that when the miners heard the Health and Welfare benefits were cut, they should ~~be~~ have worked seven days a week to build up money for a long strike. I asked him if the result of this won't be simply building up coal supplies, and thus prolonging the strike.

Maybe it could be argued that once the benefits were cut, that it was tactically wrong to wildcat. (I think it was tactically right, otherwise the clinics would all be shut down and the miners and their families would have to put off needed medical care). Patrick could have made this argument in the first week when the strike was getting underway. But what about weeks later when 80,000 miners were out on strike. Patrick's only message to them was to go back to work, they couldn't win, the strike was stupid and a mistake. This is scabbing, there is no doubt about it. We can judge him no differently than the miners in any local who refused to go out on strike for the same reasons when met by pickets.

Patrick said Arnold Miller was afraid to go to jail, but he, Patrick, was unwilling to lead the strike and risk going to jail. He could have put himself at the head of the strike, giving a focus to it, demanding that the Pension Fund money be diverted to the Health and Welfare Fund, and organizing the strike for victory. Then, at a certain point, if a victory was impossible, it would have been appropriate to urge all the miners to return as a body if they chose to do so by majority vote. But if they voted to say out, his duty was to support the decision to stay out. This is what the strikers should have demanded of Patrick, and what we would demand if we were there.

We should have known what Patrick's stand was during the strike, but even if we didn't, we do know now, and it is impermissible not to say anything about his role in the wildcats in Workers Power. To keep quiet about this when we know the truth can only be opportunist.

Knowing this about Patrick doesn't mean it is out of the question to support him in a new Mine Workers election assuming the Miller recall is successful. If new candidates can be on the ballot, we should be for a consistent strike support to run for President. (According to Patrick, the wildcat was led by the local Presidents of District 17). If only Patterson, Miller and Patrick can be on the ballot, we can argue for critical support for Patrick, on the grounds Patterson would attempt to return to the Boyle days, Miller is incompetent and afraid to take on the companies, and Patrick is the best out of the three. But we would have to make it clear that he is a bureaucrat, that he opposed the recent wildcats and scabbed on them, he campaigned for acceptance of the 1974 contract

which we were for voting down and if he won the miners would have to be prepared to oppose him when necessary. It would be a completely unprincipled and a disservice to the miners to hail Patrick and keep quiet about these things.

A word about the Miners ~~xxx~~ for Democracy, which we compared TDU to in the recent special TDU Convention Supplement in Workers Power. Patrick rightly pointed out the difference between MFD and TDU. He said the MFD was really made up of about 10 people (an exaggeration). It was not a membership organization, it had no chapters and in no way did it have a democratic structure. Its victory meant a significant democratization of the union and opened up the struggle of the miners. But the supporters of the MFD had no way of controlling the people they elected, these same officers, particularly Miller and Trbovich proved afraid of taking on the companies, and quickly developed into typical American union bureaucrats. This is not the direction we want TDU to go in, and should not be held up as an example.

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Instead we should point to the Miners for Democracy, /Steelworkers Fight Back as the right wing of the rank and file movement, with a pro-bureaucratic leadership and orientation. It was ~~xxx~~ correct to support and be involved in them, but to fight to move them in a class struggle, anti-bureaucratic direction. PROD is the right wing of the developing rank and file movement in the Teamsters and TDU is the left wing. All these organizations are part of the developing rank and file movement, but we should clearly point out how TDU differs and its approach is superior. It is correct for TDU to solidarize itself with these more conservative developments in other unions, but the IS and hopefully TDU with our encouragement should make clear the crucial differences between them.

The recent convention held in Cleveland, Ohio revealed some glaring deficiencies in our work as a multi-racial organization.

It was quite apparent that Cleveland center was overwhelmed in the organization of the convention. People are still playing "Super" roles and not training opposite members to take positions of leadership and responsibility. Whether this is do to a lack of faith in new members, or too thin a periphery is information I am not yet privy to. However, this lack of growth and the division of labor must be examined in the light of reason and overcome. The danger of "Institutionalization" is too great to risk over work of "Cadre" is being compounded by Cadre.

A direct result of this "closed circuit" approach to periphery and party building is seen in the dwindling on the vine of the once healthy Loraine, Ohio chapter. Another lack of leadership training was apparent in the final moments of the convention. In fact after the closing Gavel.

A worker from Michigan twice a member of the National Steering Committee (once to fill an interim term) and now by election at the convention, seized a microphone and uttered a "Racist" tirade against the possible formation of a Black Caucus. He threatened a "White" caucus as a retaliatory response to any such formation.

Here was a clear break-down in our ability as a Multi-racial organization to cover all the bases.

We have taught unionists how to jump through the unions bureaucratic hoops, and to follow the maze the system created as the route to reform. Or at least the illusion of reform. Our stress on the character and tradition of fighting trade unions for a better life on and off the job is great. But, we have neglected the basic principle that gives trade union struggles a winning strategy. Their unwillingness to accept any kind of racism or sexism as a valid appendage of that struggle. Somehow, in Michigan where we have one of our strongest chapters, we have been unable to prove the strength of collective activity as opposed to "Super" personalities.'

Fortunately we are not without a remedial opportunity. We must regain our equilibrium and establish our credibility as a multi-national Trade Union reform movement. The Steel industry has provided us with a classic Example of the dependence on race distinction for job security as carrying little weight. When the choice is between profit or the workers welfare, both white and Black are tossed on the scrap heap.

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