

AMENDMENTS TO THE P.C. TRADE UNION RESOLUTION

Part I.

Section (3): From the first sentence of the second paragraph delete the words,

"...particularly in respect to the creation of a labor party."

Section (4): Replace the whole section by the following:

"At present there is no clearly defined movement for a labor party. One section of the labor bureaucracy is flirting with the idea of capturing the Democratic Party, another would like to constitute itself as the left wing of the Democratic Party, another wants to continue the old policy of endorsing Democratic or Republican candidates, and yet another feels it can extend its power by the creation of a labor party.

In cases where labor intervenes, in one form or other, in the electoral struggle, it shall be the duty of our membership to enlarge the independent character of such a movement, as well as its internal democracy and the militancy of its program. Our attitude toward such a movement, and the strategy we adopt with respect to it, can be specifically determined only as it achieves palpable form.

It is possible, however, to indicate the essential framework of our agitation and propaganda in such a situation. This framework may be presented in three parts:

- (a) the use of popular, militant, demands to demonstrate the restraining and anti-bureaucratic role of the bureaucracy. This struggle lays the basis for organizational proposals which, if carried out, would increase and encourage rank-and-file control of the movement;
- (b) pointing out that the basic problem of the working class cannot be solved until a truly democratic (i.e., non-bureaucratic) government is established; and
- (c) pointing out that the structure of the present government is designed to be bureaucratic and that, consequently, parliamentary action can solve no basic problems."

Section (6): In the second paragraph delete, "This does not mean..... correctness of our attitude.", and change the following sentence to read "This means that we must seek.....etc."

Section (7): (to be inserted after section (6):

"The increased stabilization of bureaucracy throughout the labor movement highlights a commonly neglected aspect of union democracy. Traditional union democracy is a reflection of the bourgeois democracy that surrounds it. Workers are trained by their own

AMENDMENTS TO THE P.C. TRADE UNION RESOLUTION (continued)

class organizations to regard bourgeois democracy as DEMOCRACY, with the consequent reinforcement of the common belief that alternatives must lie in the direction of dictatorship. The result, even (or perhaps, especially!) in the more democratic unions, is a general tendency to regard as natural and inevitable the union bureaucracy and, by analogy, the bureaucratic structure of the bourgeois state.

Just as our general social aims cannot be achieved without a mass movement conscious of the need to break up the bureaucratic structure of the state, so the struggle to make the unions fit for even their current tasks depends upon the awakening of the rank-and-file to the need for basic changes in the organizational structure by which the bureaucracy "democratically" manipulates the membership.

Such a struggle cannot be carried on through abstract pronouncements. However, in every union there arise progressive demands, popular with the rank-and-file, which conflict with the conservatism and/or bourgeois entanglements of the bureaucracy. Non-political militants strive to force the bureaucracy to carry out these demands. Our members must be in the forefront of the fight for such progressive demands, but must couple that fight with concrete organizational proposals intended to increase the power of the rank-and-file and decrease the bureaucratic power of the officials. Such a struggle, carried on shoulder to shoulder with, but independent of, a militant caucus, should draw many militants to our direction - especially as they are repeatedly frustrated by the compromises and/or bureaucratic transformation of those they have accepted as rank-and-file leaders. From the first our line of attack must attract the interest and sympathy of intelligent militants on two counts; First, our positive organizational proposals demonstrate concretely the possibility of a new kind of union - a union that is the continuous and militant expression and instrument of the will of its membership; and, second, they have never before seen a group with a program to prevent even itself wielding arbitrary power when in the leadership!

Those attracted to us find themselves confronted with a new conception of democracy, beside which the usual conception is obviously a pale imitation. At this point they are fully prepared for political propoganda. This similarity (in principle) between the bureaucratic apparatus of the union and that of the bourgeois state can be made clear. The futility of striving for labor's ends through the use of that apparatus is indicated by their experience within the union. The conception of workers' democracy develops from that of rank-and-file union control. Finally, the need for a powerful revolutionary party, and for the extensive propagation of its views, is clearly seen in the powerful defensive and repressive means in the hands of the state bureaucracy.

AMENDMENTS TO THE P.C. TRADE UNION RESOLUTION (continued)

Labor Action plays a most important role in this educational task. In every issue it will carry, in a prominent box, a list of the Workers Party "criteria of democracy". In its labor news it must couple description of the conservative influence of the labor bureaucracy with explicit use of the "criteria of democracy" to demonstrate the practical possibility of rank-and-file control. In its political news it must point out the reactionary and bureaucratic characteristics of the bourgeois and stalinist state structures, and show how the particular bit of news would differ (if, indeed, it could occur at all) were we living within a workers' democracy. THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF LABOR ACTION IS TO LEAD THE WORKERS TO VIEW THEMSELVES AS COMPETENT AND THE ONLY FORCE THAT IS COMPETENT, TO BRING FORTH ON THIS PLANET A TRULY HUMAN SOCIETY; AND TO POINT OUT THE TASKS THAT ARE INVOLVED IN THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF SUCH A TRANSFORMATION.

This whole approach is admirably adapted to the fight against stalinism. The stalinist goal, within unions as elsewhere, is bureaucratic power. Whereas the indigenous bureaucracy represents the intrusion of an exterior bureaucracy; yet this exterior force cannot maintain control of unions without the aid of bureaucratic control within.

Our program for the destruction of the possibility of stable bureaucracies within the labor movement is aimed directly at the heart of stalinism. Furthermore, the use of the concept of rank-and-file control as an approach to that of workers' democracy constitutes a direct attack on the acceptability of the Russian state as in any way favorable to the working class. One of the best features of our approach is its unified attack on both enemies - a concrete union analogy to the slogan, "Neither Washington nor Moscow!"

Perhaps we may fail to transform a particular union. Perhaps, for that matter, we may fail to transform any union. We would regard this as unfortunate, for our fight for union democratization is sincere. Fundamentally, however, such an organizational failure does not necessarily indicate political failure. During such a struggle we are certain to find a considerable number of militants grouping themselves around us, who can hardly avoid acquiring some development of political consciousness with revolutionary implications. A few of them at least will grasp our general conception, and so become party material. Should militants become members as a result of this kind of activity, agitation and propaganda, they will enter as conscious and convinced revolutionists.

The conscientious application of this program will hasten the development of a powerful revolutionary party and a consciously revolutionary working class.

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AMENDMENTS TO THE P. C. TRADE UNION RESOLUTION (continued)

Part II

Section (2a) Delete the sentence "On the contrary, our analysis..... etc.", and change the following sentence to: "On the contrary, work in the unions must be intensified as the main axis of our activity."

Section (2b) Delete the first paragraph, substituting for it the following:

" In the coming period we must increase our political work in the manner described in Part I. In many ways our work is simplified. Whereas in the past we regarded agitation and propaganda as separate activities, the new approach unifies them into a single activity, in that political propaganda flows smoothly and directly from the methods of agitation for specific demands."

Section (2c) Delete the phrase; "...", especially in initiating labor party sentiment,"

Section (2d) Delete the whole and substitute the following:

"We must continue our efforts to recruit from the shop. While we cannot deny that objective conditions limit the amount of recruitment possible, we cannot deny that objective conditions limit the amount of recruitment possible, we are not warranted in believing that our results even approximate that limit. Blaming the "backwardness of the workers", or other "objective conditions" for our ineffectiveness is a pleasant anodyne, the substitution of smugness for self-criticism.

(Delete the remainder of the P. C. resolution, and substitute what follows.)

(3) Several steps must be taken for the initiation of the new trade union program. These include the following:

- (a) the establishment by the Workers Party of its conception of Workers' Democracy in terms of structural requirements;
- (b) the establishment by the Workers Party of its conception of rank-and-file democracy in unions, also in terms of structural requirements;
- (c) the expression of such structural requirements in terms of succinctly stated "criteria of democracy".

(4) The Workers Party criteria of trade union democracy are as follows:

(The following is merely a proposed list. After the discussion proposed in "DIRECTIVE TO POLITICAL COMMITTEE" the criteria finally decided upon will be formulated by comrades with greater literary skill than the author possesses, and substituted for this present list.)

1007

A. Questions such that a "yes" answer indicates a tendency to bureaucracy.

- (a) Are executive and policy-making functions performed by the same body?
- (b) Are any policy-making-bodies or -individuals appointed from above?
- (c) Are any policy-making-bodies or -individuals elected by bodies other than the rank-and-file for whom they establish policy?
- (d) Is the policy-making body of the union elected in such a manner that each member is responsible only to the union as a whole?
- (e) Do all members of the policy-making body have the same voting power, regardless of the number of rank-and-file votes they represent?
- (f) Does minority representation depend upon a philanthropic attitude on the part of the majority?
- (g) Do democratic processes, as carried on in the union, prevent decisive action on the part of the executive?
- (h) Are any union officials paid more (except for extraordinary expenses necessarily incurred in line of duty) than a skilled worker can earn in the industry?

B. Questions such that a "yes" answer indicates resistance to bureaucracy.

- (i) Is there a policy-making body, not identical with the executive, to which the executive is responsible?
- (j) Does the continued existence of a particular executive body depend upon its control of a policy-making body with which it is not identical?
- (k) Does the policy-making body have representation of minority opinions within the rank-and-file?
- (l) Does the policy-making body represent the different functional interests within the union?
- (m) Does each member of the policy-making body represent some specific part of the membership, so that the membership so represented may express its attitude toward his policies?
- (n) If the section of the rank-and-file represented by a particular member of the policy-making body disagrees with his vote on a given question, may they enforce upon him, in a reasonably short length of time, a reversal of his vote without recourse to recall?
- (o) Is a simple and quick recall of representatives possible?
- (p) Is there a rapid and uncomplicated way to initiate policies within the rank and file, and make them union provided, of course, that a majority favors them?

(q) Does every member of the union have ready access to the minutes of the representative body and of the policy-making body on which he is represented, as well as information concerning the vote of his representative on each question that arose?

(r) Does the union provide educational material and classes such as to give rank-and-file members full opportunity to understand the problems faced by union officials?

(s) Does the union provide educational material and classes on the nature and problems of the industry, and its place in the economic structure of society?

(5) Within particular unions the immediate task is the determination of the best concrete application of these criteria in day-to-day work. The programmatic groundwork depends upon investigation of the specific situation, as follows:

- (a) a study of the union to determine which of its characteristics, whether constitutional or merely traditional, are conducive to the maintenance and/or development of bureaucracy;
- (b) an analysis of the industry with the intention of discovering what forms of bureaucracy-resistant organization are possible; and
- (c) concretization of the criteria of democracy in terms of specific needs and possibilities as pointed out in (a) and (b).

(6) The most natural point of initial emphasis for our agitation lies within the factories themselves. Most large factories, of organized, have labor-management committees and shop-steward committees. (Sometimes the two are combined; sometimes separate.) These committees are the prototype of the factory committees that we have always considered to be the almost indispensable instruments of revolutionary struggle. As constituted at present, however, such committees constitute the base of the pyramid of bureaucratic power.

In the beginning, the fight to transform these committees in accordance with our criteria of democracy depends upon motives that "democratic" bureaucrats cannot easily attack. It can be pointed out, for example, that the bargaining power of the union within a given plant depends upon the degree to which management feels that the rank-and-file will back up their representatives. Within the plant conditions are maintained only by continuous bargaining, so that the organization within the plant must be such as to continuously represent the rank-and-file, if it is to be taken seriously by management. And there are other cogent arguments that cannot be attacked as other than good unionism.

While such arguments are being used on the union floor, there are other resources within the factory itself. In every factory there are departments that feel themselves neglected. For one reason or another, the union leadership does not seem to understand their problems. In such departments a sort of anti-leadership complex is apt to dominate. When the militants of such departments are presented

with a simple and reasonable plan for the establishment of rank-and-file control of the union apparatus within the factory, they will gladly join in the fight alongside us.

Revolutionists have always been in favor of factory committees. Unfortunately, however, their approach to the subject has usually been an impromptu one, dependent to a large degree upon the spontaneity of the workers. We have lacked a theoretical approach to the stimulation of that spontaneity. Workers will listen to anyone who has a definite program and plan. A major value of our new approach is that it facilitates our presentation of dissident militants with such a plan.

(7) While carrying on our practical work for the formation of shop committees, it is most necessary that we continue unceasingly our political propaganda. Were there no other reason, the movement for the factory committee itself depends upon it. The first reaction of intelligent bureaucrats toward such a movement would be to throw sops in the direction of the dissident militants, even to the point of minor rearrangements of the bureaucratic structure itself. Unless these militants are fortified by the realization that their present activities are essential parts of a larger struggle that has importance far beyond the factory, and even the industry, they are apt to waver. But if we, thru Labor Action, leaflets and personal contact, give them a realization of the ultimate import of their present actions, we will have made them into revolutionists.

Even tho we seem to fall within a given factory, any following we have gotten represents a success. For those who have gotten the conception of rank-and-file controlled factory committees are but half-a-step from that of workers' control of production within the factory. The conception of workers' control of production within the factory are prepared for that of workers' control of industry. It is but one more step to workers' control of the nation.

It is the task of the press to present this process in its entirety -- to make use of every bit of pertinent news for making its possibility and necessity a specific part of the political equipment of every worker. This is the essence of the revolutionary message, and the fundamental duty of every member and organ of the Workers Party is its propagation thruout the working class.

J. Wallis

1010

By whom ???

Amendments to the Trade Union Resolution of the P.C.

Part II, Section (2) Paragraph (a)

Add the following:

But we must face a hard fact. There has been an increasing reluctance of our members to enter or remain in industry despite the fact that all comrades recognize that should we fail here the formation of a labor party may pass over our heads.

This reluctance is due, in considerable measure, to the failure of our trade union work to produce practical results in the form of recruits, contacts and a measurable increase in our political influence. By the same token, industrialization will be greatly facilitated when our trade union comrades prove in practice that the unions are in fact, and not only potentially, the most fruitful field of recruitment and political work.

Paragraph (b)

For paragraph (b) substitute the following:

The chief task of members of a propaganda group in the unions is to propagandize the general ideas of socialism as well as the political program of our party. This task requires skill and flexibility in execution. In addition, it requires a conviction on the part of our members that, whatever the bureaucrats may think, we have ~~no~~ a legal and moral right to advocate our views in the labor movement equal to that of anyone else.

During the past period some of the most active party trade unionists have made considerable progress in integrating themselves into the organizational life of the unions. In most cases, however, this integration has not resulted in any gains for the party in membership or even for its political ideas in a more general way. The integration and prestige of our members in the unions can only become of actual value to us if the comrades now start devoting their main attention to propagandizing for our general and specific views both on the union floor and through personal contact work.

For paragraph (c) substitute the following:

The concentration on practical trade union "politics" which is, for us a generally healthy sign, has naturally led to a tendency on the part of our comrades to seek or to be drafted for relatively high offices in union and area bodies. At this time we re-affirm the general policy of the party that comrades shall not run for offices higher than committee chairmen except in very special circumstances. The general principle should be this: party members should seek higher offices on the basis of a political preparation of the membership rather than on the basis of personal prestige of the conflict between power caucuses.

1011