

Welcome to the new Teamster Committee Bulletin. It will appear once a month (if we get anything to put in it.) Here is the format:

1. Reports from local committees:

These reports should be detailed and lengthy enough to be useful to the national steering committee in Cleveland. We will edit them for security and summarize them for this bulletin. This means they should not be on stencils. Your local convenor should be in charge of this every month.

2. Position papers and Reports from the National Steering Committee:

These will be included as they are generated.

3. Political discussion papers:

These may come from anyone in the local committees and from the National Steering Committee. These must be on Gestetner stencils in a 8½ X 11 format and edited for security. The rule on security is that our group is not mentioned by name in this bulletin, nor are specific people's last names used. Our relationship with other groups in the union is handled very carefully in print. Assume one of these committee bulletins will end up in the hands of the officials or some of our other enemies in the Union. If this happens we want the least amount of damage done. Act Accordingly.

Time Schedule:

The bulletin will be sent out with the weekly paper from Detroit on the first Friday of the month. Therefore, all material must be in Cleveland by the last Friday of the month before. (Starting with the last Friday of August, this one is cut early.) Give any material you have to your local convenor who will have the address of the person in Cleveland to send it to.

DP, Cleveland, for
Nat. Steering Comm.

TDU

This Saturday, July 17, the TDU Temporary Steering Committee will be meeting in Cleveland. This meeting is set to discuss and approve plans for the convention agenda, a convention building brochure, and a campaign to build membership in the TDU from now until the convention. It has been a problem of timing waiting until this meeting to really begin building for the Convention, but if TDU is to be really directed by the rank and file, building a functioning steering committee is part of that process. We have lost valuable time, however, in getting out word of the Convention and building for it.

We want as many rank and file Teamsters and their families as possible to come. We are looking to build solidly from our areas of concentrated strength--those 7 or so areas with real TDU groupings should concentrate on making the Convention a major project and work to bring 20, 30, 50 people to Kent State. We will be scheduling TDU Kick-Off Meetings in many of these areas where outside speakers will come, an enthusiastic atmosphere built, and a real push for membership, activity, and the Convention will be made. We hope that the Convention will be built most strongly from these areas of concentration for TDU already and that the Convention will serve to solidify those TDU groupings into real units of a national organization and spur them to real, ongoing activity in their local areas.

We also will be publicizing the Convention far and wide through CONVOY and through the Convention Brochure. These we hope to see distributed much like the initial TDC brochure and literature. We are looking for a number of serious individuals, some who have been in touch with us for a while and some who will get involved for the first time, to use these materials to get others in their area interested and come. However, it is more likely that if they come, the Convention will generate the enthusiasm for them to go home and build TDU even if they could not convince many of their cohorts to come along. We want to urge as many Teamsters to come whether they come as individuals or small groups.

The brochure will give some information about the political and strategic direction of TDU, but not much. It is more a rousing Convention advertisement. All fraction members should have a copy of the perspectives written for the June 5 meeting. That briefly explains the TDU strategy and a program for building the group. We are also planning to have out before the convention a longer pamphlet which explains TDC, its development into TDU, the conditions in the industry and union, and our strategy for rank and file power. In addition, some pamphlets put out in the name of TDU (possibly called CONVOY pamphlets or some such) before the Convention dealing with the Schneider Struggle, by-laws changes, and dues are scheduled. All this material will help people explain, talk about, and project TDU to Teamsters you are in contact with.

Many fractions have built working relations with Teamsters through TDC and UPSurge. It is important that these people be talked to about TDU and convinced of the necessity of getting involved and building the Convention. It will be harder for West Coast comrades to seriously get large numbers of Teamsters to come to Ohio, but a token delegation is possible and important to other rank and filers. We are also talking about a special West Coast gathering either before or after, but to some extent that depends on the demand--if there are many West Coast Teamsters who would seriously attend, it is more likely we will plan it.

Fractions can help get out the word about the Convention. In some ways this will be like the ~~xx~~ process of getting the word out about TDC. But TDU is different. It will have to have real strength, real groupings at the local level. Finding people who can carry the ball on this and working with them to build TDU will be key. The more material that can get around from and through local Teamsters the better. If meetings can be set up in your area, fine. Keep the steering committee informed about how things are going, the general reception to the materials, and specific individuals getting involved.

Perspective on PROD.

K. For the IBT Steering
Committee

I. What Is PROD?

1. PROD was formed in 1971 as the Professional Drivers Council for Safety and Health, an outgrowth of a conference that Ralph Nader called. It was slow to get off the ground, but the union's complete neglect of road drivers' concerns and safety kept it alive. It provides legal advice, newsletters, etc. for \$20 per year membership fee. PROD got a big boost in 1974 when PROD director Arthur Fox won two important court cases. One was for Jim Banyard, a McLeans driver who was fired for refusing an overweight truck. He won his job back and 6 years (!) back pay. PROD got a reputation then--Here is a man who has answers to DOT, NLRB, IBT Constitution, etc.

2. Arthur Fox fundamentally accepts the same view of the union as Fitzsimmons. He believes in cooperation with the employers, and that the so-called "public interest" (public equals employers) comes first. For example, he attacked TDC for being for the 24 strike over grievances, saying it is irresponsible. He attacked TDC for being for \$2 an hour as against the public interest. (We later got \$1.65). He fears the independent action of the rank and file. Fox wrote a number of Amendments to the IBT Constitution. Most were fine, although they did not even go so far as to propose rank and file election for top officers. One of them however, proposed to LIMIT candidates against Fitz to those on the International Executive Board now! He says in this way we can avoid the "mistakes" of the miners who put "inexperienced local officers" in charge of their union when they threw out the Boyle gang!

Fox favors a reformed, non-gangster union along the lines of the other major unions such as the UAW. But these unions represent their members against the boss no better than the IBT, because they are based on the same principle--collaboration with the corporations.

3. PROD is not a rank and file organization. It has 2500 members but no meetings, conventions, steering committee, elections, nothing. The members have no say what issues it takes up, which areas it researches, etc. For a time, PROD specifically rejected the idea of a rank and file group, or opposition to Fitz and Co. In April 1975, Ken Paff and others in Local 407 organized a large PROD "Forum" for Arthur Fox. Paff discussed privately with Fox building a national rank and file network, local rank and file papers, a fight on the contract and national opposition to Fitz. At that time, and in later correspondence with Paff, Fox definitely rejected the idea, and encouraged Paff to be "the hub of the rank and file movement" (Fox's words). In 1975, with the development of TDC, Fox changed his tune.

4. In August '75 TDC was formed. Fox wanted to be the spiritual leader behind the scenes but not involved in any public or organizational way. He was invited to join in the TDC steering committee. Declined. Invited to speak for TDC. Declined. He started to attack TDC by December '75, with a red baiting letter sent to the PROD key-people-list. He decided TDC was a rival. Not only

to his definite political views (see above), but also to his enormous ego (He is the "savior of the ignorant ranks"). Fox has waffled all over on TDC and UPSurge often telling certain people he supported them, others he opposed them, bad mouthing them to the press people he knows personally, etc. He is not guided by principles and tries to talk out of different sides of his mouth.

5. TDC took a stand of unity of the rank and file. The TDC brochures mentioned PROD favorably (after checking with PROD on the wording). At TDC meetings PROD literature was welcome, Fox was even invited to speak at them.

This policy was a good one. Not only did TDC not create "bad vibes" but TDC also made it clear to active people that it was Fox, not TDC, who blocked unity and who petty personal advance above the movement.

ii. Where IS PROD Going?

6. Fox is not very experienced in the labor movement, but he has very definite political views. He is associated with (and possibly funded by) a Washington DC circle of liberal labor bureaucrats and lawyers connected to Joseph Rauh. He wants to be the architect of a new bureaucracy in the IBT, getting some Intl Vice Presidents (such as Harold Gibbons) to lead a split, bring the IBT into the AFL-CIO and the "mainstream" of American Labor.

7. At the present time he isn't very far on this program. He has not got one single local officer who will stand up publically for PROD, for example, only Pete Camaratta of TDU would make PROD's motions on democracy at the IBT convention. What PROD does have is a large current of union reformism and rank and file sentiment behind it. Many of PROD's supporters are also TDU supporters, or certainly potential ones. His active supporters tend to be more conservative, older more individualists, but still basically he is picking up on the same sentiment as TDU. Many PROD activists are union militants, some are good road-stewards. Their faith in the "Savior" in Washington is mixed with a healthy dose of rank and file sentiment. (Some PROD activists are more conservative and even border on anti-union--"the union bleeds the companies and ruins the industry and the public interest"). It is important to distinguish Fox, with his developed class-collaborationist viewpoint, from the PROD base, who mostly have a mixed consciousness and approach. Since PROD is not very far along on this program, Fox also has more flexibility. For example, at this time he is not against strikes. He (behind the scenes) will tell people it's OK to wildcat, etc. If Fox does not get connected with a group of bureaucrats, his program on rank and file action will become clear in a hurry. He will oppose strikes as irresponsible, call for "working through channels" instead.

8. PROD has no answers to the employers offensive. If the Schneider drivers called on PROD, he would not have a program like TDU to advance their struggle. Going to court won't win their strike or stop their sellout. As the employers offensive continues, and the crisis in the union becomes more severe, this will be more clear to people.

But for now most active rank and filers don't see it that way. They see that there is PROD and TDU both standing up to Fitz and Co, and fighting for the members. Those more impressed with Washington lawyers tend to PROD. Those who think more in terms of grassroots action and organizing tend more to TDU. But sometimes it's just who talks to them first. It is likely that for the short run, PROD will continue to grow and prosper, basing itself on the same conditions that will allow a rank and file movement to prosper, even though Fox does not address the real problems: jobs, conditions, and rank and file power.

9. There is another element that cannot be ignored. The government is now

toying with intervening in the Teamsters. At the present time, the rank and file are not out of control of Fitz so the government is still likely to back Fitz. But as the crisis in the union deepens, the government may switch horses, as happened in the United Mine Workers when Boyle was useless. PROD could be a vehicle that the federal government could use in the IBT to "clean up" the bureaucracy. This could include government monitorship as happened in the UMW.

10. PROD will continue to attack TDU and UPSurge along the same lines that Fox already has. He doesn't want to appear so divisive that he puts off a lot of rank and file activists, but he does want to "signal" to the officials that he is respectable, and talks the same language as the IBT bigshots. It is possible Fox will openly attack TDU and attempt to kill it.

III. TDU And PROD

11. At the present time there is a large overlap in the audience and activists of TDU and PROD. Many rank and filers can't really differentiate. To build TDU, we are involving lots of people who could just as easily go into PROD.

12. We should urge TDU to take a policy of unity with PROD, a united front. TDU should say PROD is doing legal work, research, health and safety lobbying, etc. And TDU is doing grassroots organizing, rank and file papers, strikes and strike support, fighting in the locals, building a rank and file movement. These activities are complementary, they fit together.

Fox has put out a feeler to some people about "restructuring" PROD. This might involve selecting a Board of PRODers (Teamsters) to make PROD look more rank and file controlled. Or it may involve mail referendums, or even a PROD convention.

If there is a convention or other opportunity for rank and file participation we should urge TDUers (in PROD) to attend and argue for 1) the need for a rank and file movement and strategy and 2) Unity, opposition to red baiting, etc.

13. In being for unity, we should urge TDU and UPSurge to put pressure on PROD for unity. It works two ways. TDU and UPSurge should ask PROD to advertise in PROD Newsletter the August and September conferences. TDU should ask PROD for legal help on certain cases, should ask for endorsements of specific campaigns, should get TDUers and UPSurgers who are also PRODers to write letters to PROD Newsletter, etc. In this way, we are pressing PROD to be for unity. We are also making Fox speak with just one tongue. If he refuses to back legitimate activities of the Teamster membership, it shows where he's at.

14. Basically we are for unity of TDU and PROD, but there should be elements of criticism where Fox deserves it. For example, socialists and others should write letters to Convoy where warranted on specific points. Such as if Fox red-baits, or invites the government into the union or calls for only International VPs to have the right to run against Fitz. It would not be best for TDU to open up on Fox (imitate him) on these matters, but there should be some criticism by TDUers of PROD through TDU. If Fox openly attacks TDU, TDU should respond to charges and publicly call for Unity and charge PROD with breaking unity.

15. TDU is going to need to be clear on government intervention in the union. Discussion on this needs to take place inside TDC, UPSurge, and the rank and file as a whole. We should be preparing people also, that PROD could be a tool of the government at some point in the future. At such a point as that becomes apparent, we would shift our view of PROD and openly oppose it as a front for attacking the union. But that is not the case now.

IV. Socialists and PROD

16. In the past socialists have joined PROD, helped to build it, distributed its lit, put articles in rank and file papers on its activities. Because of the turn PROD has made, a different attitude is in order. We should not be building up PROD only to have Fox attack us as "infiltrators" as he has done. On the whole, rank and file papers, TDU, etc should work with PROD, but we should not build it.

17. Socialists should point out the direction PROD is going, and its program and role in the union. The Dan Labotz article in WP #165 was an excellent example. Socialists who are responsible spokespersons for TDU and UPSurge should not be the most prominent in this (for example should not sign articles in WP) because then their views would be confused with that of TDU and TDU and IS could be attacked by PROD on this basis. Same for public speeches at TDU meetings, etc.

But socialists have a right to our views, and in fact to build the rank and file movement we will have to educate people on PROD, on reformism in general. The main points to be stressed, in WP articles, in talking with people at IS IBT Conferences, etc, are:

- a) Need for a rank and file movement, not a Savior. Prod is not democratic
- b) Need for class struggle approach (rank and file power, not top down reform-- or a "face lift" for the IST, to make it "respectable. PROD has nothing to say on employers.
- c) PROD does not accept unity, is afraid of TDU, UPSurge, etc for the same reason Fox fears the membership. Fox is divisive, willing to help bureaucrats against TDU. Red-baiting.
- d) PROD could well be a tool for government intervention in IBT.

These are not isolated points, but should be taken together to explain that PROD represents an alternative strategy, that leads to a union essentially the same as what we have now. We have to win the main TDU, SUPsurege activists to a class struggle strategy, otherwise the movement will be defeated.

END