

ANNE

IBT FRACTION BULEETIN

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Political Line on TDC, January 10-April 1

The January 10 meeting in D.C. represented an important step forward in the politics of TDC and the implementation of our perspective. Two of the major political themes of January 10 were, READY TO STRIKE and "TDC is the first step in an ongoing rank and file movement in the IBT." These are ~~the~~ the two major themes in our line on TDC from now to April 1. However, two things need to be kept in mind: (1) the people in D.C. were generally in advance of other Teamsters and there are still thousands who need to be convinced of these two ideas; and (2) these themes occur within a certain context and set of arguments. Many Teamsters are doubtful of the effectiveness of rank and file organization and fearful of the consequences of a strike. In outline, our overall line is as follows:

Although the petition drive remains to be extended to many areas and needs more completely done where it has some start, the emphasis on TDC is now more on its movement character. As a movement, TDC has already shown that it can influence events. We claim credit for Fitz' \$2.50 an hour wage demand. Further, it looks like our continued pressure will soon produce another step forward. Rumor has it that Fitz will soon announce something fairly substantial on health and safety. The lesson from this is that you can fight city hall--TDC can be and is effective. But we need to keep the pressure up.

To help organize this pressure, TDC will publish a bi-weekly paper--2 page broadsheet--called CONVOY. TDC activists, supporters, and barn representatives will take bundles, and pay for them at the rate of \$3 per 100. CONVOY will get out the news on TDC events, will present the arguments in support of our demands, will report on bargaining developments, and will present TDC's line in a concrete way. By reaching thousands (initial press run will be 25,000), CONVOY will keep the pressure on.

CONVOY will also organize for a nation-wide day of demonstrations in early March, which will be the next major step in the development of this movement. In areas that have already held TDC meetings, February meetings will help build for early March.

While strike talk at rallies is cheap and easy to come by, the actual building of a strike atmosphere requires a serious approach. Arguments against and real hesitations about a strike must be answered. We motivate and argue for a strike in the following way, though we must keep in mind that TDC itself is not an actual strike organization.

(1) Every Teamster knows that we need a strike to win our demands in 1976. A strike, particularly organized national strike, would force the industry to make enormous concessions immediately. The profits are there to pay.

(2) Fitzsimmons, however, has announced in advance he will not strike. This, of course, is sheer stupidity from the point of view of bargaining--even for a faker who will never really use the strike. The ranks cannot afford to take Fitz' line. The ranks must convince the bosses that they are indeed, READY TO STRIKE, in order to force the greatest number of concessions. Even those worried about the after effects of a strike (trusteeships, fines, injunctions, firings, etc.) must realize that any anti-strike talk plays into the bosses hands. The rank and file must be firmly for a strike. If you give up the strike in advance you give up your only threat and only weapon.

(3) TDC does not pretend to be a strike organization, but it is doing a number of things needed to make the strike more successful. For one thing it is training

a nationwide network of fighters, who are themselves getting to know more fighters. No such network existed in 1970. Also, TDC is establishing nation-wide communications, mostly through CONVOY, that will allow militants in one area to know what is happening elsewhere. All of this is being done weeks before the contract expiration date. In the event of a strike, this network and means of communications can help prevent the isolation that occurred in 1970. Thus, without making any unreal promises or taking any phoney postures, TDC is helping to prepare for a strike by talking it up, spreading the idea, and laying some of the organizational groundwork for a strike.

(4) We know that Fitz will not call a strike if left to his own devices. Determined strike sentiment, an organized contract movement, and solid communications are the best way to force Fitz to either come up with a ~~xxxx~~ decent contract or to actually call a strike on one or another scale (Hoffa often talked of selective strikes.) We can be fairly sure, however, that Fitz will not actually call a strike under almost any circumstances. Therefore, the ranks--and their rank and file leadership--must be prepared to organize and lead their own strike. To repeat, the current organizing activities led by TDC are the best preparation for that event.

January 10 also established among the leading elements of TDC that TDC is the first step in an on-going movement to change the IBT and Dump Fitz.

(1) An on-going movement is needed to enforce the gains of the contract and to carry through changes in the union structure which the contract fight make obvious. For example, the current union leadership cannot be counted on to protect employment in the face of mergers or changes of operations; a decent grievance procedure is only as good as those sitting at the final step; the continued squandering of pension funds can only be stopped by dumping the robbers, etc. In short, the leadership of the IBT must be replaced at virtually every level.

(2) Only a mass rank and file movement can accomplish this. Singel issue reform pressure, e.g. the referendum vote, no matter how good in themselves, cannot deal with the power of the bureaucracy. It takes organizing, numbers, and militancy to do that. Elite reform strategies that only plan to replace one bureaucrat with another (the Jimmy Hoffa, Jr. types) or those directed at legislative and legal reforms (PROD) cannot deal with this sort of power. Look at the coal miners, etc.

(3) An on-going national opposition can help provide links between workers in one company, but different cities and locals. The bigger freight companies play one local off against another, threatening to move to another city where, they say, the local will accept worse conditions, e.g. Wed./Sun. work thru. A national network of militants can co-ordinate action and information between the workers in different locals and head this divide and conquer tactic off.

We argue that TDC and its contract focus are precisely the best means of laying the basis for an on-going movement for the following reasons:

(1) TDC is teaching rank and file militants how to organize a national movement around issues that mobilize thousands. As a result, TDC militants are learning how to become mass leaders.

(2) TDC is actually creating a national network of militants and the means of communication which will be indispensable for a post-contract, on-going opposition.

(3) Because it concentrates on the contract, it is organizing in a way that can, and already has, produce results. The issues in the contract immediately effect the material living conditions of Teamsters. Far more than union issues per se, the ~~xxxx~~ contract fight illustrates how the bureaucracy defends the bosses and points to

their true political nature.

(4) TDC is avoiding the pitfalls of TURF because it is not based on a coalition of baronies of local leaders, or of aspiring out bureaucrats. Rather it is a network of genuine rank and file militants who are fighting for a good contract and learning how to organize and lead the ranks, having fought together, learned together, and forged ~~xx~~ a program for the future together, this leadership network--particularly those who pass the test of a strike period--can face the byreacracy united with a shared program and perspective. Furthermore, assuming that TDC continues its present course, these leaders and fighters will have an established relationship with the thousands of rank and filers who join the fight.

For the steering committee--

Kim M.

Steering Committee Evaluation of TDC Washington Events

- 1) The major problem we had in the pre-Washington preparations was a lack of focus. January 10 was decided on November 22 at the Cleveland TDC meeting. From that point on all our efforts should have been focused towards Washington. It was a theme in our local meetings, but pressed enough. Publicity materials, travel arrangements, fraction co-ordination all should have begun earlier and been more regular throughout the whole Nov. 22-Jan. 10 period, not just the last week or so.
- 2) Jan. 10 failed to do one thing we hoped it might--put TDC on the map, nationwide as a clear, strong opposition in the IBT. Our press efforts, like our other efforts, perhaps did not start early enough. Part of developing press relations is a personal working relationship and we did not have the people to spare to develop that. However, we are finding out that we got more coverage than first expected. The AP story got picked up in scattered places and there was even some national TV coverage. One thing that we did accomplish was to introduce TDC/UPSurge to the national press. Our initial contacts will help get stories for Jan. 31 and various local meetings (the Louisville meeting already experienced a higher level of local press interest than most of our others). As the contract deadline nears, some of our early spade work on Jan. 10 may pay off more than it has already.
- 3) Our main difficulty in Washington was a real lack of co-ordination on the spot. There was a need for a small group to have developed clear tasks and clear lines of authority. As it was, who was to do what and when was very confused. This impaired our contact work the most as comrades had no assignments and no direction as to whom to really talk to. Too many technical and political plans were left to on the spot initiative and hit/miss methods.
- 4) Our conception of the outdoor demo was confused. Was it a press conference? a rally? a picket line? What? this prior confusion meant that many preparations were not attended to until the last minute--placards, chants, tactical leadership, etc. It came off in fact, but with a little bit of luck.
- 5) Part and parcel of all these weaknesses was weak fraction preparation prior to the event as regards both technical and political tasks. What we wanted to happen was not communicated clearly enough and roles for each member which would make that happen were often never made clear to the fractions before they came. One result was that IS comrades often were passive participants or passive observers rather than active political leaders.
- 6) When we bring 100 rank and filers together, in Washington or anywhere else, that is an opportunity not only to politically educate, but also to train them as organizers. The demo and rally had a lot of enthusiasm and people felt good about being there, but there was not enough specific direction given about what to do with that once back home. Some specifics on what are the most important things to do when you get home, and how to do them should have been a part of the program.
- 7) Another major failure of the program was the absence of input from female Teamsters. All scheduled speakers were male. This was not only wrongheaded, but unnecessary. We have numbers of strong women Teamsters and there were some good people there whom we had not previously known. The only woman speaker was the wife of a Teamsters and while the role of wives is important and this woman should have spoken, the absence of any other women speakers created problems we should not be creating for ourselves. Our politics should lead us to avoid, not make, this sort of error.

8) We must decide on our action plans just prior to the contract and build towards them so we don't have the same problem of focus as on Jan. 10. The problem is that such a clear action plan did not emerge from Jan. 10. We are projecting some actions for early-mid March. The steering committee will clarify this soon.

9) Having said all this, it might appear that Jan. 10 was some sort of failure, if not a disaster. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The tone of the demo and rally were excellent. People were genuinely "up" after meeting militants from so many areas, realizing that people like themselves do exist throughout the IBT. A clear sense of a movement motivated the gathering. The events of Jan. 10 created a host of committed TDC'ers. More importantly, it changed the tone and sense of TDC. From a petition campaign, TDC emerged as a strike movement--a group seriously committed to winning the contract demands it put forward and not just make a showing for the record. TDC also addressed itself to what happens after the contract and the sense of the meeting was a clear commitment to build a rank and file movement that would recapture the union for the membership. In short, the spirit and direction of Jan. 10 was precisely the spirit and direction we wish to impart to the whole of the movement at this time and had all those involved in TDC been to Washington that would have been reconfirmed without a doubt. Part of our job now is to bring that new sense of TDC back through the local areas and build on it. It says something for the strength of our politics that our sense of the rank and file movement is right on target that our technical and organizational snafus did not stifle the energy and fighting direction that the rank and file wants to see TDC go. We had a sense of what was needed; the rank and file had a sense of what was needed and they coincided.

For the steering committee--

Mike F.

Report of the TDC Steering Committee Held in Washington, January 10

At the Steering Committee of the TDC in Washington on January 10, Arthur Fox escalated his attack on TDC. No longer can anyone realistically hope to "patch it up" as some did prior to that date.

At this meeting Fox and his supporters attacked the socialists in TDC by saying they were out to use TDC for "their own ends," and that TDC would be dragged down by the red label associated with them. He claimed to be friendly to TDC and its goals, however, it was clear that his goal is to wreck TDC and any other rank and file movement or organization that he doesn't personally control.

He made NO suggestions on building TDC. He, in fact, ran it down as a "flash in the pan." He had two supporters on the steering committee. One of them, Frank Greco, openly stated that he would NOT build TDC! Fox also acted in a high handed fashion, he even tried to chair the meeting, he interrupted people, "scolded" people, etc.

These actions follow a history(recent) of trying to quietly undercut TDC by red-baiting and bad-mouthing, while at the same time trying to get public credit for it!! The January 10 meeting confirmed his direction--RULE OR RUIN(and in truth it must be ruin.)

ALL KEY TDC LEADERS AND ACTIVISTS SHOULD KNOW WHAT HE IS UP TO. EVEN THOSE FRIENDLY TO HIM SHOULD BE TALKED TO. AT THE VERY LEAST THEY CAN PERHAPS BE DISCOURAGED FROM ACTING AGAINST THE TDC.

Specifically, people need to be informed:

- (1) Fox is out to DOMINATE the rank and file movement single-handedly. He doesn't believe in democracy in the movement, and we can't fight the lack of democracy in our union unless we are committed to it. Further, he has shown that he is not interested in a FIGHTING, ACTIVE GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT. He merely wants passive "supporters" and financing for his legal moves. His red-baiting is to further these aims, to undercut any independent rank and file movement.
- (2) FOX IS GOING TO RUN PROD INTO THE GROUND. It cannot grow with his divisive policies dominating it. We need legal defense and health and safety research--we need the goals of PROD. But these goals ~~xxx~~ will go down the drain with Fox, PRODers should stop him if they can, from ruining PROD with his childish policies.
- (3) TDC's policy is to co-operate with rank and file movements and organizations from Teamsters for Democracy, the Cannery Workers Committee, UPSurge, etc...including PROD! But Fox has made himself an enemy of the rank and file movement.

This viewpoint needs to be conveyed to as many people as possible, and as many as possible should adopt it as their own and convince others. This man, Arthur Fox, is going to be a real roadblock and disrupter of efforts to build a national opposition to Fitz, his bureaucracy, and the trucking bosses. PEOPLE MUST BE PREPARED TO DEAL WITH THIS ROADBLOCK.

For the Steering Committee--
Ken F.

Political Line on Arthur Fox and PROD

By now most members will have heard about the various red-baiting attacks made on our IBT activities by Arthur Fox. Fox is a lawyer and director of PROD. PROD was formed out of a Nader project and still receives money from the Nader group. PROD's declared purpose for three or four years has been legislative pressuring, lobbying of DOT and ICC, and what Fox calls "professional representation" in Washington. "Professional representation" means lawyers doing good things for workers in the halls of power. PROD, however is a membership organization. It claims to have 1600 members. It costs \$20 a year to join.

Fox's attacks on the IS leadership in IBT, i.e. TDC, has taken two forms. First, Fox sent out a lengthy letter, which your fraction should already have received, attacking socialists in near-McCarthyite terms. This letter was sent to Fox's "cadre," a list of 43 people he regularly confers with. A few of these 43 were our members. Some others have been active in TDC since the beginning. A small number, about 3, are on the TDC steering Committee.

Fox's second ~~letter~~ attack came at the TDC steering committee meeting on January 10. Fox repeated the barges in his letter adding that movements lead by socialists could not possibly become popular or successful. He proposed some resolutions: one saying WP couldn't cover January 10 (defeated), and one which, after much modification and deletion of anti-IS stuff, put TDC on record for legal change of political institutions. This last one passed with some of our supporters voting for it on the grounds that it was meaningless and would get Fox off our backs.

The fact is Fox is not likely to do so. Word is that PROD is in financial trouble. Fox himself has told us he fears that TDC will render PROD useless to IBTers and so end his career as a "professional representative." So, it appears Fox is running scared and is likely to attempt to destroy TDC by demoralizing its leaders and activists. It seems clear that Fox's clumsy red-baiting is directed at demoralizing and confusing more than from any concern for the future of TDC and the effects of evil reds.

While we understand all of this, many of our supporters--unaccustomed to faction fights, etc.--do not, furthermore, Fox has real support. Some of his people in TDC are genuine rank and file fighters in their work place. But, they share Fox's elitist assumptions, i.e. that lawyers can win more than Teamsters, as do many workers. We cannot, therefore, simply move publicly to force him out or even to have an open fight with fox...yet.

Nevertheless, we must prepare the ground for just such a fight. To do that every IS-IBTer and fraction member should know our current line on Fox and PROD. Even this line, however, is only to be argued on a one to one basis with those who we want to win to our periphery and who we trust at this time.

The Line:

Our public line on PROD remains the same. We view PROD as a legislative pressure group that is of some use to Teamsters in raising health and safety questions. We have no objection to research, expose, legislative pressuring, or even lobbying. We support those objectives of PROD that are in the interests of Teamsters.

We do not, however, believe that PROD is or can be a substitute for a fighting rank and file movement when it comes to getting rid of the bureaucracy and changing the union. That is the job of rank and file Teamsters. That movement will need lawyers, but those lawyers work for the workers and cannot be seen or projected as leaders of workers, as Fox projects himself.

Fox, himself, is a different matter from PROD. Fox is engaged in a red-baiting campaign that can only be directed at hurting TDC by breaking the very thing that gives TDC, or any r&f movement, its strength: unity in the face of the enemy. While Fox is doing this for his own, narrowly organizational reasons, he is nonetheless joining with Fitz and the bosses when he should be backing TDC.

Fox has claimed ~~to~~ to support TDC from the start. In fact, when TDC was founded in August, Fox's PROD newsletter claimed that it was founded by PROD leaders. This was only true in the sense that a number of the founders of TDC were members of PROD, including many of the ISers. Nevertheless, Fox has done very little to build or support TDC. When asked to be on the steering committee at the very beginning, he refused. When invited to speak to various TDC meetings, he refused.

Once TDC began to grow, Fox seemed to back off even farther. In early December he spoke to both Anne and Ken from Cleveland saying he was afraid TDC would compete with PROD. At one point he threatened to send a red-baiting letter and to ask his supporters to send their TDC petitions to him instead of Cleveland. Shortly after this, the letter came out. Fox's attempt to get people to send petitions was a complete failure.

Fox is willing to stoop to these tactics because he does not share TDC's r&f outlook or its concern with the contract. In fact, Fox holds a number of positions that clearly run up against the interests of the ranks. Fox has never disassociated himself from Nader's position on deregulation of the trucking industry. Nader favors this from a "public interest" viewpoint, i.e., deregulation would lower rates and rationalize the industry. What this means to workers, of course, is wage cuts and reduced employment due to concentration and mergers. While we are not particularly concerned about how the bosses organize their business, we recognize the regressive nature of such "free enterprise" reforming schemes. We have not concretely pinned Fox to this position yet, so use this argument cautiously.

Also Fox is very shaky on the question of strikes. He tells people that strikes during the life of a contract are illegal, i.e., against the law, in particular the preamble of Taft-Hartley. This is simply a lie. Such strikes are only illegal if the contract says so. The UAW, for example, has the legal right to strike during the life of the contract (the catch is UAW exec board approval is required.)

The IBT currently has an open ended grievance procedure under which approved strikes could be legal. The problem with the current set-up is that final say on grievances is in the hands of a joint union-company board. Under this set-up the union gives away grievances. Fox's position is that this should be replaced by bidding arbitration--in counter-position to the strike or right to choose a strike. We, on the other hand, favor the right to strike over grievances--though of course people will not always choose to strike--and the type of strong stewards organization that makes arbitration after four steps unnecessary in most cases.

In, general, Fox puts the law before the interests of Teamsters and the right to strike. You can get the flavor of his position from the following paragraph, reproduced from his letter about the IS.

By the way, we hasten to add that Teamsters have a lawful right to strike after the present contract expires and in order to secure a more favorable new contract. After that contract is ratified--through proper voting or procedures--the right to strike terminates if the contract contains grievance machinery binding employers. There is one exception--even a no strike clause cannot prevent you from striking over fundamental safety disputes

posing an immediate threat of bodily injury to workers. We do not, therefore, oppose the judicious use of your lawful right to obtain legitimate contract and safety goals. However, in so doing we must be careful not to alienate our allies since a crippling strike could unless a damaging backlash from the public and Congress. Ultimately, we believe that we need to hurture good relations with the public and the government if we are to succeed in reforming Teamster working conditions through new laws and regulations, and in eliminating the criminal elements from, and generally reforming the structure of, the union.

This quote also gives you a sample of his strategy for reforming the union and changin working conditions. Our allies, the public and the government, are to join us in legislative and legal action to improve conditions and the union. Naturally, legal precedents and decisions are useful to rank and filers, but any militant knows that they are only as good as the union or shop floor organization that can enforce them. DOT safety regulations are violated daily by the trucking companies. Drivers are forced to do these illegal jobs or get fired--unless they are well organized enough to resist and get away with it.

Perhaps most important for us is the fact that Fox represents an elitist and ineffective strategy for changing the union. Fox makes it clear that he has no faith in Teamsters to handle their won affairs. He argues that to get anything they need "professional representatives" who know what they're doing--as opposed to workers who apparantly don't know anything. Fox believes that legal actions change things. Also Fox views things from the point of view of public interest, that is, he wants clean, formally, democratic, and responsible unions that don'e alienate the public or government.

For the steering committee--
Kim M.