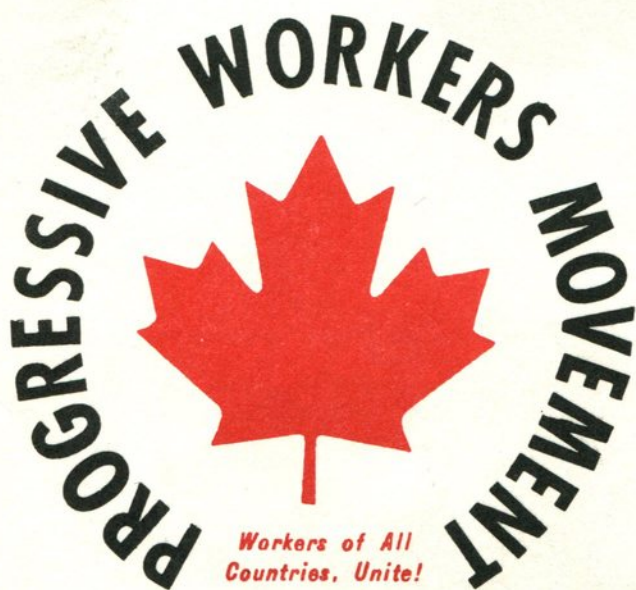


TRADE UNION PROGRAM



CANADIAN WORKING CLASS

Of some 20 million people scattered across our land, which is second in the world in terms of land area, over 6 million are workers and of these less than 30 percent are members of Labour Unions. The unions in Canada are, for the most part, American (so-called "Internationals"), controlled by the U.S. bureaucrats through their appointed conservative and opportunist representatives who hold all key positions.

Organized Canadian labour therefore, reflects U.S. imperialist domination of Canada. The one exception to this general condition is the Confederation of National Trade Unions in Quebec which was born out of the grow-struggle for self-determination in the country.

In a land with an abundance of resources, and the skills to take full advantage of them, the working people suffer from recurring crises of unemployment and the misery that accompanies it. One third of the Canadian workers live on annual incomes that are considered well below the poverty line and an additional one third live just on, or slightly above, that line.

Increasing monopoly concentration in an already highly monopolised economy and the rapid expansion of automation techniques in industrial production ensure ever greater profits to the U.S. monopolists who dominate our nation's economy but brings to the Canadian working class only increased unemployment and want. There is a growing awareness that there will be no basic change in the conditions of increasing poverty, insecurity and degradation so long as the system of capitalist and imperialist exploitation lasts.

The youth especially are hit particularly hard. Young people are leaving school in search of unemployment only to find there is none to be had. They enter a world that has little need of them, except perhaps as cannon fodder in a war promoted by the same U.S. imperialists who dominate Canada and are responsible for the conditions that result in unemployment for Canadian youth. These young people are faced with a future that is bleak indeed unless the system of capitalist exploitation is replaced with a new social system based on Socialist principles.

Canadian workers do not willingly or docilely accept poverty and deteriorating living standards. In spite of the failure of the so-called "Labour Statesmen" to give leadership in the struggle and in spite of revisionist betrayal, many bitter battles have been fought involving wide sections of the working people and the prospect is for more bitter and violent class warfare in the immediate future as the monopolists intensify their drive for ever greater profits and prepare for an expansion of their war against the common people.

The most advanced workers, those grounded in the science of Marxism-Leninism and possessing a revolutionary perspective of a society without exploitation of man by man are charged with the prime responsibility of reviving the Canadian Labour Movement and inspiring it with a new sense of purpose and direction. In order to rout the established leadership with their class-collabora-

tionist policies and to defeat the anti-labour drive of big business it will be necessary to arm labour with the historic perspective of socialism.

U.S. DOMINATION OF CANADIAN UNIONS

Figures recently published in the first annual report under the "Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act", provide valuable data on the extent of U.S. domination over the Canadian Trade Union Movement. The report shows that 79.35 percent of all organized workers in Canada (including Quebec) are under U.S. bureaucratic control, either directly as locals of American Unions or indirectly through affiliation to the Canadian Labour Congress, the policies of which are American made. Take away the purely Quebec C.N.T.U. and the percentage of those controlled from the U.S. will rise sharply.

We have therefore, a situation where U.S. economic domination is paralleled by an equally solid U.S. control of our unions—a control exercised by U.S. labour bureaucrats who overtly support American imperialist plans for world conquest. It has been clearly proven that the U.S. "labour statesmen" are no more than a front for U.S. imperialist interests. It would be sheer nonsense to expect that such a leadership could even remotely or accidentally represent the basic interests of Canadian workers. For example: when Canadian Auto Workers were on strike against U.S. owned auto corporations their "union brothers" across the border were instructed to work overtime for the same company's plants in the U.S. to produce automobiles for the Canadian market.

The U.S. union leaders have betrayed the American working class and tied them tightly to the policies of aggression and war being pursued by the U.S. imperialists. These overpaid merchants of labour act as recruiting sergeants for the militarists and spend much of their time urging the youth of America to march out and die for the "American way of life". They avoid strikes like the plague and push workers to greater efforts in the production of increasing quantities of poison gas, napalm and other weapons of death and destruction.

The corrupt A.F.L.-C.I.O. officials have defended the interests of the U.S. ruling class at every point and on all occasions. They participated in plotting the overthrow of such mildly democratic bourgeois regimes as that of Juan Bosch in Dominica and Jagan in British Guiana; they support Johnson's war of genocide in Vietnam and shore up tottering military dictatorships all over the world. They have been guilty of the most flagrant interference in the international affairs of trade unions in Britain, Japan, France, Italy, Germany, Africa, Mexico—etc. The evidence is easily obtained—they boast of their exploits.

Interference on the part of these labour bosses in the affairs of Canadian trade unions is partially obscured and given a mask of legality by the simple process of having the union constitution conform to every reactionary and anti-labour act passed by the United States Congress. In this way Canadian members of American unions are made subject to the laws of a foreign country and U.S. anti-

Communist regulations are applied to workers in Canada.

"Non-co-operative" locals are placed under trusteeship; phoney, discredited bureaucrats are appointed to positions of authority; strikes are forbidden and agreements signed over the heads of protesting workers who are allowed no say in the matter—conditions are accepted, or you don't work. So long as this imperialist fungus clings to the body of the Canadian labour movement there is little hope that the unions will play the vital role they should play in the fight to free the nation from economic bondage.

Canadian workers must awake to the fact that the stakes we're fighting for are of much greater significance than just freeing ourselves from a bureaucracy—bureaucracy is an ever-present factor in capitalist society. The immediate objective is to free ourselves from a foreign bureaucracy that acts as agent of an alien power that dominates the nation's economy. We need to struggle for an independent, Socialist nation, but we cannot properly pursue that struggle so long as our unions remain shackled to the authority of the agents of that same alien power we are fighting.

The primary task confronting Canadian workers at this point in history is one of building a militant, independent Canadian union movement under democratic rank and file control. Proposals for so-called "autonomy" (which is no more than a lengthening of the leash—not its removal) only confuses the issue and is tantamount to treason to the workers and the nation.

STRATEGY AND TACTICS FOR WORKING CLASS VICTORY

Trade unions are basic organizations of the working class which originated in the pre-monopoly era of capitalism and were formed for the specific purpose of struggling for better wages and improved living and working conditions. In *Wages, Price and Profit*, Marx wrote: "Trade unions work well as centers of resistance against the encroachments of capital. They fail partially from an injudicious use of their power. They fail generally from limiting themselves to a guerilla war against the effects of the existing system instead of simultaneously trying to change it instead of using their organized forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class that is to say, the ultimate abolition of the wage system."

After a protracted and oft-times bloody struggle for the right to organize and to improve conditions, Canadian workers are finding out that the limited reforms won at great cost have not resulted in any real security or decent conditions. Every initial gain won by the workers is constantly being undermined by rising prices, unemployment, plants moving to low wage areas, etc. So long as land and industry remains the private property of a privileged few the economy will operate for the sole benefit of the owning class and in the interests of obtaining maximum profits and the power and authority of the state will be used to protect the capitalist system of robbery which, in the case of Canada, is imperialist robbery since the main sectors of the economy are in the hands of an alien power—the U.S. monopolists.

The working class is the main and leading force in the struggle for social change by means of the revolutionary struggle for the realization of a socialist society. Revolutionaries must, therefore, strive to show the working class how to use the unions as a weapon to shape their future, a revolutionary weapon for the abolition of the system of exploitation of man by man. To achieve this we must have a clear understanding of economic and political conditions and arm ourselves with a knowledge of Marxism-Leninism. We must be able to advance in the simplest terms a correct programme that will arouse the workers to action and point them in the direction of a socialist solution to their problems. The main points in such a programme should be:

1. To expand and intensify the class struggle against the main enemy—U.S. imperialism.

2. To free Canadian unions from U.S. domination, deepen the national and class consciousness of the workers and develop action to defeat the U.S. bureaucrats and their Canadian stooges. Promote the organization of an independent, democratic Canadian union movement under rank and file control.

3. To participate in the struggle for immediate gains but in a manner calculated to take care of the future of the workers, above all working to develop the socialist understanding of the workers, creating a revolutionary leadership and a mass base for socialist action as the indispensable condition for the victory of the working class in the battle for state power.

4. To mobilize and unite the working people against exploitation, imperialist aggression and fascist reaction. Support the Quebec Liberation Movement in the fight for national self-determination.

5. Promote united action with, and support for the progressive demands of small farmers, agricultural workers, middle class, ethnic groups and intellectuals.

6. Special attention to the problems of women, youth students and unemployed.

7. Build a nation-wide united front against U.S. imperialism, national traitors and fascist reaction. Promote international working class solidarity.

We must guard against falling into the trap of separating the immediate struggle for reforms from the objective long-range struggle for socialism as the revisionists do in their opportunist contest for official positions and to direct the struggle away from the road to revolutionary action. Behind a fake call for "trade union unity" the revisionists obscure the important fact of U.S. domination and oppose the development of independent Canadian unions. They fail to expose the nature of the capitalist state and the purely reformist character of simple trade union action. The revisionists and opportunists fear to engage in struggle to make the truth known and abandon Marxist-Leninist principles advocating instead policies that are in direct opposition to the basic interests of the working people.

We must also guard against the "leftist" error of failing to participate in the struggle for immediate demands usually because of a sectarian outlook that the fight for

reforms is of no consequence and only creates illusions in workers minds. Such illusions about the capitalist system are soon dispelled through practical experience in the class struggle.

"If you want to know a certain thing or a certain class of things directly, you must personally participate in the practical struggle to change reality—to change that thing or class of things, for only thus can you come into contact with them as phenomena, only through personal participation in the practical struggle to change reality can you uncover that thing or class of things and comprehend them". (Mao Tse-tung, Selected Works, Vol. 1, pages 299-300).

So-called revolutionaries who refuse to lead workers in actual battle are no more than "armchair socialists" who quickly find they have no troops to lead.

Revolutionary and militant workers must master the technique of applying Marxist-Leninist principles to develop the political consciousness of the working class in the spontaneous struggles of the labour movement. In the struggles of the present they must take care of the future interests of the class.

There is no easy method or formula for applying this principle of struggle. Each industry, shop, union and situation must be studied in order to recognize the main features in order to know how best to advance a revolutionary programme.

THE PRESENT CRISIS

An explanation of the crisis in the trade union movement which is favoured by revisionists and right-wing bureaucrats alike is that it is the result of increased resistance to workers demands on the part of the employers. This explanation serves to obscure their own incompetence as leaders and their total inability to meet the conditions arising out of the sharpening crisis of the world capitalist system.

Resistance to workers demands has always been a characteristic feature of big business, changing only as to methods adopted according to needs and current conditions. The big play given by revisionist journals to the report of the organization of a representative committee of big business interests is somewhat humorous. It is as though the revisionists have suddenly made the discovery that the capitalist class stands in opposition to labour and is opposed to having profits reduced in order to meet trade union demands. The conflict between capital and labour has always been a characteristic of the capitalist system and will continue to be so as long as that system shall last. It is nonsense to speak of this continual struggle as being responsible for the crisis in the labour movement; such an explanation can neither explain nor solve the crisis.

The crisis is due to the failure of labour leadership, the weaknesses in organizational structure, the wide (and widening) economic and social gap between leaders and rank and file and the political immaturity of the membership (itself an expression of lack of correct leadership). The union leaders are committed to maintaining the capitalist system and raise demands that do not go beyond

"A fair days pay for a fair days work". The leaders, for the most part, identify their personal interests with those of the ruling class, consequently when capitalism goes into crisis they, too, are in crisis, find themselves alienated from the membership and are totally unable to cope with the situation.

Conditions become almost intolerable for the lower-ranking leaders who are closest to the wrath of the rank and file and more susceptible than the upper echelons to pressure from that direction. Squeezed between the members and the bosses the lower-ranking leaders are often pressured into actions they would prefer not to take and, when chastised by their superiors, the state and the employers, they blame the membership for having got them into the mess and become incensed with them. Under these conditions the actions of these lower ranks are mostly unpredictable, inconsistent and can lead to disastrous situations if no counter-balancing force exists to offset it. An example of what can result from this type and method of leadership is to be seen in the disastrous strike at Lenkurt Electric in British Columbia which is by no means an isolated incident. These struggles provide us with valuable lessons from which we must learn so we will be better equipped to give guidance in the development of an alternative leadership.

LESSONS OF TEAMSTERS AND LENKURT STRIKES

The Ontario Teamster strike ended in a large measure of victory for the workers for several important reasons.

The entire membership in the area was involved in the struggle and maintained a high degree of militancy throughout. The strike situation developed over a fairly lengthy period of time which the Teamsters put to good use in developing a strong rank and file leadership with widespread influence. There was a split between revisionist C.P. leaders and their following in the Teamster Union; a following with strong economist leanings and a militant attitude toward trade union battles.

The end result was that the rank and file in Ontario were able to overcome leadership vacillation and outright betrayal. Even "radical" leaders were unequal to the task of getting men back to work before their priority demands were met.

In the Lenkurt strike only a portion of the union membership was involved. The strike began spontaneously giving no opportunity for adequate rank and file preparation. The revisionists who played an important leading role in the struggle were united on objectives and joined with the right-wing social democrats and U.S. appointed stooges in stressing that the most important aim was to "get the workers back in the plant". The strike was abandoned and betrayed by the official leadership and went down to inglorious defeat.

The important lesson to be learned from the history and outcome of these struggles is that development of a dynamic rank and file leadership is a vital necessity to the success of future labour struggles.

Progressive Workers Movement is, of course, interested in something more than partial economic gains important as those may be to a temporary alleviation of the workers economic plight. To us it is most important that workers engaged in struggle should learn the POLITICAL lessons of that struggle and that these lessons should be drawn to the attention of the entire class. In this respect it appears to us that B.C. is far ahead of Ontario in that the lessons were widely discussed, both in the labour movement and publicly, as a result of the participation of P.W.M. members in the strike and the issuing of political leaflets by the movement. In Ontario, on the other hand, revisionist influence was paramount and succeeded, to quite an extent, in obscuring the basic lessons of the struggle.

In B.C., both social-democrat and revisionist leaders made a great show of threatening militant action against the use of injunctions but, at the first sign of opposition from the state and under orders from national and international officials, rapidly faded from the field of battle. The fight which was supposed to be pursued on the picket line was moved into the home grounds of the capitalist class—the courts, and there the workers were certain to lose.

In the face of police violence and stool pigeon tactics well-known revisionists went around declaiming that the workers must not indulge in violence and should allow strikebreakers to enter the plant unmolested. These elements try to convey the impression of standing on a sort of neutral no man's land from which vantage point they propose to mediate the conflict between workers and union bureaucrats thus enhancing their own prestige and influence. However, in a conflict such as that at Lenkurt the conciliator succeeds only in receiving knocks from both sides since he is anxious to be for neither and, therefore, against both.

The P.W.M. reacted to the situation in a generally correct manner. Standing solidly on the side of the workers the movement drew the fire of every reactionary, revisionist and bureaucrat within hailing distance. But our message was well received where it counted most—among the rank and file unionists. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the strike underlined certain shortcomings in our work and it is incumbent upon us to constantly examine our activities in order to correct our style and methods of work.

Some time ago we took a decision to make a concerted effort in raising the important question of the need for an independent Canadian union movement. But we abstracted this fight from the general struggle of the workers for improved living and working conditions. It is easy enough for us to recognize the importance of the struggle for an independent movement but the workers will see it only in relation to the general struggle. It will, therefore, be necessary for us to raise this question in conjunction with the whole broad front of struggle and do more effective work in pointing out that the defeat of the U.S. bureaucracy is essential to democratic worker control of the unions and that such control is a necessary pre-requisite

for turning the unions into the effective fighting organs they can and must become in order to defend the rights and living standards of the workers and free our land from alien domination.

AN ALTERNATIVE LABOUR CENTRE

It is an undeniable fact that broad sections of Canadians workers are thoroughly disillusioned with the policies and leadership of the American-controlled unions and would welcome the opportunity to effect a change. Almost every struggle that breaks out is marked by expressions of dissatisfaction with the existing state of affairs. The only factor of importance that seems to be missing in order to cause a mass exodus from the so-called "internationals" is an alternative labour centre which would provide leadership and a rallying point.

The forces for the creation of such a centre do exist in such groups as Mine-Mill, United Electrical Workers, Fishermen, Pulp and Paper Workers, Ironworkers, etc. But the major portion of this group are under revisionist influence and leadership and the revisionists are adamantly opposed to an alternate centre and for "unity" within the U.S.-dominated Internationals and a vaguely-defined "autonomy" that is dependent on the goodwill of the U.S. labour bureaucrats. The success of this revisionist policy is measured by the share of official posts the revisionists are permitted to occupy. According to this plan even the Quebec-based C.N.T.U. is to be "united" with the C.L.C.

It is obvious that the revisionists will give no support to the fight for an independent Canadian union movement. On the contrary, they will exert every effort to obstruct the creation of such a movement.

The C.N.T.U. is an example and an inspiration to workers in English Canada and provide us with lessons on how to work for the creation of a Canadian union movement free from U.S. domination whether open or in the guise of autonomy.

C.N.T.U.

The fact that Quebec and the English provinces both suffer alike from U.S. domination makes it necessary for the development of the closest fraternal relations between both groups. Such relations, however, can only develop on the basis of mutual respect and confidence and, in the first place, in English-speaking workers supporting the demand of the Quebec people for self-determination. A paternal and patronizing attitude is no substitute for correct fraternal relations.

English-speaking workers cannot liberate Quebec no more than Quebec workers can liberate English-speaking unionists from U.S. domination. Mutual support and solidarity in the struggle is essential but each must be completely free to determine their own destiny in their own way.

The C.N.T.U. proposals for expansion concedes the all-important point that Quebec is an integral part of the Canadian nation, threatens to alienate a section of the Canadian workers whose understanding of the national question in relation to Quebec is already low. thus the

move puts the struggle for self-determination in jeopardy by alienating the organized Quebec workers from the national struggle.

The C.N.T.U. could quite properly offer advice and support to any move on the part of English-speaking workers to break from U.S. domination. In view of the rich experience and success of the C.N.T.U. in Quebec such advice could well prove invaluable. However, they should inform those groups that call for expansion that their hands are full in Quebec where more than 70 per cent of the workers are still unorganized and the national question remains unresolved. They cannot do for the English workers what they are not prepared to do for themselves.

To those workers in English Canada who imagine that freedom from U.S. domination lies through the back door of C.N.T.U. we would point out that there is no satisfactory substitute for struggle and no easy road to freedom. Breaking the U.S. hold on the Canadian unions requires the total mobilization of an alert rank and file to seize control from the bureaucracy and place it in the hands of the members whom it rightfully belongs.

The P.W.M., however, has no intention of engaging in open battle with the C.N.T.U. The enemy of both ourselves and the C.N.T.U. is U.S. domination and ways must be found to unite our forces in struggle against the common enemy. Such unity must, of course, be based on equality, mutual respect of each for the rights of the other, full support for Quebec's right to self-determination and for an end to U.S. domination of our unions and our economic affairs.

SUMMARY

As the waves of the world crisis of capitalism break across the shores of North America the ruling class demonstrates their determination that, as usual, profits will be maintained and even increased while the burden of the crisis is loaded on the backs of the working people. The economy is being increasingly concentrated and monopolised and state control over democratic organizations is being tightened up. Even the most elementary demands advanced by labour are being met with stiff opposition from the employers who take advantage of the crisis in labour leadership. The employers crack the whip over their docile agents in the labour movement, demanding of the bureaucrats, revisionists and right social democrats that they exercise more control and discipline over the "trouble makers" in the unions.

These are the conditions that result in a crisis in the labour movement—in the leadership and structure of the unions. Leaders are occasionally forced into popular action by pressure of the members but are quite unable to provide the dynamic and consistent leadership and militant policies that are called for in an era of crisis. The personal interests of these so-called "leaders" are bound up with the present social system while only a policy of fundamental opposition to the system of capitalist exploitation can bring solid and permanent gains for the working people.

The end result is that these so-called "labour statesmen" are more and more leading workers into struggles that are already lost before they have scarcely begun.

Greater effort must be exerted to develop a rank and file movement and rally the workers for a sharpening of the struggle for an Independent Canadian Trade Union. The formation of an alternate Canadian union centre is a must.

There must be a complete break with the American unions that are committed to the support of U.S. imperialist objectives in Canada and the world.

Out of the struggle must emerge a class policy of opposition to the capitalist system and for a society free from all exploitation. We must not rest easy and be content with partial gains however extensive they may appear to be.

An attitude of satisfaction with partial and temporary gains means that labour must fight the same battle numerous times just to win territory already taken many times before. No matter what the result the position of labour in relation to capital is not substantially changed or improved—worsened in periods of crisis.

Our unions must make the revolutionary change from a fight for temporary gains to a challenge of the fundamental basis of the capitalist system itself.

**CANADIAN
UNIONS**

FOR

**CANADIAN
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