

SEP - 1979

Discipline

OTEU

Constitution p.26

The Executive Board shall have the power...to suspend, expel and discipline a member of any Local Union...for violating the Constitution or for engaging in any activity or course of conduct which it is deemed by the Executive Board to be contrary or detrimental to the welfare or best interests of the International Union.

By-Laws p.23

Any member may be penalized for committing any one or more of the following offenses:

a) Publicizing or giving information about Union affairs to persons not entitled to such information.

i) Working in the interests of any organization or a dual union opposed to the interests of this Union.

l) Any acts of misconduct which are detrimental to the best interests of the Union, or of conduct unbecoming a member of the Union...

Any member who has been found guilty of any of the above offenses or for violation of the International Union Constitution by the Trial Board may be expelled, suspended and/or fined by action of the Trial Board.

CUPE

Constitution p.62

Every member of a Local Union is guilty of an offence against the Constitution who:

e) Publishes, or circulates, either verbally or otherwise, among the membership false reports or misrepresentations concerning any member of the Canadian Union in respect to any matter connected with the affairs of the Canadian Union;

f) Works in the interest of any organization competing with the Canadian Union in a manner which is detrimental to the Canadian Union;

k) Circulates reports designed or calculated to injure or weaken the Canadian Union;

m) Any member convicted of any one or more of the above offences may be reprimanded, fined, removed from office, suspended or expelled.

BCGEU

Constitution p.23

The Provincial Executive of the Union shall have the authority to assess a penalty upon any member or groups of members for cause detrimental to the Union or for violation of the Constitution, policies, or Bylaws of the Union. Such a penalty should be in keeping with the nature of the offence up to and including the suspension of membership.

Assistant bookkeeper stenographer and member to OTEU Local 15.

She first suggested that AUCE join the OTEU by a local charter as that way you would have your own autonomy and by-laws. You wouldn't necessarily get into the same problems we have where we are run by the Business Agents, members don't know each other and don't come to meetings. (The local is composed of small bargaining units all over the Lower Mainland.) The Secretary/Treasurer has been in office for 17 years and she discourages any membership participation. Last year when a new slate of people ran for office and tried to have union socials and a newsletter the Secretary/Treasurer effectively discouraged it by slowing things down, saying there was no money, etc. The Business Agents and the Secretary/Treasurer have the time to talk to all the members and get their votes whereas I work all day so it is really hard to change the executive and eventually the by-laws. The Business Agents are all men, and the Secretary/Treasurer, although a woman once said she thought, "Women couldn't handle a Business Agent's job."

Maintenance worker and member of CUPE

CUPE's appeal is to members who want the big structures - members who don't want to have to make their union every day.

In CUPE you are presented with a service package so members don't have to think of any issues.

CUPE's game plan is to have control over the bargaining process - area bargaining with professionals running the show.

There are 2 ways to run a union - from the top - unions have been doing this and losing, and from the bottom - real membership control means fighting for all sorts of crazy things.

Clerical worker and member of CUPE

In CUPE only the executive can make decisions and even then most decisions are made only by the President and the Secretary/Treasurer. There is a portion of CUPE that is even opposed to referendum votes.

Issues such as flexible hours, being on joint committees, leisure time - things that give people more control of their working space - are poison to Business Agents as they fear it makes the workers happy. CUPE is only interested in money - money for men. The top pay rate of the clerical scale is the bottom of the maintenance scale and these are maintenance jobs that require no previous skills. There are no powers of succession. You cannot even suggest to change unions as you could be drummed out of the union.

Business agents do things that are really against the membership.

An opinion of BCGEU by a member of that union, for
AUCE Affiliation Report - Melody Rudd

A member of the BCGEU and a member of the rank and file caucus that is trying to bring democracy to the BCGEU. He has an elected position in the component executive structure but does not want to say what component he is from as Fryer would then know who he is.

Of the 3 unions AUCE is looking at BCGEU, CUPE and OTEU - OTEU is your best choice. OTEU should be dominated by women, it is wide open for an infusion of new blood. It now has some Canadian autonomy as well as local autonomy. The International is all trusteeship and discipline but because we are in Canada, the International is less likely to keep as close a watch on you as on the locals in the States. You could swing a lot of clout in OTEU because they are so small - only 2 locals in B.C. Local 15 has only 1800 members. You could formulate policy within OTEU and raise issues at CLC conventions. You would probably have more delegates to conventions in OTEU than in CUPE.

AUCE has some edge in terms of affiliation. You are a major active group with no history of jurisdictional battles. You should go into the weakest spot (OTEU) so you can get some control. 2800 members with good contracts, expertise. A militant female union with lots of energy, lots of thrust. You could come in and drown Local 15, come in with your contracts and in a year you can have the By-laws changed. You can get rid of the establishment that is there now because of your greater numbers. You'll find the active women in the Local are less feminist oriented and more socialist and trade unionist.

Going into the BCGEU is like going into a mine field. GEU is highly structured, male dominated and any woman who shows any initiative is immediately co-opted. GEU has a lot of power in the CLC considering their small size because of their tight structure, but AUCE would also be tightly controlled. AUCE would have no chance to be affiliated as the Ferryworkers because there are colleges in the Component 14.

In CUPE you would have a lot of autonomy but no clout. It would be very hard to have any influence in CUPE - 260,000 member, and there is no organization except at the top which you are not going to touch.