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Research Proposal

Designing an Index of Trade Union Freedoms

Project Objective:

To design a generally accepted format for ranking countries as to the degree of freedom prevailing on each of several trade union rights, so that interested observers can judge the status of worker freedom at a given moment and follow changes in the degree of that freedom over time.

Discussion of the Problem:

In the years since many developing areas became independent after World War II, military dictatorship has become the dominant form of government in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. This development has provoked widespread concern about the fate of human rights in these areas, yet no ready format is available for making judgments about the right which most immediately affects the livelihood of the workers and peasants who make up the majority of the population - the right to join together in organizations which can advance their economic and social interests.

Better designed concepts are needed for ordering the available data on trade unions abroad. There is little agreement about what constitutes a "free union", and there is no accepted measure of the degree of trade union liberty. This last lack cripples sound judgment about the labor scene in developing areas, because the most common

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situation is one in which a military regime allows some autonomy to unions, neither subjecting them to total control nor allowing them the full range of free union functions.

Too often we hear political observers questioning why U.S. labor and the U.S. government are working with unions in dictatorial countries. These observers often assume that in any dictatorship no union autonomy can exist at all, and therefore working with "unions" in these countries amounts to collaborating with government stooges. A format is needed which shows graphically that most unions in developing nations are in a grey area of "partly free", and that foreign labor assistance groups most often face, not a choice of whether to go into a country or not, but rather of finding a balance between doing so much that they get expelled by the regime or doing so little that their continued presence in the country is not worth the cost.

The problem of analysis is further complicated by the facts that traditions vary between countries, definitions are disputed among experts, and a number of confusing "in-between" situations exist which are hard to classify. Is it "democratic" for a nation's freely elected parliament to replace collective bargaining with compulsory arbitration? Is a labor movement "free" if a dictatorial regime allows it to organize and bargain in city industries, but not in rural agricultural plantations? Is a union "free" if it is controlled

by a political party which obtains that control by winning periodic free elections within the trade unions? Is a movement "free" if federations and locals are independent of government control but are obliged to retain at least formal affiliation with a national confederation run by the dictatorship? Is a union "democratic" if its leadership changes from democratic to Communist and back again from year to year as a result of periodic union elections? These and other problems of definition plague efforts to judge whether unions are "progressing" toward greater freedom. These judgments depend on assumptions which should be made explicit.

Rationale for the Project:

There are a number of groups in the U.S. with practical needs to make judgments on labor freedoms, and these groups need an analytical model with which to order data on labor in specific situations.

The Congress and its staff must make decisions about providing economic and military aid to regimes which suppress human rights. In the executive branch, A.I.D. has contracts for trade union technical assistance with AFL-CIO sponsored labor institutes, and the A.I.D. officials must make judgments about what programs are feasible in the present situation.

The Institutes themselves are charged by Congressional law and by A.I.D. contract to "strengthen the free and democratic trade union

movements" in developing areas, yet it is not easy to judge whether a given national labor movement at a particular time has become "freer and more democratic" or not. In the private sector, U.S. unions, active in the programs of the International Trade Secretariats, need to know what unions abroad can and cannot do, as does the AFL-CIO, which sponsors the Institutes. In the academic world, the community of scholars studying political development needs a format for classifying the allowed scope of trade union activity.

Another potential user of the model is Freedom House, an organization of persons, mainly of moderate political views, who are concerned with human rights and political democracy throughout the world. The group publishes a quarterly journal, Freedom at Issue, which semi-annually carries a Comparative Survey of Freedom, ranking countries on a variety of civil and political rights. This Survey does not specifically cover trade union rights, a lack which Freedom House regrets. Those who prepare and publish the summary for Freedom House have expressed interest in receiving a format for a specific trade union index, which they feel they could prepare and publish, once the format became available.

All of the groups mentioned above have needs for the kind of analysis which this study will produce. Given the emphasis put on human rights within the A.I.D. during the past two years, the increasing concern in the Congress about human rights as evidenced in recent

hearings by Congressman Fraser, plus the statements by President-elect Carter about linking foreign-aid programs and concern for human rights, it seems probable that these needs will become more pressing in the near future.

Georgetown University's International Labor Program, which provides training for U.S. trade unionists about international labor affairs, has agreed to help disseminate the product of the proposed study. The ILP has contacts with many trade unions and universities throughout the United States. With these contacts, plus the publication of the proposed model by the Institute for the Study of Conflict, the information can be brought to those who need it.

Research Design:

The proposed project will produce an article-length study, which will be published by the Institute for the Study of Conflict. The article will explain the difficulties in analyzing trade union freedoms and will contain the proposed model of the Index of Trade Union Freedoms. The Index will contain a list of items that make up trade union freedom, and a scale for ranking a movement on each item. The results will then be totaled up into an overall index of trade union freedom, which will make possible sound judgments as to how free a given movement is and whether it has gained or lost in the degree of freedom over time. (This effort might suggest similar methods for ranking other institutions in addition to trade unions).

A Preliminary Outline for the article is envisioned as follows:

- I. Definition of "Free Trade Union"
 - A. Basic Necessary Elements - right to elect own leaders, etc.
 - B. Confusing Cases
 1. Unions dominated through elective means by democratic political parties
 2. Autonomous federations affiliated to a government-dominated confederation.
 3. Autonomous unions temporarily under Communist control, but in which free union elections continue, etc.
- II. Construction of an Index of Trade Union Freedoms
 - A. The Right to Organize
 - B. The Right to Strike
 - C. The Right to Bargain Collectively
 - D. The Right to Lobby
 - E. The Right to Engage in Political Action
 - F. Over-all ranking, using a weighted average of scores on the specific rights

Research Methodology:

The basic concepts concerning elements of a definition of a free trade union, various confusing border-line cases, the principle trade union freedoms, and the varying degrees in which they are allowed, are already available in the mind of the principal researcher,

Dr. William A. Douglas, who has been actively involved in labor technical assistance for eleven years, and who has spent many hours discussing these problems with colleagues serving in a variety of countries.

To make sure that the study covers most items of concern to the entire community of those interested in trade union development, however, a survey of the literature on trade-unions in developing areas will be conducted to note how other writers have conceptualized trade union freedoms and their relative levels of implementation. This survey will cover both general works, such as those of Philip Taft, Bruce Millen, John Windmuller, and Everett Kassalow, as well as books on specific geographic areas or countries, such as those by Victor Alba, Robert Alexander, James Payne, and Robert Bates.

Once this survey is completed, an initial draft of the Index will be written, based on an amalgam of the principal researcher's views and those of the various authors. A number of interviews will then be conducted with labor specialists in government, the labor movement, and academia, to get their comments and suggestions on the draft. On the basis of these interviews, a final draft will be made of the model, attempting to reflect a consensus, so that the Index will eventually be basically acceptable to most of those who may use it.

When the final model is ready, an article will be written discussing the problems of analyzing trade-union freedoms, and presenting the model to the public.

Work Plan:

The entire project is scheduled to be carried out in a one month period, approximately on the following schedule:

First week and half of the second week: Survey of the literature.

Final portion of second week: Writing the initial draft of the model.

Third week: Interviewing labor specialists.

Fourth week: Final interviews and writing of the article.

Capabilities of the Principal Researcher:

Dr. William A. Douglas combines academic training in political science with years of practical experience in trade-union technical assistance. He holds a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Washington, an M.A. in International Relations from the School of Advanced International Studies of the Johns Hopkins University, and a doctorate in Politics from Princeton University. He has held a Fulbright Teaching Fellowship in Korea, and during a year as a Senior Fellow at New York University's Center for International Studies, he wrote a book on the applicability of political democracy in developing areas. In recent years he has taught courses for the School of Foreign Service and the International Labor Program, both of Georgetown University.

Dr. Douglas has spent eleven years with the American Institute for Free Labor Development, in five different assignments. He began as the Aide to the AIFLD Administrator for two years, then spent one year in Peru as a Citizenship Education Specialist writing an AIFLD textbook on Fundamentals of Democracy. He spent two more years in Peru as AIFLD's Country Program Director, and then after a year at New York University, returned to AIFLD as Director of the Inter-American Labor Economics Program in 1971. For the past five years he has been Director of Education of the AIFLD.

Given his unusual combination of academic training and practical experience in labor technical assistance, both at home and in the field, plus his long-term intellectual interest in democratic rights in developing countries, Dr. Douglas is uniquely qualified to prepare the proposed format for an Index of Trade Union Freedoms.

Budget:

Funding through the A.I.D. Small Research Project Program:

Lost-salary for the principal researcher 22 working days @ \$98 per day	\$2,156
Typing of drafts and copying of documentation	300
Local Travel: One trip to New York City for interviews:	
Train ticket	40
2 days per diem @ \$35 per day	<u>70</u>
	\$2,566

Other Donor Contributions:

Contribution of Office Space by the Institute for the Study of Conflict (ISC)	\$ 100
Publication of the Article by the ISC	500
Continuation of Hospital Insurance for Principal Researcher by AIFLD	<u>100</u>
	\$ 700

Total Cost of Project:

A.I.D.	\$2,566
Other Donors	<u>700</u>
	<u>\$3,266</u>

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