

NATIONAL REPORT

Report of the Assistant to the National Secretary

EC Minutes for November 13 and November 20

Industrial Secretary's Report

Branch Reports

Document on CLUW, WAGE, and NOW, by Women's Commissioner

FOR IS AND RED TIDE MEMBERS ONLY

## REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT TO THE NATIONAL SECRETARY

As most of you have no doubt noticed, the last NR and this one both lack a report from the National Secretary. He has been out of town both times when this document was produced and therefore is having to hold his peace. After the recruitment campaign is over, you will all do doubt be hearing from him once again.

As most of you have also no doubt noticed, EC minutes have once again taken a turn toward the cryptic. This is for security reasons (probably the only place in the world one could find a complete set of NR's is at FBI headquarters!). Instead, a fuller report is being given to organizers and NC delegates and alternates as a separate letter, issued weekly.

In the meantime, the recruitment campaign continues to go well, and the Fund Drive continues to go ill . . . and iller . . . and iller. Shape up, folks, or it will be a bleak scene indeed.

Note on WP articles--Branches should re-check the procedures outlined in the last NR, #29. People still seem to be confused--they are calling up on a Monday or a Tuesday, and if told that it's too late to get their article into that issue, they are waiting until the following Monday or Tuesday to get the article in. That's too late once again. You should get it in by the Wednesday following your call. Clear?

EC Minutes (11-12-75)

Present: Kim M., Jack W., Glenn W., Marilyn D., Mike P., Joel G., Pam W.  
for minutes; Gay S. late.

1. National Secretary's Report--The Nat Sec reported on the fund drive (which continues to stagger toward its final goal, with only a couple of branches in serious arrears), the worker membership campaign (the recent issuance of the pamphlet, and the recruitment which has already gone on).

2. Industrial Secretary's Report--The Industrial Secretary reported that the PO fraction will be having its first national conference in Pittsburgh. The main initiative coming out of this will probably be a national newspaper, which could help to solidify several groups and caucuses. This will be a very important fraction for us, as it is the first to be composed almost totally from the beginning of indigenous people.

The TDC work continues to be successful, and the new national newspaper is really leaping forward. The auto fraction passed a perspective and work continues on.

3. Open vs. Closed NC's-- It was decided that the next NC would be open, and that future NC's will be decided as they come up.

4. There was a discussion of the NYC crisis, the substance of which is to be carried in the next WP.

5. There was a discussion and report on what is currently happening in Portugal.

TO: Branch Organizers and NC Delegates and Alternates  
FROM: National Secretary's Office  
RE: EC Meeting of November 20, 1975  
DATE: November 21, 1975

The following were the main political points of the EC meeting:

1. National Secretary's Report--The WMC continues to go well--we have recruited over 50 since the campaign began. There are 3 rallies coming up this weekend, for which we are better prepared after the B'ton rally. This will be the first wave; then we will have time to evaluate them before the second wave of rallies starts in Dec.

2. Industrial Secretary's Report--There will be a TDC meeting in Cleveland this weekend, the purpose of which is to get the TDC more organized. There is also a parcel meeting both in C'go and Cleveland, where the concentration will be on the Central States contract. There were press conferences in NJ and NY which went well and got us good publicity.

Increasingly, layoffs and work force production are going to become real issues in telephone in the next period. Already downgrades in NY and transfers in L'ville are occurring.

The meeting of postal workers went well; they will begin a newspaper in Jan, either from Philly or P'burgh. There is the possibility of a letter carriers' strike on the Kokomo plan, inspired a bit by the Canadian strike.

3. Editor's Report--Issue #136 was discussed, both its strengths and weaknesses. One particular weakness was that the labor coverage lacks substance--it's not enough to just report strikes and shop floor incidents. The series on the miners' to some extent fills this void, but we need similar stuff on auto and teamsters, etc. As for the next issue, there will be continuing stuff on CLUW and on NY, and an editorial on the anniversary of the civil rights movement (preparing for the next issue which will feature a lot of stuff on this). It was also pointed out that the economy and domestic politics (esp. the Republican nomination) are two important issues we should be covering.

4. The National Chairman reported on his recent visit to the Canadian IS. At present they are largely concentrated in white collar unions (hospital, PO, etc.). They lack real industrial roots. They may be a lot like the early CP, in that much of the working class of Toronto, for example, are immigrants (Italian, Portuguese, etc.). Our comrades are now putting out the only left newspaper in the country that's in Portuguese, and it's being terrifically well received.

5. Portugal--Everyone should read WP every week to keep up on events in Portugal. A report was given which stressed the following: The revolutionary crisis in Portugal is now fully matured. If there were a mass revolutionary party, taking power would definitely be on the agenda. The PRP continues to grow rapidly--it opened 12 new headquarters in the last 10 days. Because the CP is still the largest force in the working class there, however, it was the CP that ran the recent mass demonstration and gave it its character. Therefore, yet another process has to take place--that is, breaking the power of the CP in the working class. We believe there will be a new government which will take one of two possible forms: either a SP/CP government which will also include some of the 9 moderate officers. Or there may be a kind of left Bonapartist regime (a government based on military officers standing above political parties). Both possibilities present dangers to the the revolution, but both also present dangers to the bourgeoisie as well. This is not just a crisis of parties and the government--it is rather a crisis of social classes. Immediate problems of Portugal can only be solved by armed insurrection. The CP is now the main stumbling block. The organs of dual power have now spread throughout Portugal and have taken on a decidedly political character. Economic struggles will probably be the main focus of the next period (recent construction workers' thing).

See WP for more.

6. Angola--A preliminary discussion on the current situation in Angola was held. A full resolution (which will examine popular power in Angola, the politics of the MPLA, and why our position is support of an MPLA victory) is being prepared and will be out next week. What we expected to happen there pretty much occurred as we had predicted. The Portuguese left without transferring power to anyone, largely because the US vetoed handing things over to MPLA. Two governments have been declared, the People's Republic of Angola (MPLA), and the Democratic People's Republic of Angola (FNLA). The war goes on. Since independence, invasion forces have made some progress. Militarily the situation is mostly favorable to MPLA, except for the South African heavy arms the FNLA has. More in WP and in the full resolution next week.

## INDUSTRIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Along with the rest of the organization, our industrial work is expanding and maturing. In the CWA our rank and file groups, United Action, participated in elections in three locals: Louisville, Seattle and New York. In Louisville, in the first run of the officer elections one UA candidate won and two others made run-offs. The incumbant officers, however, "discovered" some irregularities in the election and insisted on running a new one. After a vicious campaign of red and race baiting, the second election was held. In numbers of votes the UA candidates did as well or better than the first time. Unfortunately the incumbants also did better. One UA candidate will be in a run-off, the other three lost. Executive Board elections in Louisville will be held soon and UA will run a slate for that.

In Seattle, four UA candidates ran for positions on the Local Exec. Board. Two won and two lost, but only by a narrow margin. The election in New York did not go so well. There a coalition of opposition elements, led by a group of Chief Stewards, ran a number of candidates against administration officers. The campaign did not start until late and the coalition came into existence only shortly before the elections. As a result, the coalition did not do well. Nevertheless, the popularity of Local 1101 President Ed Dempsey continues to decline. Shortly after his re-election, the company announced 200 downgradings - an action which most telephone workers in NY understand to be the first step toward lay-offs in NY. Nationally, lay-offs have been growing in the Bell system.

A new United Action publication, Live Wire, just made its debut in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Teamsters for a Decent Contract continues to spread. Recent meetings in four West Coast Cities and in Chicago were very successful

It is estimated that the TDC petition is now circulating in 100 cities. TDC groups have begun to take shape in a number of cities and new networks of TDC teamsters are emerging in Toledo, Columbus, and Charleston, W. VA. In fact, the distribution of literature and petitions and the making of new contacts for TDC proved to be easier than we thought. Getting people organized and getting petitions back in to the center in Cleveland, however, has proved harder. 4,000 petitions are circulating all across the continent, but few have been returned. To help get things organized, TDC is holding a large planning meeting in Cleveland on Nov. 22. Resolutions encouraging the formation of local chapters, the raising of money, the election of petition coordinators, and other organizational steps will be proposed.

At the same meeting, in the evening will be a special TDC meeting for UPS workers to discuss the Central States UPS contract which expires a month after Master Freight. UPS workers have responded well to TDC even though the initial emphasis of TDC was the MEA. The newspaper, UPSurge, another product of Cleveland's growing IBT/publications empire, has spread like wild fire all over the country. Hundreds of dollars in subscriptions and contributions pour in making UPSurge one of the few profit making ventures around - be assured the "profits" are plowed back into expanded production. UPSurge press run has gone from 4,000 to 10,000 in three issues. At the Cleveland UPS meeting and a similar one planned for Chicago for the same weekend, from 100 to 200 UPSers are expected to turn up.

## BRANCH REPORTS

In general, all branches and their activities are currently focused on the Worker Membership Campaign, which is exactly as it should be, of course. For the most part, information on that activity will not be reported here. What that means is that this summary of branch activities seems very sparse indeed. It's not that people are lying around. It's just that they are busy worker membership campaigning.

**BAY AREA**--There was recently a training session in a branch meeting around questions/objections frequently encountered when doing contact and recruitment work during the WMC. Examples: "I agree, but I'm a mother and don't want to take time away from my kids;" or "I agree, but I'm too busy with union work--you folks do the politics, I'll do the union work." Collectively the branch worked out responses by breaking up into small groups.

**BLOOMINGTON**--Major activity has been the building and organizing of the Rally. See recent document from NO for report on rally.

**BOSTON**--There is a possible forum/debate on Portugal in early December between a leading SWP person and an IS speaker; they approached us, we agreed, they have rented a hall that holds 600, the Guardian may participate, etc.

**DETROIT**--The branch participated in a demonstration, called by the Communist Labor Party to protest a meeting of the local anti-busing group, MAD (Mothers Alert Detroit). The demo was well organized, spirited, militant, non-sectarian. Particularly good chants (Lopsinger Sleeps with the KKK) and good signs.

**LA**--One of our members will be speaking at a local left forum on Portugal at the end of November. The branch will participate, set up a lit table, do a mailing, etc.

**MADISON**--Madison is pleased to present itself as a BRANCH, with new members still being recruited. Congratulations!!

## THE CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE CLASS WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

by Barbara W.

This is being written to bring members up to date on what is happening in NOW, WAGE and other sections of the middle class women's movement. It is also important because since it is clear that we are pulling out of CLUW, a number of comrades have written to ask or suggest we have a perspective towards NOW or possibly Union WAGE. What is happening in CLUW is being written up in Workers Power and all members should read that

Overall, the women's movement is in some state of crisis. The failure of the ERA in New York and New Jersey has forced NOW to split, and caused many other 'feminists' to reappraise their old strategy.

NOW was formed in the mid sixties by a group of professional women, and women from the trade union bureaucracy, especially the women's committees of the UAW. Since then it has grown to a membership of 70,000, and has been the largest and most influential women's organization fighting for women's rights. Since its inception, NOW has been plagued by factionalism: in the late sixties the UAW women pulled out because of NOW's stand against protective legislation; in the early '70's the more radical separatists pulled out; today however, it is the right wing of NOW which is causing the split.

Betty Freidan was the woman who more or less formed NOW. However since the 1970's she has grown more and more conservative. She attacked lesbians in NOW and the concept of GAY liberation. She accused all lesbians of being conscious CIA agents out to wreck NOW. More recently she has been paying homage to the Shah of Iran and his sister as feminists, the Pope and other such reactionaries. More importantly, she was convinced by the overwhelming defeat of the ERA in New York and New Jersey, that NOW can no longer project the image of militancy for women's rights. Freidan also appeared at the big Zionist demonstration in New York City immediately after the UN vote on Zionism. Freidan has organized a split out of NOW. It will be called Women Network and they are putting out a paper called WomanSurge (Teamsters, please note). She doesn't have the majority in NOW, but her split will pull NOW more to the right,

Opposing Freidan is the majority grouping around Karen deCrow president of NOW. She ran at the NOW convention on the slogan of out of the mainstream into the revolution. Don't be fooled by this tough sounding slogan. The politics behind this will be that NOW will campaign more actively for male democratic Party politicians.

NOW did little to organize and mobilize people for the ERA in New York and New Jersey. It was afraid to do so, because it was afraid that their activities would alienate what they term "middle class women in the suburbs" In return, the right wing mobilized a very effective campaign. The Alice Doesn't Day also was an embarrassment in many places, but especially in New York.

NOW, now doesn't know what to do. So they will move further to the right, in their attempt to gain respectability. While on paper they have a program which speaks to some of the problems women face, i.e. equal pay, upgrading, extensions in welfare etc. But of course, they can't and won't do anything about it.

At the convention this year, there was a small socialist caucus. There are also lots of sectarian groups operating in NOW, CP, SWP, OL for example. In a number of cities in the demonstrations, there would be socialist tables, and SWPers would be featured speakers.



Crisis in women's movement  
page two

The SWP especially finds NOW a perfect organization for themselves at this time. For the SWP's wants to win the middle class women's movement, or sections of it to social democracy.

Even though the IS will pull out of CLUW, we do not plan on going into NOW. Our strategy is to build a working class women's movement. NOW believes you fight for women's equality by building a cross class women's organization that does not take class sides. What that means is NOW sides with the capitalist class. Furthermore, the women we want to recruit to the IS who can build the rank and file movement and the working women's movement, do not make up NOW's membership.

UNION WAGE. With the wrecking of CLUW by the labor bureaucracy, some women we work with may raise the issue of BUILDING WAGE chapters outside the Bay area. So far, the people with whom we have contact who raise this are independent lefties and NAM types. We are also not going to try and build local chapters of WAGE. Union WAGE is more of an exception as a trade union women's organization. It was founded in the Bay area in 1971, and has sustained itself. However, WAGE never had the dynamic CLUW once had, and even with the collapse of CLUW cannot take its place.

Politically, WAGE is an organization primarily focussing upon white collar workers. It has no coherent strategy and program. This problem causing WAGE to vacillate politically. One month the paper comes out for dual unionism, the next month praising the women in the Soviet Union, one month on Cuban women etc. They don't have any approach to doing consistent rank and file work. Their recent convention debated the issue of dual unionism. Once again, the women who will be doing the rank and file union work, will not be found in union Wage. More important, WAGE will not have the dynamic to expand outside of California in any serious way.

The Women's commission is presently drafting perspectives for our women's work for the next few months. This short piece was done to go over two women's organizations, and give an brief perspective on them.