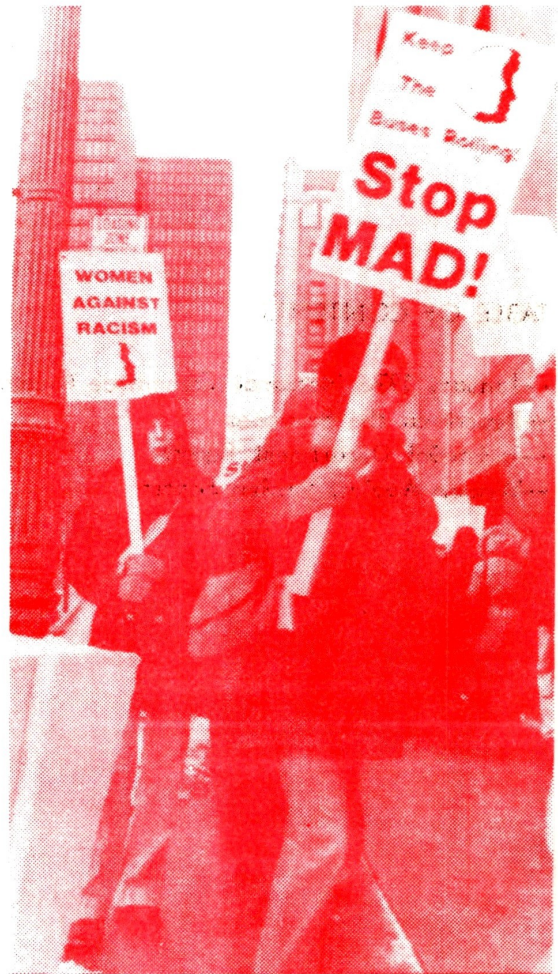


JANUARY



—Barbara W., spokeswoman for Women Against Racism, talks to local reporter at demonstration



—Women Against Racism counter-demonstration to MAD demonstration, Detroit.

is news of the month '76

for is and rt members only

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- January 1976 National Committee Meeting
- Report on the Branches
- Industrial Department Report
- Women Against Racism Report

COMRADES--

As was announced in the cover letter on the NC documents sent out to you last week, here is the new style National Report, now called "IS News of the Month."

"IS News of the Month" replaces the old National Report document and will be published on a monthly basis, the fourth week of each month. It will be mailed to the branches with their WP bundles, and under separate cover to members-at-large.

Our conception of this new internal publication for all members is that it should report, in readable form, the major developments and initiatives of the organization for the previous month. A report from the National Secretary and a Report on Branches will be regular features.

Feedback and responses from all the members on the new format and conception are welcomed, along with suggestions as to articles to be included.

National Secretary's Office
January 31, 1976

JANUARY 1976 NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT

The January 1976 meeting of the National Committee of the IS was held in Detroit and was quite well attended by both National Committee members and observers. There were over 100 comrades present. People came from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Charleston, Madison, St. Louis, Seattle, LA, Detroit, with notably large groups from Chicago (19 attending), Bloomington (14 attending), Louisville (14 attending), and Cleveland (9 attending). There were also present comrades from the British IS and the Canadian IS. Happily enough, many of the observers at this NC were new members of the IS, recruited during the recent successful Worker Membership Campaign; they were attending this NC as their first opportunity since joining IS to get a sense of the national organization, and to meet comrades from other parts of the country.

Four Major Sessions

There were four major sessions in the course of the weekend on the four NC documents sent out to the comrades last week--"The Next Step for the IS," "Building New Branches," "1976 Elections: First Perspective," and "State of the Revolution: Portugal, Angola, and Spain." All four were passed overwhelmingly by the NC.

Amendments

During the discussion of the "New Branches" document, Ken P. of Cleveland proposed to amend the document by deleting Atlanta from the list of new branches to be built. He argued that in the present period, we need to build on our strengths and cannot afford the expenditure of resources that building a branch in Atlanta would require. Other NC members pointed out that, since the South is the major growing industrial center of the US, second only to the Midwest in industrial importance, we can no longer afford to ignore the South, that we must immediately move to establish a foothold there by building a branch in Atlanta, that we will not be a truly national organization until we have southern branches. The amendment to delete Atlanta failed.

During the discussion of the "1976 Elections" document, two amendments were proposed. Ken P. of Cleveland proposed that instead of urging people to abstain in this election, we should urge them to vote for the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) or the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) as a protest vote. He argued that telling people to abstain meant we had little to say about the election, that if this was our policy, many comrades would not bother to raise the issue of the elections with their contacts at all, and that we needed the concrete test of voting for the SLP or the SWP to actually break people from the Democratic Party. Other NC members argued that such a strategy would really be telling people that, even though there was no viable working class alternative, they should be part of a

"kook" vote--that a vote for the SLP or the SWP was irrelevant--and that the important political point to be made about these elections is that there is no working class alternative in electoral politics at present. We must not only admit this weakness, but stress it in order to move people politically to see the necessity of creating such an alternative. The amendment failed.

Another amendment to the "Elections" document was proposed by Ken B. of Chicago. He too proposed deleting the idea of abstention as our line on the elections, but instead proposed that the IS intervene in the upcoming national convention of the National Black Political Assembly (NBPA) to urge a clean break with the Democratic Party, the development of a black political party with a working class orientation, and that a coalition with La Raza Unida Party be established. Other NC members argued that the NBPA was primarily composed of black elected officials and Democratic Party loyalists, that it was not a vehicle for breaking in the direction of independent political action. Rather, it is an obstacle to that break and only acts as a pressure group on the Democratic Party, serving to encourage people's illusions and loyalties to the Democrats. Intervening in its convention might produce some contacts for the IS, but is hardly a strategy for the 1976 elections. While we might support La Raza Unida Party locally, again it is hardly an alternative in national elections. The amendment failed.

WORKER MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN: EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS

In addition to the sessions on the four major documents, there was also a session of evaluation and analysis of the Worker Membership Campaign which was closed, with only NC members in attendance. The session was closed largely for security reasons (actual figures were given in the presentation), but also to allow the fullest possible discussion by NC members (all other sessions were open).

Success of the Campaign

A presentation on the campaign was given by the National Secretary which stressed the success of the campaign, that targets were not only met but were exceeded in some cases, and that, with a little more confidence, experience and deeper roots, we could have recruited twice or three times our original goal. In the course of the campaign we learned that there are literally hundreds of people waiting for us to organize them--in fact, many new members see the IS as having joined them. The success of the campaign clearly demonstrates that our turn to agitation and to the working class was correct and timely.

Lessons of the Campaign

The success of the WMC also has revealed to us certain weaknesses in the organization. In some branches, the thinness of our roots in industry and in the working class was clearly exposed; in some of the older branches, where the actual work

was in advance of the rest of the organization, the "permanent contact" syndrome, along with a certain lack of enthusiasm and aggressiveness on the part of those comrades that had been in industry the longest, served as roadblocks to recruitment. (The "permanent contact" syndrome is a recurrent pattern where certain people remain contacts of the organization for too long without being recruited, so that instead of seeing the IS as potentially their organization, they see it as ours and see themselves as relating only to the organization as contacts and friends.)

The influx of new members also showed us that in many cases, we had not set up well-organized, functioning fractions, which will play a key role in the integration and development of the new comrades. Already various forms of re-organization and strengthening of our fractions is taking place.

While the success of the campaign has, in a sense, created a new set of problems for us as an organization, the point is that these problems are, by and large, new ones and healthier ones than we have ever had. The success of the campaign means that we can now move forward to work on and correct our weaknesses, that there has been not only a quantitative but also a qualitative change in our organization, and that now indeed there does exist the possibility for us to lead mass work. We have only to seize the time, comrades.

OTHER NC EVENTS

There were also three other developments at this January NC which should be reported to the membership as a whole: the establishment in Detroit and Louisville of Women Against Racism groups, the formation of a national black caucus, and a political report on our work in the teamsters union.

Women Against Racism Formed

Women comrades from Louisville and Detroit, along with observers from the other branches, had a lunch meeting on Saturday of the Women Against Racism (WAR) fraction. The establishment of these groups in these two cities is seen as both the vehicle for getting women in the organization into activity and to bring working class women around the IS, and also to play a role in our black work; the major activity of both groups at present is to fight around the question of busing (see WAR fraction report in this issue for more details). Comrades from the two cities shared information and ideas and had a full, healthy discussion of perspectives.

Formation of National Black Caucus

At lunch on Sunday, the black comrades held the first meeting of the National Black Caucus in the IS, and a report on the caucus meeting was given to the NC members and observers present. A steering committee of five was elected--Bobbie (Chicago), John W. (Detroit), Corney (Louisville), Alfred (Detroit), and Larry (NY), who will serve as National Chairperson of the caucus. The caucus took decisions

to set up local caucuses in those branches that have three or more black members, and for the national caucus to set up communication with the other individual black members. The caucus, with assistance from the NO, will publish a black internal bulletin; it also endorsed the recent decision of the EC to re-organize the present Black Commission into a working black committee and to re-form the Black Commission by March 16th. The formation of the National Black Caucus as a real step forward in the development of the IS was the clear sense of the comrades present at the NC.

Teamster Report

Finally, a report on our teamster work was given to the NC by the Industrial Secretary. A fairly detailed, chronological report on our work in the union was given, describing the various events and stages we have gone through in the last period. The main political points that were stressed in the report were first, that there is now a real movement in the teamsters union--that our original proposal for this campaign (passed this summer) although initially viewed by some as too ambitious, has proven, if anything, to have been too conservative. We are now in the process of building an on-going rank and file movement which will be able to change the teamsters union. We are also in the process of a real recruitment drive to the IS from this work.

Red-baiting

The main difficulty we have encountered so far in the teamster work has been red-baiting. Although we began this initiative operating openly as socialists, there have still been some difficulties on this question. We have been largely successful in beating back this first wave of red-baiting--by being quite aggressive in our response to it. The lesson we have learned in this process is that we must be even more aggressive in the future, because there will be more red-baiting in the future, particularly as the movement grows stronger. We must cease to defend ourselves as socialists and instead take pride in being socialists: socialists have always been the ones to lead struggles, they are the people with the organizational know-how and the politics that absolutely give no ground to the bosses or the Bureaucrats, that the movement needs us to grow and spread, and indeed to succeed.

The Industrial Secretary also reported on certain organizational changes in the fraction, and on future plans and developments in the teamster work. (See the Industrial Report article in this issue for details.)

National Secretary's Office
January 30, 1976

REPORT ON BRANCHES

NOTE: Reports on New York, Pittsburgh, Seattle, Madison and Mid-Hudson were not able to be included in this article due to lack of any half-way current information.

AMHERST

The Amherst branch is now recruiting new members, and is becoming involved in local industrial activity. They are distributing TDC literature at barns and hubs in surrounding areas, as well as selling WP there, too. The reception has been good, and they are getting a PO box for local TDC. One of the comrades is in hospital and is organizing around the up-coming expiration of the contract; a newsletter is in preparation. The branch also recently held a 2-day educational for members and contacts, with sessions on Marxist Analysis of Capitalism; China--IS Line; and Trotsky and the History of the IS.

BAY AREA

The Bay Area branch is currently participating quite actively in international work--they are part of a local coalition on Portugal which is sponsoring a forum and slide show at the beginning of February, and will also participate in an Angola demonstration sponsored by another local coalition. Their women's caucus recently held the first in a series of externally oriented discussions; the topic this time was "Waging a Successful Contract Fight," with local rank and file women as speakers. The work in Sacramento continues, with contacts in several industries being made. A fraction has been formed around a local teamster organizing drive in a shop of largely immigrant and women workers, in which our comrades are giving the lead. A rank and file newsletter is being put out, which so far has been successful in intimidating management into making some improvements in working conditions. The response to TDC has been very good, and a group is being set up in San Jose. A successful meeting of UPS'ers was held last weekend with people from various San Francisco and Bay Area localities attending.

BLOOMINGTON

The Bloomington branch recently held an intensive two-day school for itself and its contacts. There were major sessions on the history of the US labor movement, current perspectives for class struggle unionism (with particular emphasis on the upcoming teamster, auto, and telephone contracts), reform and revolution, and the left in the US. These were intensive political training sessions on the crucial topics on which our political understanding is bound to be tested in the next few months.

BOSTON

The branch has recruited a bit, and has a couple more good prospects. They will be participating in a demonstration in support of MPLA at the beginning of the month along with a group of African students. A women's caucus has been set up, as well as functional fractions.

CHARLESTON

The branch held a very successful forum with a speaker from the British IS who spoke on industrial struggles in Britain and the struggle for socialism. This was the biggest meeting the branch had ever had, and the three most active TDC leaders in the area attended and were very impressed. Partially as a result, the first public TDC meeting has now been organized by the comrades to be held at the beginning of the month. The branch has gained some good contacts through their support of the Monsanto strike, and there are plans to further strengthen the branch. A forum on busing and racism, with speakers from Louisville, is planned for the coming month.

CHICAGO

The branch in Chicago has in the last period undergone dramatic growth and strengthening; it has recruited quite well, and is now consolidating and integrating that recruitment. The branch is focussed on three industrial fractions--teamsters, auto, and steel--with the major emphasis on teamsters at present. More than half the branch is now in the very strong, well-functioning teamster fraction. The steel fraction is in the process of being built and the auto fraction is starting up the campaign around the Coalition for a Good Contract (CGC). The branch now has a full-time organizer, David L., and the branch's WP sales and distribution are now being handled excellently; the branch has also improved its WP coverage of local activities. The branch recently held a very good orientation school for the comrades in Madison and South Bend branches, helping to re-organize those branches around the concrete work of the organization. The branch will be participating in an Angola demonstration on Feb. 7.

CLEVELAND

This branch has recently been re-organized to be a teamster branch entirely, with all of the resources of the branch going into this work; the branch exec has been dissolved and the teamster steering committee now is running the branch. The branch is now emphasizing trying to build local teamster work, and is also already beginning to make plans around the busing issue and Nazi/Klan organizing going on in the Cleveland area. (For details of the national teamster work that the branch is taking responsibility for, see the Industrial Department article in this issue.)

DETROIT

The district is now focussed on three major areas of work--busing, teamsters and auto. A Women Against Racism group has been formed, and held a successful counter-demonstration to a Mothers Alert Detroit (MAD) demonstration (the local anti-busing group). Media and print coverage was excellent locally, and we even made a very brief spot on national NBC news. The group is presently monitoring targetted schools in particular parts of town where MAD is strong, and plans to challenge MAD to a debate on a local radio station. The contract campaign in auto, CGC and Network are moving ahead. Two comrades in auto recently led a demonstration of 150-200 workers demanding checks for back pay from the government (see WP article in #145). Local media coverage was good. The local caucus is growing stronger because of this. The teamster fraction is going to be strengthened. Some re-organization of the branch recently occurred, with branch execs being dissolved and a strong district leadership from the auto work and the three branches developed.

LOS ANGELES

Three new fractions have recently been formed--youth, CWA, and auto. The PO fraction is being re-organized, also. (No more recent information).

LOUISVILLE

The Louisville branch has recently been re-organized into two branches, with Todd J. now being Louisville district organizer. The IBT branch has two fractions, IBT and Women Against Racism; the CWA branch has a CWA fraction and a United Black Workers of Jefferson County (UBWJC) fraction. All district members are in one clearly defined fraction. The national CWA steering committee is now located in Louisville, and the local rank and file group continues to be strong. The Women Against Racism group has recently been formed and is making plans for activities, including a regional IS women's conference to be held in L'ville in the spring. A successful TDC meeting was held recently. In the recent split in the UBWJC, most of the best people in the group are working with us, and our comrades are confident that the group can be re-built.

PHILADELPHIA

The PO fraction is gearing up both for a local campaign for elected shop stewards and for putting out the national PO newspaper. More branch resources are being shifted into the fraction for the latter task. Two good worker contacts attended the last branch meeting. At the beginning of February, the major activity will be building a local TDC meeting, which promises to be quite successful. The branch will also be participating in an Angola demonstration.

PORTLAND

The major focus for the branch in both political and practical work and discussion is now teamsters. In line with this, all members of the branch are being assigned leafletting, typing, layout, etc. tasks to free the industrialized comrades to do organizing and contact work. A second TDC newsletter has been gotten out, and a meeting/social held. The women's caucus is undertaking research into where women work locally in this industry and will try to develop strategies to facilitate entry. At the beginning of February, a forum, "Women in the Labor Movement," is planned by the caucus, as well as a dinner for teamster women and wives, as soon as is practical. Seattle UA will sponsor a Portland meeting soon. The branch also now has two WP boxes at important intersections in the black community, which sell about 10 per issue. Door-to-door sales in the black community continue; several issues following the first sale by a team, the steady buyers are sorted out (about 5 per 3 running blocks, both sides of the street), and one person then carries a route of that size and gets to know the buyers. Buyers have contributed to the branch's fund drive rummage sale, and a circle of friends of the branch is being built up.

SOUTH BEND

The newest branch in the IS is the South Bend branch. The comrades recently attended a day school, along with the Madison branch, sponsored by the Chicago branch. Welcome, comrades.

ST. LOUIS

An exec member is moving, which has necessitated some branch re-organization and re-allocation of resources. The focus of the branch is on teamster work, and on welfare and CWA. They have an opposition caucus in the welfare union, and are trying to build a UA group in telephone. They are mobilizing for the Indianapolis UPSurge rally and are organizing the first TDC meeting in their area for the first week in February.

National Secretary's Office
January 30, 1976

INDUSTRIAL REPORT

UAW

Our contract campaign in auto is just getting off the ground. We recently attended the production workers' council meeting, held in Detroit on January 21-25. It was an almost lifeless affair, which almost ended on the first day when the movie projector broke (!). Most of the over 1000 people there were local presidents and heads of shop committees. We were able to set up a booth for the Coalition for a Good Contract inside the hall, and did get some names of people that can bear fruit in the future. As almost everyone knows, the new Auto Network is out and being distributed across the country. Although we don't have full reports yet, the response has been good. We now all of a sudden have all these people who want to be newspaper stars and have their picture in the paper. Thirty thousand copies are being distributed:

Detroit locals	# 212	1500	# 47	500	
	# 51	1500	# 3	1000	
	# 235	1500	# 600	1500	
	# 22	1000	# 140	1000	
	# 15	1000	# 961	500	
	# 869	500	Flint	1500	
Rawsonville		500	Windsor	1500	
Indy	1000	Boston	500	Bay Area	1000
NJ	2000	Chicago	2000	St. Louis	2000
L'ville	100	LA	1500	Philly	1000
		Canada	2500	Delaware	500

The Coalition for a Good Contract itself is still in the formulative stage. All the elements are there that we wanted except the CP. It is going to be possible now to expand the Coalition to include other elements of the secondary leadership. From our point of view, this opens up more and more sectors of the rank and file to our influence. We are going ahead with the short work week as the major focus of our campaign inside the Coalition. We have come up with the Network plan on the short work week. Right now, that takes the form of a letter from the editorial board of Network to our friends and supporters. The next issue of Network will focus on the short work week.

IBT

After the demonstration in Washington on Jan. 10, our teamster work has moved into high gear. The TDC is now publishing a bi-monthly tabloid newspaper called Convoy. Their first press run was 25,000. The TDC has moved into a joint office in Cleveland with UPSurge. The UPSurge meeting in Indy is proceeding great guns, and 300 people are expected. Other good meetings have been held in Cleveland (60) and Akron, where 45 angry UPS workers turned up (out of a total of 60 at the hub!). The main focus of our teamster work in the next few weeks will be on recruitment. Almost all branches

are holding special recruitment dinners over the next 10 days, preparing for the IS Teamster Conference being held in Detroit on February 14.

The next major step for the TDC will be a national action, planned for March 13. On that day there will be local demonstrations held around the country, jointly sponsored by TDC and UPSurge. The focus of the demonstrations will be the companies. We will be pushing the line that we intend to fight and we intend to strike.

CWA

Our comrades in CWA are also on the move. The first issue of a new, improved Long Distance is now out and being circulated across the country. Over the next six months we want to build the CWA fraction into a real national fraction and build United Action into a functioning national group. We are going to run an organizing drive in the early spring, with top priority being given to building UA groups in St. Louis, Portland, Cincinnati, LA, Oakland, and Nashville. Cities like Cleveland, Detroit and Chicago will have to be put off temporarily because of TDC. The organizing drive will concentrate around the issues of harassment, layoffs, and the 76 CWA convention.

POSTAL

Our newly formed postal fraction is also making headway. They will be publishing a national rank and file newspaper for postal workers. It will be published out of Philly and will be a 4-page, agitational tabloid. The paper will come out and be on the streets by the second week of February. The fraction plans to use it as a tool to strengthen the already existing local groups, and to expand and build new groups.

Because of the tremendous strain now being placed on both the personnel and the resources of the organization, with our existing contract campaigns and organizing drives, we will be unable to mount an intervention in the rubber and electrical contract fights. For a fuller report on our industrial work, see the Industrial Bulletin, which will come out next week.

Our organization is taking on a tremendous effort over the next 6-9 months, and we are handling it fairly well so far. Our aim is nothing less than to change the course of collective bargaining in 1976, and to become a real force in the unions we are active in. Already we have seen our efforts bear fruit in the IBT, and we expect the same to be true in the UAW. We have an organizing drive in the CWA that will put us in a position to do the same in the telephone industry. Even Gerry Ford is helping, by wrecking the government's plan for intervention.

Industrial Department
January 30, 1976

WOMEN AGAINST RACISM

At the January National Committee meeting, the first Women Against Racism fraction met. In particular members from o Louisville and Detroit who are and will be active members of Women Against Racism plus representatives from the branches attended. The meeting explained why Women Against Racism groups are being formed. Detroit and Louisville are two branches where busing is in effect. Also the branches have working women who could organize and lead such groups. It is also important to wage a fight against the racists for busing and women's groups such as Women Against Racism will be one of the most effective ways to wage that fight. The meeting also discussed issues such as violence in the schools against the children; racist teachers and textbooks were discussed as well.

Since then the Detroit Women Against Racism has gone off to a good start. We held a demonstration against Mother Alert Detroit (MAD, a semi-fascist organization) (see Workers Power for details) The demonstration was one of the best the Detroit district has held. We had a bull horn, excellent posters, great chants, enthusiasm etc. The media was all out for that and we had good coverage on local tv stations, in the Detroit news and six seconds on NBC national news. The first week of busing has gone without violence against the children. Women Against Racism was out every day monitoring the schools. We wore arm bands, carried signs that said welcome to your new school, greeted children and their parents. For these activities, we have also received excellent press.

We are going to continue monitoring the schools for another few days. We also plant to leaflet communities explaining why they should oppose MAD's boycott of the schools. (The boycott, incidently has been unsuccessful so far). We are also going to call for a picket of Mad's monthly meeting on the 5th February.

Our biggest problem is lack of roots in the community and few contacts. Only two contacts showed up at the MAD picket line and one at the first public Women Against Racism meeting. We expect more to come at the meeting this Saturday.

We have an ambitious and exciting publicity and outreach committee. Muriel W. has arranged a debate between Women Against Racism and MAD on several of the largest radio shows. We are going to try and have a 'live' debate to bring more people out. We are also trying to get in touch with the tv stations about this debate.

Women Against Racism will be getting organized in Louisville and the next national report will carry their activities as well.

Women Against Racism Fraction
28 January, 1976.