

Attention of EC Members and Organisers

NATSRECS REPORT OF JAN. 29TH E.C. MEETING.

It is now clear that the re-focussing of the major branches at least is now underway, with the desired emphasis on the teamster work, though the emphasis on consolidation and training is still not clear enough. The request by New York IBT branch to foster a New Jersey branch by moving people there in the spring was treated sympathetically, but it is clear that such a move cannot be undertaken until the NY branch is itself more solidly based. Also given the imminent moving of two of the key leaders, it was decided that steps would have to be taken in the late spring to strengthen the Philly branch.

The report on the auto campaign made it clear that things are beginning to move forwards slowly. Network was well received, we made a few contract contacts at the Shaz Production Workers Conference of the union (delegates mainly local presidents) and we will now be moving forward into the contract pledge card stage of the operation. Fraction is focussing in on the short work week question because that appears to be getting the clearest response in the shops, but some EC members were worried about the dangers of a one issue focus. The major political problem at this point however (in Detroit as we have virtually no feed-back from other areas) appears to be the way WP is used, or rather not used, in the work. This ongoing problem has been magnified by the publication of the tabloid Network. The fraction is to start doing more work on preparation of WP material and there will be a fuller discussion of this and other auto problems at early date.

The EC held a discussion on the ISGB Lessons of Nov 25th pamphlet. It was decided that given the grave political weaknesses of this pamphlet it should be made available to members only along with a written criticism by the national chairman. The key political weakness of the pamphlet is its refusal to start from the dynamics of a revolutionary situation. For example it implies there was no revolutionary situation before Nov 25th, which is wrong, but gives no clear view on what the PRP should have been doing (comrades should be aware that the pamphlet is a polemic about the PRP with the words rev left instead of the party initials). Contrary to ISGB we believe the PRP were correct to raise the insurrection slogan as a means to building the party for one thing. We disagree with the ISGB that the Prp does not understand mass party building, all the evidence (including the FUR) ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ points to the opposite conclusion. The above represents the firm majority line of the EC and there is absolute unanimity on our opposition to the methods employed by the ISGB in its Portuguese intermention.

A new draft of our program in brief for WP was presented and it was generally felt that the changes, while moving in the right direction, still lacked a great deal of clarity and precision. It was agreed that there would be further input (outside the meeting) by EC members before the new version was put in the next edition of WP. Please see WP #146.

There was a review of the CWA work which has been neglected over the past period due to the IBT pressure. Following Harold's visit to Detroit, things are now somewhat clearer. Long Distance, now produced out of L'ville will become a tabloid that can help carry our major agitational programs around layoffs, forced transfers and downgrades. UA will undertake a limited organising drive in the spring, a special brochure is in preparation and all fractions will work on getting delegates to the upcoming convention.

After a delay due to landlord problems the new Cleveland TDC/UPS office is now established and the production of Convoy, an IBT bulletin and the preparations

for the Indy/UPS meeting demonstrate that we are now well on the way ~~to~~ to making Cleveland a political centre also. The round of TDC meetings continue and new developments are the schools for TDC organisers which are now going on and the decision of the ibt so to concentrate its strike preparation activity in Penna, Ohio and Michigan. There will be demos in all TDC cities on March 13th and the agenda of the Feb 14th is/teamster conference for the mid west was ratified. There was some discussion on the EC's political concern that we were not yet clear enough about what we wanted to get out of the Indy meeting for Central States UPS and the question of how to combat anti-strike feeling was discussed. As ibt bulletin says the key to combatting this is in making clear that it was the lack of organisation (i.e. no TDC) which lead to the damaging consequences of the 1970 wildcat. Finally it is clear that so is correct in assigning extra resources to several key branches, the key to our whole future strategy in the ibt requires the development of strong base area. This is true both in terms of the possibility of an April strike and the creation of an ongoing R&F movement in the union.

NATSECS REPORT OF FEB. 5TH E.C. MEETING.

Under the usual first item of the national secretary's report (which dealt of the absence for two weeks in California of the natsec was presented by the chairman) several important developments were reported. We lost about 25 members in January and only recruited half that number. The losses, or at least two thirds of them, were of members who were either not pulling their weight or could not complete the political turn we have been making to the working class now that we are involved in acting on it in the ibt work rather than just talking about it in meetings. Black membership remains the same after losses cancelled out gains, but the leadership of the black caucus continues to develop. We have established, just about, a new branch in Terra Haute and the Boston branch, previously not the most advanced of our branches, has accepted some political responsibility for sorting out the political problems of the nearby Amhurst branch which is firmly rooted on the campus. A limitation which need not be disastrous as the outgoing work of our Bloomington comrades proves.

The natsecs report on the trip to the Bay Area and LA fell essentially into two sections. Firstly we are finally now at the point where those branches are hardening up and entering the mainstream of IS politics and activity. Such a shift is not achieved without losses, but it is clear that everyday that passes without taking those losses means a greater price for sorting out the branches later on as new members are mistrained as long as the branches retain the non worker atmosphere which has characterised them thus far. In LA four people offered their resignation and this number became seven when the exec and branch took a firm political line on the petit-bourg criticism that some of these members had raised. The fact that it was resignations that sorted out the LA problem, rather than expulsions, indicates the relative strength of the branch as against the Bay Area. There, four expulsions of quite longstanding members are in the pipeline and it is likely that the overall effect will be the loss of around eight people. Almost in total, these comrades represent the worst elements of the old IS and their departure will strengthen us. Certainly the necessity for the branch exec to take firm action to speed up those departures has done wonders for the development of a hard and clear leadership in the branch.

Secondly, the report covered the steps that are being taken in both branches to carry on organisationally and politically, the Next Step line of the Jan NC. In this positive aspect of the report there is some real grounds for optimism. The teamster work in LA has a depth which is impressive by any standard, they have already organised their first three TDC barn meetings. The Bay comrades are now doing serious, ~~not~~ the less advanced work in teamsters and will be organising a working class branch based on the advanced R&F work amongst sugar workers in Sacramento.

There is a full and accurate report of the Indy/ups meeting in the latest WP but the EC also took a political report on it in an attempt to come to terms with some of the weaknesses this gigantic success exposed. The length of the meeting and our very small number (less than five) of credible IS operatives left the decisions of the meeting with a lack of clarity which can be damaging to a movement dedicated to running a major strike in less than three months. NonEXIS members fudged the question of the fighting fund for example (talking of lawyers rather than strike benefits) and we were unable to properly compensate for that. At this stage there is nothing disastrous in any of these observations and the so is moving to correct them, but it should be understood that there is an extent to which this operation is an alliance between IS and the leader of the very impressive L'ville stewards organisation and that we do not have the same class struggle politics. A meeting of 650 cannot organise a strike it can merely create the atmosphere in which it can be successfully organised. The question of beefing up the grass roots both organisationally and politically is now the main item on the is/ups agenda.

On TDC, the meetings which took place last weekend will mean that Penna is soon up for the TDC (assuming that the well organised, already existing and consciously anti communist Philly group decides to come along despite being informed about who it is that leads the TDC). The Indy TDC meeting however was a defeat (see WP) and the EC took the position that following Steves investigatory visit which has already been initiated by the steering committee (so) we should make every effort to organise a successful Indy tdc meeting with necessary assistance ~~km~~ from nearby cities. There is a clear political point in demonstrating that tdc cannot be intimidated. The Fox grouping which initiated the internal red-baiting attacks appears to have been silenced by our replies, at least for the moment. New tdc literature and an si/ibt pamphlet are about to come out and although it is impossible to judge the size of next weeks is/ibt conference there is reason for optimism about the recruitment that will result from it. It was decided to strengthen the agenda by adding a summary by the industrial secretary.

The WAR work around busing and the start of the auto campaign are now showing real signs of solving some of the problems of the Detroit branch which have been reported both at the EC and in previous editions of this letter. Nothing is certain yet but the political and organisational health of the branch is certainly better than at any time for some months. It was decided that the weekly paper required ~~that~~ another full-time worker on production, a decision which will allow us to pull Cal out of production (though not the EB) and make him into a national organiser working particularly on the new branches under the direction of the natsec. The EC took a report on the important shift now taking place in Portugal (see attached news, and ensure it is passed on to relevant members) and it was decided to send a leadership to leadership critique of the ISGB poor methods of international work to the ISGB central committee as the first step to opening a constructive international debate on the next steps for the international work of our tendency.

GLENN WOLFE.