

Mike H

I.S. NEWS OF THE MONTH



SEPTEMBER

REPORT FROM THE WOMEN'S COMMISSION

SEPTEMBER 27, 1976.

1. EVALUATION OF THE CINCINNATI REGIONAL WOMEN'S CAUCUS MEETING.

The Cincinnati regional women's caucus meeting was a positive step forward for the women in the I.S. It was originally conceived as a political meeting for I.S. women and close contacts, to go over the fundamentals of our theory and practise on women's liberation. The women's commission felt, and still feels that such meetings are important for the political confidence and morale of the women in the IS.

There were three sessions: the first on the politics of revolutionary feminism; the second on the theory and practise of organizing women, and especially on building the IS women's caucus. The third was on black women. The talks were all good. outstanding was Mary B. who spoke about women under capitalism and organizing for women's liberation all in relationship to a woman working for the phone company. The women's commission wants to turn that talk into a pamphlet. Anna P's talk was better suited to an audience of thousands, it was that inspiring.

The discussion and debate on the subjects were far ranging, and lively. The one topic that people spoke about the most was abortion and birth control. The Red Tide women especially were involved in that subject.

The meeting was successful for a number of reasons: 1) It brought women together from branches where there are from 1 to 5 women, and this gave the women the feeling they were part of a national organization. 2) It helped revive interest in the women's caucus, Louisville and Indianapolis for example. 3) It brought the few contacts who attended, closer to the IS. The contacts(3) came from Bloomington and Cincinnati. 4) It helped the political confidence of the IS women attending 5) The St. Louis women's caucus wishes to hold a similar meeting.

This meeting also revealed the weaknesses and problems of the organization as well. 1) It was small. Only 3 contacts attended. This only proves that our periphery is small. 2) With the exception of the red Tide women, there were only two Black women present (one member, one friend) We still must work out a perspective for the recruitment of black women. 3) the final problem was that there is still not a sense of coherence to our women's perspectives; that we have a fully worked out program and strategy (which we don't). 4) It still remains clear to the women's commission that many of the IS women are hesitant, and not politically confident to speak on a range of issues, and also how to carry a meeting.

This problem, the women's commission hopes to overcome through meetings like these and other political events as well.

In total, the meeting was positive, and such regional women's caucus meetings should be organized. St. Louis is planning a meeting in December; the women's commission hopes to help other caucuses set them up as well.

2. THE STATUS OF THE EXPANDED WOMEN'S COMMISSION.

At the convention we proposed that along with the present women's commission of Barbara W., Sara B., and Enid E. there be an 'expanded women's commission, made up of the women who are on the steering committees of the industrial fractions and the Black caucus. We had hoped that at the NC's there would be ample time to hold a meeting which would go over perspectives for our work. The agenda for this NC makes it impossible for this expanded women's commission to have a serious meeting. We are organizing at the lunch break a meeting, which will go over what the role and function of the expanded women's commission should be. We will give a report for you in the next news of the month.

3. INTEGRATING WOMEN'S LIBERATION INTO THE PERIPHERY CAMPAIGN.

Last year, in many of the worker recruitment rallies, the subject of women's liberation never came up. In many branches, the women's caucuses were not involved in the recruitment drive. This year the women's commission wishes to make certain this doesn't happen again. We are writing up on a separate sheet ideas in which the women question should be integrated into some of the other political topics other than the topic suggested of women and revolution. Copies of this will be sent to the speakers, branch organizers and the women's caucus convenors. We want to remind the comrades, that raising women's liberation is not just the responsibility of the women.

4. PUBLICATIONS ON WOMEN.

We have finally produced Communism and the Family, by alexandra Kollontai. We also plan to make a pamphlet out of Candy Martin's Workers Power column. Hopefully this pamphlet can be used by the women's caucuses and branches as a way to organize discussion around fighting sexism on the shop floor. If the EC proposal for a political magazine passes at this NC, one of the articles will be on abortion.

5. BW will be on vacation from 8 October to November 1. Sara B., will be in the NO to answer calls, correspondence, emergencies etc Tuesdays and Thursdays 1 - 3PM. Enid will be in the NO to do the same Wednesdays from 11 - 3PM.

6. SUGGESTIONS DIRECTIVES ETC.

Comrades please remember that we have suggested that every branch have a political discussion around fighting sexism on the shop floor. We encourage you to use Candy's column in WP. Please let us know how the meetings went. Also, we have encouraged comrades to have political discussions on the readings on Black women. Again, please let us know how that went as well. Finally, remember that the women's bulletin will be out December 1. We plan to have more theoretical articles about women and Marxism. But please make sure your reports get in, on stencils and on time. Also, please let us know if you need information on women under apartheid.

Barbara W.
for the women's commission

POSTAL FRACTION REPORT

We are just beginning to pull together a real national fraction structure and program in our newest area of industrial work. The fact that we have enough work and members to form a basis for a fraction shows our gains since the postal contract campaign one year ago. We now have functioning fractions in six cities, and work just beginning in about three others.

The national postal rank and file paper continues to come out, around which we have a larger periphery for our union politics. Our fraction's understanding of the situation in the postal service -- the issues, the unions, the types of facilities, and how the system runs -- is beginning to take shape. For example, we were able to thoroughly analyze the recently passed McGee Bill (U.S. Senate) from the viewpoint of the rank and file, and expose its class content. (See the SEPT-OCT issue of the R&F Postal Worker for an article stemming from this analysis.)

Our fractions now have work in some of the key post offices in the country. We have work in three of the major carrier branches, including two of the largest (New York and Chicago), and three of the major downtown post offices. We also have work in two of the bulk mail centers, the cutting edge of postal militancy today, and contacts in two others. But still we are quite small, and far too spread out without a strong enough base in the Midwest. We do not for the most part have solid caucuses around our members. We do not have the numbers to carry the work that is necessary to build the movement.

With not much hope of hiring in the post office, the only way we will be able to build the fraction will be through recruitment. All but two of our members now in the industry were recruited out of it since last summer's campaign. We will place a continuing emphasis on recruitment and integration of postal workers into the fractions and branches.

The national fraction center moved to the Bay Area this summer. We just put out our first national fraction mailing, and are expecting to put out our first fraction bulletin in October. We have tentative plans for information and WP packets, and for improved WP coverage on the post office.

We are now organizing in the atmosphere of increased resistance to the USPS speed-up campaign. A walk-out at the Philadelphia BMC and picket lines at the Springfield MASS BMC both won concessions from management. The NALC convention and the Sombrotto campaign mark the opening up of a rank and file movement among carriers.

We are involved in many of these developing struggles, but our ability to influence them is still quite limited. The R&F Postal Worker, edited by one of our members, is widely read. But it is not seen by any number of postal workers as the paper of their movement. This has meant that participation in the paper is not great enough -- not enough letters, articles, and money coming in. It also limits our ability to do real agitational work through the paper.

We participated in the postal union conventions held last month (except for the APWU convention in Las Vegas). At the Mailhandlers convention, we had no real presence, but our people there learned a great deal about the union. At the National Association of Letter Carriers convention, we organized a rank and file caucus (see report next page)

In the next period, we will have to consolidate the rank and file and the national fraction. In addition, we will aim to build local fractions. This is the key to organizing rank and file caucuses around our militants which will be able to lead the fight in the USPS.

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A major task we face is building multi-racial caucuses. We are looking for ways of bringing anti-racist politics into our caucus work, and are focussing on sharpening our understanding of racism in the post office.

We are also going to have to learn to fight victimization. One of our leading militants was recently fired. While he may be able to get his job back, we were clearly unprepared for this and were not able to lead a fight to get his job back.

Letter Carriers Convention Report

The NALC (National Association of Letter Carriers) convention in Houston this August was one of the first attempts by the IS to meaningfully lead an intervention in a major union convention. Given the democratic rules governing the NALC, the number of delegates there committed to our movement, and the work done preliminary to the convention, it was the first time we intervened with some expectation of success. Overall, our efforts were quite successful, and show that a small core of committed delegates can take significant steps toward building a national rank and file movement at a national union convention.

We went into the convention armed with ideas and tactical notions that had been prepared through discussion for months before. The last and summary discussion took place at national fraction meetings during our convention. These ideas included the willingness to give critical support to Vince Sombrotto's presidential campaign; the tactic of introducing several motions before the convention from the floor; and the belief that there would be no over-riding issue to dominate this convention (as there was in 1972 when the direct election of officers and contract referendum were the major fights.)

Our willingness to support Sombrotto turned out to be more than correct - it was essential. We correctly assessed that while Sombrotto's ~~and his~~ program were not crucial in and of themselves, the effect of Sombrotto's campaign and possible victory on the union rank and file ~~was~~ crucial. We constantly stressed the analogy to Arnold Miller and the ~~UAW~~, and the importance of the mine wildcats taking place during the convention. Our position on Sombrotto helped us avoid isolation as a group. For instance, several militants told us they would not work with us if we were not supporting Sombrotto. Two delegates from a sectarian group, the RSL, were extremely isolated throughout the week due partly to their opposition to Sombrotto.

Our tactical notion of introducing motions from the floor proved to have been an error. It was abundantly clear as the convention began that our role would be to support or oppose motions and constitutional amendments already submitted and printed in the official convention literature. Our ability to make this tactical shift was largely responsible for our maintaining a real presence during the convention. (Floor motions, we found out, only came up on the very last day of the convention when many delegates had already left.)

In believing there would be no over-riding issue in the convention we made something of a mistake, probably our worst. The issue of SPEED-UP was lurking behind almost everything that went on during the entire five days. A delegate from a sectarian left group (the Workers' League) introduced a motion on the floor for an almost immediate national strike against speed-up. While the large majority of even the militant delegates felt that this was premature and probably suicidal, the motion attracted considerable support. Again, we proved tactically equal to the

situation and were able to intervene in and dominate a group that met around her motion. However, had we been the introducers of such a motion, our overall intervention would have been strengthened. This mistake, the failure to gauge the tremendous strike sentiment, was due to our relative isolation. We are concentrated in only a few areas, most of them large cities, where the effects of speed-up have not been felt that greatly yet.

The Results of Our Work:

1. On one level, our intervention gave us a very close working and political relationship with many carrier militants, some of whom we met for the first time at the convention. By the end of the convention, we were able to have direct political raps with several of them about our politics and the IS. Recruitment possibilities look good.
2. Throughout the convention, we were able to organize a working convention caucus. This group first met the night before the convention started, and met twice a day until the convention ended. The relative seriousness and success of these meetings increased the self-confidence of all the caucus members, some of them brand new to unionism. And it gained respect for the IS because of the acknowledged leadership role we played. This was not easy, given the fact that we had to put up with two members of the RSL group who attended all our meetings. We were able to neutralize and effectively use these two delegates, and in no way were they able to disrupt our work. They ended up following our lead, and the difference between them and us was an effective lesson for our contacts.
3. Although the hard core of our caucus was about nine people, there was a constant drift of militants in and out of our meetings. A total of about thirty people attended at least one meeting during the week. Some of these people, many of whom were branch officers of small branches, became our floor contacts, the people whom we related to during the floor proceedings. These people read and used the R&F Postal Worker, and gave us the names for future work. But all considered, we could have done much better floor work and informal one-on-one organizing. Most caucus members lacked the necessary experience and confidence in the rank and file program to convince other delegates to join the caucus.
4. The convention intervention opened the possibility of a functioning "carrier division" of the Rank and File Postal Worker. The carrier mailing list expanded to about twenty-five in eighteen cities. Even more important, a core of carriers are committed to making the paper the vehicle for a carrier communications network throughout the country.

Why Sell in the Community?

Sales were begun 10 months ago with the idea that this was the most efficient way to reach working class blacks - more efficient than selling at workplaces, because, in Portland, there are no industries in which blacks are concentrated. We thought that selling in a specific neighborhood could also make community organizing around specific issues easier, and the paper could become a tool in that organizing.

It was also suggested that the sales would familiarize sellers with the neighborhood, train branch members to answer questions and present arguments clearly and concisely, and would occur in a setting in which conversation and follow-up would be easier than at a factory gate.

We wanted to make ourselves and the paper familiar sights in the community, and hoped to stimulate discussion, thought, and action, on some of the issues and ideas we, and the paper, presented.

How we sell

Generally, 2-4 people sell for about 1½ hours, and total sales vary from 15-35.

Before selling, we chart out a new area, and, if many people are involved, we provide each person with a map of his or her area. We sell in pairs, one on each side of the street, for safety, and keep track of each other. So far, there have been no incidents. When someone buys a paper we write down the name, telephone, address, union, or any other information we can learn.

The next week, we return to the houses of the people who bought the first time and ask them how they liked the paper, if they would be interested in attending a meeting or forum, rally, discussion group, etc.

We sell in one area until sales are down to a consistent few and then move on to a new area, still keeping in touch with our regular buyers. If, after a time, we feel we aren't getting anywhere with someone, we will encourage him or her to subscribe to the paper, or will drop them as a sale.

The British IS has a method in which the whole branch descends into a neighborhood one week and the next week a smaller follow-up crew hits the people who bought, while the "gang" is moving on to a new area. We have tried this twice, but it taxes a branch's resources.

Some advice to those contemplating beginning community sales:

1. Plot out who is going to sell where beforehand. Before whole branch sales, provide each person with a map of her or his route.
2. Sell in pairs. We have not had any problems with angry people yet, but it could happen.
3. Make sure everyone has a paper and pencil beforehand. A clipboard with Gary Tyler petition is handy.

4. Practice your sales pitch at a branch meeting or workshop first.

Sell the paper on its politics and black community news, not on its trade union reporting. Say something like, "We're selling Workers' Power newspaper. It's a socialist paper and tells what's going on in communities and places where people work, in the United States and around the world. We believe that society should be run by all of us for the benefit of all of us, instead of the way things are now, run by the rich for the rich."

You immediately distinguish yourself, and the paper, as out of the ordinary, something they might want to check out. While talking, point to articles which you think will be of interest to the person you're selling it to. Don't be meek or defensive. Don't use catch words like "workplace" or "rank and file."

What We've Learned

After 10 months and a lot of effort, what are our concrete results?

We haven't recruited anyone yet, but we are much more visible in the community. Many have seen or read Workers' Power and are familiar with its coverage of Gary Tyler or busing. Once in awhile we run into someone who stops us before we have time to give our pitch, walks back into the house and comes back with 15¢. A fellow we met on the street bought one, explaining that he'd promised his girlfriend that he'd buy her one the next time he saw us.

More concrete results can be seen in our Gary Tyler work. The Portland Gary Tyler Committee came out of sales at an African Liberation Day picnic. We sold an issue there with a front page story about Gary Tyler, and set up a literature table from which we sold many Angola pamphlets and buttons. It wasn't until later that we realized that we were the only group selling. It turned out that most of the other groups in town had been polite enough to ask if they could sell, and had been turned down. Because we had been selling in the community so long, we didn't even think to ask, and our audacity paid off. The leadership of the rally, former Panthers, became, with us, the leadership of our Gary Tyler campaign.

We used the paper in the community to publicize Gary Tyler's plight, and to organize for the rally. We distributed several hundred copies free the week before the rally, and then afterwards sold on the interest and curiosity generated by the rally. We had something local to relate the paper to.

Our biggest failure is our failure to recruit. This, we believe, is largely due to poor follow-up work. Plans for correcting this are discussed in the next section.

Where we're going

Any work with the paper, and with community sales in particular, must be placed in the general context of where our black work is going, both locally and nationally. Lacking national perspectives and direction, we have had to try to make out on our own, a very difficult task.

There are four preconditions for successful work in the black community. (From our most recent branch black perspectives.)

1. We must know our own politics, have confidence in our ideas, and be able to explain their relevance.
2. We must know the black community, its structure, function, and history.
3. We must be able to connect our particular politics to the level of consciousness and organization of the black community.
4. Based on the three previous points, we must construct a program and strategy whereby we become a leading force in the community.

Leaving aside some of our other activities in pursuit of the above goals, we plan to use Workers' Power to explain our politics, to tie us in with national programs and activities, such as the Gary Tyler campaign, and to educate both ourselves and others in black history and contemporary struggle.

Those who are drawn close on the basis of paper sales will be followed up on in a systematic manner. We will invite them to forums, women's caucus evenings, branch meetings. We will organize discussion groups. We will involve them in the Gary Tyler work, etc., or in rank and file work, if appropriate. We will also emphasize personal visits by one or two branch members to readers' homes.

We encourage other branches to experiment with community sales. They have been the most consistent, largest portion of our sales. If we are to do organizing in the black community, what better place to present our public face, Workers' Power?

WORKERS' POWER LETTER CAMPAIGN

Workers' Power is starting a letter campaign this month to revive the letters page.

The letters are an important part of WP. They create a dialogue with readers, give a sense that the paper is alive, has an impact on people, people are involved with it.

Lately, the letters page has been poor. Few contacts are writing in, few members, too. There is little feedback on articles. The range of our priority industries are not represented.

We have to turn this around.

Using the letters page is to your advantage. You can get political points printed that will help you in your work. When you get contacts to write in to the paper, it makes them feel closer to the IS.

The campaign:

* Mailgrams have been re-printed. They are available through your branches. Each branch should have a stack in their office. Each member should keep mailgrams with them. Stuff them into the papers. Give them to contacts. When discussing the paper with contacts, get them to write down their comments and send them in.

* Responsibility for letters should be taken by key people in each branch. Letters should be organized through the branch as well as through the fractions. The organizer, members of a fraction, the WP coordinator should all keep track of letters, and assign people to write in and to get contacts to write in.

* The letters campaign will be evaluated monthly through the IS News of the Month. A "Letters Scoreboard" will rate the branches and fractions for the past month. It will be clear to every member by looking at the Scoreboard where we need letters from.

* Each branch and each fraction should shoot for one letter per month.

LETTERS SCOREBOARD

Issue #:	173	174	175	176	177
Louisville	1				
Seattle	1				
Teamsters	1				
Auto			1		
St. Louis			1		1
Prisoners			3		2
Gay Caucus					1

There were no letters printed in #174 or 176 because none came in.

Address questions about the letters campaign to Elissa C.

PHILADELPHIA BRANCH REPORT

After the convention in July, the Philly branch believed that it would make steady progress during the next several months and reverse the trend toward demoralization which had set in right before the convention. In spite of our small size, we felt that our position in several important industries, notably teamsters and telephone, would enable us to grow.

Unfortunately, the branch has not grown during this period, but has stagnated. While our telephone work has remained consistently good (one of our members plays a leading role in a local rank and file caucus), our work in teamsters, our major priority, has suffered some serious blows. In both of the locals that we are in, our members have either been fired or are close to being fired because of their organizing activity. This has made it almost impossible to intervene in situations which offer tremendous possibilities for us.

The difficulties in our industrial work and our small size have taken their toll on the morale and confidence of our branch members. And without any sense of forward direction, we have come to feel more and more isolated by the lack of central resources that have been made available.

The new WP circulation drive and the periphery campaign will have a positive effect on the branch by pushing us to conduct more public events and developing more ties with the black community. Whether or not these campaigns can turn this situation around cannot be determined for another several months.

Philadelphia Branch Exec

Portland

Since the convention, Portland has had to come to grips with the price of being a feeder branch - the departure of some of our most experienced comrades. Coupled with this has been a more general disorientation of the branch politically - reelecting also our growing sense of isolation as recruitment continues to languish. This has led to a period of profound examination and analysis of our future direction, both in our rank and file and community work, and in our efforts to build the Portland branch. This has resulted in a commitment to monthly public forums, more intensive education programs for members and friends, and a real attempt to politicize our industrial/community work fractions.

So far the most successful arena of activity has been the Women's Caucus. Though small, the Women's Caucus has begun a series of monthly women's evenings, which have attracted a number of women we have been working with. The IBT fraction is focussing on the formation of a IDU chapter here, with its first activity to be running a slate of candidates in an upcoming Local election. "Rollin' Wheels", the local teamster rank and file paper will be used as a vehicle to introduce the slate and what they stand for. A number of people we worked with in TDC appear pretty solid. In our other industrial fraction, centered around a number of comrades in the Machinists' Union (IAM), we now have a very solid caucus, which is putting out a regular newsletter and is meeting biweekly to discuss WP articles. The Black Community work fraction recently went through a period of fundamental reevaluation of its work, resulting in a clear perspective for the next few months, including a day school for comrades and friends on the nature of the local black community, a public forum, and hopefully a newsletter of general interest to the black community, which we hope to put out with a number of friends we made through Gary Tyler work. We also are planning a series of classes for comrades and friends on Braverman's Labor and Monopoly Capital. We are doing one to ones with some of the comrades and are also having workplace organizing educationals in which we discuss how to deal with issues that come up on the shop floor.

All in all, the spirit of the Portland branch is rapidly picking up as the summer doldrums draw to an end. Comrades are optimistic about the challenges of the next few months, and a mood of cautious optimism reigns, tempered by the realism born of the branches very real experience in working class struggles in the last year.

Portland IS Exec

Like the legendary phoenix, the Bloomington branch burns itself to ashes in the spring, only to resurrect and renew itself in the fall. Each May the branch membership is decimated and each fall the reconstruction process begins again. Last spring, Bloomington sent ten comrades to four industrial branches. Since 1971, Bloomington has sent over fifty comrades to industrial branches.

Presently, we have seven comrades and a growing periphery. Milton and Tim K. are acting co-branch organizers--a diumvirate of sorts. It seems to be working out well.

The work we have undertaken for this fall includes four forums and five topical discussion groups, ie. (What is Marxism; Workers on the move in the US-Teamsters; Women's Liberation w/Barbara 's Revolutionary Feminism; Building a Revolutionary Party w/ Party and Class)

Our first forum, on September 13 was quite successful. We have significantly expanded our periphery due to it. Many thanks to Larry S. and Fred H. for doing an excellent job-the Fight for Freedom in Southern Africa.

Our next forum, Monday, October 4, on the conflict in the Mid-East will be very big. Together with the Iranian Student Association and the Arab Student Association, we hope to draw 300 to 500 people. Hopefully David F. will be able to participate.

On Monday, October 25, we will conduct a forum on the elections and on November 8, our forum will be on feminism and socialism. We look forward to seeing Barbara then.

We continue contact with workers from General Electric, Otis Elevator, and UPS, although we are to undermanned to continue WP sales at all three sites.

Overall, our political focus remains on the student community, as we are best suited for that type of work. We feel that Bloomington is ⁱⁿ good shape and will make great gains this year.

CINCINNATI BRANCH REPORT

The branch and its periphery has been expanding since the convention. We recruited a postal worker who we've known since the CLUW who has already contributed a great deal to the branch.

We now have a Red Tide with around 4 members which is just getting off the ground. Currently, it is not a stable group - only two of the ~~about~~ members have a reasonable idea of what the Red Tide is about. We are in the process of working out a perspective for Red Tide work here.

Because we are a new branch with few roots aside from those of the two comrades who have joined since we set up the branch, and because the members have had difficulties in getting industrial jobs, we've been forced to approach workers primarily from the outside. For the most part, this has taken the form of going out to picket lines seeking articles for WP and selling WP. The picket lines have provided an opportunity for relatively inexperienced comrades to talk politics to workers with success. Our best intervention so far has been at Westinghouse where we were able to make contacts and we now sell about 15 WP's weekly. A well known militant there has become a close contact of ours and we plan to recruit this person in the very near future.

The Cincy women's caucus and the women's commission in Detroit are working on a conference for Sep. 18 which will take up the questions of women's liberation and revolutionary politics as well as women organizing women. The conference is not only for women members ~~and~~ but for contacts as well.

The UPS work is going slowly here. We're still trying to get response to the TDU convention, but it is minimal. In August we had a successful IS meeting on UPS which was attended by a key UPS worker and wife, auto worker, postal worker etc.,

Branch education has been taken very seriously here. We have a branch education at each branch meeting and we have a small study group on Lenin. Overall, our branch meetings are interesting with a lot of discussion and participation of members. We have begun to invite contacts to them. We had an especially interesting branch meeting last month with Mike C. from Britain who spoke about the anti-racist campaign there.

New York UFT Report

Due to the schools' being out and vacations very little was accomplished over the summer. Three of our members participated in Gary Tyler/Red Tide meetings but, again because of vacations, nothing really got together. The New York district has begun to pull our GT ctt. back together, with a picnic scheduled for September 16.

Since Labor Day, most of our time has been occupied with getting organized. The only real event so far has been a preliminary meeting of New Directions (our UFT group), which was a great success. Eventhough many people were still on vacation and we didn't send out a general mailing, over 20 showed up and all were extremely enthusiastic about getting down to work and, in addition to monthly publication of the newspaper, having a series of actions leading up to a campaign against Shanker next spring.

As a rank and file group, ND has so far been quite successful, but we haven't yet converted this to gains in IS membership. We hope to correct this with dinner discussions, WP sales and systematic WP coverage.

As the branch has grown and ND members have taken on more responsibilities, it has become clear that we need another major activity but we are unsure what this will be. Our highest hope is to resurrect UPS work in New York. To this end we will add WP sellers to the 2 we already have there. We will also be educating ourselves in the politics of the Latin community, where we have several contacts and especially in the PSP, which has become a not insignificant force in the NY left.

The district is holding a school on Southern Africa this week, a forum with a ZANU speaker in October, as well as film showings for smaller groups in the branches and fractions with contacts. Together with branch education and the fall campaign, it looks like a busy year ahead.

DETROIT DISTRICT REPORT

Four branches: two auto, teamsters, community

RED TIDE: The Red Tide has been the major source of the district's recruitment over the last nine months. In addition to our growth in numbers, the Red Tide has led the I.S. in opening up new areas of work, most significantly anti-racism work. Right now the RT is stretched quite thin, compared to the past here, because a chunk of its cadre moved to other cities and its periphery was difficult to maintain without school in session. Externally, the group faced one serious political problem: the gang/curfew situation is very hard to get a solid handle on. (More on that later.)

/The group's relationship to the I.S. has gone through several stages in the last 6 months. Initially we were unable to keep clear the differences between the Committee to Free Gary Tyler, the Red Tide and the I.S. Our reaction ~~was~~ was to separate the RT and the I.S. too much. In addition to race, the age difference presented another barrier to initially developing the easy-going social and political relationships that makes recruitment both happen and stick. This stage was passed through when the ~~X~~ recruitment from G.T. to the R.T. and then to the I.S. did begin, and when the district (~~X~~ mainly through Women Against Racism) began to do on-going G.T. work as well. Relationships began to improve on all levels. However, the loss of R.T. cadre to other cities and the failure of the I.S. to recruit blacks brought us into another stage this fall. The key problem is developing methods for the whole district to politically work closely with the Red Tide. The creation of the community branch has begun already to establish stable healthy political and social relationships. It provides a regular place for R.T. members to learn about the I. and I.S. politics concretely since we are discussing similar problems and activities, and it provides a clear focus and responsibility for recruitment beyond the I.S./R.T. members.

IBT The other area of recruitment has been from our IBT work. We now have tremendous opportunities here. A large number of Detroit Teamsters (particularly from freight and ~~xxx~~ car haulers) attended the recent TDU convention. They are extremely enthusiastic about organizing in Detroit. The branch, however, is disorganized and work proceeds slowly. The internal problems are being straightened out and ~~xx~~ we are regearing the branch to more effectively work with these militants and recruit them to the I.S.

The TDU plan is to center activity around a city-wide newspaper, a campaign on bylaws changes in the locals, and building TDU local chapters.

AUTO: Results of our work in auto this past year are mixed. The lack of mass motion around the contract among production workers meant that our GGC work has not produced major results. However, There have been significant advances in several locals. There will be a full review of the auto work at the upcoming NC, and it is too long to cover in depth here. But the setback in our national perspective has naturally produced considerable demoralization in the

in the fraction. Since January we have lost several members. We have recruited none, although several members have gotten jobs. Recruitment remains our major difficulty. In one local we are attempting a shift to more emphasis on fighting racism to facilitate this.

While the contract campaign never caught on, during this period several of our members have emerged as clear class leaders. At Local 51 we have a group that we are working with. At Local 15 we are trying to build a group out of the recent wildcat there that we played a major role in leading. Through both our contract work and our leadership in struggles against the company, the auto work has advanced overall. We are working on ways now to focus on the local situations and translate the respect for our comrades' leadership into periphery and membership for the IX I.S.

COMMUNITY: Gangs, police harassment and now black police corruption have become a major political issue in Detroit. The RED TIDE has had some success in intervening in the high schools. Beyond this we have had difficulty because of lack of resources and the nature of the issue. A good part of Detroit is in fact terrorized by the gangs so that a lot of the police measures aimed at all ghetto youths was seen as quite appropriate. The totally black city administration was quite capable of enforcing this program even though it is actually directed toward clearing the downtown of black youths and giving other comfort to racists. For instance, the big anti-crime demonstration in support of the police was organized by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference head, who happens to be the mayor's brother. *(RACELE NAAR IS WAREHOUSE LULL. IT WANTS TO REBUILD THROUGH GARY TYLER)*

After holding a highly successful picnic and Gary Tyler's work and possibly take up some South Africa work, but needs to find a Detroit issue to become a stable group. A number of people, including auto workers have become part of our periphery as a result of this work and have expressed interest in joining. But we have too few I.S. members responsible for the time-consuming work that can carry the group through the demoralizing lulls that are a natural part of community organizing.

DISTRICT STRUCTURE: Following the convention two of the branches became auto branches and membership was restricted to auto workers and those non-auto workers who would be involved in the auto work. Same as Teamsters already. We established a community branch which, while young, is so far very successful. Cross-branch work like W.A.R. and G.T. now has a focus. Previously members felt like outsiders in industrial branches. Second, there is solid community work for us, we have developed enough roots to carry our real on-going activities. The branch will begin work in community colleges with mostly black working class student bodies. Several weeks ago we initiated a campaign to rebuild our periphery. Progress is slow but steady. Making contact systematic and complete is a massive job alone. So far it has meant more social activities connected to branch life, and these have been successful. We've held two solid forums and are more than half through the first series of the national education ~~XXXXXX~~ classes. They are excellent, but optional. Therefore attendance has been low and mainly RTers and newer members.

SPRINGFIELD I S. BRANCH REPORT

The branch has passed through something of a crisis since the convention: one that reflects in part the crisis in the organization as a whole, but also a crisis of our own making. On the one hand we have been shaken by personal conflicts; on the other, by the fact that some of our best and most active comrades have been moved elsewhere. However, in spite of these tensions, which sent morale plummeting for several weeks, the membership has held firm. Work has gone on and though some are for now less active than before in general discipline is good.

This is producing some dividends. We are building a strong periphery in the key areas, particularly within our Post Office fraction, among the Black community and within AFSCME. We expect to be recruiting again shortly from our periphery and to bring others into that periphery. Other important areas of work: Gary Tyler, students and agit-prop among workers in Holyoke (part of the Springfield conurbation) have also indicated that things are looking up. On the other hand, TDC/TDU work is at an ebb, and the UPS strike actually hurt our ability to work among UPSers. Our theory is that Union solidarity is high at this point, so our class-struggle unionist position creates tension between the rank and file and us. The r-and-f still looks to the local Union for support - not to us. That may change in time.

We have a series of public forums planned, one a month until the New Year. A recent forum on South Africa - held at UMass and in Springfield - was very successful. Dimbaza was shown and a representative of P.A.C. spoke. About 150 people, many Black, attended the combined meetings. Good possibilities for recruitment among Springfield Blacks came out of it all, and we are represented on a South African Support Committee which has been formed in the area. In general, then, things look good.

REPORT AND ASSESSMENT OF THE TDU CONVENTION

The TDU Convention at Kent State on Sept. 11-12, was a significant step forward for the rank and file movement and a giant step forward for our own perspective in the Teamsters' Union. There were about 250 people in attendance. Aside from 10 lawyers and a few reporters, the rest were Teamsters and their wives. The vast majority were from Ohio, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, though 15 states were represented, including 8 people from L.A., 47 from Detroit, and about 30 each from Pittsburgh and Cleveland. The Convention was spirited, but also serious.

The opening event was not sponsored by the TDU, but by Mackie Presser, head of Joint Council 41 (Ohio), and son of William Presser who recently "resigned" his post on the Central States Pension Fund. Jackie and his right hand man, a Cleveland P.R. man, organized seven bus loads of people to demonstrate against TDU at Kent State. A large portion of the demonstrators were retirees who had little idea of why they were there - they were in fact on their way to another event to be held later in the day. The biggest chunk of demonstrators were union officials from the area. Surrounding Presser and his P.R. man were several of the largest human beings ever seen this side of Los Vegas - all with "smile" buttons on their lapels. The demonstrators carried professionally printed red white and blue signs and distributed a leaflet entitled, "Teamsters are for Real, TDU is Socialist Lies." The demonstration folded when the President of K.S.U., trembling with memories of 1970, told Presser and the rest to get off campus. Presser protested that ten regents had given him permission.

While the demonstration may have upset some people at first, the convention got off to a rousing start with a speech by Mel Packer. The speech spelled out the employers offensive, the economic crisis, the inability of Fitz and the labor leadership to fight back, their conception of business unionism, and the need for a rank and file movement. This was followed by a panel discussion that helped set a militant tone. Particularly good was Al Ferdnance's (Detroit Carhaulters) line by line answer to the Presser red baiting leaflet. He laid to rest any immediate possibility of demoralization or red baiting as a result of the demonstration and he got a big hand for doing it.

After the panel the floor mikes were opened and a good discussion followed. The theme of the discussion was the employers attacks and the union's failure to fight. One older Teamster, who had not been around TDU before, led the crowd in the pledge of allegiance - to an exit sign since there was no flag in the room. But most raps were upbeat, militant ones that kept things moving in the right direction. In line with the goals for the convention, most of the speakers were non-ISers. Throughout the convention participation by non-ISer was high in frequency and content.

Next came Saturday's workshops: Jobs and Casualization; Working Conditions; Women; Union Democracy, Union Elections; Racial Discrimination; and the TDU constitution. Union Democracy was the largest and Racial Discrimination the smallest - one of the few negative things at the convention. All of Saturday's workshops were good in terms of participation by those attending. In most cases good additions to the resolutions came from non-ISers.

The one workshop that was on the negative side was that on the TDU constitution. Poorly attended by non-ISers, it was dominated by members of Teamsters for Democracy (TFD) from Madison, Wis. TFD is composed mainly of ex-student radicals. Their numerous, detailed constitutional amendments were directed at weakening to the point of disappearance any strong national organization or central leadership. These were reported out as a minority report at the evening session.

The evening session on the constitution lasted about four hours. The TFD people presented and motivated most of their amendments - until it was long past obvious that they were not going to get any of them passed. In fact, the presentation of the TFD amendments played a positive role. It created a controversy about the very nature of TDU. The debate did not emerge as a nit-picking session around details, but as a political debate around the nature of TD and its enemies.

The TFD got virtually no support in their effort to win a loose "confederation" (their word) of local organizations. Over the months, helped by ideas put forth by us and by events that confirmed those ideas, many TDCers, UPSurgers, and now TDUsers have learned a lot about who they are fighting and what it takes to wage that fight. They wanted a strong organization with a functioning leadership. With hardly a single exception they repudiated the TFD proposals. It was an educational discussion for those new to TDU. In spite of the demanding nature of that four hour session hardly a single person left the room.

As the Pittsburgh people had to go to a union meeting on Sunday, and a few other people had to return home, attendance was lower on Sunday - about 120. But participation by those remaining was strong in workshops and sessions alike. The Sunday workshops were: Local By-laws changes; Building TDU; Legal Rights and Victimization; Teamsters in different jurisdictions; and Winning Better Contracts.

Resolutions and amendments were reported out by the chairpersons of the workshops. The discussion was generally good and political. The greatest participation, and unfortunately the greatest confusion, came on the women's resolution. The original resolution was substantially strengthened in the workshop. It now includes a much stronger statement on getting women into the industry. But there was controversy over a phrase that said women should get full hiring hall privileges, "even if the union had unemployed members on its rolls." Someone moved that the phrase be deleted. People from the west coast argued that out there because the hiring halls are used by a large number of people working casual there are always technically unemployed members of the rolls and that if the union used that as an excuse women would never even get a chance to work. Confusion about how the hiring halls work in the mid-west as opposed to the west coast buried the real issue - preferential hiring. ISers were as confused as anyone else, speaking and voting on both sides. In the end the deletion passed. In spite of that, the resolution is much stronger than at first - due to the insistent work of several women.

The program and constitution adopted by the TDU are a strong start for a real national opposition organization in the IBT. The seriousness and

participation by scores of non-ISers was impressive. A number of non-ISers emerged as fairly well recognized leaders of TDU: Alk Ferdnance (Detroit); Bob Bell (Cinci); Doug Allen (L.A.); Keith Gallagher (Tannersville); Charlies and Marion Borwon (Washington PA, near Pitts.); Dan Kablack (Pitts), to mention a few were pretty impressive. And, of course, Pete Camarata was, in many ways, as the Cleveland Plain Dealer put it, TDU's "most prestigious spokesman." A number of these and other TDUsers will lose their non-IS status in the near future.

The steering committee that was elected was certainly the strongest to date ~~xxx~~ and looks pretty solid. Its members are:

Anne Mackie	Local	407, Cleve.	UPS
Pete Camarata	"	299, Detroit	freight
Dan Kablack	"	250, Pitts	soda driver
Carl Boarman	"	89, L'ville	freight- road
Doug Allen	"	208, L.A.	freight
Jim Davidson	"	85, S.F.	"
Gail Sullivan	XX&	278, S.F.	UPS
Mel Packer	"	249, Pitts	freight
Ken Paff	"	407, Cleve.	"
Ed Walker	"	100, Cinci.	UPS
Bob Bell	"	100, Cinci.	freight
Mike Bertrand	"	695, Madison	liquor driver
Charlie Brown	"	585, Wash., PA	freight
Keith Gallagher	"	229, Scranton	fregiht
Al Ferdnace	"	299, Det.	carhauler

From the vantage point of the goals we set for the convention it was an unqualified success. It showed that there is a core of people who have learned alot in the past year and are dedicated to building TDU. The lawyers and press present were generally impressed with the solidity of the thing. The participants came away enthusiastic about what they had done. At least in Detroit, the convention gave a huge boost to the local work. It helped bring around some new forces, including from locals other than 299. The top goal, the creation of a sense that TDU belongs to those who came and not just a handful of activists was well achieved. The sense of "we" was very strong by the end of the convention. At the same time, the credibility of the major IS leaders in TDU was enhanced. The conceptions of national organization and central leadership were established. TDU, at this point, looks like it will be a viable organization - really the first we have had on this scale.

The political level of the convention was the highest yet of any IBT event. The ability of most of the participants to think politically and organizationally was, to a large extent, the pay off for a years hard work. The million discussions, bulletins, articles in Convoy, UPSurge, and WP, and the patient working with many of the people there over that period all paid off to give TDU a leadership grouping - most of those there - that was quite impressive.

The IS presence at the convention was visible but low key. WP was distributed on Sunday - to avoid being one of many sect papers on Saturday. Two WP reporters talked with many people giving the IS an additional personal presence that positively affected a number of people. At least one Teamster from Kansas City wrote in to WP about having met a number of terrific people connected with WP at the TDU convention. While the TDU convention was not supposed to be the scene of heavy contact work, a certain amount of discrete contact work was done - work which has already netted us new ~~members~~ members.

In general, the majority of IS members functioned well, followed fraction guidelines, and encouraged non-ISers to participate. Some comrades, however, acted as individuals. A small number hardly attended any sessions or left early. Some made unplanned amendments from the floor. Another small group urged one member to reconsider running for TDU steering committee after that member had been asked to decline by fraction leaders. In one instance a member thoroughly dominated a workshop. And on the debate over the women's resolution, ISers were to be found all over the map - with a majority voting against what should have been our ~~position~~ position.

In the context of the convention none of these mistakes in functioning made much difference, nor were they noticed by anyone other than the

fraction leadership. Nevertheless, we must correct this sort of practice and discover why it happened. It was not a question of general inexperience, as it was not new members who made the mistakes in most cases. Fundamentally, the failures in discipline stemmed from the weakness and lack of past organization of the Teamster Fraction. During its entire life it has not had strong internal life and channels of communication have been makeshift and incomplete. They didn't work well enough to get our information and directives, much less to have trained people to function as a team. Without systematic political discussion and two way communication in a fraction people do not ~~xxxxxx~~ internalize any sense of functioning as a distinct team with a recognized leadership.. Having had little on-going political relationship with the fraction center members from outlying areas experience or training in working with that leadership or under its direction. This past failure of fraction organization explains most of the individualism at the convention and also the weakness of floor organization.

It would be mistake to concentrate on the mistakes made at the convention. In general the functioning of the vast majority of ISers was excellent. While we were responsible for the planning of the convention, we did not dominate, domineer, confuse or alienate other Teamsters. On the contrary we impressed nearly everyone there. The IS can be proud of the role it played at the TDU convention as well as of the hard work during the past year that made it possible.

Prepared by Kim M. on the basis of
the discussion of the IBT Fraction
Steering Committee, Sept. 16.

NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

We are now back onto the monthly schedule for "News of the Month" after missing a month during the summer. Comrades will no doubt welcome that, though after they see the upcoming Internal Bulletin which will contain several lengthy documents from the October 2nd National Committee meeting, ~~MMMMMMMM~~ comrades may feel that we will have to start putting aside some of our valuable political time just for keeping up with what is going on in the organisation.

The campaign to boost the circulation of WP has now got underway and getting it firmly into its stride will be the key priority of the next couple of weeks. This is urgent given the fact that from the beginning of next month the campaign to build the periphery will be taking most of our time and effort, and that campaign will not have any chance of success if we are not using WP far more systematically. So far there has been little or no actual increase in circulation, indeed some branches have reduced their orders, but that isn't as negative as it sounds. For it represents those branches beginning to get back on top of paper sales (and payments, if it comes to that) and essentially clearing the decks for the drive to increase circulation. So far those branches, still a minority, that are organised for the campaign are showing that it is possible, with minimum effort to increase their circulation, paid circulation, by a substantial amount. The next important steps for those branches will be maintaining that circulation. That will be done as long as we do not allow the paper to slip to the bottom of the list of political priorities as we did over the summer. Starting over a month ago the centre began to help the branches reorganise their WP effort, firstly by intervening on the question of who was WP co-ordinator. Since then much help and advice has been forthcoming, particularly from Tom, the circulation manager. This means that those branches who are not yet organised on the circulation drive have no-one to blame but themselves. It is time they got moving.

This edition of the "News" contains a detailed evaluation of the recent TDU convention. This should be read by all members, not only because it represents a significant step forward, but because it is a milestone in our strategy for building a rank and file movement. Understanding the significance of that convention is worth a dozen abstract documents on "mass work" and the role of revolutionaries in it. Of course we did not get everything right, either with the TDU or TDC, but a strategy for building the Rank and File and the IS which required that every step be perfect before the strategy could work would be worthless.

While still on the subject of our strategy for growth over the coming period, a word should be said about the upcoming NC meeting. This ~~xxxx~~ promises to be a very important meeting for us. It is the first totally closed NC as well as the first full-meeting of the strengthened NC which was elected at our July convention. It comes at a very opportune time, a time when we are putting all our efforts into re-establishing our sense of direction as an organisation and breaking out of the stagnation that has been with us for the better part of a year. There will be detailed discussion of corrections to our industrial perspectives, the auto contract campaign, the relationship of mass work to party building, the foundation of a political magazine, WP and the periphery drive and the role of the PRP in the Portuguese revolution. It is a heavy agenda, but out of it will come a much clearer and broader lead for the period of the fall and winter. It will be hard work, we have even had to abandon the traditional Saturday night party in order to squeeze in another session. But it will be worth it. On the four days following the NC the organisers will get together for an even more intensive training school.

The Gary Tyler work is once again moving forward with the adverse developments that have taken place in the case over the past few weeks. Our earlier hope that Gary would be released has now been replaced by fear that on Nov 10th he may once again face the electric chair. In response to this the relatively low level of activity of the fourteen tyler cttcs we are involved in is being stepped up. Most of them are in good condition to take the extra work, with non-ISers thoroughly involved. In October there will be an extensive mid-west and east coast tour by Mrs Tyler which will be used for media, fund raising and a public meeting. We are also planning demos around the time of Gary's next court appearance and we are re-gearing the central apparatus to guide and help with this work. It is clear that this work and the South Africa campaign (which is moving forward as can be ~~xxxx~~ seen from the reports in WP) will be a central part of the periphery campaign we are about to mount.

Along with the emphasis on high schools, Gary Tyler work will also be central to the new perspectives of the Red Tide. These are being discussed in the RT EC at the moment and will go out to the RT membership before it goes to IS. As a step towards ensuring the parallel development of the RT and IS the two EC's will now be meeting jointly on a regular basis.

Auto is not going any better at this point than it has before and it is clear that our campaign has been a failure that has even had the by-product of losing some less committed members in auto. Every cloud has a silver lining, we have undoubtedly increased our standing as a legitimate opposition grouping in the UAW and we have gained a lot of valuable experience. But that is the subject of the document being prepared for the NC by the Auto Steering Ctte and that will be published for all members in a couple of weeks.

In telephone there is nothing very new to report and the state of the postal work, which is now becoming a serious fraction, is given in the report in this document. In steel we have established a new fraction cttc based in Gary and including a couple of comrades with wide industrial experience. The committee has just completed work on a position paper on the IS intervention in the Sadlowski campaign for the union presidency. That will be going out to the fraction and will appear in the next "News of the Month".

Immediately after the NC and organisers school, the periphery campaign will go into full swing. The document on it was sent to all branches almost two weeks ago and should now be the subject of serious branch, fraction and exec discussion. Such discussion should go beyond the political motivation for the campaign, we should now be in the stage where we are turning the general program into concrete activity which fits each specific area of local work. This is not a campaign where the center organises every dot and comma and the branches carry it out. Much of the initiative, both by choice and necessity, is being left with the branches. The centre is ready to give substantial assistance both in terms of resources and further advice, but the ball is now in the court of the branches. So lets get movin'!

Glenn Wolfe,
September 29th. 1976.

NEWS ON THE INTERNAL BULLETIN.

The first edition of the new internal bulletin which was agreed to by the July convention will now be published in mid October, one month later than originally planned. We decided to delay publication because of the poor response to the request for articles and the fact that we wanted to include in it the important documents from the October NC. Anyone wishing to have any other article in it should send ~~them~~ to the National Office within a week. Those comrades who were asked to do certain articles by the assistant national secretary should make that deadline as well, they will not be asked again (we don't have the resources to chase after people) and if we don't have the stuff in a week, it will not go in. As things stand at the moment the IB will contain the NC documents and an article by Barbara of the NY teachers branch criticising the PRP and the organisations general line on the Portuguese revolution.

G.W.

NATIONAL TREASURER APPOINTED FOR THE I.S.

It will no doubt strike fear into the heart of those (majority of) branches who are behind with their dues, but we have just brought Sandy of NY onto the national office staff as national treasurer. His first job is to sort out the chaotic dues situation and he is going to be fairly hard about it. Maximum co-operation from the branches would probably soften him up.

He will also be in charge of fund raising and it should be noted by all comrades effected that any fund raising outside the organisation (from foundations, individuals, whatever) for either the IS or ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ the other non-IS organisations we lead, MUST NOW BE CLEARED WITH SANDY, before we start.

Finally, on the fund raising question, it should be known that X we will be launching a small fund drive aimed at raising the equivalent of one months dues in the middle of next month. There hasn't been any fund drive this year due to the cancellation of the spring drive and we were due to have a large \$35,000 ~~XXXXXX~~ one in the fall. However the EC decided that given the poor financial state of the membership after the heavy activity of the last period, that large drive should be put off until the spring. Sandy will be sending out details soon, but the general idea is to raise the money outside the organisation thru various fund-raisers which can also complement the periphery campaign rather than interfere with it.

G.W.