

FRACTION BULLETIN

CONVOY

Evaluation of Indianapolis, January 31

TDC: Moving Towards a Strike

March 13: TDC/UPSurge Day of Action

## CONVOY

This is a brief report on how CONVOY is going so far and what we have found out about using it. It is a bit early to tell exactly the reception since the time delay in shipping them out and getting them distributed locally has meant that the second issue was printed with only fragmentary reports in from the first. From what little we can tell, the first issue was well received. We printed 25,00 and sent them all out. About 1200 were mailed in bundles of three to all those who have paid for supporter cards. This is part of what you pay for when you buy a card and is the closest thing CONVOY has to subscriptions. We sent out about 5500 in bundles of 50 to selected names on our mailing list in hopes that they would not only get out, but bring in requests for regular bundles. The response to this has been very slow, but we're hoping it will pick up. The rest were distributed in bulk orders to local TDC groups or to fractions. We know they are out and around--Steve K. was distributing some at a terminal in Baltimore when a road driver from North Carolina pulled one out of his back pocket--but cannot yet judge the impact. Most initial comments were favorable. The key now is whether people will begin looking to CONVOY for the kind of news about the contract they are not getting from the union and whether people start using it to tell other rank and filers what is happening and what should be happening.

The second issue is a bit bigger in size and, we think, a clear improvement in quality. We printed 34,000 so that we could cover a larger number of names on the mailing list with bundles of 50 and because certain areas asked for increases in their bulk orders. It will be shipped in a day or two so use it well.

Our biggest problem now is money. We have a large printing debt and are running short on cash for shipping. It is imperative that all fractions pay for their CONVOYs IMMEDIATELY!! Money can and should be collected from Teamsters when distributing, but we can't wait for that. We also need funds raised for TDC. If there are barns in your area that can sponsor an issue--let's get in the stick. If people are willing to hold raffles, bingo parties, garage sales, whatever for TDC--NOW is the time! If you know any road drivers that can hold coffee breaks, start making this concrete and get it rolling. The importance of coffee breaks is not simply that they can raise bread, but they can get out a lot of TDC literature--CONVOY, brochures, petitions, bumper stickers. This not only raises funds, but creates a TDC presence.

We also have a new slew of bumper stickers and buttons. The bumper stickers come in three slogans (each in 5 dazzling day-glo colors)--Ready to Strike, No Sellout in '76, and Hit the Bricks in '76. The cost is 6 for \$1; 50 for \$7; 250 for \$30. There are also small square stickers that say: Read CONVOY; Separate Vote on all Supplements; Innocent Until Proven Guilty; and STOP--70 hour slavery-Casualization-Runaway Jobs-Unsafe Equipment-Jobs Lost by Merger. (4 styles) These cost 15 for \$1; 50 for \$3; 100 for \$5. Buttons are 25¢ each; 50 for \$7; 100 for \$12.

VERY IMPORTANT: Here is the CONVOY printing schedule. We need letters, articles, meeting information, meeting reports, ideas for stories, cartoons, photos (the last two especially) and we need them by the following dates.

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Date Printed</u>	<u>Deadline for Submission of stories, photos, etc.</u>	
3	Feb. 19	Feb. 15	
4	March 4	Feb. 29	
5	March 18	March 14	
6	March 25	March 21	For the steering
7	April 1	March 28	committee,
?	?	?	Mike F.

## Evaluation of Indianapolis: January 31

The Jan. 31 In Indianapolis was the biggest workers meeting ever organized by the IS. Like Each of the major TDC and UPSurge meetings before, it represented a new step forward for us. With over 600 people there, it reached deeper into one ~~xxx~~ section of the working class than we have ever reached before. It was not only the traditional activists, but newly activated militants who were there. Those who came were serious about doing business. In spite of a long agenda which lasted nearly four hours, very few people left the room until all the business was completed.

It is also important that virtually all of the business proposed was completed. Only one piece of business had to be dropped, the 710 resolution, due to the indecision of the Indy people about which local to go into. While it was necessary to push hard to get the business through, no one was spoken to after felt ram-rodged. In fact, the general feeling among those participating was that they had accomplished a lot of business.

Politically, the early speeches touched on most of the points previously agreed to: strike organization, on-going R&F movement in the IBT, UPS/freight unity, anti-government stance, rottenness of union leadership, profit hungry bosses are killing us, etc. However, the length and even tediousness of the latter part of the agenda probably buried many of these points. While the length of things probably ruled out a long summary, some sort of concluding remarks should have brought these points back into focus.

The steering committee is further agreed that the speeches we make at these ~~xx~~ sorts of ~~xx~~ meetings can--and will--be even more political and radical than those we planned ~~xxxxxx~~ and made on the 31st. By more political and radical we specify more class--as opposed to just UPS or freight--themes, more attacks on the government and politicians of both parties, and more emphasis on the fact that the major employer attacks in trucking are just part of the general attack by all the profit hungry hungry corporations. Class themes, such as quoting the salaries of top executives and owners, as was done on the 31st, bring a big and angry response.

A problem arose with the proposed steering committee. Some of those on the original slate did not show up, one was too drunk to stand for election. Furthermore, we did not know many of those we proposed in the first place. As a result some changes had to be made. Vince Meredith, from Louisville, stepped into the breach and changed the concept of the steering committee to one that would represent the major cities in the Central States contract, and would be chosen by those from those cities. Nominations were made by groups from 11 major cities: Chicago, Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Kansas City, St. Louis, Louisville, Detroit, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, and Decatur, Illinois (part-timer). This means that an even higher proportion of people on the committee are unknown to us. On the other hand, there is no doubt that this committee is more real and will have more authority--if it works out--than the one originally proposed.

The major political problem at the meeting was Vince's presentation of the fighting fund. He motivated it almost exclusively as a fund for buying ~~the~~ expensive lawyers to take the company and the union to court. Our conception, of course, emphasizes using the money to run a strike. No one modified Vince's motivation during the meeting. The feeling is that Vince is not opposed to our conception, but the steering committee (IS) decided to move immediately to discuss with UPSurge leaders the broader conception and to get any possible mis-conception of the uses of the fighting fund cleared up.

Over-all, the meeting accomplished the following:

- (1) It showed those who came that their movement is real--a good beginning for a strike organization. This point was stressed by Vince and Anne.
- (2) The decision was made to form local committees to carry out the contract campaign.
- (3) A sharp NO CONTRACT-NO WORK policy was adopted.

(4) A real, but untested, steering committee was chosen--with no known opposition elements as in TDC.

(5) Workers' Power was distributed and, as far as we can tell, was well received.

(6) A fighting fund was established, though there will be hassles over its use.

In summary, the basis for both a strike organization and an on-going element of an IBT opposition were laid in Indy. However, the fleshing out, both organizationally and politically, remains the job of the next couple of months. Organizing for March 13 will be an important element of that. The Fraction Steering Committee will discuss a written proposal at its next meeting (2/10/76) to flesh out the next steps in detail. Organizing an UPSurge steering committee meeting and bringing UPSers to the 2/14 IS Conference will be immediate steps toward political consolidation.

For the steering committee,

Kim M.

## TDC: Moving Towards a Strike

The last fraction bulleting outlined the basic arguments for a strike. Further arguments can be found in CONVOY #1 and Workers' Power. Here we propose to deal with certain specific arguments, to point to the next major steps for TDC, and to outline some possible situations that will face us.

Two major questions that come up among militants and ordinary rank and filers about a strike are legality and violence. Many people are worried about the legality of a non-official strike and about violence.

First of all, strikes are not illegal simply because the union leadership doesn't like them. The 7 month NY telephone strike of 1971 was legal in spite of the fact that the CWA leaders were against it. They were forced to sanction it against their will. Part of the whole idea of being ready and willing to strike is to play on the possibility of forcing Fitzsimmons to sanction a strike he does not want. So, the more we prepare and the clearer it is that the ranks intend to strike, the better our chances of making it "legal" if not loved.

We know well that the powers that be will have no trouble in making the strike ~~legal~~ illegal--one way or another. Our answer to this is that this "law" is nothing but the bosses' law, anti-labor to the core. Whether it is Taft/Hartley, injunctions, or whatever, the law will be used to back the employers against us.

Furthermore, the appeal to legality made by the bosses, union bureaucrats, and government officials alike are pure hypocrisy. The trucking bosses violate the safety and ICC regulations every day with the complicity of the union and government. Drivers are sent to die on the roads because of this and they have no recourse because the union will not fight to enforce these laws. The bosses are murderers and their only law is profit. Only a sucker would accept their definition of what is right and wrong. They have no moral claim to appeal to legality or non-violence. They are violent when they break the law, violent when they get the safety regulations watered down (see CONVOY #1 about the new 70 hour regulations). They fight for profits--we fight for our families and a decent life. Morality is on our side, not theirs. We should not be bound by their one-sided appeals to "obey the law."

Every movement for justice has had to break unjust laws. The anti-labor laws they intend to use against our strike are unjust because they distort or attempt to destroy our right to withdraw our labor--which is the only thing which makes us different from slaves.

Workers' Power, Convoy, and UPSurge will have to expose the nature of laws such as the Taft/Hartley so that our militants are prepared with the background and arguments about these laws and where they came from.

On the question of violence, our response is much the same. The employers--and certainly the IBT leaders--are murderers, both through their consistent violations of safety standards (or efforts to water them down as in the higher weight issues, longer hours, and deregulation issue now in Congress) and in their willingness to throw thousands out of work when they don't need them. The trucking employers will also use direct violence to protect their profits--or ask the government to do so for them.

It is worth noting, however, that violence is partly the result of a lack of organization and strength in a strike. The more wide-spread and well organized a strike, the less necessary violence is. Some "action" against independents who try to profit off a freight strike would be needed, but a comprehensive national shut-down would have enormous effects immediately.

Another problem that workers raise is what happens after a strike. Even assuming that we win something from it, won't the bosses and the union retaliate after the strike--by fines as in St. Louis, by firings as in Akron, or by trusteeships as in Los Angeles?

We, of course, cannot deny the possibility of such retaliation. But there are two kinds of answers to give. The first is simply that the entire reason they do things

to strikers following a strike is to prevent a re-occurrence of it. If you, the militants fall for this and do fall in line without a strike or a threat of one, then you have done just exactly what they want. They quite openly threaten retaliation to prevent the possibility of a strike. If we believe it, then they succeed. In particular, it amounts to giving up in advance--just like Fitz, though for different reasons--your only weapon. If you give this up you are entirely at their mercy. They will impose whatever contract they see fit and will interpret it however they choose. You will be a slave under a situation that is worse than fines or trusteeships. In effect, you will have given up your union without a fight and the bosses will be free to walk all over you.

The second answer is essentially the answer to all of the objections to a strike and to all the fears about the future. It is that the degree to which we are organized is the degree to which we can resist injunctions, fines, or any other retaliation they may have. If we are nationally organized, can carry off a strike, can return to work with closed ranks, and can continue building and strengthening our organization to enforce the contract and change the union, then we can resist to one degree or another, their attacks on all fronts. Program and organization, these are the keys to all of the problems and their solutions. Read the forthcoming IS pamphlet, "Conspiracy in the Trucking Industry" for a fuller explanation of this perspective.

#### The Up-coming Situation:

As the strike date draws closer, the situation we face becomes more complicated. The most desirable situation--an expired contract with no agreement, ratification, or extension--is the least likely one. Far more likely is something of a fuzzy nature. Some possibilities are as follows:

A "tentative" agreement is reached before the deadline, is not yet ratified--a process which takes at least two or three weeks--so, the union "extends" the contract pending ratification. Ratification takes only 51%, but a rejection leading to a strike takes a 2/3 vote. Such a rejection is highly unlikely. Do we simply organize a rejection vote and hope that 2/3 will turn it down? Do we wait until the returns and initiate a strike--assuming we are in such a position--if the agreement is rejected by less than 2/3 but by a majority?

We have a "NO CONTRACT-NO WORK" policy. Is an extension a contract or not?

Another scenario is that the deadline comes, there is no agreement, but the union extends the contract anyway, saying a settlement is near. Again, is an extension a contract?

From our point of view, NO CONTRACT-NO WORK can only mean one thing: that if on April 1, there is no ratified contract, then there is no contract. Without a line that is sharp and clear we will be unable to lead a strike even if we are far better organized than now. People must know, well in advance, what is expected of them on April 1.

The master freight agreement allows the union to extend the contract under almost any circumstances. There can be no doubt that this has already been taken care of.

While it cannot be entirely ruled out, it is unlikely that a "tentative agreement" will be reached long enough before April 1 to allow ratification before that. If that happens, we have little choice but to work for a majority rejection--which means no new contract--and again, be prepared for an April 1 strike even if there is no 2/3 rejection.

Every predictable situation, then, points to a position that says no ratified agreement on April 1 means no work!

The possibility of a strike is also conditioned by what the settlement includes. There is, of course, no chance that the contract will clearly be a good one. But

it is possible that it will include enough progress in one area or another to dull strike sentiment. In spite of much talk about not wanting wages as the main thing, experience shows that a disappointing package with a substantial wage boost can often be sold--particularly if people feel that the officials won't fight for any more even if we send them back to the table. Further, it is possible that some ~~extra~~ xatchy clause, say on health and safety, that looks good may get a majority vote or dull strike sentiment.

The best we can do in this area is to keep dissatisfaction over all issues--particularly non-wage issues--high and to keep pushing on what is really needed to make progress in those areas, so that a phoney clause won't fool people. We should,--through CONVOY, UPSurge, and Workers' Power--keep supplying the arguments that militants will need to expose a phoney settlement and to clarify the situation.

Ultimately, our ability to initiate action on April 1 depends on the extent and degree of organization that exists by then. CONVOY is meant to be an organizer and a means of communication for the network that will be needed. But it is only one aspect of what needs to be done.

For the steering committee,

Kim M.

## March 13

The March 13 events are to be an important mobilization for TDC and UPSurge. We are trying to turn out a nationwide presence. That means rallies of Teamsters in as many cities as is possible organized with the aim of giving the employers a clear message: We are not Fitzsimmons. We are looking for a decent contract and are prepared to fight for it.

In some respects, it is a test of strength, but it is not primarily that. We know that the TDC/UPSurge movements are speaking to an anger that can erupt over a lousy contract in far greater measure than can be formally organized two weeks before that deadline. And the union and the employers know it too. What the 13th is to a far greater extent is a test of organization.

This is in two respects. First, any movement that can organize sizeable rallies nationwide, clearly aimed at employer targets two weeks before a contract deadline will be a force to be reckoned with. And secondly, organizing for the 13th will be a vehicle for building the kind of barn by barn organization, welding together a local network of TDC/UPSurge militants who know each other and have worked with each other, of using our papers--UPSurge and CONVOY-- as organizers in a way that produces concrete results.

Moreover, the effect that a successful, nationwide effort on March 13 will have on the rank and file, in giving them the confidence that an alternative strategy ~~is possible~~ to a hostile acceptance of a lousy contract is possible. It will make real what many Teamsters want to see, but shy away from only because they don't believe it will happen. After March 13th, you gotta believe!

So the task is clear. Starting now, every area where TDC can, a target should be chosen. That target should be some employer target for it is them we are speaking to through this action--the headquarters of an area trucking association, the headquarters of a big freight firm, a large UPS hub, an area where many terminals are located--these are all possible. If a good employer target is not available, or a solid union target ~~is~~ stands out, then go with that.

Having set the date, begin the publicity. Part of making this happen will be a self-fulfilling prophecy. If everyone in a local area is talking about it, seen leaflets, heard about it on the news, etc. it will be the kind of event we are seeking and it will turn people out. We will be doing up a "master leaflet" which will give all relevant info and leave room at the bottom for the local time and place to be added. We also hope to do some nice posters. We want to create the impression that there is a similarity of publicity for this event. It is a single, national movement reaching into many local areas. We will also be trying to get some national press on the day so that local areas will feel part of a national link-up.

People should get the info on when and where their event will be into CONVOY and any meetings, actions, events, incidents, etc. leading up to the 13th should be sent in immediately after they occur. CONVOY ~~is~~ and UPSurge will be key in building this event but they can't be unless YOU make them real and relevant by sending in the info.

Finally, TDC and UPSurge are building this together. As much as possible the material for freight and UPS should be the same. In some areas, freight people will be reaching out to UPS people and helping them, in other areas the UPS people will be the mainstays and



be giving the lead to freight. But in both cases we want to build wherever we can and project the maximum strength of the movement of rank and file Teamsters.

Just to give people some sense of what "nationwide" and "in as many places as possible" means at this point, we are looking for rallies/demos in ten cities coast to coast definitely with 10 more as distinct possibilities. Hopefully some areas deemed weak will come through stronger than expected and some we don't even know about will take the initiative and go. But right now 10 solid demos coast to coast will work. 15-20 will be good. And more than 20, No stopping us April 1. Part of the problem is that especially for TDC we have lots of followers in areas we cannot really help organize and where it will be hard to translate the idea of the 13th into any kind of organized reality. So the number of rallies we are projecting is much lower than the number of areas we have reached into. But we want people to understand how we view the date, its political significance, what it will mean to the rank and file movement in the IBT, and how it should be built.

One final note: factions must keep in touch with Cleveland about how things are going for March 13. Don't wait to the last minute if there are problems, don't hesitate to ask questions. We will help in any way we can and will be sending materials as soon as we can. But also realize, we cannot service every rally personally and set things up entirely from here. We'll do our best.

For the steering committee,

Mike F.