

## NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Coming out of the Convention, the tasks of the I.S. nationally fall into three broad areas: 1. Rebuilding the politics of the group, 2. Advancing the connections between our labor work, principally through developing the labor paper project, 3. Deepening our understanding of dynamics on the left and our relationship to that process.

This report is a necessarily too short assessment of what we have accomplished thus far (a longer report will be produced for the upcoming National Committee meeting). This report also does not cover the work of the branches which is regularly reported in the Newsletter.

### I. Rebuilding the I.S.

Since the convention the single most important accomplishment of the center has been the publication of *Changes*. An Editor's Report is also included in this Newsletter so I will not go into detail on this. However, one point should be restated here—it is through *Changes* that we intend to restate and develop the politics of the I.S. in relation to debates taking place on the left today. And we see this as playing an important role in rebuilding the political cohesion of the group. K.M.'s series on the working class, consciousness and the party is a summing up of our views in the context of questioning the nature of the state, reform vs. revolution, and the nature of revolutionary organization—a debate that is currently taking place on the left.

We also understand the importance that struggles within the Democratic Party will play over the next period and the effect this will have on both the reform movement and the left. Anticipating this, we have begun a study group (first in Detroit, then to be picked up in other branches) on the nature of the capitalist state and the role of the Democratic Party.

We have begun other serious educational programs: the Left Day School and the planned Women's School (See Women's Newsletter, this issue.)

We have also begun to rebuild the group internally: the I.S. Newsletter, short political documents such as the ones on Iran and Weber, and the new dues procedure, are all part of this process.

We are also slowly recruiting—eight new members in Detroit, ones and twos elsewhere.

However, we have also lost some members. Ken B. in Chicago has resigned. A copy of his letter and a response will be sent out separately.

In general, this is an extremely difficult time for the revolutionary left—and our own organization, while slowly moving forward also still suffers greatly from the bigger problems affecting the whole left.

### II. Advancing our labor work

In the past the conception of the Trade Union Committee was a leadership body of industrial organizers who would both play a leadership role in the work of their specific industrial area and as the TUC, politically generalize from their collective experiences.

This conception never really worked for many reasons. Key to its failure, however, was the fact that the labor movement in this country is not sufficiently political to allow full time politicians to actively function in the trade union arena on any level. No matter how talented the individual organizer was, over the several years we operated on some version of this perspective, the TUC members were rarely able to actually play a leadership role in the details of the work in their individual industrial area. They could never know enough detail or have enough feel.

In terms of leading our industrial work, the TUC became a relatively nonfunctional body. It did, however, serve the second purpose—it enabled its members, and the EC, to develop an overall political assessment of developments in the labor movement.

Now the organization's labor work faces new tasks, and a far more specific role of the TUC. As was documented at the Convention, there is a reform movement developing in the trade unions that we wish to play a significant role in. Part of our task, as before, is to understand the overall political situation that faces the labor movement. But, we have a new task, how to take this political analysis and turn it into a tool for the reform movement and how to help this movement become self-conscious, understand the tasks before it, and tactics and strategies to accomplish these tasks.

We see the development of a labor paper as a crucial step in this development—both to organize it and to politicize it.

The development of the Labor Paper project will be the key task of the Trade Union Committee. The first steps involve building a network of communication and, when possible, common work amongst sections of this layer.

The TUC has begun this with several projects. The first involves perspectives for possible support work around the upcoming struggle around the Master Freight Agreement. At this point little has happened in terms of support work, as little is yet happening around the MFA. Support work perspectives

continued next page

**FROM SOLIDARITY**

In Detroit, hundreds of trade-unionists turned out in a balloon-and-banner bedecked hall to show their support for the struggle for justice by J. P. Stevens' workers. In New York City, 3,000 workers marched around Stevens' corporate headquarters. In Los Angeles, Mayor Thomas Bradley addressed a noon-me rally for Stevens' workers.

All together, support rallies were held in 68 U.S. and Canadian cities Nov. attracting thousands of workers and demonstrating widespread and growing support that Stevens' workers fight for their cause.

Stevens' employee must work under a cloud of "Lung" disease. S/he gets paid almost a third less than a union of negotiators in the U.S.. Attempts to negotiate contracts, or have been...

DAVE WELSH

Just want you to know we're doing a good job bringing up the baby. This is Brett T. at a rally for JP Stevens. Brett is sitting with a member of the UAW Region 1 Women's Council.

## NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT CONTINUED

will pick up depending on what happens in industry.

The second project of the TUC has been to propose to LERP the publication of a newsletter. This resulted in "Labor Notes". Thus far any overall assessment of "Labor Notes" is premature, however, from all reports it is receiving a very favorable response and is filling a real, felt need in the rank and file movement. Our use of "Labor Notes" and the response to it will be discussed in more detail when more facts are in.

In line with the tasks set for the TUC, the composition has been changed to include leaders of our work. The new TUC is KM, GS, JW, CKP, KP, BP, CM. CM is to act as the organizational secretary to the TUC, a large part of her job will be to help coordinate the fractions, in particular, steel.

### III. Regroupment

American politics and much of the political development within the Left will be focused around the political struggle touched off by the Carter budget. In Congress there will be a highly visible, vocal and bitter struggle. One which will create more tension within the Democratic Party than we have seen since 1968.

Carter's "betrayal" will continue to push the development of the alliance between the official leadership of labor, the Black community, the women's movement, conservationists, environmentalists, etc. Already UAW President Fraser has announced the formation of the Progressive Alliance, which represents these elements. This development will have its impact on the left. How to relate to the initiatives coming from Fraser et al will be the most important new question in left politics.

In the short run, these initiatives are going to strengthen the social democratic tendencies within much of the left we are in touch with. For many independents and much of NAM the Progressive Alliance is going to be where the action is. To many this will be the only credible force for progress and seem the only source of motion.

On the other hand, in the near future we are not going to see any qualitative changes in the pace and impact of motion at the "base"; either in the ranks of labor or the Black community (the radical women's movement might be an exception). This could serve as a counter pressure on a left which is more impressionistic than theoretical. This pole will not be stronger

than it has in the recent past.

For now then the balance and dynamic of political motion are going to favor the tendencies within the left which want to orient to and accommodate to the "left" in the Democratic Party and the trade union bureaucracy. This is already becoming apparent in NAM. (See report in Newsletter, this issue.)

On the other side of the accommodationist coin will be the Maoists. The response of the national organizations (RCP, CPML, etc.) will be sectarian. Unfortunately this will effect the "Trend" as well, which still views politics from the vantage point of debates within the New Communist Movement. The Trend groups will be pulled between a healthy desire to relate to the world and the need to posture within the narrow "Marxist Leninist" milieu.

The Maoist left, hard and soft, will be in continual and even increasing crisis as one so-called "socialist" country invades another.

Since the Convention we have continued to deepen our understanding of developments on the left, through the left Day School, attendance at the DSOC Convention (report in this issue of the Newsletter), articles planned for Changes on the politics of DSOC and the mind of Michael Harrington.

We will attempt to pull much of this together at the NC, which will be held April 14 and 15 in Detroit. It will be open to members to observe. The tentative agenda is:

I. National Secretary's Report: to include the overall state of the group and a report on our industrial work.

II. The Left: to include an overview and analysis of the state of the following trends on the left: DSOC, NAM, and the soft Maoist groupings.

III. The Democratic Party: Jack W. has raised the question of supporting leaders of the rank and file movement if they run for office in the Democratic Party. He will be writing a document supporting this position. The E.C. will be writing a document explaining why we believe this position is incorrect and defending the I.S. point of view on this question. This question has only just been raised due to the possibility of a leader of the steel rank and file movement actually running. There has not yet been any discussion of this question either in the Gary branch or between J.W. and the E.C.

IV. Changes: evaluation and perspectives.

[National Secretary's Report by G.S.]

## NICARAGUA CONFERENCE

J.G. and C.M. attended a conference on February 23-25 held in Washington, D.C. on Nicaragua. The event introduced us to a new and significant milieu which has long been involved in anti-imperialist and solidarity work with Latin America. Although attendance was expected to hit an outside limit of 125 people, around 225 came. It was organized by the Washington Office on Latin America, and included among its sponsors the UAW International Affairs people, who attended, Dellums and the like. Representatives from the People United Movement (MPU) in Nicaragua and important figures from other Central American countries attended, including members of the fast-growing Nicaraguan women's movement, AMPRONAC.

Nicaraguan solidarity committees around the country participated. They consist largely of an independent Latin left, with many Chilean exiles in the leadership. The other participation in the conference was left liberal, including church and community groups, the ADA (American for Democratic Action).

The Communist Party although it has not been known for any consistent solidarity work on Nicaragua, was involved in organizing the conference from early on and controlled it. The politics, however, remained wide open in spite of them. A political rift developed between the strategy which they, in conjunction with the ADA, the Institute for Policy Studies, and so forth, pushed hard—congressional lobbying and telegrams—and one for more direct action and organizing supported by the solidarity committees. We were viewed by the committees as their ally in that debate, and developed extensive contacts we had not had before.

A national network was established out of the conference. A national week of solidarity with Nicaragua was declared for the last week in April, when film showings, rallies, meetings, demos and the like will be organized in different cities. We have openings to do something fairly good in Detroit without a

great commitment of resources. Already Channel 56 has contacted J.G. and C.M. for interviews and will promote the week of solidarity. We are also working with a group of radical priests and nuns, the Latin American Task Force, and have developed other contacts which are leading us to a left milieu we have previously been isolated from.

[Report submitted by C.M., Detroit]

## NEW PAMPHLETS

The E.C. and leaders of our Teamster work have rediscussed and passed the motion commissioning a pamphlet on the crisis in the trucking industry from a socialist point of view. We are asking D.L. to begin work on this in consultation with our leading members in the industry.

Another pamphlet on affirmative action and the Weber case will be out in one or two weeks. In addition, LERP has published a new pamphlet on the Wage Guidelines, which is available from LERP or by subscribing to "Labor Notes."

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The purpose of this newsletter is to keep the membership informed of the work of the organization. However, writing about our work often creates security problems. We are trying to come to terms with this problem.

You will notice that some of our industrial work can only be reported in the barest outlines. Also, we will try not to use names, substituting initials instead. This may be confusing, but it is a necessary step.

In addition, branch organizers are encouraged to write their own reports. (Thanks to the Bay Area for writing theirs this issue.) You have a better sense of what should be told, and what can't be. These reports can be called in or mailed in, whichever is more convenient for you. Deadline for the next issue is March 22. Call 883-5580, or send copy to I.S. Newsletter, 17300 Woodward, Detroit, MI 48203.

## REPORT ON THE DSOC CONVENTION

The Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) held its convention on February 17, 18, and 19 in Houston, Texas. The convention was designed to establish DSOC's political and organizational perspectives until 1980. M.L. attended the convention as an observer for the I.S. His report follows. A political critique of DSOC's ideas will appear in *Changes* #3.

**POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES:** For DSOC, the key political task is to create a viable challenge to Jimmy Carter in the 1980 Democratic Party primaries. Much of the convention rhetoric was bitter denunciation of Carter's betrayal of the ideals of New Deal liberalism. As far as DSOC can tell the only real liberal who could beat Carter is Ted Kennedy. The problem is that nobody knows if he will run or when he would announce his candidacy. So DSOC and their allies face the problem of what to do while they're "waiting for Teddy."

The first answer to this was to float the idea of DSOC chair Michael Harrington running in several primaries. This was not to be a "socialist" campaign, but a "left Democratic campaign with a democratic-socialist candidate." In other words, Harrington would run as a liberal.

Harrington was for it, so was a majority of the DSOC national board which decided that he should explore the possibility. All the serious forces in the Democratic Party which DSOC works with were quite negative. What would be the value for the liberal wing of the Party in having Harrington get 5% of the votes in New Hampshire? So the Harrington campaign is stillborn.

Instead, DSOC is now pursuing the idea of campaigning for a candidate, creating a "program in search of a candidate." The plan is to hold a Democratic Agenda (see below) meeting in the fall of 1979 around this theme. Harrington and other notables will use the conference to speak around the country on the need for a left challenge to Carter.

**DEMOCRATIC AGENDA:** This is DSOC's broad front within the Democratic Party. It was one of the forces which, together with UAW President Doug Fraser and Ted Kennedy, challenged Carter's budget cuts at the Memphis Mini Convention last fall. Democratic Agenda's program is the obvious: full employment, national health insurance, etc. It is DSOC's main arena of activity nationally.

**ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVES:** DSOC is growing. It now claims 3000 members and hopes to have 5000 by its next convention. The overwhelming majority of this 3000 are not DSOC activists. They might be active in the Democratic Party or in their unions, but rarely as DSOCers. The organization discussions dealt with: 1) the need to build viable chapters and the necessity of more national staff resources for this purpose, 2) the establishment of DSOC youth groups on college campuses, 3) establishing an educational program, 4) furthering the work of DSOC's Hispanic Commission which has established links with Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Mexican-American groups.

**THE CONVENTION:** Although DSOC claims 3000 members, the Convention was attended by approximately 250 members, 200 of which were delegates elected at a ratio of 1-15 to 1-19. The delegates seemed to reflect the three sources of DSOC's membership: old cadre from the Socialist Party, Democratic Party activists (including unionists) who worked for McGovern in 1972, and student types in their twenties.

Few of DSOC's letterhead names were in attendance. There were no notables from NOW, the UAW, or AFSCME. The IAM was represented by William Holayter, its CAP director. Joyce Miller, head of CLUW, also attended. Jerry Wouff sent greetings. IAM president William Wimpinsinger (not present) was elected as a DSOC vice-chair. The only other notable was Rep. Ron Dellums.

The Convention also saw the formation of a "left caucus," led by Bogden Denitch. Its platform dealt mostly with international issues—orientation to the "Marxist trends" in the Socialist International, favorable attitudes towards Eurocommunism and support for national liberation struggles. None of these issues were fought out at the Convention. The left contented itself with fighting for stronger language on the role of socialist propaganda, running a partial slate for national board, and strong language on merger with the New American Movement (NAM).

On all these issues the left was supported by the broad center which insisted that there were no differences between them.

Since most delegates viewed the formation of this caucus as factionalism without any basis in political disagreement, they elected most of the left's slate but dumped Denitch who was the only figure really identified with the caucus. In general the convention displayed a high degree of unity. There was no substantive disagreement over any aspect of DSOC's perspectives.

Finally, the convention was attended by representatives from the Puerto Rican Independence Party, the German Social Democratic Party, MAPAM (Israeli left labor party), and the Canadian New Democratic Party.

**NAM:** The convention passed a motion calling for the creation of a commission of the national board to explore merger with NAM. There was a good deal of enthusiasm for this, with only a few cranky right-wingers saying that this might be "premature." DSOC would like to consummate unity discussions at its next, 1981, Convention. DSOC wants unity with NAM for two reasons: 1) They believe that NAM is simply a New Left version of themselves, 2) NAM would be a source of DSOC activists, in particular on campuses.

**CONCLUSIONS:** DSOC is a social democratic organization which works within the Democratic Party. This points out the core contradiction in its politics. DSOC is for a socialist alternative to New Deal liberalism, yet it fights for rejuvenation of New Deal liberalism. DSOC wants to be the "left wing of the possible" yet it lets Ted Kennedy and Doug Fraser decide what is possible. DSOC claims to be for a mass socialist movement, yet it operates as a left conscience for corporate liberalism.

Nonetheless, DSOC is growing and the influence of its ideas is gaining within the American left. The possibility of merger with NAM is a clear enough example. But it's not just the left, the idea of building a left wing in the Democratic Party, or of supporting Ted Kennedy in 1980 are ideas which will seem quite practical to many of our colleagues in the reform movement. Our task will be arguing that transformation of the Democratic Party is the biggest utopia of them all. □

[Report submitted by M.L.]

## E.C. STATEMENT ON NAM

At its convention in mid-February, the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee proposed a merger with the New American Movement (NAM) to be effected by 1981. Already the proposal has revealed a division in NAM between those for it and against it, even before the opening of a formal debate. The New York-New England Regional Conference voted 10-2-2 to oppose merger with any group, while rumor has it that a majority of the NAM national committee is for the merger.

The proposal comes on the heels of what was to be the opening of a debate in NAM on allied questions: support to Democratic Party candidates (and with it Marxist or liberal social-democratic conceptions on the nature of the state and of political parties), relation to the Progressive Alliance and more generally with the left liberal bureaucracy as opposed to a rank and file approach, unity on the left, and relations with DSOC and the I.S., as well as foreign policy questions like the Middle East. The debate was to run until the NAM August Convention. Naturally, the merger proposal will sharpen the nature of that debate, and possibly polarize the organization between a current looking to social democracy and another to the revolutionary left.

We are, of course, opposed to NAM's merger with DSOC. This would not be a step toward unity on the left, but would be a dissolution into social democracy, a weakening of the revolutionary left, and the loss of allies to building a rank and file left in the unions. We however cannot intervene in NAM's internal dispute. That would quite rightly be rejected by all sides, just as would any attempt by another group to intervene in our disputes would be.

The questions debated however are questions that we have attitudes on, and are generally being debated by the left. We will be intervening in that debate through articles in *Changes*. Without trying to exacerbate NAM's problems, or attempt to rip off a fraternal organization, we will present our point of view on questions now being discussed throughout the left, and help to share our experiences and strengthen the political understanding of those in NAM who are in favor of a regroupment process on the basis of a revolutionary, working class and rank and file approach. □

[Report submitted by J.G.]

# NEW YORK NEW JERSEY PITTSBURGH CLEVELAND DD

## NEW YORK/NEW JERSEY

The class series on economics has just been completed and a new one is starting based on the E.C. proposal on the nature of the state and the role of the Democratic Party.

There's a planning meeting next week to set up a solidarity committee with the Teamsters and against the wage guidelines. We will raise the possibility of doing support work for the Teamster milk drivers who are on strike now.

A meeting on Weber is planned for later in March. So far, the issue doesn't seem to be generating too much enthusiasm in NY, particularly in the unions, but the coalition is still exploring the possibilities of union involvement.

NAM is planning an east coast Labor Conference in April which we have been invited to participate in. We will probably have a speaker on one of the panels.

URPE is holding a conference on the nature of Russia on March 17. M.U. will lead a workshop on bureaucratic collectivism.

The CETA workers committee had demanded that AFSCME support their demands and activities. The union has responded by setting up official committees in each local. AFSCME is also supporting some of the key demands of the CETA workers, like calling for an extension of the government funding. This is a move by the union to co-opt the CETA workers committee, but it could provide real opportunities to use the union structure to make the committees stronger and more legitimate. The union is also calling a meeting of all AFSCME CETA workers. □

## PITTSBURGH

CCU is holding regular benefit evenings in a local bar, featuring current labor issues, singing, etc.

Elections in steel are being held in April. We have no one running. Cleveland and Pittsburgh steel fractions held a meeting a couple of weeks ago, discussing problems of local work, the need for better fraction coordination between the three steel centers, and a discussion of tactics, how we align ourselves in various election struggles, etc.

For information about PCHR and Women Of Steel, see the Women's Newsletter □

## CLEVELAND

The Labor Education Action Project, a group we helped to form, is holding forum to discuss the importance of the Master Freight Agreement. Speakers from the USW, IBT, and possibly UAW. The Labor Education Action Project is considering

similar events on a monthly basis.

On March 24, the TDU is holding a rally in Cleveland, at which P.C. will speak.

A branch meeting is planned for March 11. L.S. will go to Cleveland to address the branch on the Weber case. There will also be a discussion about a candidate who is running for Board of Education. She was a leader of WELCOME. She is running because she sees the need to pull together a new level of leadership in the Black community, and greater parent, student, teacher control of the schools. She sees her campaign as a way to accomplish that. The branch is considering what its relationship to the campaign should be. □

## DETROIT

The Detroit District would like to welcome a new member, J.B. to the organization. J.B. is an activist in the UAW.

On March 3 the auto branch sponsored a potluck dinner discussion on the Teamster contract. Unfortunately, the dinner was poorly attended, with only half a dozen contacts.

For a report on our International Women's Day celebration, see the Women's Newsletter.

The District has begun a study group on the Democratic Party and the nature of the state. The first two classes have already been given, one on eurocommunism, the other on false consciousness and the role of the Democratic Party. Members who attended felt the classes were terrific. The first was poorly attended, but many people came to the second one and the discussion was lively about how you convince people that the Democratic Party is really an obstacle for the movement they wish to build.

Autoworkers for a Better Contract (ABC) is holding a public meeting on March 18. At a planning meeting, there were 25-30 people, so there is reason to believe that the March 18 meeting will be quite successful. So far, participation in the ABC is coming from left groups like ourselves, the Trend and others, as well as the Independent Skilled Trades Council. Autoworkers in New Jersey, Chicago-Wisconsin, and Detroit are already involved. The ABC plans to send organizers to Indianapolis and St. Louis to start chapters there.

On April 7, the Weber Coalition is holding a conference. A fund-raising dinner held last week was attended by 200.

B. from the Red Tide has been asked to come onto the District Committee, and he will help P.B. convene the City Branch. At the next meeting of the District Committee, we will have a discussion of Detroit Alliance for a Rational Economy

## UNION WOMEN MEET

Union members should check out programs for women workers offered by universities in their area. The woman worker is all the rage now, and educational programs for her abound.

My local sent me to a three day school sponsored by a state university, one of two which are held every year. There were over 100 women union activists there, from a number of different unions, ranging from rank and filers to chair of district women's councils. It was an invaluable way to make contacts for future work—and the school considerably furnished a registration list.

The classes and talks themselves were only mediocre—and tended to promote the trade union philosophy promulgated by the bureaucracy. They were not the important part. The important part was meeting the people who are the working women's movement.

I felt a kinship with the women at the school like I've felt in no other movement—a real sharing of goals and attitudes. Most of the women at the school were activists—not people you had to drag to a meeting, if at all, but people who go to as many as ISers do. Not just concerned with personal advancement, but genuinely wanting to advance the lot of women workers. Feminists (and showing a hostility to men was much greater than I would have expected), but whose feminism was inextricably intertwined with their unionism. Women who had

been to Washington for the ERA *twice*, CWA stewards, organizers of women's committee discos, women who refuse to let their husbands keep them from being active, organizers of women's committee IWD events. Women who get off on singing union songs. Women who are not letting race divide them.

Throughout the conference, during the breaks, women were sharing their knowledge. Example: an AFSCME woman asking some of us, "There are hardly any women active in my local. Do you think it would be easier to get them involved in a women's committee rather than trying to get them to come to union meetings?" UAW women assuring another UAW woman that it *was* legal for women's committee to have its own fund. Learning how an open women's committee functioned.

They showed Babies and Banners, of course, and afterward the leader asked whether people thought women today could do what these women had done. The answer was an immediate yes.

Besides schools such as this one, there are also programs such as weekly classes, on topics ranging from grievance handling to assertiveness training.

The University College Labor Education Association is sponsoring a national one-week school in Ohio in June. For an of these, check out your local university labor school.

I urge women members to do it—both for the political contacts and for the up! □

[Article by J.S., Detroit]

# TROIT GARY CHICAGO AUSTIN BAY AREA LOS ANGELES

and Cokerel. Members are welcome to attend. (Probably March 16). □

## GARY

On March 14 a conference on the Weber case will be held in Gary. The Conference is being organized by District 31 Director Jim Balanoff and Gary Mayor Richard Hatcher. After the Conference, the District 31 Women's Caucus is holding a disco.

On March 2, a rally was held in Newport, Virginia for the Newport News strikers. 4,000 people were there. District 31 sent five busloads.

CBS is airing a special on Local 1010 called "Inside the Union" on March 6. Although our press date makes it impossible to review it here, during the filming CBS seemed very sympathetic to the Rank and File Caucus, and unsympathetic to Inland Steel.

Local elections are the main focus of work in steel until the end of April. A very important election is taking place in Local 1010 where Bill Andrews, president and a member of the Rank and File Caucus, may face a challenge from the conservative and racist vote. The outcome of this election is very important for the entire rank and file movement in the USW.

A meeting of the national steel fraction is tentatively scheduled for May 19 and 20. Any members of the fraction with conflicts on that date should notify C.M. for the Trade Union Committee at 883-5581. □

## BAY AREA

We had an extremely successful forum with P.C. 100 people attended. Rank and file leftists made up the majority—very experienced, solid folks, revolutionaries of some ilk. The turnout was by invitation only and could have been larger. The presentation was excellent and the discussion showed a well-prepared I.S. and a serious, well-grounded trade union periphery. Over 30 locals were represented, including Teamsters, iron workers, building tradesmen, ILWU, and postal workers. The discussion centered around the nuts and bolts issues for socialists working in the trade unions, e.g., use of courts, elections, labor party, red baiting.

A very up party followed the talk. It was apparent to all that an active socialist periphery exists, that is very impressed and interested in the I.S.

At the last meeting of the Rank and File Coalition, a new group attended, janitors who have a 5-6 year old rank and file caucus. This is important because they work the same San

Francisco buildings as the operating engineers and laborers who are also in the Coalition—opening up possibilities for cross-union action in the future. The Coalition is also organizing to support the yellow cab taxi drivers' strike at the picket line.

Our work in the Labor Community Coalition has centered around defending community service agencies (most of which serve minority communities) against post Prop. 13 budget cuts. It is a difficult, up hill struggle, but we feel our presence is essential in helping to develop necessary democratic organization based on a mass action strategy. We have already come into contact with several community activists. Also we hope to re-establish the Coalition's links with the county unions and other labor sectors.

In Teamsters we are preparing for the upcoming contract with the car haulers showing the best prospects. P.C. spoke to 125 people at a TDU luncheon.

In postal, one of our members spoke at a recent San Francisco demonstration of 100 for amnesty for the fired postal workers. □

[Report submitted by Bay Area.]

## LOS ANGELES

The LA branch held a semi-public forum on the rank and file movement in the Teamsters at which P.C. spoke. 60 people attended, most of them leftists who were new to labor work. Everyone enjoyed the forum, and the party that followed.

An educational was held on the IBT in the 30's given by D.S. 30 attended, including Stan Weir who talked about the differences in the 30's and today. The discussion centered on the problems of building stable rank and file organizations and recruiting to socialist ideas.

The Weber coalition held its first meeting on Feb. 21. 100 attended, which was a disappointing turnout. Coalition includes the Trend, CP, SWP, NAM, IS, and Union WAGE. The meeting went well; everyone saw the potential for raising this issue among workers. Committees on education, schools, labor, and community were formed. In addition, our old friend Anthony has been reactivated around this issue and has proposed a caucus with the I.S. and others to make a political contribution to the Weber Coalition.

A demonstration around the Master Freight contract is planned for March 24. So far, support work has not gotten off the ground. A public meeting that was held was attended by very few, but as the expiration date draws nearer, there may be more interest. □

## CHANGES EDITOR'S REPORT

The second issue of Changes is now out. We are pleased to report that it is only a couple of days late, despite Sun staff cutbacks due to the financial crunch.

Overall the magazine has been well received by both members and friends. Without exception people have liked its professional appearance and design, and generally everyone has found some article or articles that really turned them on. Subs are growing, and not just from former WP subscribers. Bookstore consignments are also growing. (There will be a full accounting in the next editor's report.) We have suggestions and offers of articles to fill up the rest of the issues for this year—a very heartening and welcome sign of interest.

The third issue will include major articles on Michael Harrington of DSOC, the UMW one year after the strike, the last half of the Martin-Geier piece on Nicaragua, and the last on the Moody three-part series on the Party. Issue four has articles on China and the relationship between feminism and socialism.

More specific feedback is also coming in. Below are a couple of representative comments. We will begin printing some of these in each issue of the newsletter as a means of developing a dialogue on Changes, so if you have comments or criticisms of the magazine, send them in. □

[Report submitted by M.D. for the editorial board.]

“ I liked the magazine. But I felt there should have been more coverage of women. Even if we don't have separate articles, women can be included in some of the other articles, like the article on steel, for example. There were no pictures of women in the magazine! I'm working with some feminists now, and I wanted to give the magazine to them. I kind of avoided a couple of women because of that.

“I felt that some of the articles that were long needed to be broken up some. They were sort of scary to look at, though the content was good anyway. I understand the need for articles that are more in depth and theoretical, but I hope it doesn't get too much weighted to that side. Most of the people I'm giving it to didn't go to college; I'm hoping it doesn't get too much oriented to the left.”

S.P., Cleveland

“Changes was impressive as a publication. All of the talents of the organization came through. People of talent from various cities were called upon; I think this is an expression of people's desire to make a contribution.

“I felt though, that the politics were not sharp enough. The article on steel, for example, was impressionistic, unprogrammatic. There were some erroneous theories. The article did not indicate that a socialist would have a unique contribution to make. Several of the articles were politically weak.”

D.L., Chicago

# Women's Newsletter

## WOMEN'S SCHOOL PLANNED FOR JUNE

The Women's Commission is sponsoring a weekend school on women's issues on June 1, 2, and 3. The School will give us the opportunity to share our diverse experiences in the women's movement, learn from each other, and begin a discussion about raising our politics on the nature of women's oppression with the women we are working with.

We are proposing a two-part format. The first part of the School will address the problems and issues coming out of our work. We will center the discussion on key aspects of our work, probably in each of the following four areas: affirmative action, abortion, lesbian rights, and trade union women's organizations. For example, in terms of abortion, one possible focus of the discussion could be: how do you convince working class women on the question of abortion? On the topic of trade union women, there seems to be a great need for exchanging information as well as discussing perspectives for the groups we work in and what kind of leadership we should be providing.

(These topics are only suggestions. As we learn more about the needs of the organization, they may be altered.)

The second part of the School will deal with the politics of women's liberation. One problem that the women's movement faces today is its extreme diversity, which is reflected in our own work. The movement has no focus, and in many ways our own work has no focus. But for us, as socialists, one bond we have is our common understanding of the nature of women's oppression and the need to link the fight for women's liberation to the fight for socialism. How best can we convince the women activists that we are working with of our view of women's oppression, and of the need for socialism? How can we begin to recruit out of this movement? This part of the school will discuss ways to raise these questions, how to present clear, convincing arguments, and exchange experiences in dealing with both working class and feminist women in discussing politics.

We are also proposing that the west coast branches hold a similar school.

The School is really part of an educational campaign that will begin now and culminate in a weekend of discussion. The Women's Commission will be working with members of the branches who are active in the various areas of our work. We need first to come to an understanding of the needs of the organization — what questions must be addressed, what problems do people face, etc. We will (along with the help of various members) publish short, educational documents on the different topics that will be discussed at the School (some of these may be reprints, reading lists, etc.) Members of the Commission will also travel to the branches, meet with the women's caucuses so we can have more input in planning the School. We want to begin the process of education in branch discussions so we can come to the School with a high level of understanding and discuss the complicated questions that we face, not the basics.

E.E. and J.S. will be responsible for organizing the session on trade union women's organizations, working with our members in Pittsburgh, Detroit, and Gary who are active in this area. G.S. will work with the Cleveland and New York women to prepare the session on abortion. M.J. will work on the session on affirmative action, we will be asking the Black Commission for help, as well as other comrades active in the Weber work (for example, D. from L.A. is working on a brochure for the Weber Coalition there on the relevance of the Weber case to women). We have asked the Gay Caucus for a proposal on a session dealing with gay oppression. The final session will be coordinated by E.C. An article in Changes #4 on the nature of women's oppression and the relationship of socialism and feminism will provide background on this question.

The School is designed to educate our own members, but it will also be open to close friends. It will be held in Hayes State Park, located in Michigan's beautiful Irish Hills (60 miles west of Detroit). Lodging will cost \$10/person; we expect that meals will come to about another \$10. There will be plenty of free time to enjoy the park, talk politics, and renew friendships. The Lodge sleeps 44, so we encourage branches to send in estimates for reservations as soon as possible. Meals will be prepared by the nationally celebrated chef, T.D.!

### NEW YORK/NEW JERSEY

The Coalition for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse (CARASA) held its second annual convention on February 16, 17, and 18. Friday night was a public forum on tactics for the pro-choice movement. Speakers included Marilyn Katz from NAM, and a woman from the Italian feminist movement. 150 attended.

Saturday and Sunday were devoted to discussions on strategy and structure respectively. 70 attended, reflecting CARASA's active membership. The audience was white; it included white collar workers, students, hospital workers, social workers, lawyers, law students, etc. All had experience

in the left, or in the feminist movement.

All participants felt that the strategy discussion was poor. The organization did not seem to know what it wanted to accomplish; discussion was vague. A lot of emphasis on "grass roots organizing" but there was little agreement about what that meant.

We, along with others, put forward a proposal to fight against the cutbacks in hospitals. That proposal was defeated, although a similar, but vaguer, proposal passed. Work against cutbacks could be part of CARASA's work over the coming year, but there was no decisive backing from the organization.

Another proposal we made was to work with the American

Cyanimid workers against sterilization abuse. This was referred to the trade union committee as a possible project; again there was no strong commitment from CARASA for resources.

Sunday's meeting went much better. A proposal passed to hold membership meetings three or four times a year that will vote on policy for CARASA. This will help to make the group more democratic. Meredith Tax, former co-chair, did not run again, saying she wanted to devote her time to national organizing. This was a good step.

In general, CARASA still suffers from its inability to reach beyond the left and feminist community to working class women. Our proposals would have pointed in this direction. The fraction is now discussing perspectives for our work, and the feasibility of implementing these suggestions even without CARASA's commitment of resources.

Two forums on women's issues are being held by the New York branch. The one on the family was attended by people from Quest magazine, and will be reprinted in that magazine. A second forum on women in the workforce is planned. □

#### PITTSBURGH

International Women's Day will be celebrated on March 10. There will be a celebration with speakers, music, party, etc. K.K. will speak on gay rights, R. on women workers, another speaker from the coalition on Black women. In addition, NOW is bringing Kate Millet to town, and A. will speak at another event with Millet.

Women Of Steel's first newsletter is coming out this weekend. It is four pages, and has major articles on Weber, maternity benefits, and the Civil Rights Conference. It also has short reports from 7-8 mills, taking up such issues as apprenticeships, bathrooms, probation, and so on.

Women Of Steel is having some problems with the CP, which is attacking various people in the group, scaring some off. The group will be able to pull through this, but will take longer than we originally expected to establish a strong group.

NOW has a state-wide Labor Task Force which is meeting next week.

Members of the gay caucus attended a meeting in Philadelphia last week to plan for a national march for gay rights to be held in Washington on October 14. 2-300 people representing a variety of lesbian and gay organizations attended. There was good participation from both minorities and women. The demands of the march are: passage of a Congressional bill guaranteeing lesbian and gay rights; executive order banning discrimination in federal employment or by any employer with federal contracts; non-discrimination against lesbians and gays in custody cases; full rights for gay youth. The meeting was called by an ad hoc committee formed out of the late Harvey Milk's office and the New York Coalition of Lesbian and Gay Rights. □

#### CLEVELAND

The Pro-Choice Action Committee, the group we initiated, held its second meeting on February 24. The group is at a critical stage, going from an ad-hoc committee to an on-going group and trying to find some sustaining projects, as well as to reach beyond its feminist-left periphery. A campaign was proposed by S.P. to work with the Cleveland Abortion Rights Action League in a community campaign around reproductive rights. Leafleting and door to door canvassing would be followed by a community educational meeting on reproductive rights.

Plans are also being laid for a demonstration at the Right to Life Convention held in Cincinnati on June 23.

The NOW Labor Task Force held an educational meeting on wage guidelines, at which S.P. and another woman (an organizer from UE) were the best informed. The two were asked to address the NOW chapter meeting on wage guidelines, and to appear on educational TV. The LTF is beginning a discussion on perspectives. We will probably propose a series of workshops for working women, on such issues as forming a women's committee, maternity legislation, and so on. This will give the LTF a chance to reach out to new women, call around to local unions' women's committees, and so on.

A women's committee is forming in G.'s local.

We will be endorsing a city-wide IWD event. The event was

supposed to be a broad coalition, originally proposed by the I.S.O. to the Lawyer's Guild. But the I.S.O. refused to allow a coalition to form if we were a part of it. So those two organizations are co-sponsors, the rest endorsers. This sectarian attitude on the part of the I.S.O. has already backfired, since it is inexplicable to the groups involved.

The I.S.O. is quite active in reproductive rights work. Barbara Winslow and Christina are coming to PCAC meetings. Winslow also traveled to New York for the CARASA Convention, and to Chicago for a meeting on reproductive rights called by NAM.

(The NAM meeting, by the way, was quite successful. Representatives from 30 different groups attended, mostly left feminist groupings. A national demonstration called by NOW and NARAL in Washington has given the coalition an organizing goal. The coalition plans to be the "left wing" of this demonstration, raising demands against sterilization abuse, etc. Branches should be on the lookout for organizing efforts around this demonstration, which is planned for the fall.) □

#### DETROIT

The District held a celebration for International Women's Day on March 4. We showed the film "I Am Somebody" and J.S. and W.T. spoke. The film is excellent, an account of Black women hospital workers fight for union recognition in South Carolina. Their struggle became a movement that involved the entire Black community, and it is a good example of how women's consciousness can change through struggle. (Available from the UAW Film Library for \$7.50) About 50 people attended the film showing, including 15 friends. The Red Tide brought several friends.

J.S. has been appointed to the Board of Directors of the Women's Justice Center, a feminist legal aid organization that is in many ways a magnet for political issues facing women in Detroit. J.S. is proposing an educational campaign around the issue of the new maternity disability legislation—what are your rights, how can you secure them, etc. We hope to be able to meet women in many different unions and locals through this work.

A study group on Socialism and Feminism is beginning on March 21. The group was initiated by a friend met through the Weber work and the Justice Center. It will include women from the feminist movement. Members interested in attending should call E.C. □

#### GARY

A report on the District 31 Women's Conference appeared in "Labor Notes". Rather than repeat the information published there, there are just a few additional comments.

1. The Women's Caucus, although it did not sponsor the event, played a big role in building it and providing political leadership. A lot of the big delegations that got out for it were mobilized by Caucus members. Caucus members also wrote most of the resolutions. In addition, members co-chaired all the workshops. This amounted to real recognition of the role of the Women's Caucus in leading the union on women's issues.

2. At the time of the USW Convention, it seemed that the USW would establish a Women's Committee on the International level. They have reversed their opinion on this, saying instead that the Women's Committee should be part of the Civil Rights Committee, that this would be less divisive. This angered many of the women attending. The general issue of continuing discrimination against women, and the failure of the union to deal with it was the main theme of people's remarks at the Conference.

3. The head of NOW's state-wide Labor Task Force was invited to the Conference, and was extremely impressed and enthusiastic.

The Caucus also faces severe problems right now. Many radicals are going into it, who see their job as exposing the leadership of the Caucus, and they don't seem to care if they wreck the Caucus to do it. The leadership of the Caucus is not handling the problems well; seeing the solution as rigidifying and bureaucratizing the Caucus.

Plans with the NOW LTF look good, but they are too tentative to be printed here. More on that next issue. □

continued next page

## THE SWP AND THE CHINA-VIETNAM WAR

### *A Tavesty of Theory*

There is nothing shocking about political predictions which don't come true. The I.S. makes them, other groups make them, Jimmy Carter makes them, etc. Wrong predictions by themselves aren't fatal.

But what would you think of a "theory" that led a socialist group, three days before the outbreak of a major war, not only to predict that such a war would not happen, but to *claim that it could not possibly happen?* Such a "theory" surely is fatal.

Such is the theory of the American SWP (Socialist Workers Party), as revealed in the *Militant* of February 23, 1979. (Closing news date: February 14. Chinese invasion of Vietnam: February 17). No fewer than seven full pages are devoted to the issues involved in the China/Vietnam/Cambodia conflicts. In this brief document I will not attempt to lay out our own analysis, which will be presented in a lead editorial in *Changes* #2, except to say that this war is clearly a *calculated political act* by the Chinese ruling class flowing from its strategy of "collective security" with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union. I am simply going to discuss how the "deformed workers state" theory held by the SWP led to truly incredible conclusions.

In a major analytical article (p. 21) Mary-Alice Waters condemns the Chinese leadership for "lending the prestige of the Chinese revolution to Washington's anti-Vietnam campaign" and even says "Of course, Peking's military buildup along Vietnam's border does create a danger of sporadic outbreaks between Chinese and Vietnamese troops". But she hastens to add "*But this is not the source of the war threat in Indochina today.*" (Will next week's *Militant* tell us China's invasion of Vietnam is a "sporadic outbreak"? Stay tuned.)

This statement is backed up by the following string of analysis: "*The danger is not a Chinese invasion of Vietnam* [emphasis in original]. . . A major war with Hanoi is the last thing that the Peking bureaucrats are interested in. With economic modernization uppermost in their minds, they stand to gain nothing from the instability and drain on resources that would result. . .

"This desire for peace and stability was again demonstrated during the war in Kampuchea last month. If the Peking bureaucrats were angling for an opportunity to back up their ally Pol Pot by a military offensive against Vietnam, that would have been the time—not four weeks later."

In reality, Peking probably doesn't even want to save Pol

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## WOMEN'S NEWSLETTER CONTINUED

### BAY AREA

The women's caucus has been meeting, and is planning a women's forum series, beginning with a discussion of Irene Brugel's article "What Keeps the Family Going?" Many friends of the organization expressed an interest in participating.

Our members are working more closely with Union WAGE. WAGE recently held its convention, which was attended by 50. Much of the discussion centered on whether WAGE should concentrate on working women's issues.

M.J. from the Women's Commission will be meeting with the women's caucus this week. □

### LOS ANGELES

The Union WAGE group in LA is in the process of becoming an official chapter. Five activists went to the Bay Area for WAGE's national convention.

Members of WAGE are working in the Weber coalition, trying to give it a real feminist content. The WAGE chapter has written a short leaflet on how the Weber case affects women. The leaflet will be distributed at a conference for working women at California State. Members of WAGE will be giving a workshop there on Weber and women. A longer brochure on the same topic is being planned. The Women's Commission will distribute this material to the branches.

The branch is beginning a women's study group on March 16. The first discussion will be on Irene Brugel's "What Keeps the Family Going?" article in I.S. 20 women have expressed real interest in coming, asking for a copy of the article etc. □

Pot. It does want to inflict a major political and military defeat on Vietnam and Russia. But the "workers' state" theory tells the SWP that such a war is *impossible*.

Waters concludes: "Our spotlight must be on the Thailand-Kampuchea border (which beknownst only to the SWP is apparently aflame with U.S. imperialist intrigue—DF), not the Vietnam-China border."

To understand how an intelligent political person could possibly have written this stuff, you have to go back to the editorial on p.2 which makes clear that full-scale war between China and Vietnam is out of the question because of the class character of these states.

"The postcapitalist economic structure of the workers' states has eradicated the drive towards imperialist expansion and war. . . the bureaucratic rulers of the workers' states fear and desperately seek to avoid the war (despite their 'self-defeating path of collaboration with imperialism'—DF). . . This is why there have been no wars between workers' states since the post-World War II revolutions brought new deformed workers' states into existence alongside the Soviet Union. . ."

As you can see, it is not simply a matter of *prediction* but of the *impossibility* of wars between these bureaucratically-ruled but economically progressive societies where phantom workers' revolutions have overturned capitalist property relations. (In orthodox Trotskyist theory, *only* capitalist states can be imperialist). According to SWP theory, Vietnam became a workers' state sometime in 1978 when "big mobilizations" of the working class (this is Waters again) "expropriated thousands of remaining capitalist enterprises in southern Vietnam." If you think the Vietnamese workers may not have noticed that capitalism was overturned by their own class self-activity, don't worry; the workers in Poland, Czechoslovakia and a few other places didn't notice when it happened in their countries either.

Thus the war threat in Southeast Asia "comes from U.S. imperialism and its unceasing expansionist drive for new markets, new investment opportunities, and new military footholds. . ." No one could possibly produce this drivel unaided; you have to be guided by SWP "theory" to do it.

But wait a minute. If all this about the impossibility of workers' states having a war was written just *before* China invaded Vietnam, wasn't it *after* Vietnam had invaded and more or less overrun Kampuchea? Wasn't there *already* a "war between workers' states" going on???

Answer: NO. As far as the SWP is concerned (editorial p. 2), "Capitalism was toppled in South Vietnam last spring. But the opposite happened in Kampuchea under Pol Pot. Rather than mobilize the workers and peasants to abolish capitalism, his regime physically dispersed the working class and rolled back the land reform that had begun."

In other words, *Kampuchea remained capitalist*. (A thesis developed at length in a mommoth five-page article beginning on p.22). The Cambodian big landlords and bourgeoisie will be glad to hear this, if they are lucky enough to get the *Militant* delivered to their graveyards. And when the smoke clears perhaps we will hear how capitalism can continue to exist with the working class "physically dispersed."

Thus, "the conflict between opposed social systems in Vietnam and Kampuchea—not the machinations of Peking and Moscow—was the central factor in the war." The Vietnamese "militarily aided oppositionists in Kampuchea against a capitalist, counterrevolutionary government that threatened the Vietnamese revolution."

Let's leave aside the fact that the threat to Vietnam from Kampuchea was actually border attacks on Vietnam by the Pol Pot army, clearly instigated not by the U.S. but by Vietnam's fellow "workers' state," China. What is really shameful here is that to give their support to Vietnam with its "superior" social system, the SWP says that Vietnam "militarily aided indigenous oppositionists," when the whole world knows that the new Phnom Penh regime rests solely on the Vietnamese occupation army!

This is what is usually called a cover up!

What a sad day for American Trotskyism. Not only did it proclaim that a China-Vietnam war *could not* occur. When it came to its "analysis" of the already-existing Vietnam-Cambodia war, it couldn't even display one-tenth of the willingness to face facts, or the political integrity and truthfulness shown by the *Guardian*, which clearly came out against the Vietnamese invasion as a violation of socialist principle. □

[Article submitted by D.F., Detroit]