

## National Convention Assessment

The 1982 Convention began the process of determining perspectives for the I.S. Key decisions were made: to pursue a new course on revolutionary regroupment, not to continue to focus on DSA, to expand use of the labor paper with a more activist approach, and to become more involved in the anti-war and disarmament movements.

In this sense, the convention made significant strides in addressing the demand of the group for a perspective. Members left the convention with a clearer sense of the tasks of the I.S., and felt more satisfied than at the conclusion of previous years' "educational" conferences because the convention dealt with their need for direction in their work.

The convention was weakest on organizational questions. While there was a certain level of agreement about the political course, there was almost no discussion on rebuilding the organization, branch functioning, Changes, etc.

Sixty members attended, and 40 plus friends. Three people joined at the convention—Sue W. a reproductive rights activist from Cleveland, Adela G., a CISPES activist from Detroit, and Kevin M., a teacher in southern Pennsylvania. Carol I., a student from Ann Arbor interested in the rank and file movement, joined after the convention.

Workers' Power, the Revolutionary Workers Headquarters, and the International Socialist Organization sent observers.

On the international front, a comrade from the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) of Mexico came to the US for the convention. He brought greetings from his organization, a Trotskyist group of 10,000, and spoke during the regroupment discussion on the role of the struggle for revolutionary unity in the development of the PRT. Four comrades from Denmark also attended the last part of the convention.

### Overview of the Labor Movement and the Labor Paper

The opening discussion was an overview of the state of the labor movement, led by Mike F. Mike said that the connecting thread characterizing the labor movement in this period is the lack of strategy from any sector of the labor leadership that is different from management's strategy, for the particular industry. The breakup of pattern bargaining and the concessions trend lays the basis for the secondary leadership to oppose the actions of the international because they have to take the heat for the higher-ups. The two issues around which we have built the opposition movement—union democracy and contract militancy—will not be enough. As the secondary leadership is opened up, the issue becomes the alternative to the unions' and companies' programs. Our responsibility is to lead and encourage this debate.

Discussion expanded on Mike's theme, and the need for socialists to provide answers. Mark L. pointed to the contract concessions in the UAW. He said that at GM where we could make a simple economic argument, we built significant opposition. At Ford, where we couldn't, we failed. GM is now disinvesting in auto; the Izuzu deal means that subcompacts will not be built here. We have been defending the status quo; we need to have answers.

Mike P. said similarly that the UAW's leadership is in doubt, and there are two popular responses. One is class collaborationism and jingoism. The other is that it's time to DO something—but what?

This discussion raised more questions than it answered, but it led into a more concrete discussion of the labor paper, which was presented by Carole K.

Carole began by describing the trade union left, and reminding us that while we are familiar with the phrase today, we did not realize that this layer existed in the unions in any depth until the LN conference. This discovery is encouraging because we know that successful rank and file movements historically have depended on a conscious left to provide guidance, analysis, leadership.

The labor paper was originally seen as a first step in a more long-range process. Its purpose was to cohere the most militant unionists, across union lines, to enhance communication. The success of that task, along with the identification of the trade union left, means that the labor paper is ready to take its next step. The characterization that Carole used to describe this was an "activist center." The guidelines would be 1) revitalization of the labor movement, 2) building a more united anti-concession effort, 3) building an anti-war presence in the labor movement, 4) building solidarity campaigns.

Discussion in this session took two directions: first, that this is already our program. Enid said, "This perspective towards labor paper activities and groups is catching up with reality." This is true, as the labor paper has been going in this direction since the conference. Local groups, sometimes with help from branches, have been holding local meetings. This needs to be expanded.

Mike U. argued that we should not take major responsibility for local projects, and that the Boston conference was a model because it drew very little on our resources.

The other theme of the discussion was that the labor paper may become too narrow if it tries to address only the trade union left. Dennis S. expressed concern that the labor paper stay broad enough to tap into the broad layer of oppositionists in the unions.

Two other issues of importance were raised. Sandy P. argued that women and Blacks should be a fifth priority on the list. She pointed out that the crisis affects women and Blacks in a very sharp way, wiping out the gains of affir-

mative action. Ilene W. spoke to the same point, saying that a large section of the trade union left are female and minorities. These people are entering into fights over hiring, upgrades, etc. We have no perspectives to help to guide our work in this area. Sandy decided that further discussion was necessary before offering an amendment.

Dave Y. raised the question of the Black project. Kim responded that there had been an extensive search for a Black organizer. The position was offered to three persons, but for various reasons, none was able to take the job. This is a prerequisite for the project.

Carole proposed that the resolution be amended to drop "with a publication" from the description of "an activist center with a..." in order to clarify that the publication would continue to be a priority. The amendment passed, and the resolution passed unanimously.

### The DSA Proposal

Mark and Mike's proposal that the I.S. explore joining the Democratic Socialists of America was the key debate within the group since the last national conference.

Mark spoke for the proposal, characterizing "exploration as a process of testing whether DSA is habitable to revolutionary tendencies within it." Mark said that passing this resolution would be counterposed to voting up the regroupment proposal.

He said that he and Mike came to the DSA proposal by taking a hard look at the I.S. The group is too badly unravelled, too small, too depoliticized, to build a revolutionary group out of the movements of the '80s.

DSA is the only dynamic towards socialist organization in America. The development of new movements ups the ante. If it's demoralizing to be in a small group that's not growing when nothing is happening, wait and see how demoralizing it will be when a lot is going on. The biggest danger is that the I.S. will miss out on the next wave of radicalized youth.

There are only two options for the I.S., Mark said—develop a serious perspective for the I.S. that would include regroupment (in principle), building a 3rd Camp Tendency (without illusions of organization), and reorder political priorities in order to recruit out of new movements.

DSA is the other option. DSA has a membership of 6-7,000, and is growing in diversity. There are three generations of socialists in DSA. The first is the Harringtons, etc., whose politics were formed in the '50s, social democrats defined by ties to the establishment. The second generation is like people who were in NAM—lawyers, academics, trade unionists, community and social activists. Within this layer are interesting people, like the person who considered taking LN Black project job, Manning Marable, LN periphery, TDU staff person, people in UAW who don't support concessions. The third generation is the youth section. This is the most important section, but the one we know least about. DSA claims it has 1,500 youth, involved in a variety of activities besides working for Democratic candidates, including strike support, anti-imperialist work, socialist youth conferences. Therefore, DSA can't be characterized as a left or right development. It is mixed. Some people are giving up on revolutionary politics, some are moving left.

DSA is no longer a social democratic sect. Harringtons have not been able to clone themselves. DSA leaders are subject to pressures. For example, in 1980 Harrington did

not endorse Jimmy Carter because too much support within DSOC for Commoner. Now, three meetings to be held on concessions with Mike U., Doug Stevens and Bob Master as speakers shows that DSA is open and willing to engage in discussion.

What role would I.S. play in DSA? We would have to be committed to building DSA. Simultaneously, we would maintain our own politics and a struggle attitude towards the majority positions within the organization. Concessions meetings a good model for what we could do.

We would have four tasks: 1) maintain our work, 2) be involved in those DSA activities we consider supportable, like student work, 3) publish a revolutionary marxist journal and organize a readers club, 4) develop and shape a DSA left wing.

A raid of DSA is not on, Mark said. "If we could have said we can go in and wreak havoc for two years and come out with 1,000 young people, could have gotten more support in the I.S." We should assume we will be in DSA until a superior form of organization is possible.

Conclude with the big picture. The next step for the labor movement and the working class will be around questions of social democracy. There will be a prolonged period of social democracy. This precludes the development of a revolutionary party or of a serious party building perspective.

The challenge for us in this period is to be relevant. For the next ten years or so, relevancy means finding ways to function as the left wing of a social democratic development without ourselves becoming social democrats.

Elissa spoke for the Political Committee majority. She argued that while there is room for a left within DSA, it will not be organized around questions that we could play a constructive role in. Independent political action would be the political question for the I.S. in DSA. There is no one on the DSA left willing to take a principled, class stand on the Democratic Party. Rather the debate is over whether to run socialists in the Democratic Party, or to support the more electable liberals endorsed by the labor bureaucracy. How could we intervene in this debate? We would be against the organization as a whole and against the left. We would either make enemies of the left who will be trying to win over the middle of the group, or make political compromises, for example, to justify voting for some good Democrats.

Isolation is not resolved by surrounding ourselves with bodies. We would be isolated not only within in DSA, but also within the left wing. Rather than build our tendency in DSA, we would be engaged in a faction fight and would find few allies who would stand with us. Maintaining an organization—not to mention building—would be a nightmare. In short order, we would be looking at a crisis much worse than what we face now.

Do we have enough information to make a decision about DSA? It would be nice to have more information, but waiting has its costs too. We will be tied in knots if we wait until every question is answered before we can move forward. The questions Mark/Mike say need more investigation are questions that won't be resolved in a year either. The proposal is full of these kinds of illusions. We're always told it is some other DSA local that is exciting and dynamic. It's never the one in the city where you live. Likewise, the section of DSA Mark considers most important, Youth, is the one we know nothing about.

Mark and Mike are for prioritizing exploration of DSA

because they believe that joining will be a probable outcome of the exploration. If it were not probable, it would be a disaster, not because it is heresy, but because our resources are so scarce. If, after a year, we decided not to join, it would be a terrible defeat for us. It would be a year of no recruitment because people will shy away until the debate is resolved. A year when we did not pursue regroupment when that sentiment exists on the left. A year not spent in the anti-war and disarmament movements.

Also critical is that prolonging the debate prevents us from beginning a dialogue with those revolutionaries who are joining DSA. Right now we can't argue that they should not join DSA, because we are considering the same thing. We will need to develop a clear analysis of the role that DSA will play in the development of third party politics, in the labor movements, and in the social movements in order to begin this dialogue.

If we were bigger, we could explore DSA, and pursue other perspectives also. But we are small, and we have to make choices. We all want to be part of something bigger. We all want socialism to be a real force. We all want revolutionaries to be in the same organization. But our assessment is that we cannot achieve these things by joining DSA. A minority organized around independent political action would be isolated in DSA. We cannot afford to postpone for another year our need to develop and act upon perspectives for the I.S.

The Political Committee forwarded a counter-proposal to Mike and Mark's resolution, which called for developing a political analysis of DSA, joint work where possible, and continuing relationship with DSA members, but that an orientation towards DSA would not be major priority for I.S. Parts I - IV of Mike and Mark's resolution failed, 10 for; 50 against.

The P.C. resolution passed 41:11. Part V. of Mark and Mike's resolution (education on social democracy) passed, 34:17.

Discussion during this session was vigorous, and, for the most part, principled. It reflected, however, the same problem that has plagued the debate all along. That is, the organizational conclusions were determined before a political discussion took place. Enid said there were two discussions going on, neither thoroughly. One discussion is about DSA as an organization, and whether we should be in DSA. The other is exploring the development of social democracy and assessing how it would or would not advance the working class movement in this country.

The many speakers against Mike/Mark's position discussed many points. Dan LaB. said that "relevance" is not a stirring romantic vision that can win people to socialism. Jeremy and Steve B. said while there is no principle against socialists joining a social-democratic organization, Cleveland DSAers asked the IS not to join, and that request deserves serious consideration. Dave P. said that the strengths of the I.S. in labor work are impressive, and it is imperative for the group to develop strength in other arenas, rather than waste a year exploring DSA. Jane said that Mark admitted revolutionary regroupment would be precluded by the DSA proposal, and was for devoting time to an "active, advocatory" exploration of regroupment. Bill P. said there are UAW-DSA members opposed to concessions, and he works with both of them, but the organization as a whole is responsible for the class collaborationism of its other UAW members, like Ray Magerus. Bill D. said that our exploration of DSA has been confusing to people around our periphery, some thinking

we would advocate joining DSA, therefore for putting the exploration behind us. Dave McC. said that social democracy would be an important step in the U.S., but it has yet to be shown that DSA will have anything to do with that.

Those who spoke in favor of the DSA proposal had a range of reasons. Gay said that the outcome of the exploration was not so important to her, but that the group's ability to discuss new questions in an open, political way is. Mike H. said that if we could vote for what we want, we would vote for insurrection, but social democracy is the best that can be hoped for in the next ten years, and that people in the plants have to "bend" on the question of the Democratic Party. Marty said that students join DSA, but they are already more radical than DSA, and can be won to revolutionary politics. Mary said that if we want to pose an alternative to DSA, we need to understand it better, and was therefore in favor of a thorough investigation. Mark H. said that the DSA proposal forced us to look at the dynamic of social democracy in America from a broad viewpoint, but he was for trying regroupment first. Mel P. said that no matter how good our work, if we are not relevant as socialists, we have wasted our time. While he is not for joining DSA, he is for investigating social democracy in depth at this point in our history.

Marilyn D. spoke about the need for a perspective for the I.S. That is, how are we going to build a socialist movement out of the struggles of the '80s. The convention's strategies towards the new movements, and even on regroupment, did not answer that question. The IS had a clear party-building perspective in the early '70s. A clear perspective pulls things together and gives the energy, excitement, and romantic view that makes it possible to grow. Until there is an alternative perspective, DSA proposal deserves serious consideration because it is a dynamic towards building for socialism.

### Regroupment

Two resolutions on regroupment were presented. Kim's proposal called for a broad regroupment of the revolutionary left. Mike P. proposed an amendment calling for a broad third camp regroupment.

Kim's presentation stressed the importance of the new movements against war and nuclear weapons. The political scope of these movements, along with new developments in the labor movement, means that no one trend on the left has hegemony over the new movements. Alongside these new developments, and encouraged by them, have come changes among left activists. There is a new openness to cooperation and greater interest in the idea of left unity.

The regroupment process would differ substantially from our previous regroupment strategies, which were really merger negotiations. This process would be an open one, appealing to broad sections of the left. It would bring into the process political independents, the Black left, activists in the women's movement, etc. Especially important would be to create a pole that could attract people new to politics.

The process would begin with a statement, signed by a broad group. Would progress to common work, and open forums. However, we want an organization with programmatic clarity on key points, particularly questions that are relevant to action. However, this means more than domestic questions because it would have to have an

agreed approach to the disarmament movement, which raises third camp questions.

However, although third camp politics are correct from A to Z, it is too narrow an approach to appeal to other sections of the revolutionary left. We can't expect that everyone who comes around the process in the early stages will accept third camp politics. To define it that way will cut too many people off from the process.

The I.S. should be aware that regroupment is a powerful idea for recruitment as well. The idea of unity on the left is important for people coming into politics. We will be more attractive if we are a group aggressively calling for regroupment.

Mike P presented an amendment titled "For a Broad Third Camp Regroupment." Mike said that our previous regroupment perspectives were based on organizational necessities—we were small, how could we become bigger. It is not possible to base regroupment on decline. What is exciting now is that regroupment seems to fit the realities of what is happening in the world. There are three developments that illustrate this: First, the lines in the class struggle are becoming much sharper. Buddiness of class collaborationism and class struggle is dissolving, and people are looking for alternatives to collaboration. Second, liberalism has collapsed in the face of the attack. Liberals are not willing to defend the gains of the social movements. Social activists are looking for alternatives. Thirdly, the anti-war and anti-nuclear weapons movements raise third camp ideas. They tie questions together, like the relationship of peace to class society and social structures. This makes the ideas relevant beyond socialists.

There have to be certain minimums on regroupment. Agreement on historical baggage is irrelevant, but agreement on key questions of the movements is critical.

Regroupment does have to start with the geological layers of the I.S. because these are the people closed to us politically.

Idea of multi-tendenced regroupment is wrong because we don't want a group that requires tendencies from the beginning. To build in the necessity of tendencies is to guarantee we will have nothing but a debating society.

Geoff B. spoke on the resolution "Women and the Regroupment Process." Geoff pointed out that women were forgotten from I.S. perspectives, and that we must work seriously to develop these perspectives, because they are important to our politics, and because regroupment will not be attractive if it is not serious on these questions.

Mel B. spoke on "Changes and the Regroupment Process," and reported that initial responses from groups to the ideas in the resolution were positive. They include joint work on publications on women's liberation, third camp socialism, socialists in industry, disarmament, and the student movement.

Observers to the convention were invited to speak first on the round, and the discussion was given an initial boost by positive comments from the RWH and the Workers Power. Frank Runninghorse from the ISO began, saying that the regroupment proposals being discussed would amount to squabbling sessions, and that work together in the social movements would be more productive. The ISO does not believe that regroupment should be based on weakness, and the groups interested in regroupment are interested to prevent their own dissolution. The ISO, on the other hand, is growing because it understands its role as a

propaganda sect and does not have grandiose illusions about its role. The ISO left the IS with 30-40 members and has "tripled" in size to 180 members. [Some mathematical error here, not sure where.—Ed.]

Steve Downs said that Workers Power was surprised and pleased at our invitation to attend the convention. WP is also interested in regroupment, and sees Against The Current as a vehicle for discussion on the left. Their point of view on regroupment is similar to what Kim laid out and they do not favor third camp regroupment. Despite all this, our proposals won't be received in WP with the enthusiasm we think they deserve because WP relationship to I.S. colored by the split. Also had a negative experience with ISO over merger talks, which broke off after a year. WP would welcome contributions from I.S. to Against the Current, and would like to reciprocate in Changes.

Dennis O'Neal said the Revolutionary Workers Headquarters is also discussing regroupment. Their original focus was a Maoist regroupment. Even in this context the I.S. is raised a lot because of our joint work in steel and auto. Feels that I.S. and RWH have wide practical unity and temperamental unity. Also said that the Maoist movement is in smithereens. There are 30-40 people who consider themselves part of the CP-ML, but for all intents and purposes that organization has ceased to exist. Other groups in similar shape.

RWH has two weakness the IS does not have: lacks a "bureaucratic core"—meaning, a group of people who take responsibility for the organization. Secondly, the RWH has been seriously shaken by developments in the international communist movement in the '70s, the same developments which strengthened the world view of the I.S. Therefore, ideological underpinnings of RWH very weak.

Also said that RWH is in disarray because of year-and-a-half discussions with CP-ML on regroupment. "We were locked in an embrace with an organization with a terminal degenerative disease," Dennis said, and warned that regroupment is no day at the beach. However, agreed with 80% of the points of unity in regroupment document, and hopeful that RWH would be interested in continuing the discussion.

The discussion revealed a strong, positive attitude toward initiating such an open regroupment process in cooperation with interested groups and individuals. A number of speakers stressed the importance of involving independents from the start. Carole K. said that independents are the glue that will hold the regroupment process together. Also said that the I.S. should not stop recruiting, but should use the fact that we are aggressively for left unity to attract independents to us. Some people, both those who favored the proposal and those who opposed it, expressed some skepticism about the goal of a new, broad, revolutionary socialist organization. Others pointed out that we should view this as an extended process, not a quick fix. The bulk of the comments were positive. Ilene W. expressed concern and frustration about counterposing third camp regroupment to broader regroupment in the discussion, saying it was too early in the process for that. In NYC, she said, it makes no sense for the I.S. and WP to be in two separate groups. Mike U. said that he was in favor of regroupment, but felt that we would have to allow for disagreement on more than theoretical questions, that there will be different approaches to the various movements as well. Jeremy and Dave Y. spoke about the need for the I.S. to have some

credible literature. Dave later volunteered to work on this. Foss and Mark spoke about the importance of the group working seriously on regroupment, that it mustn't be a paper perspective like the last regroupment strategy. Mike's amendment failed, many:2. The amendment on the women's movement passed unanimously, and the amendment on Changes passed many:0:2. The regroupment perspective passed with four abstentions.

### Third Camp Statement

The discussion of the third camp statement was confused and unproductive. The responsibility for this lies with the PC for not adequately explaining what the projected statement was supposed to accomplish.

There is a general shared sense in the IS that the time is right, not only for a regroupment process initiative, but also for a more coherent ideological offensive on our part within the new activist movements, to link together the issues of the struggle against US imperialism with the struggle against Stalinism (Poland) and disarmament. This is clearly related in certain ways to our regroupment idea, but it is also semi-autonomous: that is, some of the forces with which we want a regroupment process are distinctly non-third camp; and some of those with whom we would want to co-sponsor a third camp statement are distinctly uninterested in regroupment.

This leaves us with the problem, as yet unsolved, as to exactly in what form and with what allies we would undertake this ideological campaign, to move the center of gravity of the anti-war struggle closer to our viewpoint. The third camp statement was our proposal as to how to begin to do this. Clearly, a substantial percentage of the I.S. has very little confidence in our ability to bring it off, or considers it as "third camp regroupment through the back door."

While the resolution passed by a narrow vote (24:17:7), it is quite clear that there is simply not the mandate for the PC to act on it in the same way that there are clear mandates on the other main resolutions.

An amendment by Margaret and Elissa on writing women, Blacks, gays, and other oppressed minorities into the third camp statement passed. An amendment by Jane that the statement be written in "modern language" passed, and that the statement falls lower in our priorities than regroupment, Labor Notes, or the new movements also passed many to few.

The PC regards the third camp statement as operationally tabled for a few months, at least until the implementation of the other perspectives adopted by the convention is well under way.

### New Movements

On the whole, the session on New Movements was quite successful. It suffered some from having too many topics included in one session, but this was difficult to avoid.

Marty R. gave a report on the student movement and work within the Progressive Student Network (PSN). PSN is working to link single issue campus groups both within and between campuses. Marty said that while he is surprised that there is student activism in places like Bowling Green, Ohio, the student movement is not conscious of itself as a movement. The next PSN Convention will be held in Detroit, and we should use this as an opportunity to play a role in the movement.

Barney gave a report on unemployment work in Pittsburgh. They have set up several self-help programs, and food banks. They have received support from area union locals, but remain in control of the program. This is because none of the locals had any programs of their own, hence bureaucrats were not getting their toes stepped on.

Foss T. gave a presentation on anti-intervention work and CISPES. He focussed primarily on the current situation in Central America. He also reported on the growth of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador. Nationally, there are now over 300 chapters and affiliated groups. He urged activism in the anti-intervention movement not only among those ISers not otherwise engaged, but also by comrades in labor work, explaining that the labor involvement in the anti-intervention work was weak, and the I.S. could make a valuable contribution with labor experience and contacts.

Mel P. said that we should be moving on this issue in our rank and file work, he had noticed that in the Pittsburgh area labor bureaucrats were already jumping on the bandwagon. Steve K., though expressing some skepticism over how important this movement will be without U.S. troops in El Salvador, suggested that if there was a tour of a Salvadoran trade unionist, we could be active in building for it. It was also mentioned that Labor Notes would be making an effort to cover Central America.

The CISPES resolution passed after the deletion of the last two paragraphs (24:6 on the motion to delete) which prioritized CISPES work over disarmament work.

Jeremy G. gave the presentation on disarmament. He explained the popularity of the freeze campaign, but also its limitations. After June 12th and the November elections (where the freeze will be voted on in many state elections) the movement will be looking for new things to do and new perspectives. In motivating the resolution, he said we should enter this movement, and help it move toward a more conscious disarmament movement position (as opposed to a freeze movement).

Ilene W. proposed an amendment that we defend the rights of women, gays, and oppressed minorities to participate fully in the disarmament movement. This caused some confusion as to whether we would advocate the "laundry list" approach to demonstrations, or whether we were trying to defend the rights of reproductive rights activists to participate. There have been attempts at exclusion (Black United Front in NY), and anti-choice people have spoken at demonstrations while pro-choice people are excluded. In the spirit of defending the right of groups to participate, the amendment was adopted unanimously.

In the discussion Mike P. and others stressed the importance of working with the traditionally radical pacifist groups; it is there where people serious about the issue will be drawn. Mike U. warned of the possible collapse of the movement after the November elections. Mel B. said that his impression of the fraction meeting (at the convention) was that there was a lot of interest, but we had to get more involved and find out "who's who in this movement" before we could figure out how to give the movement direction.

The resolution passed unanimously.

From both the discussion and the fraction meeting held on Saturday, it was clear that there is a genuine interest in the group in the "new movements." The fraction meeting included about 20 people who reported on the movements in NY, Cleveland, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Gary, Yellow Spr-

ings. Many cities had something to report from both the anti-intervention movement and the disarmament movement. Sentiment favored supporting the work of those involved in these areas, as well as trying to bring these issues into labor work wherever possible.

### Organizational Session

The Organizational Session was unsatisfying because it was not well prepared, and time for discussion was so limited on some motions that it was meaningless.

The most thorough discussion was on the Constitution. Specifically, the section on discipline and the amendment offered by the NY branch. The clause as presented by the PC defined discipline as "all members, minorities as well as majority, actively carrying out the decisions of the organization," but noted that the I.S. is not a disciplined organization nationally. It said that national and local committees, fractions, branches could adopt a level of discipline appropriate to their work. The New York branch proposed to change the definition to say that "minorities may abstain but cannot publicly oppose decisions of the organization."

Those arguing for the PC's formulation spoke to the need for maximum unity in carrying out I.S. politics. New York members and others argued that while today disagreements on function in arenas are small, there could be larger disagreements in the future, and members should not be asked to argue for politics they don't agree with. They also pointed out that a strict definition of discipline in our constitution could turn off other leftists with whom we want to work on regroupment, particularly those burned during the party-building era. Some of the speakers seemed to agree with neither position, either wanting more discipline in the group, or less. Mike U. suggested deleting the remainder of the paragraph after saying "The I.S. is not a disciplined organization." Mike's suggestion was voted down 2:many:few. The New York amendment was also voted down 17:27:2. The Constitution passed many:3:6.

Geri gave a report on the women's caucus meeting, and announced that the women members had decided to hold a weekend retreat at the end of the summer in Cleveland. The purpose of the retreat will be to develop I.S. perspectives on women's issues. The retreat is primarily for members, and close friends, but is not to interfere with building the LN concessions conference. The caucus also passed a motion from Gay registering disappointment in the limited mention of women in most of the convention documents.

Little time was allotted for the discussion of Changes, which was particularly inadequate considering that Changes is our public face, and the biggest consumer of our resources. Mark L. said that we had to learn to use Changes better, citing Workers' Power's use of Against the Current, and that the major way we should circulate Changes is through subscriptions, which means that members have to make the effort to sell subs. Elissa said that quality of the magazine is uneven and that it is too narrow and draws from a tiny pool of writers. More people should write, and there should be more coverage of domestic issues. She cited the DARE article as one that increased the circulation of Changes, and the upcoming debate on DSA.

The P.C. resolution on dues passed unanimously. The

resolution differed from our old policy in that there is a new rate for unemployed persons and students of \$10/year in order to remove any financial barrier from joining. Along with this should go a greater commitment on the part of the membership to regular payment of dues. Jane pointed out that dues is mandatory for membership in the I.S.

The new P.C. slate is: Dave F., Kim, Jane, Elissa, Frank T., Carole K., and Foss. Mark L. and Mike P. both asked to be removed from the P.C. The new slate, while weaker in its theoretical level, will reflect better the work in the anti-war and disarmament movements as this is Foss' and David's main political work. Carole will be working on the regroupment project. Speakers expressed disappointment that Mark and Mike were leaving the P.C., but were glad that new people are coming forward to take responsibility for the group. The slate passed many:0:1.

The Convention ended on a non-traditional note (for the I.S.) with an assessment. Jeremy G. led the discussion, saying that he felt the weakest part of the convention was the organizational session, but that real progress had been made in determining perspectives for the group. He said that while he had been initially upset that the ISO was invited to the convention, he now thought it was very positive and that we had to be the group that said that past differences and personalities did not matter and we stand for unity on the left.

Many speakers expressed their pride in the group, for having held on despite severe reverses, and for the work our members do. Despite criticisms, those who spoke seemed to feel that the group is now doing more than "holding our own," and that the convention was a step forward.

—Elissa

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### Labor Notes

Labor Notes has sponsored meetings in Cleveland (On Quality of Work Life) and New York and Pittsburgh (on concessions) in the last month. New York readers plan two more forums in June and July on "Militarism, Reagan's Foreign Policy and Labor" and "New Roles for Labor in Management" (Quality of Work Life — worker ownership).

Labor Notes readers in New Jersey held a planning meeting which drew close to 30 people. They will hold a one-day conference October 9 which will include both discussion of the state of labor in New Jersey and discussion of strategic alternatives for labor.

### Institute for Labor Education & Research

The Institute for Labor Education & Research in New York and the OCAW held a conference on "What's Wrong with the U.S. Economy?" attended by 75 people June 6 in New Jersey. It came up with a program for "corporate concessions" which it intends to push as a program for the labor movement. The concessions include such things as a freeze on executive salaries, hiring of supervisors, worker givebacks, overseas investment, and "unnecessary mergers and unproductive speculation." Tony Mazzochi is at the head of this effort; the program has already been endorsed by Region (Northeast) of the OCAW. The Institute for Labor Education & Research is a new and interesting development, hopefully more detailed information will be available soon.

## Regroupment Report

Kim, Dan, Frances and Jane met with members of Solidarity from Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Washington in New York June 13. SSFN does not as yet have one outlook on regroupment, they will be discussing it at their conference August 14-15. Four proposals have been put forward: 1) to join the Socialist Party, 2) to merge with "revolutionary socialist fractions" such as Workers' Power, 3) to hold a socialist-feminist conference next summer like the Beyond the Fragments conference in Britain, which would be for socialists who are feminists, anti-racist, non-Leninist, and believers in independent political action, and 4) continue discussions but take no action soon.

Solidarity members reported that their prior efforts at regroupment-type activity had not been overly successful. These included a year-long effort at forums in Philadelphia and the "Tripod" discussions our members were involved in in New York. They are active in the Bay Area regroupment committee which includes people from Workers' Power, IS, ISO, Socialist Party and Solidarity.

One sentiment expressed was that they were for regroupment but not enthusiastic about the IS proposal. Another was that Solidarity doesn't have the resources for movement work, regroupment and building Solidarity itself. Sentiment for joining the Socialist Party is apparently quite small.

Although the response of those present was not enthusiastic or united, we felt that if local forums were held, Solidarity members would participate. They emphasized that any decisions would have to be made by their national conference.

Solidarity responded very favorably to our proposal to put out an issue of Changes jointly with them on feminist issues.

The meeting also included a discussion of the IS's feminist theory and practice, which the Solidarity members found educational, and a discussion of the anti-militarist movement.

Kim, Dan, Frances, Jane, Dave F and Geoff met with Revolutionary Workers Headquarters members from New York, Philadelphia, the Bay Area and Gary. The discussion was in many ways more practical and more political than the previous one, although our respective political differences and program for a future organization were not discussed. RWH members asked whether our proposal was coming out of what we saw as a growing coherence of ideology on the left. We replied that we saw a growing coherence of practice and willingness to work together on the left and that a regroupment process could contribute to some growing closer on ideological questions. We also said that there seemed to be acceptance among groups and individuals who have abandoned sectarianism of the notion that a revolutionary party cannot proclaim itself to be so because of its ideology but must be based in the working class.

We admitted that this proposal did not grow out of widespread demand for a new organization from the remnants of the left but out of our own perception of what was necessary and possible.

RWH members expressed some initial skepticism over whether independents would be attracted to such a regroupment process. There was also the question of

resources — human and financial — and whether their own members could be won to putting energy into regroupment. As previously noted, they have no national center and are more fragmented than we are. One RWH member said that we should target people in local collectives or around particular projects rather than lone individuals or members of national organizations. Another proposed that we should put forward this notion of regroupment as "a stake in the future." There was some discussion of what the remaining forces on the Marxist-Leninist left are like (apparently some ex-OCIC people correspond and held a conference recently.)

The RWH people had quite a few ideas about who should be approached. They also stressed the importance of the involvement of Blacks and other minorities in the regroupment process.

Kim, Dan, David F, Teresa and Mel B. met with members of Workers' Power on Monday, June 14. WP was represented by Carl F., Peter D. and Steve D., all former members of the IS. They expressed general agreement with our convention position and a willingness to work with the other groups we had talked with. They explained that they had established a network of groups that they related to and saw as groups with whom to have a shorter ranged merger perspective. These groups include: City Life (Boston), Workers Education (Milwaukee) and Bay Area Socialist Organizing Committee. In addition they have relations with Solidarity, Theoretical Review (particularly in NY, Bay Area and Minneapolis) and ourselves.

It is clear that there are disagreements in WP over whether or not to be part of a broader regroupment process. There are a small number of people who don't want to work with us at all because of past events. However, most are favorably inclined.

We presented the idea of a joint probing mission in the Mid-west and on the East Coast. This would include Dan from the IS and members of the other groups that are willing. The WP committee that met with us could not give an answer as their National Steering Committee will have to discuss it. It seems possible that they will hold off on this first initiative, but as a group will remain receptive to future joint activities. They expressed a desire for continuing joint work, which has been done in NY in the Solidarity Support Campaign (which will turn its attention somewhat more to the disarmament and anti-intervention movements) and in the Bay Area through the regroupment committee mentioned earlier.

### Good News

Members did well in the Steelworkers elections in May. In one Indiana local, a reform slate won control of the local; members won a seat on the executive board and a grievor position. In another Indiana local where the incumbent reform administration was returned to power, two members won grievor spots and one took an executive board position. A member also took a seat on the executive board of a Pittsburgh local.

### Solidarity Support Campaign

The reception organized by the Solidarity Support Campaign following the June 12 rally was considered quite successful. 178 people signed the mailing list, and of course others who already are on it didn't bother to sign again, so the actual attendance was something over 200. The featured speaker, Paul Robeson Jr., gave a very good short talk strongly identifying with the peace movement and the need for it to build links with similar movements "on the other side" and with social struggles at home. He also stressed the need for the peace movement to "become political," saying that he knew there were many different ideas of how to do this and did not want to get into that debate now, but that it was an issue that everyone needed to be conscious of (I believe he is in favor of some kind of Democratic Party orientation).

The Solidarity Support Campaign is attempting to become stronger organizationally and politically, by recruiting new forces. This is not to be done by opening it to become a sect forum, but through recruitment of individuals and hopefully publication of a newsletter.

—DF

### Notice!!!

For the 1982 tax year, you will be able to deduct charitable contributions from your income even if you don't itemize. You will get to deduct a maximum of 25% of your first \$100 contributions (single taxpayers). LERP, a tax deductible educational institution, would love to hear from you.

