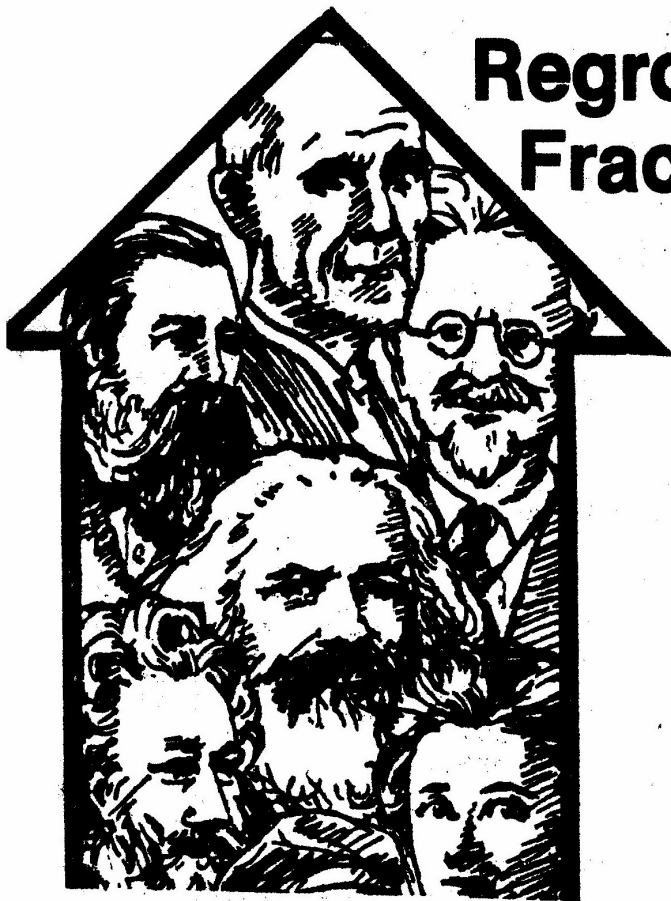


Regroupment

July 1982

Fraction Newsletter



IS Convention Sets Up Regroupment Fraction

The regroupment resolution passed at the IS convention authorized the formation of a national Regroupment Fraction. An open meeting of the Fraction held at the end of the convention discussed what first steps to take to get the process off the ground. The Fraction voted to call on other groups and independents to join with us in a probing tour of cities on the East Coast and the Mid-west. Groups that were mentioned for inclusion were: Revolutionary Workers Hq., Solidarity Socialist-Feminist Network, and Workers Power. Many people stressed the importance of including independents from the start.

The tour would consist of individual and small group meetings with local people, both independents and those in groups, in various cities. We would discuss the idea of a regroupment process and what might be done to launch it publically in that city. At some point, depending on the response, we will want to circulate a statement, agreed to by a variety of groups and people, outlining the process and its goals. This could be published in the left press and circulated in other ways.

It was suggested that Dan L. be hired, part-time to do some of the travelling for the IS. This was referred to the PC, which subsequently hired Dan. Toward the end of the meeting, a list of independent socialists who various members thought should be approached was compiled. The list included about 60 names and has been updated to include nearly 100. Not all of these people, however, are likely to sign on — at least in the beginning.

The Fraction requested that the PC pick the committee to meet with Solidarity on June 13.

The resident Fraction in Detroit is composed of: Kim, David F., Carole P., Foss, Jane S., and Bill P. Branches are to pick their own representatives. Dan L. will be on. Other members so far: Mel B.-NY; Mel P.-Pitts; and Joel-Chicago.

Activity Since Convention

On June 13-14 we met with committees from Workers Power, RWH, and Solidarity. Reports on these meetings are attached. So far, only WP's leadership body has met to discuss our proposal. RWH will discuss it at its Central Committee meeting later this month and Solidarity will discuss it at its convention on August 14-15. WP has tentatively accepted our proposal (attached) and has made some suggestions and requested clarifications. They naturally want to work with us and others to shape the trip. Subsequent discussions with RWH members indicate a generally favorable attitude.

One consequence of the discussions with RWH was the possibility of including the Proletarian Unity League (PUL). PUL does not consider itself maoist and has, we are told, rejected Stalin. They have about 70 members around the country, mostly in Boston. They are known in Boston for trade union work, which is highly respected. They seem to hold some variant of the "white skin privilege" theory. We will be setting up a meeting with some of their leaders within the next several weeks. They have expressed interest in the process.

Discussions with a small number of independents during and after the June 12 Rally have generally been positive, though often sceptical.

IS members in Pittsburgh have taken their own regroupment initiative. A letter has been sent out to about 40 people calling a meeting to discuss the prospects of a broad regroupment process there. As the letter was just sent out, as of this writing no results are available.

The IS is hiring two part-time people to work primarily on regroupment. Dan L. will do traveling for us in the next few months. His first trip to Minneapolis is reported later. Carole has been hired to work one day a week in the office. Most of her work will center around the coordination of our efforts, keeping track of who has been approached and who should be, putting out the newsletter and doing some of the political work. She will start in late July. Once we get our Fraction organization in place, we should be able to accelerate the pace of events.

For those of you not aware of it, a Regroupment Committee has been in existence in the Bay Area for some time. It is composed of people in the IS, Solidarity, ISO, WP and an associate of Joanne Landy. The group is now discussing a draft statement of principles drafted by Eric Chester (Solidarity) who seems to be the force behind the Committee. Our representative on the Committee is Leo S.

Early Lessons in the Regroupment Process

A number of things are already becoming clear in the regroupment process. One is that taking the initiative, as we have done, helps to frame and to a degree set the terms of the discussion. Hesitation and lack of boldness would be a mistake. It has been a while since the IS has taken any sort of initiative as an organization toward the left. Just taking such an initiative has already breathed some new life into some branches. And it is making us a more attractive organization. Of course, this particular initiative could hit a snag, as has the DSOC/NAM merger and growth perspective, but the lesson should stick. We have to be willing to take political initiatives if we are to grow as a political tendency.

Because of the multitude of political differences out there, including among those already interested, taking the initiative has a political dimension as well. We should have no illusions that we can convert everyone to our views or cobble together some program everyone will accept. But for this thing to work in the long run there will have to be a political backbone, a core set of politics. By taking the initiative, both as the IS and in cooperation with others, we can to some extent establish the "agenda" for part of the left on crucial questions like independent political action, disarmament, the women's movement, the nature of socialism and Marxist method.

Another lesson runs somewhat against the grain of the first but is not really in contradiction. It is that having taken the initiative we will confront a lot of caution. Caution is evident in the WP response and even more so on the part of Solidarity. Many people have been burned by organizational disasters. Our limited experience so far indicates that many people still understand the need for revolutionary organization, but would like to find a way to do it right this time. This, of course, is one source of caution.

I believe we should continue to take the initiative in cooperation with other groups and independents. By doing so we can set much of the frame work for the process. At the same time, however, we cannot determine the pace of the process by ourselves. Just as in our trade union work we will have to move with others at a pace they can keep up with. It is also important that the process not be viewed as an IS property. This means taking people's concerns into account and involving others in deciding the course of the process.

As might be expected, the results of the limited activities we have undertaken so far are mixed. There are hard questions about the nature and function of socialist organization and about the political content of regroupment that we and others will face in the coming months. Our experience is, however, limited and we will have to do a good deal more probing before we can concretize some of the answers to these tricky questions.

Kim Moody

TO: PC

June 16, 82

FROM: DL

RE: REGROUPMENT MEETINGS IN NEW YORK JUNE 12 & 13

Several IS members were involved in meetings with Solidarity Socialist Feminist Network, Revolutionary Workers Headquarters, and Workers Power in New York on June 12 & 13. What follows is a summary and appraisal of the meetings.

I. Solidarity (SSFN)

Present for SSFN - Paul (Philly), John (DC), Nancy and Carolyn (Boston), Susan (NY)

Present for IS - Dan, Kim, Jane, Francis

Agenda: Regroupment, Changes, Feminism, Anti-militarism

Regroupment:

Kim made presentation of IS regroupment perspective. John presented their position. John said: four positions in group: a) pursue merger with SP; b) merger with rev. soc. groups, such as WP (they have a mtg. with them in July); c) no merger, call conf. of soc. fem groups like Beyond the Fragments conf. in GB, with soc. fem, anti-racist groups, non-Leninist groups; d) continue discussion with various but pursue SSFN work, no ambitious plans. Carolyn added: "Wide range of feelings in Solidarity; actually it is a wide open question." Later Carolyn said, "We want a revolutionary left pole in the anti-militarist movement. We need to give SSFN tendency organizational life. We have no energy for this project and also do other work." Paul: "I'm receptive to IS proposal, but big jump to broad rev. soc. group; big jump to submerging oneself." John: "I'm not very enthusiastic about any of the regroupment ideas; the IS idea is interesting." Nancy on SP: "After meeting more respect for SP but personally no desire to join. Has 400-700 members, midwest locals, range of politics, not a rev. soc. group but revs. in it. Some joint members with DSOC. Their own (political) campaigns. Some in Cit. Party. Broad range of age, background, politics, not ideologically sophisticated. SP told us (SSFN) 'You could out argue any of our members.' We are revs. Some fem.ism not negotiable. We'd feel better if we'd met them in the movements. SSFN would have to join SP. No one in Boston would be for joining. They have pro-choice position but don't support abortion. Reasonable group. Do electoral work, War Resisters League." Susan added: "SP has been in contact with R2N2. Some people joined. Were at Cit. Party convention. Coalition work. SP 1984 priority, find a candidate SP and Cit. Party could support. Very non-Leninist." Carolyn is not in favor of SP merger.

Regroupment summary:

KM: "My bottom line: 1) openness to cooperate on specific activities, conferences, forums, etc.; 2) Changes (see below)."

Paul: "Future talks between IS and WP should focus on: 1) specific areas for potential on-going jt. work, ex. labor paper. 2) Where SSFN and IS groups exist, mtgs on specific subjects."

Carolyn: "You are united behind a particular proposal. We have varying degrees of enthusiasm."

CHANGES

KM made presentation. John, "Open to gay & lesbian?" IS, yes. Carolyn, "Feminist perspective in disarmament movement?" IS, yes. Nancy, "I'm for it but because it would link us to IS the group's opinion would be mixed." Carolyn, "Nice initiative, but don't just invite us to deal with women's issue; we don't want to be type-cast." John: "I think it's great. Feminism is more than the women's movmt."

Feminism

Carolyn: "Our conf. backfired. Invited Buffalo Women's lib. group, WP, IS Did not build agreement. All in SSFN agreed. Problem with IS presentation (Mike U.), very candid, neglected any discussion of fem.ism. Excluded any primary importance of fem.ism. Agenda for IS convention no feminist discussion. What are you politics and priorities?" Nancy: "Mike U. had nothing to say." Carolyn: "IS had most anti-feminist position." Francis: "Women in IS upset about Convention agenda. Our emphasis on labor work. Women and union work need not be counter posed. Hard hatted women, United Trades Women." Dan: "Independent self-organization of women in society; not subordinated to other movements. Right to self-org. in group, women's caucus." KM: "Rev. feminism, socialist feminism. Women and sexuality not class questions. Working womens' mvmt. Cross class. In labor work. Spouses in transportation work. Womens' cttees in metal, women's caucuses. Never only shop floor or even union." Jane: "We don't have to be defensive. Sexual harrassment, comparable worth, office workers, labor paper, hospital and nurses, metal caucus, abortion, reproductive rights, women's health in work place, , SIMCOSH, NICOSH, vdts. Our work among women in non-traditional jobs can play role in wk cls due to position. Integration of wk force, women can do anything. Trained our women to be macho too w/ in and w/ out movement. We tried NOW, were in R2N2. Will have women's retreat in September. Decline in activity of women members a concern." Nancy: "I will only be in a left org. that will push feminist perspective. What are your attitudes on lesbian and gay?" KM "In transportation, defend right of gays to be active and leaders. Defended gay rights in r & f caucus in transportation. Had gay caucus, but collapsed with shrinking size." John: "We don't have these experiences and can learn from you." RE SSFN fem. work. Carolyn: "Fem. orgzgn our main activity. Started R2N2 groups. The guiding politics are our politics. Mvmt. building rather than pushing our position." Nancy: "Lavender left, Lesgian and gay, GCN writers." Carolyn: "Men who work on feminist issues." John: "SSFN rule, 50% of women in leadership; committed to rotating leadership. Some chapters mainly women." Dan: "IS industrial perspective means not in womens' movement perse, not feminist organizing even though womens' issue." Jane: "Disagree." KM: "Disagree." Carolyn: "We have no women's caucus. We will have a women's mtg. at our convention. Straight and gay men will meet on the challenge of the women's mvmt. at same time."

Anti-militarism

KM presented IS position from convention. SSFN presented some of the problems: anti-imperialist Stalinists, old-boys network of 50s and 60s anti-war leadership; how involve CISPEs, women's issues, how involve Hispanics and Blacks, SSFN wouldn't do civil disobedience, Carolyn, others disappointed by that.

EVALUATION OF MEETING: The meeting was business-like, amiable and clarified for them some of our views on feminism, we may have risen a couple of notches in their estimation. They have no perspective on regroupment. While their leadership is probably third-camp by and large, the group is organizationally and politically lacking in cohesion. By nature they belong in the West Coast version of WP; they may eventually go into the SP. Eric (SSFN) probably wants the name, the newspapers and the easy-going milieu. They will invite us to their conferences and meetings where we can push their members and contacts. They can be involved in our proposed meetings and conferences. We might even on individual bases be able to persuade their people to tour with us. They will probably do Changes proposal. As Kim put it, they can be involved de facto in our proposal by inviting their local people to speak at, participate in mtgs. Proposal will have to go to their August Convention.

II. RWHQ

Present for RWHQ: Dennis (NY), Jeff (NY), Mickey (Ind.), Lee (Philly)
Julie (LA), one other.

Present for IS: Dan, Kim, Jane, Francis, Dave

Agenda: Regroupment.

Regroupment

Kim made presentation of IS perspective. Jane summarized our meeting with SSFN. Lee: "RWHQ perception of SSFN, friendly, but not in the same place re. the struggle for socialism. SSFN suspicious of our t.u.ism. They view it as economism. If regroupment means t.u.ism, they wouldn't want in. I agree with the objective and with the analysis of changed circumstances and changed left. Also political changes. We've changed and so have others. Is their a pattern?" KM: "T.u. leftists agree, re shop floor, re t.u. functioning, re involving CISPES type work in t.u.s. Left has to deal with politics. Labor party popular among left and t.u. activists." Lee: "We're in it for socialism. What's the view on that." Dan: "Socialism means the struggle of the labor movement. Polish Solidarity. Will only get clear on politics with a Chinese Solidarity." Dennis: "And that's the last thing the Chinese want." Mickey: "How work with indigenous workers. Agree DSA off the wall. How do you do real party building among indigenous workers? We now have joint branches in cars, metal. How establish cores of future party. I can't see all them other groups, SSFN, etc." KM expressed that we shared Mickey's concerns, that he was laying out our old party building perspective: "We agree party will be built at root of working class or it will not be build at all. This is not party building. It is to make the left look less than ridiculous." Dennis: "Numbers can affect changes in society. How to get best approach to problems of American politics. Deep seated differences are a problem but they can go on back burner." Jeff: "Where are these forces coming from? We are two small groups. SSFN not hopeful. I had hopes for SSFN, PWOC, now skeptical." Julie: "A stake in the future is my idea. A stake in the future, not party building. Need network, shared structure." Dave: "Labor party would create possibilities of party building. We don't project regroupment as party building. Party needs either tight ideology and strategy or actual leaders of significant struggle, better yet both." Jane explained our idea of campaign, individual endorsers, groups, road show. Julie: "I'm not opposed to approaching individuals, people burnt by ML orgs. Many in Bay Area do ^{has} work better now and get along better. Also approaching groups such as PUE. We need a network which can give a service. Membership in an ML or other group shouldn't preclude their getting a service." Dennis: "Agree Mickey, need Blacks, Latinos, etc. PUL might go for it. Collectives are make or break for this proposal." Lee: "What resources, energies. We're very minimal. You guys would carry it, right? Would mean our local people giving up organizing time from other work." Mickey: "What about electoral work?" Dave: "Electoral stuff is major problem; can't discuss now. Point well taken. Dennis: "We must start broader then we end up. Some questions are biggies for us. Russia, self-determination." Dave presented ^{changes} proposal, they seemed in agreement.

Information:

We also got some information from RWHQ on other groups.

PUL Proletarian Unity League

Has 60-70 members, holds white skin privilege theory, all their members in the working class, very secretive, large group is Boston. They were once vaguely Maoist, now say they were never Maoist.

Have many gay members. They say ML trend is dead. Big on left agenda. Set their own agenda and pace. They were involved in RCP-CPML unity but left fearing other groups would pull them under as they went down. Heavy anti-Soviet. Don't like Stalin. Were expelled from PWOC-trend for anti-Soviet views.

LRS League of Revolutionary Struggle

Wants into everything. Real cadre ("bitches," said Julie), highly centralized and controlled from top down. Can get along with cadre and Xs but not with leaders. Very multinational. Heavy attacks on RWIQ theory of national q.

EVALUATION OF MEETING: The meeting was very informal and very friendly. They seemed interested in proposal. Their reservations were more organizational (Who else is interested? Who will do the work? What groups and individuals do we contact when?) than political. They are very concerned not to appear soft on Russia or weak re. the national q. and Black and Latin involvement. They probably have fewer contacts than we supposed. They will work with us on meetings and tours and presenting contacts to us. Problem is their organizational weakness means it will be hard to get them to agree as a group. May mean working with local and regional people rather than with a national organization. Proposal will have to go to their July CC.

III. WP

Present for WP: Steve D. (New York), Carl F. (New York), Peter D. (New York).

Present for IS: Dan, Kim, Dave, Mel B., Teresa

Agenda: Regroupment

Regroupment

KM presented IS position. Peter D. presented WP position: "Major contacts with SSFN esp. on West Coast; Theoretical Review, they are loose have differences, have talked in NY and Berk.; Minn. North Star (they are also interested in STO); Boston City Life; x-YSA Milwaukee Workers Education Group; Bay SOC. All had observers at WP convention. So did the ISO, but they are not interested in regroup. Only raiders. Cal W. was contemptuous of regroupment. STO wants conference at end of summer or fall for regroupment. Their agenda: deindustrialization, racism in England, migratory workers in Germany. They had NYC planning mtg for their (STO) mtg. Workers Education group is young, dedicated. Having merger discussions on political questions. They are ortho-Trots, defensists, 4th Intl, etc. Also SSFN west coast is pushing for political discussions. WP convention pushed 8 points as basis for regroupment discussions based on socialism from below, centrality of working class, etc." Steve D.: "Other points, self-org. of oppressed, soviets, IPA, no socialist country, need for rev., dem.-central org (democracy plus unity in action). Your IS regroupment is like ours only two years behind schedule. We say there should be no unassumed political points. A minimum is necessary for us. We are upfront re. need for rev. org." Peter D. explained that they are trying to create their own network. They want joint actions, united fronts, political statements, forums. They are for both collaboration and mergers. In their opinion SSFN has a range of viewpoints. Peter D.: "The centrality of the working class bothered them (SSFN). They are also bothered by idea of revolution is 'post capitalist societies'--their term." Peter D. said there is a range of attitudes towards the IS in the WP "bitter, hostile, critical of 3rd camp, critical of labor practice. WP like SSFN has a range of options on IS." Steve D.: "We've had an orientation to 4th Intl. groups. Capitalize on problems in SWP. We have discussions re. their ortho-Trot positions after joining." Carl F. "Disagree Steve D.; no orientation to any group. Recruit from 4th Intl. groups an accident. (continues, turn.

TO: PC
FROM: DL
RE: Regroupment: Trip to Twin Cities

July 13, 1982

I traveled to the Twin Cities, Minn.-St. Paul, on July 9-11 to scout out the political situation and to probe the possibilities for our regroupment project. I had the opportunity to have lengthy political discussions with seven individuals, mostly ex's and independents, but also some current sect members. Before I go into those discussions, let me give a little picture of Twin Cities and their political life.

The Twin Cities give the impression to the visitor who's recently been in Chicago, New York and Detroit of prosperity. Gleaming corporate headquarters rise above well preserved or renovated older buildings. The city is now the center of the high-technology industry with corporations like Univac, 3M, and Honeywell; the handsome lumber and grain exchange buildings are monuments to the past. The twin cities are white; I was told that less than 3% of the population is Black and there is a small Chicano barrio in St. Paul though the Latinos are dispersed. No one worries or talks about crime. The gay and lesbian community is out of the closet and in the state legislature, with Karen Clark a socialist lesbian being a prominent political leader.

The Twin Cities were once the center of strong populist, socialist and communist organizations, and there is still a lively political life (though unfortunately much of that is sect-life--more below). The weekend I was there, there was a demonstration by the local affiliate of R2N2 and another by a group in support of the Northern Irish (which IRA or other group I don't know). There are various international solidarity groups supporting liberation struggles in Africa and Central America through CISPES. Most of the politicals didn't know anything about CISPES work. The main centers of recent interesting labor activity are FORD (UAW), FMC (UAW--an ordinance or munitions plant), Honeywell (IBT), and the Bureau of Engraving (GAIU, Local 1B--it is a private company not a government agency) at which there was recently a very militant strike with picketlines as large as 400 and 250 people on a regular basis, with support from UAW & IAM (which recently ended the very militant Northwestern strike, headquarters in the Twin Cities). There also seems to be some political life in the Hotel and Restaurant Workers which the CP runs or influences and in which the left radicals are involved.

The left is, if one can put it this way, well-represented in the Twin Cities. The Communist Party (CP) is large and influential with deep historic roots in the city and in the farm land around (this was once the center of CP farmer organizing). The CP works politically in the Farmer Labor Association (FLA) which is the left-wing of the Democratic Party in Minnesota. I was told that the CP dominates the FLA central committee. The Communist Labor Party (CLP) is also active in the FLA; it was not clear how large or influential it is. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) has a large branch (?20 members) in Twin Cities. They are involved in SWP election campaigns as elsewhere. They sent their members into industry, but told them not to get involved in rank and file or caucus activities. The SWP has good relations with "liberal" labor officials, the sort who speak at SWP rallies and collaborate with management

to fire and to drive out militant workers or radicals. The rank and file activists resent the SWP for failure to cooperate in rank and file or reform activities and for working with the bureaucrats. There are a few Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) in the Twin Cities, described by other leftists as left social democrats, but the tendency is considered small and unimportant and the DSAs are not known as activists. The FLA occupies the DSA slot on the spectrum and is controlled by the CP, leaving little room for building that tendency it seems. The International Socialist Organization (ISO) has recently established a foot-hold in the Twin Cities, apparently 4 to 6 feet (that is two to three members) are involved. They have no reputation in the Twin Cities so far.

The left, as elsewhere, has been Maoist. The Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee (PWOC) established a national network or proto-party called OCIC a few years ago. Within the last two years the OCIC called a meeting in the Twin Cities which was reportedly attended by between 70 and 100 people. Subsequently this group isolated itself in its labor work and then destroyed itself in its political work with its "white chauvinism" campaign. Its labor activists are now virtually politically ostracized in the plants and from its large meetings it has dwindled to a tiny "study group" on the history of the communist movement. (Hopefully even they can learn from history.) Those who have been through the PWOC-OCIC experience remarkably now are far enough from it to still have an interest in politics. Some have become independents and others have drifted towards the Line of March or perhaps Sojourner Truth Organization or Theoretical Review. Most of them seem to remain Stalin-Maoists unfortunately. However, we would want to work with some of these people (and do now in our labor work and in work around the labor paper).

The Line of March tendency has some following (its size was not clear) and is currently conducting a study group on fascism and the rise of the right. The members of the study group do reading and write papers on fascism and circulate them within the study group and within the left. One of the groups which went through the OCIC experience was the North Star Socialist Organization. Unfortunately I didn't have the opportunity to speak with people from this group, for I heard good things about them. They are I understand close to Theoretical Review and perhaps talking with Workers Power. There is a radical bookstore in town called May Day Books, an independent collective. They sponsor various political groups to speak and conduct on-going educationals. They recently had Sojourner Truth Organization (STO) present their crash course in dialectics, and have subsequently launched a study group inspired by STO politics. The leader of the book store group admires STO and its publication, Urgent Tasks. RWHQ has 3 members; many ex's

The more pernicious left organizations (Spartacist League, League of Revolutionary Struggle, etc.) don't seem to do well in the northern climes and I found no representatives of their species there, though some of their droppings were encountered on the book store trail.

I had discussions with seven individuals for about 1-2 hours each. I also attended a party of an African liberation solidarity group and had an opportunity to talk casually with several other politicians. I'll simply letter rather than name the individuals, give a brief political description, and then some of the comments they made in response to our proposition.

A) RWHQ; activist in a postal workers union. "I don't see how this would affect my day to day work. What would I do differently? I don't see how it would change anything. Personally I'm tired; I've been doing this for seven years."

B) RWHQ; activist in PSN. "I think the creation of a multi-tendency organization will lead to difficulties and eventually to splits. I've seen this in the Wisconsin Alliance. I believe we do need a revolutionary organization. But I'm for an ML regroupment."

C) x-OCIC; radical attorney active in a barrister's group. "I think starting such a discussion is a good idea. Should concentrate on similarities, build unity. Groups now recognize that they don't know all the answers. What you're doing is very similar to what OCIC tried to do; they too aimed at independents. However, I fore see difficulties. It's right to start with points in common, but you need some principles of unity, some lowest common denominator. There is a problem addressing both old and new people. What level are you pitching this at?" An aside: "DSA isn't important; nobody's heard of it up here."

D) independent, once close to some OCIC people; activist in auto. "EWOC people got us in trouble. Lead to heavy red-baiting. Our caucus became removed from the average worker. Went too far to the left. Raising of the racism issue in a bad way. Too many issues. Charges of dual unionism. How can we defend people in our labor work."

E) x-RWHQ; activist in auto. "Broad socialist propaganda fucks up our labor work. What does it mean to be a socialist? Why do we need a hard-core cadre group; it causes more trouble than it's worth. I would support a journal, but see no need for a revolutionary group."

F) x-RWEQ; activist in public employee organizing drive. "Organization can't start from the books anymore than politics. The rank and file papers in specific unions and the labor paper are good, they deal with real issues. Especially the labor paper level. There is no basis or need for a revolutionary socialist organization. There is a spontaneous discussion which goes on in the movements. Networks are fine."

G) independent, works in local radical center; I did not take notes on my talk with him, however he is non-sectarian, sympathetic to SIO. Indicated that this was not a new idea, but was not chilly to the proposition. Said that presentations would be welcome by either the IS or the regroupment road-show at his center.

Conclusions from experience of this trip:

- 1) Changes is unknown on the left. I gave a few issues to each person with whom I spoke. No one had seen it or read it. It was not in the local book store. Changes circulation is a must.
- 2) Our labor work, in which we take so much pride, is held in low esteem on the Stalinist-Maoist sectarian left toward which we are orienting. One of the sympathetic independents (G above) asked, "Why didn't you have the labor programs or positions of socialist groups at the conference of the labor paper?" We are seen as economist, conservative, and probably racist. We need some new theoretical paper explaining our position on labor, particularly explaining our view that a labor caucus, organization, union, newspaper or whatever is entitled to its own program, its own autonomy, etc., even though we would like to influence that program and organization with our views. Trade union method.
- 3) From the discussion in Chicago with three current RWHQs and with these seven individuals in the Twin Cities, I think we need something like our old Tasks and Perspectives document with an overview of the world situation, U.S. political economy, the social situation, the state of the working class, the state of the left. We need a substantive political statement, something with meat on it, with which to talk to people.
- 4) There are many fascinating stories out there about the political work of leftists (most of it about the stupid political work of leftists). We might try to have some articles about this stuff. For example, what happened to the left caucus at FORD in the Twin Cities in the UAW. Or what happened to the OCIC attempt at regroupment. Or what happened to the ML tendency. With enough such stories we might lay out some general lessons of what not to do. Would anybody be interested?
- 5) The Sojourner Truth Organization has, I was told by a friend of theirs in the Twin Cities, put their dialectics crash course on the road and given in in over 50 locations. They operate through their old network of mid-west ML folks. We need something like that. The IS model would be Marxist Politics with say EC, DF and MP or some such group doing week end stints. Like STO with readings and syllabuses and paraphernalia. There are a lot of hungry folks out there being stuffed full of crap. We might give them a better diet.
- 6) The RWHQ and x-RWHQs tend to ask, "Why do we need a revolutionary organization?" They do the best labor work but are heading rapidly for social democracy or simply assimilation to the working class. It may be too late. A pamphlet reiterating why in simple American language might help.
- 7) Many people think that if they can't understand something then it must be important. That seems to be the attraction of the OCIC, Line of March and Sojourner Truth Organization types (and Theoretical Review and Against the Current to a lesser degree). Many leftists feel insecure and mistake sophistication for substance. I don't know what to do about it.

REPORT ON DEALINGS WITH THE I.S.

INTRODUCTION

We have been working with members of the International Socialists in auto for 4 years now and almost as long in steel. In the last we have developed more contact with thwm: they have a couple of people in the PSN, they attended the Midwest t.u. conference last fall and we are jointly pulling together a Labot Notes forum series in N.Y

In May, 2 c.c. members attended an I.S. national Convention in Detroit as guests. A major topic was left regroupment. The Convention endorsed the approach outlined in the accompanying paper by I.S. leader Kim Moody, a perspective with significant similarities to some of the views being discussed in the RWH. Six Hq folks from different districts met with a similar group from I.S. after the June 12 demo and got a better sense of their proposal and its prospects.

QUICKIE BACKGROUND

I.S.'s family tree goes back to a peculiar tendency called Schactmanism which split from orthodox Trotskyism around 1940, declaring the Soviet Union to be not a "deformed workers state" but an oppressive class society called bureaucratic collectivism. The I.S. itself was formed mainly by older SDS types in the late '60s. Their basic theory is called "Third Camp Socialism"-- the U.S. imperialist camp and the Soviet-led bureaucratic-collectivist camp are the target of the Third Camp, which is defined mainly as the working class movements "from below" in different countries.

In the '70s they were battered as much as most -- several splits and a costly several Party building turn. Today they have under a hundred members. Only Detroit, their stronghold, and one other city have any real collective functioning. On the other hand, their work in the trade union movement has been impressive. They have been the motor for TDU, the most successful rank and file based gx opposition grouping in a major union since Miners for Democracy. Labor Notes is the closest to a national voice the labor left and the reform movement have. A Boston LN conference this spring drew 600 people, most from New England.

Despite its small size and many problems which closely resemble our own, the I.S. seems to have stabilized more successfully. They have two distinct advantages. One is a bureaucratic copy essential to keeping a national organization functioning. The other is an ideology which has in some ways been strengthened rather than battered by the international crisis of Marxism and in particular the development of ~~the~~ Solidarnosc.

POINTS ON THE I.S. REGROUPMENT PROPOSAL

1. It calls for practical political, not ideological, unity. Their ten points roughly overlap with the seven contained the RWH network idea outline. They also agree there has to be some kind of principal dealing with the Soviet Union and feel that the final result will be arrived at through the process of trying to pull off a regroupment.
2. It has no concrete proposal for organizational structure, which our experience teaches is no small problem.
3. It has several things to recommend it. First, success would mean an organization of several hundred people, better able to build struggle and affect society than small sects and independent individuals. Second, it would serve as a pole within the left for the view that opposition to the USSR is necessary and part of a revolutionary world outlook. Third, the need to transcend diverse, historically-based differences would be an impetus towards the development of an American Marxism.

I.S. 2 2 2 2 2

with a revolutionary strategy based on this country's particularities and an American vision of socialism.

§ 4. It has big problems. The main question is whether there are really forces which could be rallied to such an undertaking. So far it looks pretty thin, especially for the already organized forces needed to get the thing under way enough to attract many independents. Beyond that, the problems of a multi-tendency organization -- in agreeing on common practical activity and in debating theoretical and ideological questions without provoking splits -- promise to be lusus.

5. In practical terms we agreed with the I.S. to explore the idea of regroupment in our own ranks and among other MLs. They want to draft a general statement calling for left regroupment and have it discussed by groups, individuals, etc. for revision and publication. It would be followed by a roadshow or two, including us, to travel to different cities and meet with potential participants. On another front they want to bring a special joint issue of changes, their theoretical mag, on trade union work out.

Bear in mind that this option is one of a number RWH folks should be thinking about. We can accept it, reject it, modify it, or pursue it in a limited or exploratory fashion.

From RWHq