



Regroupment Fraction Newsletter

November 1982

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TO: PC
From: Dani
RE: Iowa Regroupment Trip

October 25, 1982
Chicago, Illinois

The trip to Iowa this month was in every sense a success. In summary: I traveled to Iowa City, Waterloo-Cedar Falls and the town of Waverly, gave six talks speaking to about 250 people, held two regroupment meetings and one informal meeting with DSA people, met with about 20 radicals in the course of those meetings, and raised \$80 (\$70 in contributions and \$10 in literature sales) which exactly offset the cost of the travel by bus. I distributed about 75 copies of Changes back issues, about 50 copies of the convention regroupment document and about 50 copies of the pamphlet Why Socialists Need Organization. Our regroupment ideas were met with enthusiasm by some and with interest by others. The trip allowed us to get in touch with Paul and Christy, two x-IS members and put them in contact with other local radicals, socialists.

Iowa City

Monday, October 18

I gave the "In Search of Socialism" talk to a class at the University of Iowa, and some students expressed interest in the ideas and the organization and took literature. Paul, Christy and I held a meeting with members of Revolutionary Workers Headquarters and other socialists active in the New Wave, a campus organization associated with the Progressive Student Network. I laid out the regroupment perspective and they seemed enthusiastic; Paul expressed a willingness to try to work with them.

Tuesday, October 19 AM

I gave two talks "Class War on the Unions" and a "Socialist Perspective on Community Organizing" to two other classes, talked with some students briefly and distributed I.S. literature.

Waterloo-Cedar Falls

Tuesday, October 19 PM

I had an informal meeting with several local DSA members who are professors at the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls. They are active in CISPES, anti-nuclear group (Citizens Against Nuclear War), and in several Democratic Party campaigns. They have 14 DSA members in the area; have not had a meeting in two years. Have no contact with student activists and little if any contact with local labor unions. The DSAers were very hospitable, put me up and fed me and arranged for some talks at classes at the university.

Wednesday, October 20

I gave the "In Search of Socialism" talk twice to university classes at the U. of N.I., again talked with students and distributed literature. Two local radicals had organized a regroupment meeting for that afternoon which was attended by about 10 people including Rusty Martin, a local cause celebre because he is a resister being brought to trial, a couple of campus radicals and a few of the DSAers. The two local radicals expressed enthusiasm for the regroupment idea. They are also looking for help in their political work around draft resistance and other issues (they are both about 19), and I put them in touch with Paul.

Waverly

Wednesday, October 20 PM

Through a community organizer friend I arranged to give a talk at Wartburg College (a Lutheran College bankrolled by John Deere, 1,000 students). The "In Search of Socialism" talk was attended by about 15 students and professors. I made contact with three radical professors. I collected \$70.00 in Waverly.

TO: PC
FROM: Dan
RE: Chicago Regroupment Meeting

October 25, 1982
Chicago, Illinois

The Chicago regroupment meeting was passable and a small step forward. The meeting was attended by 17 people including representatives of RWHq, CPML, SSFN, New World Resource Center, the IS and several x's including x-SWP and x-IS. There was only one RWHq person present, but that seems to have to do with logistics and other arrangements and conflicts of scheduling, rather than with a political change.

Those attending the meeting for the IS were: Dan , Penny, Dennis , Mike and Larry from Chicago and Gary. The SSFN was represented by Cathy C.; the CPML by Jerry; the RWHq by Dino; the New World Resource Center by Jim. The participation of the New World was important since it is a long standing left institution, a collective which operates a book store and research library, holds public forums, and is well respected in the left community. Jim was sent as an official representative; he is also a UE union member and will be attending the labor paper conference, and he is sympathetic to our regroupment perspective. Several x-ISer's attended: Wayne, Loret, Matt, Joe, Bobby. Also Rich, formerly of Canada IS and x-ISO.

The discussion at the meeting revolved around how to organize good discussions of joint work and politics when peoples work is so diverse:-- USWA, UE, R2N2, PHRC, IBT, CISPES, etc. There was no easy answer to such a question, but the question pointed to the need for some locus of left political work and discussion beyond the networks. A few of the x-ISers expressed a desire for a publication as the means of having a left presence, though most others were not interested in that approach. Several people felt that New World would be a natural place to organize a series of discussions in Chicago about regroupment and the future of the left. However, the New World collective has not yet had a discussion of our documents and our position.

The meeting served mainly to get some people acquainted, create some good will, but made no real political progress. As in other cities, the I.S. seems to be respected for having taken the initiative to call such a meeting and to call other similar meetings nationally.

TO: PC
FROM: Dan
RE: Recent regroupment meetings and talks.

November 11, 1982

Regroupment meetings were held Nov. 5 in Philadelphia, Nov. 6 in Washington, D.C., and Nov. 7 in Charlottesville, and a second regroupment meeting was held Nov. 10 in Chicago. These meetings were attended by over 50 people in total, over 50 pieces of I.S. literature was distributed, \$34.00 toward travel was raised in collections at two meetings.

- 1) Philadelphia: The meeting in Philadelphia was organized by Mike, held in the home of two Solidarity: A Socialist-Feminist Network (SSFN) members, and was attended by one Revolutionary Workers Headquarters (RWHq) member, three members of the New Organization for an American Revolution (NOAR), and one member of the International Socialist Organization (ISO). Three of those in attendance were Blacks. Dan made a presentation of the IS regroupment proposal; the response was sympathetic, but there is a feeling that no one knows how to get to stage two. Lee of RWHq made some suggestions regarding work on tasks, etc. Paul of SSFN suggested the idea of a Marxist school, probably begun as a political discussion group, which might provide a common locus for regroupment discussions. Dan created a little friction with SSFN members and NOAR in discussion of "feminist process," too abrasive, but no serious damage done.
- 2) Washington: The meeting in Washington was organized by Mike, held in the home of two SSFN members, and was attended by about four Catholic pacifists, a couple of feminist anti-pornography activists, other movement activists. No RWHq people attended, though they were notified. Total attendance: 15. The meeting was difficult because most of those present did not know each other, did not work in same arenas, were not all revolutionary socialists. The feeling was that those present were not engage. La Botz made the IS presentation, there was little response at first. Mike U. spoke forcefully for the regroupment perspective as well and helped to move the discussion along. Finally the group decided to have an on-going political discussion and arrangements were made for the first meeting, including hall, leaflets, etc. at which Mike will report back from the conference of labor activists to take place in Detroit.
- 3) Charlottesville: Dan delivered the talk on "In Search of Socialism" to a public meeting organized by the Charlottesville Socialist and Feminist Alliance, a group on the campus of the U. of Va. About 20 people attended the talk, it was followed by an exciting discussion that lasted about two hours and included a discussion of the regroupment perspective. Most of those in this organization are in their early 20s, came to the movement as Quaker pacifists, environmentalists, and feminists. One young woman said she had been radicalized reading Ms. Magazine as a young person, and subsequently got involved in environmentalist activities. The group also had a brief business meeting which was very efficient and serious; they hold forums on a number of different issues and are engaged in many local movement activities. The meeting was very interesting and exciting and one of the best so far. (PS: One of the members of the group is a 14-year old high school girl who argued forcefully and politically for her opinions.)
- 4) Chicago: A second regroupment meeting was held in Chicago organized by S. a professor at University of Illinois Circle Campus. She personally sent invitations to about 25 professors and students asking them to attend. The meeting was attended by nine people, mainly feminists and gay activists, including one DSA member, one member of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (LRS), and members of several campus and city feminists organizations. The presentations

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were made by Dan for the IS, Cathy for SSFN, and Richie for RWHq. Following the presentations, S., the organizer of the meeting, spoke very enthusiastically about regroupment. The discussion was very good and very supportive of the ideas of regroupment, again with the feeling that it's hard to envision stage two. People liked the idea of ~~xx~~ quasi-public forums among leftists to discuss the future.

As in all the other trips, our members and friends were very helpful in arranging travel, providing housing, helping with food, organizing the meetings. All of the meetings were basically friendly and cooperative. As one can see from the description of those involved (feminist and gay activists, Blacks and whites, Quaker and Catholic pacifists, environmentalists, labor activists) the diversity of the groups makes a common discussion somewhat difficult. And despite the fact that there is difficulty in trying to figure out how to go forward, there is interest in going forward, and in some cases real enthusiasm.

TO: PC
FROM: Dan
RE: National Regroupment Meeting

November 15, 1982

At the initiative of the I.S., a meeting of representatives of a number of socialist organizations and of individuals was held this month. The groups which sent representatives to the meeting include:

- 1) Workers Power (WP) - 2 people present
- 2) Revolutionary Workers Headquarters (RWHq) - 2 people present
- 3) Federation of Revolutionary Socialists (FRS) (formerly the Communist Party Marxist Leninist, CPML) - 1 person present
- 4) Proletarian Unity League (PUL) - 1 person present
- 5) League of Revolutionary Struggle (LRS) - 2 people present
- 6) International Socialist Organization (ISO) - 3 people present
- 7) Christians for Socialism, Detroit Chapter (CFS) - 1 person present
- 8) City Life, Boston - 1 person present.

There were 29 people at the meeting: five women, one Black, one other minority person. There were 11 independent socialists and five IS members.

Solidarity: A Socialist-Feminist Network (SSFN) sent a letter to be read at the meeting (see attachments). North Star Socialist Collective (Minn) expressed regret at not being able to attend due to logistical problems.

Dan presented an evaluation of the process to date to the group and proposed the next steps for the regroupment process (see attachments). Carol then led a discussion in an attempt to see where things stood and what amount of interest and enthusiasm existed. In the course of the discussion we can say that the groups took the following positions, roughly speaking:

- 1) WP - non-committal officially, but actually chilly toward the process by raising differences with the I.S.
- 2) RWHq - indicated they do not necessarily share our goal of a new organization, but spoke in favor of continuing the process and indicated a willingness to take some responsibility.
- 3) FRS (formerly CPML) - indicated they do not share our goal of a new organization, but spoke rather enthusiastically about continuing the process and willingness to take some responsibility.
- 4) PUL - spoke in favor of the process and seemed willing to help.
- 5) LRS - indicated a willingness to talk. However, indicated they are not in the process, do not want to contribute to the creation of a regroupment trend.
- 6) ISO - said they thought discussion on the left was good, sceptical about process of regroupment, highly doubt possibility of new organization.
- 7) CFS - group has not yet had a discussion, but individual present is enthusiastic about the process and seemed willing to get involved.
- 8) City Life - spoke in favor of the process, indicated some willingness to help.

The result of the discussion which took place was that several groups indicated they would help to one degree or another to organize local meetings of a quasi-public character, basically inviting people through the socialist and movement networks. It was felt the local meetings would be most successful if they dealt with the role of socialists in the labor movement, since this is an area in which we have the most cooperation and experience. It was also felt that such local

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would help to build the trust, confidence, and mutual understanding which would make a national conference on the role of socialists in the labor movement a success.

There was some difference of opinion among the IS members who attended the meeting on how it should be characterized. However, it was basically successful in moving some of those with whom we have worked most closely to take more responsibility for this process in which all of our organizations have a shared interest. RWHq, FRS (formerly CPML), PUL, City Life and CFS all made positive contributions to the meeting, as did a few of the independents. Some I.S. members felt the meeting was lacking in enthusiasm and the level of commitment was low. Those closer to the process over the last five months felt somewhat more optimistic, understanding that this is going to be an extended process. Our report to the meeting was correct, there is enough interest and energy to go forward.

TO: PC

Nov. 15, 1982

The following letter was sent by Paul from the Philadelphia chapter of Solidarity: A Socialist Feminist Network (SSFN) to the national regroupment meeting held this month:

Nov. 14

Statement from Solidarity: A Socialist-Feminist Network.

Solidarity was unable to send a representative to this meeting on regroupment, but we appreciate the initiative taken by I.S. to hold a discussion of regroupment. Solidarity is committed to furthering this regroupment process. We are exploring several alternative ways of carrying out that commitment.

At the national level we are holding talks about possible directions for regroupment with I.S., Workers Power, and the Socialist Party. At a local level, we are meeting with members of these and other left organizations to discuss our work and the issue of regroupment.

Solidarity recognizes that no one political tradition has a monopoly on the truth. Our own organization is politically diverse, although we are united around a basic political perspective that is revolutionary, democratic, socialist-feminist and anti-racist. We are interested in discussions of regroupment that could help pull together the best of different left traditions.

The recent labor conference made it clear that we have a lot to learn from the experiences of the organized left in the labor movement. Solidarity's own priorities at this point are reproductive rights organizing, anti-militarism, and anti-racist work; we hope that regroupment would strengthen both our own work and the work of others in these areas.

Solidarity at local and national levels will consider participating in broader left discussions of political issues facing us, as soon as we have a concrete proposal in front of us.