



PRESS RELEASE

the International Workers Association

Workers Solidarity Alliance

U.S. Section of the International Workers Association

New York Group

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WORKERS SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE HOLDS 7TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

Over the weekend of May 25-27, 1990 the Workers Solidarity Alliance, U.S. Section of the anarcho-syndicalist International Workers Association, held its 7th National Convention in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Represented at this convention were delegates from all regions of the Workers Solidarity Alliance-I.W.A. (WSA-IWA). The 7th national was also the largest since the formation of the WSA-IWA in November 1984. This convention also saw a good mix of women, men, young and old.

Greetings to this convention were received by many Sections of the IWA. Greetings were received from the IWA Secretariat who stated that the WSA's effort at promoting solidarity was "second to none". Greetings were also received from IWA Sections in Denmark, Norway, Italy, Argentina, France, Britain, Australia and Brazil. Greetings were also received from the Bulgarian anarcho-syndicalists in exile and from a pro-IWA group in Switzerland.

Keeping with tradition reports were submitted by the National Secretary, International Secretary and Treasurer. The National Secretary reported that the WSA-IWA has seen a growth in membership since our 1989 convention. The National Secretary stressed the need for greater growth and a more systematic development of workplace organization. Later in the convention it was agreed to form networks of WSA militants in similar workplace sectors.

The WSA International Secretary reported on his activities during the past year which have included a trip to the Spanish National Confederation of Labor-IWA (CNT-AIT) VII National Congress, maintenance of contact with various IWA Sections and international anarchist groups.

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INTERNACIA LABORISTA ASOCIO
ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES TRAVAILLEURS
INTERNATIONAL WORKER'S ASSOCIATION
INTERNATIONALE ARBEITER-ASSOCIATION
ASOCIACION INTERNACIONAL DE LOS TRABAJADORES
ASSOCIAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE DEI LAVORATORI

Following the Treasurer's report came reports from the National Committee. The National Committee is composed of representatives from the WSA's four geographical regions. Despite some self-criticism concerning the functioning of the National Committee by some National Committee members, it was generally agreed that the current structure should be maintained.

Reports were then given by all local groups present. It was generally reported that each local group is active in several areas. WSA groups continue to be active in such areas as the workplace, pro-abortion movement, strike support, anti-nuclear and anti-militarist activities, propaganda (leaflets, bulletins and "Ideas & Action"), educationals, cooperative activities with other libertarian workers (including local IWW groups in San Francisco, Baltimore and Boston). Further activities include Anarchist Black Cross prisoner support, and continued international solidarity.

Given the specific interest and activities in two specific areas, Latin America and Eastern Europe, the WSA established last year two Working Group's in these fields. The Latin American group reported on contacts with both IWA and non-IWA organizations and a trip made to Mexico. The East European group reported on the publication of its quarterly newsbulletin, "East European News". This group also reported on its contacts with anarchists and libertarian workers in Central and Eastern Europe as well. It was agreed to maintain the activities of these groups and to redouble their efforts.

Given the fact that this was the first convention for many of the participants it was agreed to have an open discussion ("round robin") on what each member sees as the pluses and minuses of the WSA and what can be done to make the WSA a larger and more effective organization. It was generally agreed that the WSA needs to attract more women and to encourage the female members to take a more active role in the organizational life of the WSA. It was further stated that we need to make more community links to our activities, while all the while not separating such links from our overall activism.

Further comments made concerned building an anti-bureaucratic unionist movement; educating people about the new society we would like to see and better educating ourselves as well; more participation in writing articles, etc. for "Ideas & Action"; more emphasis on linking environmental issues to the workplace/workers' struggle; more coordination of WSA workplace activities; expanding our activities as it concerns people of color and gays; criticism of being locked too much in the anarchist ghetto; using more effectively propaganda (both print and video); and further emphasis should be placed on our connections with the IWA.

Following on the heels of this open discussion WSA comrades moved into specific discussions on how to carry out many of the activities described above.

It was agreed, as a starter, to set up a Public Sector Working Group to share information and coordinate activities of WSA public sector workers. It was further agreed that an organizing manual would also be produced to help aid and inform comrades in their workplace organizing activities.

It was also agreed that WSA should step up its public and internal organizing activities and there was agreement to produce more WSA literature, have a higher profile at public events, hold regional conferences (where practical) and to carry out concerted May Day events in 1991, to mention just a few items.

Probably one of the more interesting discussions, and certainly one of the highlights of the convention, was the discussion of "Women, Anarcho-Syndicalism and the WSA". This was a very positive and forward looking discussion, as well as being self-critical.

In an effort to break out of the mold of being a basically male dominated organization, WSA women presented a five-point proposal which was adopted by the convention. The proposal includes the formation of a group that would promote women and anarcho-syndicalism, both within and outside of the WSA. It was further agreed that literature concerning women and the workplace would be produced. Further agreement was reached concerning the recruitment of more women into the WSA by the 1991 convention and that each group and region will be responsible for such recruitment.

Another topic of significant discussion concerned the "WSA and the Environment". It was generally agreed that the environment and its current destruction is of great importance to workers. WSA members expressed this concern time and time again. Some were critical that the WSA has not paid enough attention to this important matter. In an effort to do so it was agreed to tie the environment into our workplace, educational and agitational activities. It was further agreed to add an additional section to our statement of principles ("Where We Stand"). Included in this section will not only be a general analysis of why the environment is of great importance to workers, but also a call to "engage in and encourage direct action to defend the environment".

In other business the WSA 7th National Convention passed resolutions concerning its constitution, finances, WSA and the general anarchist movement (including the newspaper "Love and Rage"), "Ideas & Action", the "Anarchist Labor Bulletin" and on relations with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

In regards to relations with the IWW it was agreed that the WSA "should go on record expressing our general sense of solidarity with the IWW as a revolutionary workers organization, and...our continued willingness to work with them on a local as well as national basis..."

The convention reaffirmed a National Committee proposal concerning possible IWW affiliation to the International Workers Association. The proposal stated, and affirmed by the IWA Secretariat, that since the WSA is the U.S. affiliate of the IWA all negotiations concerning IWW affiliation to the IWA must be conducted between the US Section and the IWW.

Lastly nominations for National Secretary, Treasurer, International Secretary and National Committee were placed. In the spirit of seeking greater participation of our female members, two women were nominated to the positions of National Secretary and National Committee representative for the Mid-West region.

In closing it was agreed by all that this was the best convention to date. A high degree of comraderie was reinforced and any differences that occurred were worked out in the best traditions of comradeship.

The 8th National Convention will be held from May 24 - 26, 1991 in Fort Wayne, Indiana.