

1992

# Workers Solidarity Alliance

U.S. Section of the International Workers Association

## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

### WORKERS SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE HOLDS NINTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

The Workers Solidarity Alliance, U.S. Section of the International Workers Association, held its Ninth Annual Convention in New York City, May 22 - 24, 1992.

Members from all WSA regions (Northeast, Southern, Mid-western and Western) were in attendance. Also present were observers from the new I.W.A. Secretariat (Valencia, Spain), the Confederation of Brazilian Workers (local Belem-Pa), the Workers Solidarity Movement (Ireland), Budapest Anarchist Group (Hungary), Network of Black Organizers, N.Y. Branch of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), Anarchist League (New Jersey), Libertarian Book Club (N.Y.C.), the Love and Rage Network and Wooden Shoe Books (Philadelphia).

In addition to those attending the convention, greetings were also received from the Direct Action Movement-IWA (Britain), the Free Workers Union-IWA (Germany), the Confederation of Brazilian Workers (National Committee, Sao Palo), Center for Documentation and Union Studies 'Clotario Blest' (Chile), Anarcho-Democratic Union (St. Petersburg, Russia) and the San Francisco State Rank-and-File Movement (California).

As is customary, the first order of business were reports of the three national officers, the National Secretary, National Treasurer and International Secretary.

The National Secretary reported that the WSA has gained some new members since our last convention in Fort Wayne, Indiana last year. In fact, a couple of new members (who were attending as observers) joined the WSA at the convention, further extending WSA membership in the Southern region (Virginia) and the Northeast (Philadelphia).

The National Secretary further reported on our generally friendly relations with the I.W.W. The convention agreed that if it is possible the WSA should send observers to the 1992 I.W.W. convention.

The National Treasurer reported on the state of WSA finances and a further discussion on the matter continued under our discussion of finances. As with all revolutionary workers' organizations, funding a multitude of projects are difficult but important. In an effort to continue to fund our press projects a Nick Keirn Memorial Fund was established. This Fund is dedicated to an early member of the WSA who was tragically killed in a car crash in late 1991. It was further agreed to establish a Fundraising Committee in an effort to supplement our cash flow necessary to carry out the activities of the organization.

The International Secretary reported on the international work of the WSA. The report spoke about WSA attendance at the IWA XIX Congress this past April. It was further reported that the WSA maintains contact with revolutionary workers' organizations and the libertarian movement throughout the globe. The WSA continues to play an important part in the work of the I.W.A. and consideration was given to attending the 2nd Inter-American IWA Conference in Brazil this Fall. The I.W.A. General Secretary spoke of the importance of the I.W.A. and how the future is bright for anarcho-syndicalism given the fall of state socialism in the former SR and in consideration of the problems of the so-called "new world order".

Founded in 1984, the WSA coordinates the activities of anarchist unionists (anarcho-syndicalists) in Alabama, California, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Washington.

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A discussion further on in the convention further addressed other international issues as well. The WSA resolved to further aid the work of the I.W.A. and agreed to a dues increase that was proposed at the XIX IWA Congress this past Spring. Our agreement is contingent upon passage by a majority of I.W.A. Sections.

Reports were also heard from the WSA Working Groups on Sexism & Feminism and East Europe.

Local groups reported on their various activities since the 1991 convention. WSA local groups have been involved in a whole of activities such as attempting to build independent unions, rank-and-file activities in reformist unions, various forms of workers solidarity, production/distribution of literature, participation in various demonstrations and general educational activities.

On the issue of literature, the WSA has agreed to publish **ideas & action** once yearly as a theoretical magazine. A new publication has been issued by the WSA called **workers solidarity**. This newsletter will appear bi-monthly and will contain news and views on current events and activities. The WSA has also agreed to issue a couple of new pamphlets this coming year.

Two important discussions also took place at this year's convention. The first was on the issue of racism. The discussion was lively and critical. All participants were critical that the anarchist unionist movement has yet been able to reach out across color lines. Various views were expressed as to why this is so and how best to further get our ideas across to people of color. All agreed that there are many complexities to this issue given that, as anarchists, we are against nationalism. We all agreed that autonomy and multi-racial unity with a working class perspective are key elements in helping to get our message across to people of color. It was further agreed that the WSA must do all that it can to build a broad based multi-racial revolutionary workers' movement and it was discussed how we can best do that in practical ways.

The second issue of importance focused in on workplace organizing and the formation "industrial networks". Industrial networks are multi-workplace networks of militants in the same economic sector. As anarchist unionists this discussion was quite important since we believe that the class struggle in the workplace as being key to our beliefs, focus and practical activities.

It was agreed that the WSA should actively form such networks, with two being established for the Education and Public Service sectors. A comradely yet intense discussion took place as to whether or not the future networks should be open only to WSA members (thereby setting up WSA affiliated unions) or should be open to all militants regardless of whether or not they belong to the WSA. It was also discussed whether or not the WSA should immediately transform itself into a confederation of unions or remain a national anarchist unionist propaganda organization. Ultimately it was agreed that the WSA should continue to discuss the issues at hand, yet at the same time do all that is possible to pave the way towards a more established nation-wide workplace policy. Currently WSA militants are generally active as individuals in their own workplaces without systematic coordination with others in their field of work.

Other discussions took place on such issues as women and sexism, anti-militarism and ecology. Further discussions also involved on how we could best build promote anarchist unionist ideas in the U.S. and also how to build the WSA.

Elections were also held for the 1993 National Committee. It was also agreed that the 10th National Convention of the Workers Solidarity Alliance will be held in San Fransisco, California, May 29 - 30, 1993.

As is customary, the participants closed the convention with recap of the events which took place during our deliberations. All agreed that this convention was one of the best to date. Participants agreed that we are well on the way to building a stronger WSA. One with a clear and practical vision of where we want to go and how we want to get there.

WSA Press Release 92-03

June 1992

## **Workers Solidarity Alliance**

**U.S. Section of the International Workers Association**

**New York Area Group**

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