

Workers Solidarity Alliance

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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WORKERS SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE-IWA HOLDS 10TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

The Workers Solidarity Alliance, U.S. Section of the International Workers Association, held its 10th Annual Convention in San Francisco, California May 28-30 1993.

WSA members from the Western, Southern and Northeastern regions attended the convention. Also present were observers from California and a three person delegation from the German IWA Section, the Free Workers Union (FAU).

Greetings were received from the IWA Secretariat, Friends of IWA (Switzerland), Italian Syndicalist Union-IWA (USI), FAU, Norwegian Syndicalist Federation-IWA, Brazilian Workers Confederation-IWA (COB), The Free Union (Holland), Finnish Anarchist Federation-IWA, Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), Workers Solidarity Movement (Ireland), Initiative of Revolutionary Anarchists (IREAN, Moscow), Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists (KAS, Moscow), Italian Anarchist Federation (FAI) and the Japanese Anarchist Federation.

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

The National Secretary reported the "continued publication of 'Workers Solidarity' on a timely basis... (has)... offered documentary evidence of our existence... and in the process... have increased interest in WSA ... We have seen an increase of membership in both the midwest and northeast. In addition, an international campaign aimed toward freeing our comrades in the Nigerian Awareness League has been successfully organized, with demonstrations occurring in several countries and hundreds of signatures gathered on petitions. Our level of member workplace activity has increased dramatically, with members helping to form the Temp Workers Union in San Francisco... democratizing a security guards union in Silicon Valley (CA), organizing furniture workers in Alabama, and continuing activity among education workers ... (and) ... the first issue of a public sector newsletter... will be distributed shortly. "In fact, we have never been more solid ... "

A National Treasurer's report was submitted. It was agreed that we must do more to increase our financial strength and ability to maintain timely reporting practices.

At this convention a replacement International Secretary was found. The previous one resigned from the position in April.

A further discussion on international issues took place during the course of the convention. The convention went on record supporting the reactivation of our Latin American Working Group. Reports and discussions were also held on future IWA events, the IWA English Language Discussion Bulletin, Nigerian solidarity and happenings in other IWA Sections. The FAU delegation gave a good report on the situation in Germany and the state of the FAU. Our East European Working Group reported on their activities and the current situation in Central and Eastern Europe.

International Workers Association



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Local groups reported on their various activities since the 1992 convention. WSA local groups have been involved in the production of propaganda (notably "Workers Solidarity"), workplace activities and solidarity actions and campaigns.

There was a general discussion of WSA Working Groups, with particular emphasis on the Sexism & Feminism Working Group. It was agreed that more should participate in this working group. Participants also agreed that this working group should act as the WSA's contact point and develop positions and position papers for the 1994 IWA sponsored conference on Sexuality.

Probably the toughest discussions of the convention centered on internal organization. This year saw a number of internal problems come to the surface. It was agreed that there needs to be improvements in internal communication and follow-up on ideas and projects. Our financial standing must greatly be improved and there should be some restructuring of the three national officer positions. Greater membership participation in internal matters can only prevent burn-out and over dependence on a few comrades. We also discussed the need to find the right balance between workplace, community and social activities. Despite some of the tough issues at hand, and in typical WSA fashion, we were able to overcome all of the problems in a comradely way.

The best discussions concerned workplace networks/organizing and focus areas. At our 1992 convention we began a formal and detailed discussion on the nature and role of networks of workplace militants in the same industry or service. Throughout the year the issue was discussed and debated, as mandated by the previous convention. Our 1993 convention saw a resolution of the issues of structure and whether or not WSA initiated networks should be directly affiliated to the WSA or not. It was agreed that workplace networks are a cornerstone in the promotion of workers' solidarity and a foundation for the building of revolutionary unions, councils or assemblies. The participants agreed on the need to be flexible in our approach and that the networks should be open to all worker militants and, thus, they would be independent of WSA. All agreed that our goal is to help promote and build an alternative and revolutionary labor movement. A workers' movement built by radical workers and which is absolutely independent of the reformist unions.

As has become customary, we reviewed a number of focus areas that members have a particular interest in or that WSA should pay special attention to. One of the points discussed was racism and the need for anarchist unionists to fight it both at work and in the community and for WSA to make a particular effort to reach more people of color. We also agreed to cover this issue more in our press as well as in our activities. In the near future WSA plans to issue a pamphlet anarchist unionism and racism.

The participants then turned their attention to a proposal to create a Defense & Support Committee. This was passed. This committee will consist of at least one member of each group. As well as any other interested WSA members.

Another topic discussed was the general anarchist movement in the U.S. and relations with the IWW. It was agreed to maintain friendly and cooperative relations with the IWW, "Love & Rage" and the Anarchist Youth Federation.

The final order of business was nominations for the 1994 National Committee and place and date for next convention. The 1994 convention will be in Atlanta, Georgia, May 27-29 1994.

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

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