

HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING IN DES MOINES

People here in Des Moines are interested in exchanging notes with other anarchists and libertarians on the work we are each doing locally. A lot can be learned from each other's experiences. This article is a brief summary of current work here in Des Moines.

OUR POLITICAL GROUP REORGANIZES

For years radicals in Des Moines have been in study-action groups together. These groups were mainly affinity groups. This spring we decided that we were at the point of wanting to grow and that we needed to become a membership organization-- a group with a clear joining process and requirements for membership. In this way people will join because of unity on political ideas instead of through first getting to be our friends.

We have taken in some new members since this reorganization and are at our limits for group size. Our plans are to divide into two groups based on action focuses and for these groups to belong to a federation. This federation would have a common level of unity on political analysis and would jointly work out strategy for political action here in Des Moines. The small groups would be able, at the same time, to concentrate energy on their particular action focus, enabling more in-depth work. In the future each group plans to grow by taking in new members until they reach an optimum size and then, once again, divide into two groups. In this way we can keep small groups as our basic arena for work, while maintaining a broader outlook and work through the federation.

We will be dividing soon. After this first division, one small group will be concentrating on healthcare organizing. The other group will not have a particular action focus until we can clarify our strategy for Des Moines more fully. Possible action focuses are: agri-business and clerical organizing. We need to find out more about Des Moines and what work will have the most effect before we can pick other action focuses.

The rest of our work at this time is listed below in terms of actions we are engaged in.

HEALTH CARE ORGANIZING

The health care group is presently working at one of the local hospitals. Work there includes three levels:

- 1) Supporting a union organizing drive. The drive is with 1199 and is not yet a public campaign. One of the main problems has been a tension between needing to be more public to build strength and remaining covert to prevent harassment and isolation of those active in the effort.
- 2) Developing individual progressive workers. We are developing plans of action to motivate these people and to work on their blocks toward taking a more active stance. We also place a high priority on spending time with these workers.
- 3) Building for an independent worker's organization. Right now this is at the stage of presenting more about our politics to workers, pointing out the need for an independent organization, and engaging in direct actions at the workplace.

WORKER'S UNITY WORKSHOPS

We are developing a workshop giving our analysis of capitalism and class for people at our workplaces. Strong emphasis is placed on how race, sex, age, etc. divide workers. Also emphasis is placed on analyzing participant's own experiences. Games, discussion, film and short lectures are the main mode for giving information, as opposed to reading. A reading list is provided along with supplemental readings for those interested. We see ourselves conducting these workshops as an ongoing action. We plan to structure workshops for different types of groups to allow participants to analyze their common experiences.

RESOURCE CENTER

We are trying to pool our books, periodicals, and articles together in one place with them organized for easy access. We want to make this center, which would include a mimeo and typewriter, available for use by progressive people outside our organization. We see this as a first step toward eventually opening some kind of store front resource center. This step is, however, quite a bit down the road.

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSPAPER

Some of our members are participating in a neighborhood paper which involves other progressive people, some consider themselves radicals, others do not. The paper is distributed in the neighborhood door to door and at drop points. It has met with fairly good response so far. The paper is new and its future is uncertain.

Other activities center around trying to maintain contact with progressive people in town and trying to involve them in activities as well as informing them about our group's work.

We are also trying to build more contacts on a movement basis and thus participate in several newsletters as well as maintaining correspondence. In fact we are responsible for putting out the next issue of the Anarcho-Feminist communications bulletin which is a merger of the Anarcho-feminist Network Notes and the Anarcho-feminist communications bulletin which came out of the Socialist-Feminist conference in '75. So send any news or articles for the bulletin to: Karen Johnson 1821 8th St. Des Moines, Iowa 50314

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Redwing Worker's Organization
Des Moines, Iowa