

Organizing committee on rise

American Leftists must unite, socialist says

By MIKE RUST
Of the Emerald

"The only way the Left will survive the '80s is through coalition," says Ray Levitt of the Eugene chapter of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee.

With a nationwide membership of approximately 4,000, DSOC (pronounced deesock) is considered to be the largest organization on the American democratic Left.

Formed out of a split in the Socialist Party in the early '70s, DSOC includes such prominent Americans as author Michael Harrington, labor leaders Victor Reuther and William Winpinger, feminist Gloria Steinem and U.S. Rep. Ron Dellums (D-Calif.).

The local DSOC chapter, which held an organizational meeting earlier this week, is currently small in numbers, but Levitt, a graduate student in the University's Labor Education and Research Center, hopes the group will grow to the point where it can provide a body of activists for service in progressive causes.

"The myth that shrouds DSOC is that it's a paper organization," Levitt says. "There's a lot of energy there."

In the past, the local chapter has been involved with other activist groups in such events as Big Business Day and Big Oil Day. Levitt has also worked with the Lane Coalition to Save Jobs.

One aspect of DSOC that has distinguished it from other Left-leaning groups on the national level has been its activity within the Democratic Party. The organization was the chief sponsor of the Democratic Agenda—a coalition within the Democratic Party that fought at the 1978 Democratic midterm convention and last summer's national convention for platform planks supporting national health insurance and full employment and opposing federal budget cutbacks in public service programs.

DSOC supported Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) for the Democratic presidential nomination despite ideological differences. Levitt says that while most DSOC members probably agree with the positions taken

by Barry Commoner, last year's Citizens party nominee, it's "pretty unfeasible" for a third party to succeed in America.

DSOC was one of two rival groups to form after the collapse of the old Socialist party in 1972. DSOC attracted most of the anti-war element within the party while the smaller, more hawkish Social Democrats gathered some members of the AFL-CIO.

However, Levitt says DSOC has attracted a number of members of the labor movement, including Winpinger, the president of the United Auto Workers Machinists Union, and Jerry Wurf of AFSCME. The group has also participated in the Progressive Alliance, which was formed in 1978 by the UAW and consists of 85 minority, consumer, women's, liberal and labor groups.

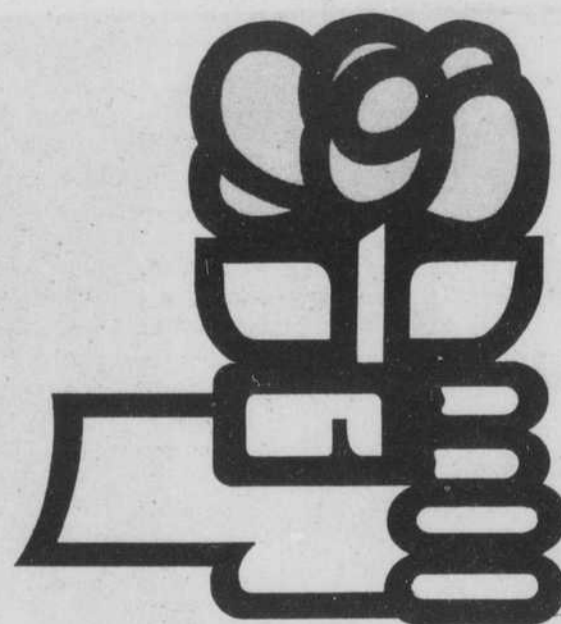
The Alliance has been active in lobbying for passage of plant-closure legislation and the "Corporate Democracy Act," which called for more corporate disclosure, representation of workers on boards of directors and tougher sanctions against white-collar crime.

On both the local and national levels, DSOC has worked with the New American Movement (NAM), another democratic socialist group. The possibility of merger between the two groups is a much-discussed issue within DSOC, Levitt says.

DSOC does not work with Communists, Levitt says.

While socialism is linked with bureaucracy and big government in the minds of many, DSOC members disagree.

"I see socialism working on a local level more than anything else," says local DSOC member Rose Beachy. "DSOC is no advocate of big government," Levitt agrees.



Democratic Socialist logo

Levitt doesn't see a backlash against socialism in social democratic countries such as the United Kingdom and Sweden which have turned out socialist-oriented governments in recent years.

"A lot of it has to do with the fact that those socialist policies were never implemented to the extent to which they were meant," he says.

Good theory doesn't neces-

sarily lead to good administration, Levitt says, and without competent administration, the theory cannot be carried through.

"Anything that's half-baked is going to fail," he says.

"Michael Harrington says that history is very sloppy," Levitt says. "You never really know what you're going to end up with, but you try to move in the right direction. I think moving to the Left is the right direction."

Idaho game officer shot; partner, killer hunted

MURPHY, Idaho (AP — The body of a state conservation officer was found Wednesday by police who combed a remote area of southwestern Idaho after a witness said he saw two officers gunned down while investigating alleged illegal deer hunting.

The body of state Fish and

Game Department conservation officer Wilson Elms, 34, apparently shot to death Monday, was found in the Owyhee River, the Idaho State Police said.

A search continued in the rugged area for the second officer and for a Owyhee County trapper charged with killing the two.

A two-count, first-degree murder warrant against Claude Lafayette Dallas, 30, was issued Wednesday by Third District Magistrate Charles Jurries. Owyhee County Deputy Sheriff Jim Bish said the FBI obtained a warrant charging Dallas with unlawful flight to avoid prosecution.

Department of Fish and Game spokesman Hugh Wilson identified the officer still missing as William Pogue, 50. Both officers were from Boise.



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