

REPORTS and CORRESPONDENCE

ILWCH Business Meeting

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Nick Salvatore chaired the meeting at the 1982 American Historical Association convention and presented two main topics for the agenda: 1. a thorough discussion of the financial crisis facing the group and 2. the election of national and regional officers pending the outcome of the first discussion. David Montgomery then discussed the difficulties facing ILWCH.

At the outset he stressed that the problem was not with editorial content. Indeed, there were enough manuscripts on hand of quite good quality to fill a number of issues. Rather the core of the problem was financial, and centered on a longterm decline in subscriptions. In 1981, there were 135 institutional subs and 481 individual ones. While the institutional subs went up somewhat in 1982 to 160, the individual subs dropped to 354. In a letter he had sent out in September to the editorial board and the national and regional coordinators, David had held out hope that some money might be available from the Robert Wheeler Memorial Fund at USC. Through the efforts of Vera Wheeler and Steve Ross, the trustees of the fund have agreed to forward the remaining money. Even when the money arrives, however, the crisis would remain. Montgomery suggested that the drop in subs could indicate a basic lack of interest. With that somber introduction, he suggested three options for the membership to consider. First, ILWCH could find an honorable way to close up shop, handing over manuscripts and membership lists to another likely journal. Second, ILWCH might find a useful way to continue publication in the present form. If this were to occur, and the financial problems overcome, however, two other conditions would also have to be met: a. the journal would need a revised editorial board which was willing to actively solicit and edit manuscripts; b. the journal desperately needs a business manager, as he can no longer attempt to cover all the various tasks. (It was suggested that this position might also be important to solving the financial crisis as such a person could concentrate on building

subs and fund raising.) Finally, he suggested that ILWCH might merge with another journal, notably the *Radical History Review*. Montgomery had had very preliminary and non-binding discussions with some of the *RHR* editors earlier that day. He noted that such a merger presented certain problems, for ILWCH focused on the working class whereas *RHR* was broader; and ILWCH was not political in the same way *RHR* was. Nonetheless, three possibilities emerged from his discussions. Assuming the feasibility of merging business operations for lower cost and efficiency, ILWCH might appear as a section of each issue of *RHR*; appear as one complete issue of *RHR* each year; or have the traditional ILWCH content (review essays, book reviews and the special reports on major conferences) appear once a year as an issue of *RHR* and have the remaining ILWCH news and reports in the *RHR Newsletter*, which appears four times a year.

After a long discussion by the 20 or so people who remained, the clear sense of the meeting was that ILWCH should remain as presently structured at least for the following year. To achieve this, however, will require substantial money and, as David repeatedly stressed, a business manager. To reach a breakeven point, ILWCH needs about 200 new subscribers (assuming no current ones are lost). There is also a need for immediate money for printing bills and for the costs of any fund raising circulars. Two approaches were suggested to begin to meet this end. Supporters were asked to search out their institutions for aid, either in the form of direct donations or in kind, such as help with mailings. Second, it was proposed that all subscribers try to sign up between 5 and 10 new subs within the coming year. A circular announcing this drive will come out shortly.

The meeting then reelected all the current officers, with the exception of the Midwest regional coordinator, Mike Hanagan, who has moved on. With hope we adjourned to San Francisco next December.