

Report from Massachusetts CCDS monthly meeting group on ideas for future of CCDS / the 2020 national convention

Massachusetts CCDS has met continuously since the founding in 1992. A small group still holds monthly meetings and has connections with a number of local activists and organizations.

The CCDS future directions topic has been discussed at several meetings, including the documents sent by the national organization. This topic will be central to the 2020 convention discussions.

Response is preliminary; there is agreement:

-- CCDS should continue in a new form, keeping as many members together as possible

-- learn from the CCDS experience to outline a new type of socialist/Left political organization which could attract new participants

- Merge positive aspects of the different proposals
- Make the best use of CCDS members' considerable political knowledge
- Make a unique and valuable contribution to struggles
- Emphasize the unity of theory and practice
- Function under the popular education model:
 - o Evaluate results of every activity
 - o Conduct criticism and self-criticism
 - o Learning is continual and collective
 - o Dogmatism is not tolerated

Here are some preliminary thoughts on transforming CCDS into a new type of political organization. We reach out to others for open dialogue. CCDS members have much they can contribute to the movement on issues such as anti-imperialism, the centrality of the struggle against racism, the importance of the working class, and the history of the communist and socialist movements. How can this be organized so it is effective, productive and attractive to others?

Transformation into something new is required so that CCDS will start growing again. This transformation is not a new idea. The founders of CofC understood that the original organization would need to help create something much bigger

than what we were, even as they didn't have a crystal ball to tell them how to do it. This needs collective discussion.

A transformed CCDS needs a program with a clear priority and focus on a concrete political activity. We would select this activity on the basis of making a unique and valuable contribution to struggle, taking into account the combined experience and availability of our members along with the others that we would attract to join with us to make it successful. Results of efforts to carry out this activity are assessed according to what worked and did not work, and changes made accordingly. Criticism and self-criticism are conducted within a framework of unity; learning is a continual and collective process and dogmatism is not tolerated. These are basic principles of popular education. Members have commitment but not as a traditional cadre-type, vanguard organization. Outreach is fundamental. Such an organization would be a fresh and inspiring addition to the current movement and have to be especially attractive to get others to join with us to make it happen.

The process of achieving the transformation would require outreach well beyond our active members. This would require a draft outline for the new formation that would be collectively created by an initial core of members and others. Key to success would be on the basis of offering an opportunity to participate at a higher level of struggle in a way that does not diminish, but rather reinforces and makes more effective on-going, existing participation in struggle.