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February 8, 1974

TO ALL ORGANIZERS AND NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dear Comrades,

The following Tasks and Perspectives report by Doug Jenness, given to the New York City SWP local convention, January 26, outlines some of the key tasks before the party this spring. Of particular importance is the section which describes the steps the party is taking to make our election campaigns and our work around the SWP and YSA suit more effective.

Comradely,

*Betsy Stone*

Betsy Stone  
SWP National Office

TASKS AND PERSPECTIVES REPORT  
NEW YORK CITY LOCAL CONVENTION

January 26, 1976

by Doug Jenness

This report will offer an overview of our central tasks in the next months and how these various areas of work fit together in our day-to-day activity. Although I'll touch on our election campaign, we felt that this activity is of such top priority that it would be useful to have a separate report and discussion on it.

Geoff's youth report is a report from the YSA City Executive Committee on the work of the YSA in the city. He also intends to take up our principal opponents in the youth arena.

The purpose of this local convention is not to decide on the party's political line. That can only be done at national conventions and during the pre-convention discussion periods prior to national conventions. The reports and discussion at this meeting will be how to carry out the line adopted by the party at our national convention in August.

Before outlining our specific tasks, I'd like to review the political framework in which we're operating.

First of all is Watergate. What is this phenomenon all about? It has certainly come to mean far more than a few of Nixon's people bugging the Democratic Party headquarters.

In the eyes of the American people "Watergate" has become synonymous with much of what's wrong with the capitalist government and capitalist politics. The revelations around the Watergate investigations have exposed some of the thievery, bribes, deceit and corruption of capitalist politicians. It has lifted a corner of the curtain covering the thousands of threads that tie the corporate monopolies to the government. It has brought to the attention of millions the degree to which the capitalists invade our privacy with surveillance, bugging, wiretapping. It has deepened the conviction on the part of most working people that this is not their government, that it is a government totally aloof from their lives.

The Watergate revelations are accelerating the process of radicalization that's been taking place in this country for the last 15 years. It is serving to force people to reject old conservative ideas, for new more radical ones. It is really an extension of the "credibility gap" that began with the Vietnam war and the antiwar movement and forced LBJ not to run again.

The distrust in the capitalist government stimulated by the Vietnam war and amplified by the Watergate revelations coincides with and is reinforced by an offensive against the working class. The political resolution adopted at our convention in August points out that in the context of the new world capitalist economic situation, including the increased competition between U.S. imperialism and Euro-Japanese imperialism, "the U.S. ruling class has been compelled to bring the weight of the government to bear against the real wages, rights and working conditions of the American

working class under the banner of 'fighting inflation' and 'protecting American jobs' from foreign competition. The goal of the boss class is to lower the costs of production relative to those of the other major imperialist powers by raising productivity and depressing wage gains." The various phases of the wage control plans have been part of the drive to squeeze more from American workers. The squeeze has also come from monopoly-conspired shortages, like meat last winter and spring, and fuel now.

The so-called energy crisis is having a direct and immediate effect on the lives of millions of American workers. The capitalists are telling us that we are too fat and have been living high off the hog, that we should cut back, stay home, wear sweaters, tighten our belts, work harder, and smile when Con Edison is allowed to use the most polluting fuels. But the political climate in the country has made people distrust the necessity of such measures. Everybody knows the oil monopolies are raking in huge profits while we're asked to sacrifice, to take a cut in our standard of living. There is a growing belief that it's not the Arab nations or an historical shortage of fossil fuels, but a conspiracy of the oil trusts that's behind the shortage. The Congressional hearings on this question are a reflection of the pressure building up against politicians throughout the country. There have already been protests and actions against some of the effects of inflation and the "energy crisis,"--the meat boycott last spring, the truckers just last month where they blocked highways. And there is an article in the Times today that said that an independent truckers coalition has called for a U.S. shut-down on January 31st. They are demanding an immediate ceiling on all petroleum product prices including diesel fuel, gasoline and lubricants; an immediate audit of all companies' reserves and refinery capacities in this country and abroad (it sounds like "opening the books"); oil prices rolled back to May 15, 1973. And then just last week we saw the picket line in New Jersey called by UAW unionists, featured on the front page of The Militant February 1, where they said, "Nixon, you closed the Watergate; open the gas-gate." You see, the average American person, the average American worker connects all these things--Watergate and the energy crisis--it's all part of the same thing.

So, some very significant protests are taking place and millions of people are asking questions and many of them are asking fundamental questions about the nature and character of this system. Think about that. The central political questions of the day are being debated in classrooms, at dinner tables, at coffee breaks, in truckstops. The questions can't be kept out. There's certainly been nothing like this in my political lifetime. It offers us tremendous opportunities.

On the international arena we can also expect to see continued ferment. Many countries are powder kegs that could explode at any moment. This means that international campaigns--protests against U.S. intervention, getting the truth out about revolutionary struggles, and defense of political prisoners will continue to be a part of our work. Where the next revolutionary explosion or counterrevolutionary blow will take place we can't be sure.

In a nutshell this is the objective situation we face going into 1974.

What, then, is our response? What are we going to do?

First of all what's our response to Watergate?

I think it'd be useful to take a look at what our response isn't.

It isn't a united front single issue coalition like the antiwar movement. We don't see any single class struggle demand or slogan around which to initiate a united front type coalition. The Stalinists are trying to get a campaign going around the slogan, "Impeach Nixon," which is certainly a popular one. Of course, we want to get rid of Nixon too. In fact we vigorously campaigned against his election. But we don't see this as the rallying cry for the working class against the bi-partisan gang of Watergaters that runs this country. Because impeaching Nixon is not the answer to the problems posed by Watergate, the energy crisis and the attacks of the government on the working class.

Just to give an example of the kinds of mistakes you can fall into by making "dump Nixon" your key slogan, you should check out the main headline that appeared a month ago on the Bulletin, the now twice-weekly organ of the Workers League. The headline says, "A Call to Action. Stop unemployment, force Nixon Out." Now, that's a real sure-fire solution to unemployment, isn't it? Get in Gerald Ford and unemployment will go away. Or get in Teddy Kennedy, or any of those other rascals. It's not a solution.

There is no one demand which we can put forward at this time which can be a focus for action aimed at providing a solution to the problems posed by Watergate. Because the only way we are going to get rid of so-called Watergating--of secrecy and corruption in government, of government harassment against those who oppose its policies--is through the creation of a workers government. So our response is a broad propoganda campaign aimed not only at explaining the need for socialism, but also aimed at explaining what people can do right now to join the fight to build a class struggle alternative.

In respect to the energy crisis, at the present time there is also no movement developing around any specific slogan such as "open the books" or "expropriate the oil industry." And we don't believe that through our own initiative we can spark such actions.

This is important and we should consider carefully what this means. Most of the people here were recruited during our antiwar campaign. This was the central campaign of the party and it had a profound impact on everything we did. Many comrades became accustomed to a whole way of looking at politics and how we can intervene in the class struggle. Consequently when looking at the key issues that have emerged in the past year we have sometimes attempted to look for the single issue or slogan around which we can build another united front-type coalition. The implication is that if we can get the right slogan, intervene with it and call a conference, that our know how, contacts, etc. can help build another mass movement.

But politics is more complicated than that. One of the errors of this way of thinking is a misunderstanding of the

antiwar movement and what the SWP's real role in it was. It's important to remember that we didn't "create" the antiwar movement. We didn't wake up one day in 1965 and decide to call a national conference to get out of Vietnam and put together a united front coalition. The movement began with the SDS call for the march on Washington and we joined it and helped build it for eight years. What's important is that our participation helped give it a class struggle direction and prevented it from being totally drawn into Democratic Party politics.

I'm reviewing this experience because I think it helps explain why we can't just go out and pull together some forces and spark protests around either Watergate or the energy crisis.

So a single issue united front type coalition isn't our answer to the Watergaters.

Nor is our Watergate suit by itself the answer. Our suit against Nixon, and the civil liberties committee we initiated to help build support for it, doesn't answer the most fundamental questions raised by the whole Watergate affair: Who rules this country? Who should rule it? Who are the Watergaters? What should be done about them? What is the working class alternative to Nixon?

Our answer to the Watergaters is socialism, a workers state, a congress of labor, a labor party. Our response is a propaganda offensive to explain this.

Through such an offensive we can raise all the fundamental questions posed by Watergate. We can explain how neither the Republicans or the Democrats are the answer, how a congress of labor and a labor party are needed as a working class alternative to the capitalist parties. And we tie in with this education about who the victims of Watergate-type harassment really are--hammering away at the point that it is the labor movement, the Black movement, the socialist movement and others who are opposing the injustices of capitalist rule.

And this is where our suit comes in. Our suit is not the answer to the fundamental questions posed by Watergate, but it is a vehicle for educating about the meaning of Watergate and for fighting for the rights of our movement and of those most victimized by government harassment.

How, concretely, will we carry out this propaganda we have projected?

Nationally, we've decided to establish a Socialist Workers Party 1974 Campaign Committee which can help spearhead our campaign against the Watergaters. Frank Boehm has come into New York to head it up. In addition Maceo Dixon and Debby Bustin will be available to tour nationally in the name of this campaign committee.

The committee will be publically launched at a news conference in Washington D.C. this coming Thursday. This is scheduled to answer Nixon's State of the Union address on Wednesday night. The committee plans to put out some literature and to issue statements which can help provide a national voice.

In conjunction with this, we will be stepping up the campaign to build support for the suit against the Watergaters, and in doing this we will want to make some adjustments and changes in the way we are building this suit.

A weakness we've noticed in building the suit thus far is that we have relied too much on people speaking in the name of PRDF to publicize our suit. We have not been speaking out about it enough as SWPers and YSAers. For example, when the PRDF speakers toured last fall many comrades pointed out that often there would be no one speaking at the meetings who represented the SWP or YSA, who could speak as the victims of the Watergaters. In every branch there were comrades who had been victimized--people who had lost their jobs or been framed up--or there had been some attack on the headquarters such as a bombing or robbery, but we did not have the comrades there to speak about it.

The entire party has been victimized by government harassment and all of us, as victims of this, have to help publicize the crimes that have been done to us and our fight against this. All of us are plaintiffs.

Because we are the victims of the crimes which this suit is fighting, SWP and YSA speakers are going to be able to make the most effective appeals for support for the case. We are going to be able to make the people understand concretely the nature of the harassment and the urgency of ending it.

So, what we want to project is the party, through our candidates, our tours, national speakers, stepping out more in its own name to carry out this fight for our rights. This does not mean that we will put any less emphasis on building the suit through PRDF. On the contrary. It is only by having the SWP and YSA aggressively campaigning for the suit that we will be successful in building PRDF and at the same time be able to get out our socialist ideas.

Already we've seen that PRDF has accomplished a great deal in winning broad endorsement and support for the suit, in raising the badly needed funds and in helping to publicize the case through the press. Nationally known figures such as Ramsey Clark have spoken out in favor of the suit and we hope to get more such support. We want expand all the areas of work PRDF has been involved in. There is no question that through this suit we can not only fight effectively for our rights, and help to put the Watergaters on the defensive, but we can also get out very broadly the name of the SWP as the group which knows how to fight back.

We also want to keep in mind that although we can gain very broad support for PRDF, and although there are many people who are not members of the SWP or YSA who will carry out activities in support of the case, PRDF is not an action-coalition of the type that is going to draw to it large numbers of people who will actively help build the case on a day-to-day basis. In general, the people who will be most enthusiastic about helping with the day-to-day work of PRDF--such as building meetings, sending out mailings, raising money, etc.--will also be the same people who

will be enthusiastic about our election campaigns and other activities. They will be potential contacts or sympathizers of the movement.

This means that in the future we will want to be more conscious of the inter-relationship between the suit and our other activities, most importantly our election campaigns. Everywhere our candidates go, on every campaign table, and at every campus meeting, we will want to have literature about the suit and endorsement cards for people to sign. At campaign meetings, we will want PRDF spokespeople to stand up and take names and get endorsers.

In New York we will want our PRDF directors to work closely with the campaign directors. And we will want to really think out carefully how we can be more creative in winning support for the case, how we can get more comrades and our candidates on radio and TV, and in front of union locals and Black and student groups to talk about it, of how we can take better advantage of the publicity we are getting in the New York Times and other papers as well.

So far I've outlined the centrality of propaganda in our activity in the coming months, the increased receptivity to our ideas and the key role of our election campaign.

Another aspect of our propaganda offensive will be our sales campaign which begins this week. The sales drive is not simply a campaign to sell more papers. It is one of the most effective ways we have now of doing energy crisis work, farm-worker support work, etc. The shift we made last spring towards putting our main emphasis on a sales campaign rather than a massive subscription drive has helped to totally transform the way branches look at sales. Regular Militant sales have been raised to a much higher priority and it is becoming an accepted norm that comrades sell two or three times a week. And we have more and more successfully begun to integrate sales with all our activities. This spring's drive goes even further than last fall in putting the emphasis on individual sales. We have a smaller sub drive which we hope to complete at the beginning of the sales campaign in order to move into really high gear with individual sales when warmer weather comes.

Not only do we want to reach our sales goals but we want to continue experimenting with more selective sales. For example, this past fall Lower Manhattan tried selling in a Puerto Rican housing project on the Lower East Side. Right now two comrades are having a contest to see who can sell the most subs in the Lower East Side. I know of several comrades who regularly sell papers to people they work with on the job. We want more comrades to try this wherever it's possible. Also we want to experiment with more workplaces and union meetings. The excellent sales the comrades in Brooklyn had last week at the rally of striking maintenance workers is an example of the receptivity we can find.

In addition to sales, we have two other branch institutions which help disseminate our ideas and draw contacts around us--our forums and our bookstores. We should see our forums, not simply as Friday meetings where speakers come. They are far more than this.

They are ways we help to build and promote other activities we are involved in. They are a regular weekly occasion for us to bring contacts and sell Militants and literature. Organizing forums isn't simply lining up a speaker and getting a leaflet out. Special efforts have to be made to get contacts to come. The YSA has to be involved in this process. When contacts do come comrades have to be prepared in advance to do contact work. The forum is an activity that everybody in the branch can be and should be involved in--from the building stage to attending and helping to do contact work. I think we've made some progress on the Upper West Side where we get the most contacts regularly to forums. But there's lots of room for improvement.

Our bookstores are also propaganda centers. Our concept of branch bookstores is not simply to maintain tidy shops with regular hours, but to serve as distribution centers for campus and high school tables, campaign tables, and other interventions. Having bookstores on the UWS and Brooklyn has made it easier to organize sales and tables of books and pamphlets in those parts of the city. In New York we've probably done more than most branches in hawking pamphlets, particularly the farmworkers, Chile and Fuentes pamphlets. Several of our comrades who are teachers have been selling the Fuentes pamphlet on the job.

We are also involved in a considerable amount of outside work. In preparing this report I started to draw up a list of the various types of work that comrades are participating in to one degree or another, and it's quite an impressive list. It includes Haitian work, defense of Chilean political prisoners, Irish work, participation in the District I school struggle, activity in the UFT, the Hospital Workers Union and AFSCME, District 65 organizing drive at Columbia, trade union women's work, NOW, Iranian defense, following and participating in Puerto Rican and Dominican activities, Middle East work, farmworkers support work, African liberation support work and Black women's liberation. I may have missed a couple, but this list gives you a feel of the scope of our activity in the city.

There's a few general observations I think we can make about the nature of the work we are doing.

First of all, there's an increasing overlap and interrelationship in the various areas of work. Perhaps it is most clear in our trade union women's work which is both our main union work and our main women's liberation work. It's also true in our Black work and our women's liberation work, and our Haitian work and our participation in USLA.

This has sometimes made it more difficult to have clearly defined fractions and it involves a great deal of consultation and collaboration between comrades assigned to different areas of work. But the fact of the matter is that this interrelationship of our work reflects an important characteristic of the unfolding radicalization in this country and the interpenetration of its component parts.

Another characteristic of our outside work is that it usually does not involve getting a date set and building a united front type demonstration as it did in both the antiwar movement and our abortion campaign. Although occasionally it



does as it did a couple of times this fall around our Chile defense work. A great deal of our present work is attending conferences, meetings, participating in small protests, helping to initiate and organize publicity campaigns in defense of political prisoners, doing contact work and selling the paper and politically following what's going on in the areas we're involved in. This is particularly important for comrades in union situations who should get to know the politics of their unions inside and out. Our sales and contact work are a very important part of our outside work. I think that a good example of union work we've done is the group of hospital workers who were brought to Ray Markey's forum uptown on the lessons of the hospital workers strike.

I won't have time to go into every area of work we're doing but will only try to hit the key ones. I hope comrades involved in our work, and who know it better than I, will contribute to the discussion.

First of all on our union work. Our central activity in the unions in the coming months will be centered around the women's trade union conferences. Particularly we want to help build the national conference of trade union women to be held in Chicago on March 23 and 24. Our activities in N.Y. will be part of a national effort on the part of the party.

Over the past year there have been a number of meetings, conferences, and protests by women in trade unions in order to deal with the specific problems facing working women. The most recent one in New York last weekend drew 600 women. This is a politically very significant development and is a threat to the union bureaucrats. Our participation and involvement in building these conferences are an excellent way to make contacts, discuss our ideas and to get to know the situations in our unions better. This is an activity that not only our women trade union members can be involved in but also our male unionists to one extent or another. We have 34 comrades in 11 different unions in the city.

In New York we are not only involved in attending conferences and building support for the Chicago conference, but at Columbia U. we are part of the leadership of a drive to organize women employees into District 65 of the Distributive Workers Union.

Another area of union work has been our support to the UFW boycott. In New York we helped build the Chavez rally in November and have participated to some extent in picketing supermarkets. We have been involved in campus committees particularly at Columbia, NYU, and Hunter and in community committees in Brooklyn. One of the big problems is the national situation with the boycott. The UFW is up against very formidable foes--the agribusiness monopoly and the Teamsters union. And at the same time they aren't getting much help from the AFL-CIO officialdom, certainly nowhere near the backing they got for the first boycott. The meat cutters and retail clerks unions are actually stabbing the boycott in the back. On top of this is Chavez's own bureaucratic and greenhorn approach to the boycott. In New York this has been reflected in confusion and disorientation and a tendency to exaggerate small moral witness type of picketing rather than mass picketing. Our approach in New York in the picketing strategy

meetings has been to encourage mass picketing at a few key stores rather than tiny pickets at many stores. On a few occasions we've been successful and comrades report that it has helped pick up morale some. Despite the problems we've made a number of contacts from our participation in boycott activities both on campus and around the office.

I'd like to take a little time here to discuss what I consider to be the two most important strikes in New York the past year--the hospital workers strike last fall and the maintenance workers strike in the schools last week. Both strikes have important lessons and implications that we should review.

First of all both strikes involved some of the poorest paid, most exploited workers in the city. In their majority they were Black and Puerto Rican. They were workers more quickly hurt by the effects of increasing inflation.

Second, they were demanding wages about the 5.5% guideline. In the case of the hospital workers it was a strike to force the government price board to grant a wage increase that had already been negotiated. In the case of the school employees it was a fight to get a much bigger wage increase.

Third, the militant strike actions forced important gains even though the workers didn't win their full demands. They helped to set an example to other workers in the city on how to make some gains. The hospital workers contract comes up this summer and we'll want to watch closely any developments there.

Fourth, the school employees strike had an important impact inside the UFT. Although Shanker verbally backed the strike, in practice he and his coterie of chapter chairmen, urged the teachers to not join the strike picket lines. Many teachers rankled at this and there was a great deal of anger at Shanker during a UFT delegate assembly meeting during the strike. In some schools teachers did join the picket lines and helped shut the schools down. Our comrades in the UFT were part of this and helped win teachers to solidarity with the strikers. The discontent against Shanker inside the UFT is maybe the most in five years, although as of yet it isn't organized. We have eight members in the UFT and they're becoming more and more acquainted with the political developments inside the union.

On Black work. Over the past year our main activity has been in the African liberation support work and National Black Feminist Organization.

This fall, the people at "the East" in Brooklyn, that's really the New York supporters of Baraka, took over the African Liberation Support Committee and have been sitting on it for some time. Now just this week there was another meeting of the African Liberation Support Committee and there was a lot of new people that came, there were a lot of young people and it was a large meeting. Sixty people came. There was a lot of pressure from students on campus to get some kind of action going for May 25th again. We're continuing to keep on top of this. In addition to work in the committee, there's also propaganda activity we can do around African liberation support work.

The reformist leadership of the Black Feminist Organization has placed some limit on what we're able to do in that organization. However, we continue to participate in it and its conferences and meetings and our involvement in this formation helped to draw some Black women contacts around us.

One area of work we think can help us make contact with Blacks, especially on campuses, is our work around defense of Haitian refugees. Through our participation in USIA we've been active off and on over the past seven or eight months in helping to work with Haitian organizations on defense activities. Some of the Haitian leaders now want to reach out and involve more non-Haitians in the defense. We think this can provide an opportunity for collaborating with Blacks, for setting up meetings for Haitian speakers, etc. And there's quite a lot of interest in this issue expressed on Black radio stations and in the Black press. It also has a sense of immediacy since the victims are Haitians in the U.S. threatened with deportation to Haiti, which is one of the most repressive regimes in the world.

Finally, there is going to be another Black political convention in March, like the one two years ago in Gary. This time it will be held in Arkansas. Local Black assembly meetings will be held throughout the country in preparation for this. For example, a New Jersey meeting will be held tomorrow. We want to be at these meetings with our campaign literature to meet people, make contacts, to find out what is going on. These meetings can be a barometer to how large and what extent this Black political convention will be. In her campaign report, Janice will indicate some of our ideas on how the election campaign will relate to Black work, particularly to Attica.

Next is Puerto Rican work. Our main field of activity is the struggle for Black, Puerto Rican and Chinese control of schools on the lower East Side. This is the most significant struggle involving Puerto Ricans going on in the United States at the present time. Our involvement has brought us numerous contacts, a certain measure of influence in the Puerto Rican community, and most particularly, greater familiarity with the ins and outs of the struggles and problems of Puerto Ricans.

We see the central features of this struggle to be a specially oppressed part of the working class fighting for better schools, with one of their central obstacles being the Social Democratic Shankerite leadership of the UFT which is trying to preserve its union as a privileged job trust. The Shankerite policy has helped pit one section of the working class against another. Our approach has been and will continue to be to vigorously defend the struggle of the oppressed Black, Puerto Rican and Chinese community for better schools, more control over the schools, more bilingual programs.

Following the successful struggle to invalidate last May's election and get a new one called, a new and much broader coalition has been established, called the Community Advisory Committee to carry out a pro-community control, pro-Fuentes election campaign. So far, the date hasn't been set for the election and new candidates haven't been chosen. When this is done, we'll want to discuss the ways we can help get support in other parts of the city for the pro-Fuentes ticket. One of the things we'll want to watch

very closely in this struggle is the increasing involvement of the Stalinists. Comrades who follow the Daily World know that they've been stepping up their coverage of the situation on the lower East Side; more of their people have been coming to the meetings. Although they give lip service to community control, if they can find ways of blocking with the reformist Democrats, watering down the program of the campaign to be simply a campaign against racism in the schools, they'll do it. And we should anticipate that they will continue to try to find a way of angling into influence in the struggle.

Finally, I would like to make a few comments on our Chile defense work. This has been USLA's central campaign since the coup in September and will continue to be so in the coming months. We've established a number of contacts through this work and we'll want to continue helping build support for this effort. Fund raising projects are planned and more speaking engagements. Though most of our meetings have been on campus, other meetings are possible. For example, Debby Woodruffe, who is active in USLA, spoke to a caucus of the Communication Workers Union last month, and they invited her back to speak at their local.

On our opponents. As I indicated before, Geoff will be going into this in more detail, in his youth report. However, I'd like to say one or two things about the CP because it's our most important opponent and it's an opponent we've done our most consistent work against over the past year.

We think the CP is attracting some young people, including a layer of Blacks, and we don't believe that they're all hardened dyed-in-the-wool Stalinists. In order to possibly win some of these people, or at least to encourage them to quit the CP or YWLL, or to discourage sympathizers around the YWLL or CP from joining, we feel it is to our advantage to continue to maneuver with the CP and the YWLL.

The central line of our maneuver has been to get as close to their young people as we can, confront them with our ideas and explain what's wrong with Stalinism. Generally we try to implement this by urging them to join united front type actions, regardless of how small they might be. This was our same policy in the antiwar movement. We tried this around the attacks by the Labor Committee, where we defended Rasheed Storey at Columbia from physical attack. This had a big impact on some of their members and for a few weeks we had a few of the YWLLers coming up to our headquarters, talking to us and so on. The arguments by the CP chieftans that the Trotskyists were counter-revolutionary and fascist sort of broke down when our comrades physically defended one of their leaders. However, they refused to work with us on any continued united front type defense against the Labor Committee.

We urged them to make a statement on the banning of the Ligue Communiste or participate in our action on that, but they refused.

I believe we scored our greatest success vis-a-vis the Stalinists around the Chile defense. Our first united front rally at Columbia was so successful and so large that despite all their attempts to sabotage it, it couldn't help but make a

deep impression on some of their members and periphery. And we know for a fact that they've been debating inside their organization the question of how to relate to us, how to relate to the united front, as they call it.

And in December, you will recall, we were able to get a united front action. The opportunity came up to protest a Chilean right-winger that was going to be at Town Hall. We called them up and they said yes and we had a united front action all the way down the line.

Consequently this not only helped make for a broader, more effective action, but it brought us into direct contact, not only with CPers and YWLLers at the demonstration itself, but in the process of building it and the aftermath.

We also took our maneuver into the electoral arena when we first published an Open Letter attacking their support of Badillo, which they felt compelled to defend in the Daily World. We then joined picket lines defending their right to be on the ballot. We also extended critical support to three of their candidates in the elections and published an Open Letter on this. This facilitated some individual debates and discussion with CPers and YWLLers.

It's hard to gauge how successful this work has been, how large an impact we've had. Probably the gains have been relatively modest. However, we think it has been worthwhile to continue and deepen our opponents work in regard to the CP. The recent debate with Dave Frankel in the Daily World on the mideast is probably a reflection of disagreements with their line among some of their new Black members. They're trying to paint the self-determination line as being Trotskyism. We should find ways of getting to members on this issue.

I'd like to describe a special event we'd like to project for around May Day. We want to hold a city-wide banquet around the theme of solidarity with the Fourth International, more particularly the role of Intercontinental Press on its tenth anniversary, and a tribute to the comrades who have been most involved in publishing this. We'll try to get messages from some prominent members of the Trotskyist movement and give it some national attention. We think that given enough time for preparation that we can make this into an inspiring occasion as a real genuine national event for the party.