

PARTY BUILDER

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REPORT TO THE SWP JUNE 1974 NATIONAL COMMITTEE PLENUM ON THE PARTY'S FIGHT FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

by Larry Seigle

Introduction

The party's legal status and the fight for our democratic rights are important questions for the party leadership as a whole. We are now involved in two political offensives which directly affect the legal status of our party. The purpose of this report is to outline our perspectives for these campaigns and to discuss how they relate to our continuing fight for democratic rights.

The axis of our suit against Nixon and other government officials is the fight to protect and extend the democratic rights of the organizations of the working class and the oppressed nationalities, including the SWP and the YSA, which have been the real victims of the government's secret police operations.

The second initiative, which we have just launched, is a broad-ranging offensive against the election reform laws. This campaign, which is really an extension of the efforts we already have under way, includes both a challenge to the constitutionality of these laws as they are applied to the Socialist Workers campaign committees, and a political offensive to expose these so-called reforms as a fraud aimed at reinforcing illusions in the capitalist parties, and as an attack on the rights of the unions, Black groups, smaller parties and others.

These fights constitute the current framework for the struggle to protect and extend the right of the Socialist Workers Party to exist and to function without interference by the capitalist government. We fight to protect and extend the party's legality not because we have any confidence in, or allegiance to, bourgeois legality—we don't. We fight for the rights of the party because we want to do everything in our power to enhance the ability of the revolutionary party to advance the class struggle. And we know from the history of the workers movement that legality is something worth fighting for, worth jealously guarding against any and all attempts to restrict it or destroy it. The democratic right of a workers party to function freely is an acquisition of the class struggle that, in contrast to many would-be revolutionaries, we don't take lightly.

The form that our current fight takes is different from many times in the past. For example, in the PRDF suit we are the plaintiffs and Nixon and his gang are the defendants. But the heart of the issue is a continuation of all of the major defense cases we have been involved in, going back to the Minneapolis trials and before—our fight for full legal rights.

This struggle is a constant one. We are in a permanent battle with the ruling class over our right to function as revolutionists. It is a perpetual tug-of-war. The capitalist government is constantly trying to limit, weaken, chip away at our legality—take away this or that right, impose restrictions on this or that activity. Sometimes we face major attacks like the Smith Act trials, or the setting up of the attorney-general's list; other times it is smaller moves, like limiting the right to sell *The Militant*, or be

on the ballot, or the right to an honorable discharge from the Army.

And we are constantly pulling in the other direction, protecting the rights we have won, and—whenever possible—trying to establish some new ones.

If we relax our grip, let some slack in the rope, they quickly yank it hard and we lose ground. On the other hand, when we are on our toes, and they are off balance, we can make advances at their expense.

Of course the battles in this tug-of-war are a reflection of the class struggle as a whole. We know that the legality of the revolutionary vanguard is not primarily a legal question at all; it is a question of the relationship of class forces.

The political situation we face today puts us on favorable ground in this fight. The political atmosphere today is more favorable for the protection and extension of our legal status than at any time since prior to World War II and the Smith Act indictments. The radicalization, the exposure of government frame-ups, the revolt of the juries—all weigh heavily on our side. The arguments used to justify thought-control legislation or other repressive measures—national security, anti-communism, patriotism—are at a low ebb. They are the very arguments that have been discredited as a result of Vietnam and Watergate.

One clear sign of the favorable conditions was the recent decision to abolish the attorney-general's list, after 27 years. This list was one of the two central legal underpinnings of the witch-hunt—the second was the Smith Act. It has been used as the justification for everything from firing our members from government employment to authorizing a mail cover on the party's national headquarters.

Its abolition represents a real victory. And it is a victory for which we can claim part of the credit. We helped get rid of that list, both with our current legal challenge to the constitutionality of the list in our PRDF case, and also in an earlier suit that succeeded in putting new limits on the way the list could be used.

In recognizing this victory, however, we also should note that there is a new list—the list of 52 groups—which is supposed to be secret. This is a list of groups under active investigation as "possibly subversive."

How should we characterize the current legal status of the party? We are a legal party, with the same rights as the Democrats and Republicans. We can get on the ballot in many states, maintain public headquarters, etc. On the other hand, the government claims that because we are "subversive" or "possibly subversive"—that they have the right to infiltrate, bug, burglarize, harass and disrupt our party. Our legal status is contradictory. The government contends that we're in some kind of "twilight zone": not quite legal, but not quite illegal either.

One of the big gains that we have made in the past few years in strengthening our rights has been through the

election campaigns, our practice of consistently, vigorously running campaigns wherever and whenever we can. This is, of course, only one of a number of things we accomplish with our campaigns, but it is an important one.

Our electoral activity strengthens our argument that the SWP is entitled to equal rights, and equal protection of our rights with all other parties. Our campaigns—including the winning of ballot status, both through petitioning and through legal challenges—have helped to legitimize the party in the eyes of a large number of people. This has made it harder for the government, or right-wingers acting with protection from the government, to take action to restrict our rights to function.

In this regard, CoDEL continues to have great value for us. It is an essential weapon in our fight for ballot rights. And we will need it more than ever as we get ready for the 1976 campaigns.

Currently, although there is no national staff person in CoDEL, the committee is active in several state challenges to election laws. Our perspective nationally is to assign the personnel necessary to get CoDEL geared up for the preparations for our '76 campaign.

PRDF

The PRDF is *not* our "answer" to Watergate. Our "answer" includes the full range of activities that the party is involved in—our propaganda campaigns including our election work and sales drives, our activities in the unions and in support of strikes, our work in the Black and Chicano movements and in support of community mobilizations like the struggle in District 1, and so on. Our "answer" to Watergate includes *both* the fight for democratic rights and furthering the idea of and action around *independent political action* by the working class and its allies.

Within that framework, the campaign around PRDF is one important component. It is a vehicle through which we can exert maximum leverage to move the tug-of-war over our rights a few steps in our direction, through which we can take maximum advantage of the current openings to advance our fight for democratic rights.

What have we accomplished in the year of work around PRDF? I think we have already achieved more than any of us thought we could when we started. I want to run through some of the gains, though not necessarily in the order of their importance.

First: We have been able to project the SWP and the YSA right into the center of the fight against government secret-police operations and other violations of democratic rights, insofar as the radical movement, and even a section of liberals and civil libertarian-types are concerned. Three recent examples of magazine articles drive this point home quite dramatically. The first was the *Black Scholar* of April of this year, which ran an article by Baxter Smith, based on articles he had done for *The Militant*. Along with soliciting this article, the *Black Scholar* donated a full-page ad to PRDF, explaining the case.

Shortly after that, the June issue of *Ramparts* appeared, with a major article by Noam Chomsky, an active PRDF supporter. In the article Chomsky draws on materials compiled by PRDF and includes a good section of the government attacks on the SWP.

Then, shortly after that, the June 1 issue of *The Na-*

tion published a long article by Frank Donner on the FBI, which also has a good section on the crimes against the SWP and refers to the PRDF case.

These three recent articles are in addition to dozens of others in newspapers, including news stories and columns. And one fact comes through all of these articles: that of all the groups—ranging from the Stalinists to the Black Panther Party—that have been Watergated, the SWP and the YSA are the only groups that are fighting back.

The work around PRDF, and the extensive coverage in *The Militant* of all the developments around COINTELPRO have also given us a big advantage over our opponents, especially the Communist Party. The Communist Party has been downplaying and even ignoring the whole series of disclosures around the COINTELPROs and similar revelations. They haven't even made the pretense of putting forward a campaign of any kind around this issue. *The Guardian* and other Maoists have likewise defaulted almost entirely.

Because of this blunder by our opponents, we have become identified as the tendency that takes this question seriously, has a campaign to get the truth out about COINTELPRO, the Huston Plan, and other secret operations, and a concrete campaign to mobilize support for the rights of revolutionists to function without being subjected to disruption programs.

So, we have succeeded in projecting the SWP right into the center of this issue.

Second: We have succeeded to some degree with one of our original goals with the PRDF case, and that was to *set an example* of how to fight back. By launching this campaign we were taking an initiative, showing in practice the most effective way to fight for democratic rights.

In a broader sense, we are winning respect for the party because in our fight we are bearing the brunt of the fight to defend the rights of the entire labor movement, the Black movement, and other struggles. We are defending the right to advocate pro-labor, pro-Black-struggle views. People recognize that what is at stake is not just the rights of the SWP as a party, but the right of any organization to advocate and disseminate revolutionary ideas.

Third: Another area where we have had success is in uncovering secret documents relating to the disruption plan against us. It is easy to forget that when we began this campaign we didn't know about COINTELPRO, or the SWP Disruption Program, or the existence of the mail cover, or other things that have since come to light. That is, we knew about them in the sense that we could deduce what was general policy, but we didn't know about the specific programs, and we had none of the proof.

But we figured that in the general atmosphere, the proof would continue to come out—and we were right. We have gotten some of the memos through our suit, and others have come to light through other channels—and there is every indication that this process will continue.

Fourth: Another accomplishment of the campaign has been the significant success in winning sympathy and support for our rights and for this case from liberal and radical circles. Through the PRDF work we have succeeded in renewing and strengthening some contacts from

the antiwar movement and other areas of work and in penetrating new circles for financial backing and other support. We have reached into areas and made contact with individuals that we previously had no contact with. Especially because of the nature of the case itself, which requires that people become at least roughly familiar with what the party is and what it does, many of these gains will be lasting ones for us.

These connections mean we are continuing to accumulate a circle of friends, contacts, and potential supporters that is bigger than what we have had for many years, and much of it is coming at the expense of the Communist Party or other opponents, much to their distress. In this way also, this effort is putting us at an advantage over our opponents.

Another benefit that has resulted from this campaign is the transforming of the attitude of the entire party toward the systematic harassment and surveillance we have been subjected to. There are many things that for years we had to accept politically because there was no realistic way to fight back against FBI harassment, mail covers, other surveillance. We didn't like it but there wasn't much that we could do about it. But this posed a problem. If the party, and everybody around the party, were to begin to *accept* these things as "inevitable," then there would be an unavoidable tendency to implicitly *concede* the government's right to place us in a semi-legal category.

And this is exactly the aim of much of the FBI surveillance: to psychologize us into a semi-legal frame of mind, to create an atmosphere in which, without having to pass any laws, they convince us, and our contacts and periphery, that we have to accept a semi-legal or less-than-legal status.

As a result of the suit, our own attitude is changing toward the incidents of harassment or surveillance we become aware of. Of course, we can't respond to every single incident in a public way. But when things come up—whether it's proof of FBI surveillance, or someone losing a job, or even a candidate's landlord being visited by the FBI—we should ask: "Can we use this to gain support or publicity for the suit; or would it be wise to issue a press release, or write an article for *The Militant* just to have it on the public record that we consider this a serious violation of our rights?"

Sixth: One of the most impressive areas of PRDF activity has been in fundraising, both by the local committees around the country and by the national PRDF office. We have raised a total of \$95,000 in the first twelve months of PRDF.

This is a financial operation on a scale unprecedented for party defense work. And it is in itself a measure of the breadth of support and the political appeal and potential that this case has. Of this \$95,000, about \$14,000 came in from money raised through the efforts of local PRDF groups, including literature payments, honoraria, and contributions. All of this money has come from outside sources, not cut into party finances.

Now, this is a lot of money, but there is no surplus left over. The price of "justice" is climbing even faster than the price of food and rent. A large chunk of this money—by far the largest single item—goes to legal fees. And these fees have been increased for the next 12 months, so even more money is going to be needed. The other expenses are going to be at least as high.

I don't have time to discuss in detail PRDF work. But there are a couple of general points. Every defense campaign has its peaks and valleys of activity. They are generally tied to legal proceedings that we can't control completely. When documents are unearthed, or some legal decision is anticipated, interest picks up in PRDF. We can't maintain it at a high pace permanently. But there is a basis for establishing in every branch a level of sustained activity, sponsor work, fund raising, and publicity on a regular basis.

And we have to be flexible enough to move quickly when things break, to hold press conferences, send out immediate mailings, make phone calls, get some radio and television appearances, tied to specific developments in the case.

One thing we want to be alert to is to relate the PRDF case to events that break locally, the way the Houston comrades jumped right in a few months ago and took advantage of the revelation that the Houston cops had been spying on and infiltrating the SWP. They organized a series of protest news conferences and visits to the mayor's office.

The other thing to keep in mind about PRDF work is to use it to promote and build our campaigns. This can be done without in any way abusing the civil liberties basis of the committee. It is perfectly natural to have party candidates or other spokespeople present at every PRDF affair to explain how we as a party have been harassed and to explain the views that the government is trying to repress.

Sometimes a union or a radio or TV show won't be willing to invite a party candidate to speak, but they might be willing to have the same person come and speak about the suit and the PRDF. We should be alert to all openings like that to get out the name of the party and to make contact with interested people.

There are two specific campaigns that the PRDF staff are discussing now and for the fall. The first is a drive, which has already been begun, to go after in a systematic and organized way as many endorsements of trade unions and trade union officials as is possible. The success we have already had has been very encouraging.

Generally, if we can get a resolution on the PRDF introduced and motivated, it is going to be adopted in most locals. We had a very important breakthrough with the Michigan AFT convention, the first statewide union body to endorse. And we have collected an impressive list, which we are just getting started on in a sustained way, of union officials. This is an area of activity that all comrades and all contacts that we have in unions can participate in.

The political message of the PRDF campaign is not just aimed at civil libertarians or at intellectuals and those in radical milieus, although we need and welcome their support. It is also aimed at the entire labor movement and the movements of the oppressed nationalities, because this is a case that directly involves *their* rights as well as the rights of the SWP.

Another specific campaign that the PRDF staff is discussing with the comrades in the YSA, is a special drive to get signatures and donations for a *New York Times* ad. The ad would be signed by hundreds of professors, student leaders, student groups, from schools all around the country. This could give a specific focus to a short,

intensive campaign to get the word out on PRDF on the campuses—a campaign in which the YSA would play a major part.

These ideas and other specific projects will be nailed down and discussed in more detail at Oberlin.

I know comrades are interested in what the next stage of the suit itself is going to be; and when we're going to get more FBI memos. The suit is still in phase known as "discovery." Each side asks the other for information and documents. Comrades saw the response we made to their request, in which they asked for such relevant information as whether James P. Cannon was ever a member of the Communist Party, and demanded to see the financial records of the party since 1948. In good lawyerly language, we told them to go to hell. And we have asked for a series of documents, most of which haven't been turned over.

The next step now is for the judge to issue some general rulings on what kinds of questions they have to answer, and what kinds of questions we have to answer. If we don't like his rulings, which is quite possible, we can consider an appeal on that issue.

All future discovery proceedings, including the depositions, that is, sworn statements, we take from government officials will have to follow the guidelines of the judge's ruling on this issue.

This procedure may be cut short by a sweeping government motion to dismiss the entire case, which they have indicated they might submit. They may say that even if everything they are charged with were true, we wouldn't have a case, because what they did is legal. Such a motion would not necessarily be a bad thing, because it would immediately move the case to the central issue we are raising, that is, that the government *doesn't* have the right to subject the SWP and the YSA to surveillance, harassment and disruption. A ruling against us on this motion, of course, would immediately be appealed, and probably go to the Supreme Court on that question alone.

Campaign "Reforms"

The so-called campaign reform laws, requiring disclosure of names of contributors, are developing into a major element in the ruling-class campaign to convince the American people that the Watergate mess is being cleaned up. The liberals' answer to the growing disillusionment with capitalist politicians and capitalist parties—along with impeachment—is to tell people, "Look, we're reforming. We are going to pass tough laws that will prevent another Watergate and prevent the big corporations from controlling the government and the Democratic and Republican parties."

This drive gained new momentum with the passage of Proposition 9 in California, a campaign reform initiative backed by Common Cause, one of the main organizations in this campaign nationally. The *Wall Street Journal* news story on the results of the primary began, somewhat cynically, "Political purity continued to be a big seller in Tuesday's primary voting. . . ." That's exactly the way the rulers look at it: packaging their politicians with "political purity."

These reforms are a complete sham and a fraud; the crudest kind of trick. It's nothing but an illusion to think

that new ethical codes or disclosure laws are going to change the class character of the capitalist parties.

We also oppose them on other grounds—because they place new weapons in the hands of the prosecutors to use against political parties and political campaigns. We have no illusions that they will be used against the capitalists—except in a token way or as part of partisan infighting. But they will be used against political action by working-class organizations, by Black, Puerto Rican, and Chicano groups.

Trotsky pointed out long ago that "Under conditions of a capitalist regime all curtailment of rights and freedoms, no matter against whom they may be originally directed, in the end inevitably fall with all their weight on the working class—especially on its most advanced elements."

These laws constitute a two-pronged offensive to reinforce the political monopoly of the capitalist parties. On the one hand, they are aimed at strengthening illusions in the possibility of reforming or even taking over the capitalist parties. On the other hand, they erect new barriers in the road of independent political action.

These barriers are not just hypothetical. We know from the first-hand experience of our campaign financial directors around the country the difficulties in complying with these laws. And we have a lot of experience in this general area. Imagine the problems confronting, for example, a Black group that decides to run a candidate. The first thing they come up against is that you virtually need to hire a lawyer and an accountant before you can run for anything.

The difficulty in complying is not just a nuisance, however, it is a built-in threat; these laws are designed for selective prosecution. Whenever they make a political decision to go after somebody, they'll find a goldmine of violations in even the most carefully compiled reports. And, of course, the requirement of disclosure of names of contributors to the SWP and other smaller parties is a serious attack.

As we have written in *The Militant*, the laws are also aimed at tying the hands of the labor movement and restricting the use of union resources, including money, in the political arena. We oppose this in principle, just as we oppose any government restrictions on the rights of unions, regardless of whether we agree or not with the way the current union leadership uses those rights.

In fact, aside from the Socialist Workers Party, and some Republicans, the only voices that have been raised against these laws have come from the union bureaucracy. The AFL-CIO in California campaigned against Proposition 9. Arguments against these laws have appeared in the *AFL-CIO News*, and even Albert Shanker opposed them in his paid column in the *New York Times*. They oppose, of course, within the framework of general support to capitalist reforms and bourgeois solutions to Watergate. That opposition can help us get a hearing on our challenge in the unions. Whatever their views on other questions, we will bloc with union officials on the need to oppose these restrictions.

Our legal challenge to these fake reforms does not encompass this entire political analysis; just like our PRDF suit doesn't include our rounded political analysis of Watergate. The legal challenge says, in essence, that these

laws are unconstitutional as applied to us because we have proven systematic, sweeping surveillance and harassment by the government, aimed at disrupting the SWP and intimidating our supporters. Disclosing the names of contributors would merely give them new names to add to their "enemies list."

On this issue, we can appeal to, and have already won support from, a broad range of people, including many who disagree with us and support the goals of the "reform" laws. In Seattle, we have even won support for our challenge from some of the chief backers of the state reform law — who say they never intended it to apply to us.

There is a growing national debate over these reforms. The victory of Proposition 9 in California put some new wind in the sails of these reformers, but it also provoked for the first time some organized opposition to the laws, primarily from the unions. This debate is going to intensify, and we want to jump right into it.

Several comrades have asked why we are doing this case through the ACLU rather than with Boudin. There are several reasons. The first reason—which carried an awful lot of weight with us—was the money. The ACLU will pay for this entire case. Second, having the national ACLU take this case will be a help in many places in getting local ACLU chapters to represent us in state challenges. Because this case necessarily is going to involve parallel challenges in several states, the question of getting local lawyers was very important, and Boudin and the NECLC don't have the resources to provide this.

Third, we felt that having the ACLU behind us in this, with its authority, would help us in explaining the importance of it and winning support for our position.

And we had another reason in the back of our minds. We have everything to gain from establishing a good working relationship with the ACLU, on both a national and a local scale, meeting their lawyers and board members, building up a relationship. Their offer to take the national case represented an important breakthrough for the party.

As in all questions involving party legal questions, we consulted Boudin on this.

There is nothing for us to gain from setting up a separate organizational structure to build support for this

case. We don't need a new committee. We can do it directly through the ACLU and our campaign committees, with the help of the contacts, mailing lists, etc. of the PRDF.

In preparation for our national news conference announcing the challenge, the SWP simply contacted some of the sponsors of PRDF and asked them to send a statement supporting the ACLU in this challenge on behalf of the party. And many were happy to do so.

This case is distinct from the PRDF case, although PRDF should certainly join with others in expressing support for this new challenge. The main thing that PRDF can do is to use the publicity and attention focused around the announcement of the challenges to step up sponsor and publicity work, fund-raising, etc.

Conclusion

These two fights—the PRDF and the ACLU effort—are not separate, isolated campaigns but components of our overall political response to Watergate. They are both integral parts of our election campaigns. They are tools in mobilizing support for democratic rights and in explaining to a broad audience our political views on questions being debated in the wake of Watergate.

These cases create new opportunities to organize backing for the rights of the revolutionary vanguard, and for all organizations of the working class and its allies. And they provide an alternative to the so-called solutions of the liberals and the other reformers who are trying to shore up confidence in capitalist politics and capitalist politicians through a bunch of "reforms" that have absolutely nothing to do with democratic rights.

Several comrades have pointed out the significance of the fact that the SWP today has the two major civil liberties groups in the country—the ACLU and the Boudin-NECLC group—each handling major legal challenges for us. This is a sign of the growing respect and stature of the party as a fighter for democratic rights. And it is also another indication of what comrades have pointed to—the growing centrality of our movement to all aspects of radical politics in this country—the degree to which we are directly involved in, and taking the initiative in, important political struggles. We can use these cases to take that process even further along in the period ahead.

REPORT ON THE 1974 SPRING SALES CAMPAIGN

by *The Militant* Business Office

1. Branch weekly sales averaged 7,978 throughout the 1974 spring sales campaign. This substantial weekly average, maintained over an 18-week period, reflects a solid achievement in terms of regularizing high street sales. Weekly sales came near the 8,280 average of the 11-week fall drive and represent a 26 percent increase over the 15-week 1973 spring sales campaign average of 6,308.

The ability of areas to meet their individual goals fluctuated from branch to branch. Detroit was the most consistent, surpassing their goal 14 times. Philadelphia and Austin met their goals ten times and St. Louis nine times. Ten other branches sold their goals at least four times.

Oakland/Berkeley maintained a weekly average of 716, which is the highest average of any area throughout the three sales campaigns. Chicago sustained the second highest average of more than 500. Six branches sold more than 1,000 *Militants* one week of the drive.

The 10,000 goal was met once during the special target week, when more than 15,000 *Militants* were sold—the highest sales week since May 1970. A number of branches launched ballot drives in May, so the 10,000 goal was out of reach for the final two weeks of the campaign.

2. The average participation of comrades increased by 4 percent over the level of participation during the fall and 15 percent over one year ago—an increase of 100 comrades per week in one year. Per capita sales averaged 11.5 per comrade selling, which compares with 12.6 last fall and 10.6 in spring 1973.

3. An overriding characteristic of the spring drive was the ability of branches to consistently conduct weekly sales in regular locations. Sales took place each week on campuses; in the Black, Puerto Rican, and Chicano communities; and in other working-class neighborhoods, shopping areas, and transportation terminals.

Black, Puerto Rican, and Chicano community sales have increased by 75 percent. They now represent 26 percent of total sales, an average of 2,043 per week. Chicago and Atlanta averaged more than 200 per week, and seven other branches averaged more than 100 per week.

Campus sales continue to make up a large proportion of each week's sales. Twenty-six percent of total *Militant* sales, in addition to many *YS* sales, are conducted on campus.

Some branches have begun to regularize sales at plant gates and other workplaces. For example, San Francisco and Oakland/Berkeley average more than 30 per week sold regularly at workplaces. These sales overall are still a modest proportion of total sales and could be improved.

Regular sales at supermarkets and other shopping areas and in transportation terminals helped to further expand

Militant sales to Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, and other working people.

4. In addition to the establishment of regular sales, branches took advantage of opportunities to initiate sales in new locations and to increase sales in response to political developments. An example of this are the sales to striking truckers.

Also, the gas lines brought on by the contrived fuel shortage became a sales location for many branches. Another example are the stepped-up sales organized in the Black communities around the COINTELPRO documents.

Branches made progress in integrating *Militant* sales with political struggles taking place in their cities. New York's highest sales coincided with the week of the District 1 election and helped to advance the fight against racism in District 1. Twin Cities consistently sold *Militants* at activities in support of the Wounded Knee frame-up victims. San Francisco tied in *Militant* sales with support for the striking Sears and municipal workers. Most areas linked *Militant* sales with building support for the SWP campaigns.

Some areas report that they were able to successfully conduct high sales during the weeks of educational conferences rather than automatically lower their bundles. For example, both West Side and Central-East Los Angeles achieved their sales goals during the week of their socialist conference.

5. In addition to the single-copy sales campaign, a successful subscription drive was conducted this spring for 8,230 new subscriptions. This is as large as the last two spring subscription drives, which were not accompanied with the *Militant* and *YS* sales campaigns organized this spring. The bulk of subscriptions were sold on campuses. However, some areas report successful subscription sales in Black and Chicano housing projects. For example, Cleveland sold 88 in this way; Chicago, 75; and Oakland/Berkeley, 64. Also, comrades report selling 165 subscriptions to co-workers and another 88 to other unionists and working people at labor gatherings.

Branches have continued to sell subscriptions since the close of the drive. A number of branches report that comrades are successfully selling subscriptions on the street during the course of single-copy sales.

6. Branches sold an average of 79 percent of their bundles this spring, netting a profit of \$4,922. All but four branches made a profit. The *Militant* debt is now down to \$2,270 from a high of \$11,351 in 1972, and only three branches still have large back debts.

June 14, 1974

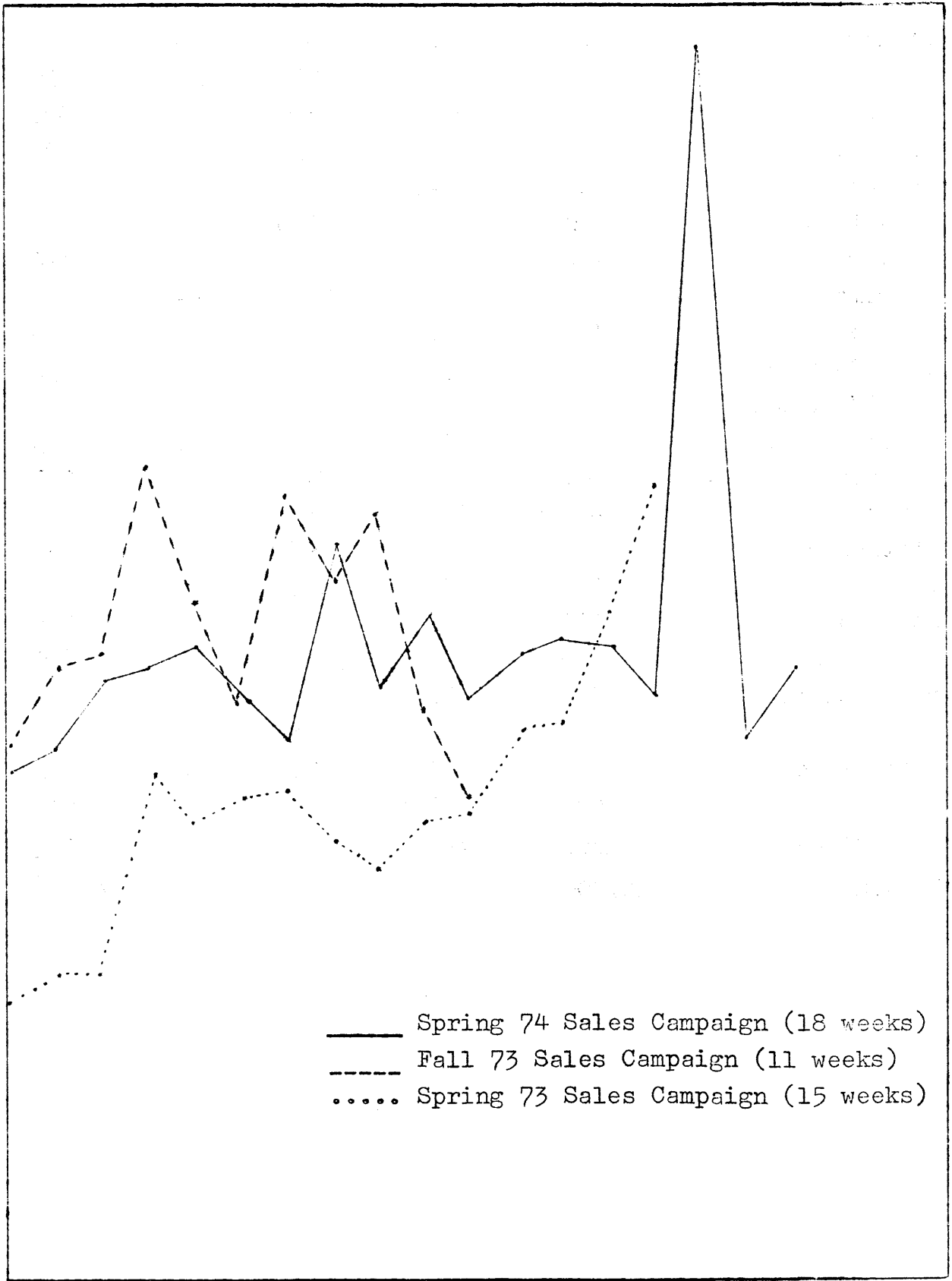
COMPARISON OF AVERAGE WEEKLY MILITANT SALES

<u>Branch</u>	<u>Sp.74</u> <u>Goal</u>	<u>Sp. 74</u> <u>Aver.</u> <u>18wks</u>	<u>% Of</u> <u>Goal</u> <u>Sold</u>	<u>Times</u> <u>Made</u> <u>Goal</u>	<u>F.73</u> <u>Aver.</u> <u>11wks</u>	<u>Sp.73</u> <u>Aver.</u> <u>15wks</u>
Atlanta	500	422	84%	4	451	301
Austin	40	43	108%	10	116	163
Boston	700	395	56%	2	526	420
Brooklyn	450	389	86%	2	372	295
Chicago	700	554	79%	6	605	419
Cleveland	350	270	77%	4	269	290
Denver	450	247	55%	-	310	203
Detroit	450	466	104%	14	360	330
Houston	500	368	74%	3	403	414
L.A.(Central-East)	350	252	72%	5	440	339
L.A.(West Side)	350	321	92%	7		
Lower Manhattan	500	406	81%	1	403	510
Oakland/Berkeley	800	716	90%	6	683	488
Philadelphia	400	382	96%	10	377	234
Pittsburgh	375	331	88%	7	264	---
Portland	325	260	80%	3	246	155
St. Louis	325	309	95%	9	244	---
San Diego	325	240	74%	2	349	282
San Francisco	525	322	61%	1	433	335
Seattle	425	369	87%	4	423	278
Twin Cities	350	296	85%	7	252	263
Upper West Side	475	306	64%	1	430	365
Washington DC	<u>400</u>	<u>314</u>	79%	4	<u>324</u>	<u>224</u>
TOTALS	10,000	7,978			8,280	6,308

GRAPH OF TOTAL SALES FOR PAST THREE SALES CAMPAIGNS

TOTAL SALES

15,000
14,000
13,000
12,000
11,000
10,000
9,000
8,000
7,000
6,000
5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000



— Spring 74 Sales Campaign (18 weeks)
- - - Fall 73 Sales Campaign (11 weeks)
..... Spring 73 Sales Campaign (15 weeks)

WEEKS: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

AVERAGE WEEKLY MILITANT, YS, AND COMBINED SALES-SPRING 1974

<u>Branch</u>	<u>Militant Average</u>	<u>YS Weekly Average*</u>	<u>Combined Average</u>
Atlanta	422	166	588
Austin	43	19	62
Boston	395	168	563
Brooklyn	389	144	533
Chicago	554	119	673
Cleveland	270	64	334
Denver	247	89	336
Detroit	466	88	554
Houston	368	81	449
L.A. (Central-East)	252	77	329
L.A. (West Side)	321	71	392
Lower Manhattan	406	163	569
Oakland/Berkeley	716	165	881
Philadelphia	382	134	516
Pittsburgh	331	76	407
Portland	260	83	343
St. Louis	309	79	388
San Diego	240	76	316
San Francisco	322	119	441
Seattle	369	85	454
Twin Cities	296	105	401
Upper West Side	306	151	457
Washington DC	<u>314</u>	<u>142</u>	<u>456</u>
TOTALS	7,978	2,464	10,442

*YS Averages are based on sales from February through April
May totals not yet available.

COMPARISON OF PARTICIPATION AND PER CAPITA SALES

<u>Branch</u>	<u>Weekly Average Participation</u>				<u>Average Per Capita</u>		
	<u>Sp74</u>	<u>High- est Week</u>	<u>F73</u>	<u>Sp73</u>	<u>Sp74</u>	<u>F73</u>	<u>Sp73</u>
Atlanta	39	44	37	29	10.8	12.2	10.7
Austin			13	19		9.0	8.5
Boston	50	67	58	50	8.0	8.9	7.8
Brooklyn	39	69	34	37	10.0	11.1	8.1
Chicago	40	55	45	43	13.9	13.5	10.2
Cleveland	24	28	20	22	11.3	13.3	12.0
Denver	27	36	32	31	9.1	9.7	6.6
Detroit	33	40	21	31	14.1	18.0	10.7
Houston	36	45	35	33	10.2	11.5	13.4
L.A.(Central-East)	29	34			8.7		
L.A.(West Side)	25	35	37	31	12.8	11.4	11.3
Lower Manhattan	43	74	40	40	9.4	10.0	12.6
Oakland/Berkeley	50	54	49	47			
Philadelphia	30	32	29	22	12.7	13.1	11.1
Pittsburgh	26	34	20	--	12.7	12.9	----
Portland	23	26	18	23	11.3	13.4	7.3
St. Louis	23	29	17	--	13.4	14.0	----
San Diego	20	25	22	21	12.0	15.3	14.3
San Francisco	31	47	42	24	10.4	10.7	14.6
Seattle	24	31	22	22	15.4	19.2	10.8
Twin Cities	26	33	24	24	11.4	10.9	11.0
Upper West Side	34	66	35	39	9.0	12.4	9.5
Washington DC	<u>28</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>11.2</u>	<u>12.5</u>	<u>11.0</u>
TOTAL WEEKLY AVERAGE	700	943	676	608	11.5	12.6	10.6

*Per capita is based on number sold by those participating, not on total membership.

LOCATIONS WHERE THE MILITANTS WERE SOLD-SPRING 1974 (Weekly Average)

<u>Branch</u>	<u>Campus</u>		<u>Black Commun.</u>		<u>Work Places</u>		<u>Polit. Events</u>		<u>Other Comm.</u>
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	%
Atlanta	90	21%	212	50%	8	2%	6	1%	26%
Austin*									
Boston	71	18%	89	23%	22	6%	23	6%	47%
Brooklyn	109	28%	95	24%	23	6%	32	8%	34%
Chicago	152	27%	211	38%	55	10%	40	7%	18%
Cleveland	107	40%	71	26%	26	10%	28	10%	14%
Denver	66	27%	107	43%	14	6%	33	13%	25%
Detroit	143	31%	81	17%	37	8%	29	6%	38%
Houston	46	13%	176	48%	7	2%	24	7%	30%
L.A.(Central-East)	85	34%	55	22%	15	6%	25	10%	28%
L.A.(West Side)	90	28%	46	14%	18	6%	30	9%	43%
Lower Manhattan	87	21%	80	20%	9	2%	27	7%	50%
Oakland/Berkeley	184	26%	183	26%	34	5%	35	5%	38%
Philadelphia	125	33%	66	17%	10	3%	22	6%	41%
Pittsburgh	163	49%	6	1%	9	3%	7	2%	45%
Portland	57	22%	71	27%	20	8%	19	7%	36%
St. Louis	77	25%	95	31%	13	4%	24	8%	32%
San Diego	88	37%	82	34%	2	1%	15	6%	22%
San Francisco	58	18%	55	17%	43	13%	16	5%	47%
Seattle	60	16%	91	25%	17	5%	18	5%	49%
Twin Cities	102	34%	15	5%	21	7%	68	23%	31%
Upper West Side	40	13%	66	22%	10	3%	53	17%	45%
Washington DC	<u>87</u>	<u>28%</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>29%</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>23%</u>
WEEKLY AVERAGE	2087	26%	2043	26%	424	5%	625	8%	35%

Note: "Black Community" includes all sales in the Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Arab, and Haitian communities.

*Figures not available.

COMPARISON OF AVERAGE WEEKLY SALES IN THE BLACK, PUERTO RICAN,
AND CHICANO COMMUNITIES WITH THE FALL 1973 SALES CAMPAIGN

<u>Branch</u>	<u>Weekly Average</u>		<u>Percent of Total Sales</u>	
	<u>Sp74</u>	<u>F73</u>	<u>Sp74</u>	<u>F73</u>
Atlanta	212	178	50%	39%
Boston	89	10	23%	2%
Brooklyn	95	86	24%	23%
Chicago	211	159	38%	26%
Cleveland	71	34	26%	13%
Denver	107	55	43%	18%
Detroit	81	70	17%	19%
Houston	176	92	48%	23%
L.A. (Central-East)	55	33	22%	8%
L.A. (West Side)	46		14%	
Lower Manhattan	80	56	20%	14%
Oakland/Berkeley	183	148	26%	22%
Philadelphia	66	64	17%	17%
Pittsburgh	6	2	1%	1%
Portland	71	0	27%	0%
St. Louis	95	69	31%	28%
San Diego	82	14	34%	3%
San Francisco	55	31	17%	7%
Seattle	91	19	25%	2%
Twin Cities	15	18	5%	7%
Upper West Side	66	13	22%	3%
Washington DC	<u>90</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>29%</u>	<u>6%</u>
TOTAL WEEKLY AVERAGE	2,043	1,169	26%	14%

COMPARISON OF AVERAGE SALES ON CAMPUS WITH TWO PREVIOUS SALES CAMPAIGNS

<u>Branch</u>	<u>Weekly Average Sales</u>			<u>Percent of Total Sales</u>		
	<u>Sp74</u>	<u>F73</u>	<u>Sp73</u>	<u>Sp74</u>	<u>F73</u>	<u>Sp73</u>
Atlanta	90	167	51	21%	37%	17%
Austin		62	42		53%	26%
Boston	71	201	59	18%	38%	14%
Brooklyn	109	105	104	28%	28%	35%
Chicago	152	105	53	27%	17%	13%
Cleveland	107	133	148	40%	49%	51%
Denver	66	96	44	27%	31%	22%
Detroit	143	231	124	31%	64%	38%
Houston	46	79	53	13%	20%	13%
L.A. (Central-East)	85	155	76	34%	35%	22%
L.A. (West Side)	90			28%		
Lower Manhattan	87	87	92	21%	22%	18%
Oakland/Berkeley	184	176	107	26%	26%	22%
Philadelphia	125	194	49	33%	51%	21%
Pittsburgh	163	166	---	49%	63%	---
Portland	57	92	36	22%	37%	23%
St. Louis	77	66	---	25%	27%	---
San Diego	88	165	162	37%	47%	57%
San Francisco	58	110	80	18%	25%	24%
Seattle	60	134	54	16%	32%	19%
Twin Cities	102	87	79	34%	35%	30%
Upper West Side	40	87	53	13%	20%	15%
Washington DC	<u>87</u>	<u>84</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>28%</u>	<u>26%</u>	<u>22%</u>
TOTAL WEEKLY AVERAGE	2,087	2,782	1,516	26%	35%	24%

COMPARISON OF SALES AT POLITICAL EVENTS AND AT WORK PLACES, UNION MEETINGS, AND STRIKE ACTIONS WITH THE FALL 1973 SALES CAMPAIGN

Branch	Political Events				Work Places, Etc.			
	Aver. Sold		Percent		Aver. Sold		Percent	
	Sp74	F73	Sp74	F73	Sp74	F73	Sp74	F73
Atlanta	6	7	1%	2%	8	1	2%	--
Boston	23	44	6%	8%	22	12	6%	2%
Brooklyn	32	43	8%	12%	23	5	6%	1%
Chicago	40	107	7%	18%	55	12	10%	2%
Cleveland	28	19	10%	7%	26	30	10%	11%
Denver	33	13	13%	4%	14	9	6%	3%
Detroit	29	15	6%	4%	37	8	8%	2%
Houston	24	41	7%	10%	7	29	2%	7%
L.A. (Central-East)	25	82	10%	19%	15	2	6%	--
L.A. (West Side)	30		9%		18		6%	
Lower Manhattan	27	60	7%	15%	9	3	2%	1%
Oakland/Berkeley	35	14	5%	2%	34	63	5%	9%
Philadelphia	22	40	6%	11%	10	5	3%	1%
Pittsburgh	7	11	2%	4%	9	0	3%	--
Portland	19	23	7%	9%	20	6	8%	2%
St. Louis	24	13	8%	5%	13	9	4%	4%
San Diego	15	28	6%	8%	2	1	1%	--
San Francisco	16	38	5%	9%	43	17	13%	4%
Seattle	18	23	5%	5%	17	6	5%	1%
Twin Cities	68	36	23%	14%	21	13	7%	5%
Upper West Side	53	63	17%	15%	10	6	3%	1%
Washington DC	<u>51</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>1%</u>
TOTAL WEEKLY AVERAGE	625	783	8%	10%	424	241	5%	3%

WHERE SUBSCRIPTIONS WERE SOLD IN THE SPRING 1974 SUB DRIVE

Branch	Total Sold	1 Cam- pus	2 Black Comm.	3 Other Comm.	4 Co- Work.	5 Other Union	6 Polit. Activ.	7 SWP Camp.	8 Str. Sales
Atlanta	200	(No report)							
Austin	26	(No report)							
Boston	407	280	--	--	7	--	86	8	4
Brooklyn	318	233	20	--	--	--	36	--	20
Chicago	528	312	75	--	12	6	40	7	--
Cleveland	333	143	88	--	--	10	1	3	--
Denver	301	210	--	--	40	10	--	--	10
Detroit	305	234	--	--	16	--	23	--	17
Houston	297	225	40	--	2	2	13	6	13
LA(Cent-East)	253	96	43	--	5	10	65	18	15
LA(West Side)	279	150	--	50	5	25	35	10	1
Low. Manhat.	335	170	13	--	7	--	59	5	16
Oak./Berk.	528	336	64	--	--	--	--	--	--
Philadelphia	283	218	--	--	5	5	20	15	10
Pittsburgh	138	122	--	--	9	6	10	7	21
Portland	149	120	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
St. Louis	152	91	17	--	1	3	30	--	3
San Diego	213	198	--	--	6	--	5	2	4
San Francisco	404	321	25	--	--	6	2	6	--
Seattle	260	218	--	6	--	2	14	4	3
Twin Cities	284	186	33	--	5	--	20	3	--
Upper W. Side	281	(No report)							
Washington DC	327	190	--	12	46	--	39	--	3
TOTAL REPORTED	6,601	4,053	421	68	166	85	498	94	140

Explanation of categories:

1. Campus--Inner-city and regional campuses; off-campus student housing
2. Black Comm.--Door-to-door in Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican neighborhoods
3. Other Comm.--Door-to-door in other working class neighborhoods
4. Co-Work.--Sold by comrades to co-workers on their jobs
5. Other Union--Sold to other unionists and workers
6. Polit. Activ.--Political activities
7. SWP Camp.--Campaign activities and literature coupons
8. Str. Sales--Subscriptions sold during street sales

COMPARISON OF PERCENTAGE OF BUNDLE SOLD DURING SALES CAMPAIGNS

<u>Branch</u>	<u>Spring 1974</u>	<u>Fall 1973</u>	<u>Spring 1973</u>
Atlanta	78%	91%	85%
Austin	57%	85%	83%
Boston	72%	72%	70%
Brooklyn	79%	68%	66%
Chicago	85%	84%	85%
Cleveland	81%	72%	82%
Denver	64%	75%	76%
Detroit	94%	81%	76%
Houston	80%	76%	69%
L.A. (Central-East)	67%		
L.A. (West Side)	81%	66%	67%
Lower Manhattan	75%	83%	83%
Oakland/Berkeley	86%	79%	78%
Philadelphia	87%	82%	68%
Pittsburgh	84%	80%	---
Portland	82%	72%	66%
St. Louis	94%	86%	---
San Diego	81%	87%	90%
San Francisco	63%	76%	63%
Seattle	81%	90%	80%
Twin Cities	72%	62%	68%
Upper West Side	71%	78%	78%
Washington DC	75%	70%	81%
AVERAGE OF TOTAL BUNDLE	79%	78%	76%

(The average percent of the bundles sold in 1972 was 54%.)

COMPARISON OF PROFIT MADE DURING SALES CAMPAIGNS

<u>Branch</u>	<u>Spring 1974</u>		<u>Fall 1973</u>		<u>Spring 1973</u>	
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Wkly</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Wkly</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Wkly</u>
	<u>18wks</u>	<u>Aver</u>	<u>11wks</u>	<u>Aver</u>	<u>15wks</u>	<u>Aver</u>
Atlanta	\$234	\$13	\$341	\$31	\$456	\$30
Austin	-\$28	-\$2	\$52	\$5	\$242	\$16
Boston	\$97	\$5	\$67	\$6	\$440	\$29
Brooklyn	\$240	\$13	\$48	\$4	\$266	\$18
Chicago	\$505	\$28	\$284	\$26	\$646	\$43
Cleveland	\$200	\$11	\$42	\$4	\$366	\$24
Denver	-\$63	-\$4	\$104	\$9	\$260	\$17
Detroit	\$576	\$32	\$75	\$7	\$325	\$22
Houston	\$244	\$14	\$139	\$13	\$408	\$27
L.A. (Central-East)	-\$10	-\$1				
L.A. (West Side)	\$234	\$13	-\$81	-\$7	\$330	\$22
Lower Manhattan	\$178	\$10	\$229	\$21	\$746	\$51
Oakland/Berkeley	\$672	\$37	\$293	\$27	\$660	\$44
Philadelphia	\$368	\$20	\$175	\$16	\$230	\$15
Pittsburgh	\$289	\$16	\$143	\$13	----	---
Portland	\$204	\$11	\$45	\$4	\$143	\$10
St. Louis	\$380	\$21	\$651	\$15	----	---
San Diego	\$176	\$10	\$204	\$19	\$473	\$32
San Francisco	-\$116	-\$6	\$125	\$11	\$230	\$15
Seattle	\$260	\$14	\$291	\$26	\$323	\$22
Twin Cities	\$80	\$4	-\$76	-\$7	\$262	\$17
Upper West Side	\$62	\$3	\$153	\$14	\$491	\$33
Washington DC	<u>\$140</u>	<u>\$8</u>	<u>\$103</u>	<u>\$9</u>	<u>\$269</u>	<u>\$18</u>
TOTAL NET PROFIT	\$4,922	\$273	\$2,921	\$266	\$7,566	\$506

Note: In the Spring, 1974, and Fall, 1973, sales campaigns, branches had to sell over 70% of their bundles to make a profit. They had to sell over 50% to make a profit in Spring, 1973.

COMMENTS AND REPORTS ON THE COALITION OF LABOR UNION WOMEN

Comments from a CLUW Activist in Detroit

The Coalition of Labor Union Women exists. The test for us now is to build it. In determining how to help it grow, several factors must be taken into account.

1. An organization such as CLUW has the potential for being one of the elements in transforming the union movement into a fighting class-struggle instrument. This is a fact which both we and the union bureaucracy recognize. The union bureaucracy is obviously nervous about that potential and this is reflected in their approach to organizing CLUW.

2. Unlike almost all of our opponents—who see CLUW as simply another forum for them to "expose the bureaucrats"—we understand that the current leadership of the unions is crucial to the growth of CLUW. We want to help keep them involved, get to know them, and work with them.

3. The strength of CLUW lies in its being organized within the existing trade-union movement. We do not want to get CLUW cut off and isolated from the union movement.

4. There are literally thousands of women who are potential CLUW activists that can *only* be reached through their unions. We cannot write off these women by trying to circumvent the union structure. We have to understand that the overwhelming majority of union members do not share our analysis of the treacherous role of the union bureaucracy. To demand that level of consciousness from union women as a precondition to becoming involved in CLUW would be fatal. Not only would it automatically isolate CLUW from the unions, it would also make CLUW unintelligible and threatening to the very rank-and-file women we want to involve in CLUW. CLUW gives us a chance to work shoulder-to-shoulder with hundreds of women unionists we have never had access to before. This is a very important opportunity.

These factors determine our activity. We want to build and broaden something that the union officials are very nervous about. We must be patient and not try to artificially barge ahead. Our first job is to reach out and bring more women in, gain authority and legitimacy for CLUW, and thereby lay the basis for future action.

Here in Detroit there is a layer of militant women who went to Chicago who are very enthused and want to do things. These women are not aware of the bigger problem of the leadership holding back and see no reason not to move out and do *something*, even though they are not sure *what* to do. Our job with regard to these women will be to patiently explain in informal discussion—to whatever extent possible—our analysis of the situation and the importance of patient building work and going through the formalities required for getting the Detroit CLUW chapter recognized.

One thing these women can do is get involved in women's committees in their unions, or establishing them where they do not exist. For instance, one very enthusiastic young woman in the American Postal Workers Union returned from Chicago with contacts and full of ideas.

She was impatient about the slowness of organizing CLUW. I encouraged her not to get hung up *waiting* for CLUW but to start organizing in her local. Last Sunday she called a meeting of women in the postal service to discuss how to deal with discrimination against women in the post office. They are considering a class-action suit against discriminatory policies.

Work in the immediate period is proceeding along the following lines:

1) Publicity to and through the unions

a) articles in union papers. So far there have been articles in the *Detroit Metropolitan AFL-CIO News*, the *Michigan State AFL-CIO News*, the *Michigan Teacher*, Wayne County Community College Federation News, AFSCME 188 Newsletter. I'm sure there were reports in the UAW papers.

b) resolutions of support and endorsement. The Detroit Metropolitan AFL-CIO, the Wayne County Community College Federation of Teachers, and the Michigan Federation of Teachers have all passed resolutions of endorsement.

2) We want to begin organizing local CLUW chapters. There will be a large meeting held here in Detroit in mid-July, to hear a report on the Chicago conference and draw in new women. This is the first step to start off the CLUW building campaign in Detroit.

3) We especially want to get a feel from the women involved what they would like to see CLUW do. We want to encourage them to think of realistic activities for CLUW to carry out: strike support and support to organizing drives (where there are no jurisdictional questions involved). CLUW could, for example, organize a picket line in front of the federal building in support of a class-action suit against discrimination by women postal employees or something of that character.

The national office which will be here in Detroit has printed and distributed a booklet with the proceedings from Chicago, the statement of purpose, and CLUW membership cards.

Comments from a CLUW Activist in New York

There are several questions which are brought up quite often in relation to CLUW. They are: 1) Should CLUW be open to non-union women at this stage? 2) What should CLUW's relationship to the UFW be? 3) How can activities be carried out in the name of CLUW before official chapters are chartered? 4) Should CLUW seek official endorsement from unions? 5) How should we approach the sectarians who are attempting to divide CLUW between the "rank and file" and what they call the "bureaucrats?"

1. If CLUW is to develop as a legitimate part of the union movement, with the support and endorsement of the union leadership, its basic characteristic must be that of a *union* women's organization. If the union movement comes to view CLUW as a competitive organization, or as another "feminist group that happens to have some union women in it," they will shy away from it.

CLUW cannot afford to have that happen at this formative stage. Its only hope is to gain legitimacy within the union movement, while at the same time involving rank-and-file women in activity.

CLUW has the potential of playing a powerful role in bringing unorganized women into the organized labor movement, and that will certainly be one of its main responsibilities. That can't happen, however, unless and until CLUW itself is established. That must come first. We can't put the cart before the horse. The first job is to get a union women's organization off the ground. Broadening it out can only be successful when CLUW itself becomes successful.

What some areas have done, which seems a reasonable way to handle the situation, is to invite non-union women to attend if they are particularly interested, but with voice and no vote. That is, they are not official members, but are welcome to come, participate, and help out. The rule does not have to be super rigid. For instance, some areas have included as full members women who are involved in organizing drives, or who are staff members of unions but don't belong to the union.

The question of membership is still to be decided by the National Coordinating Committee. They will probably decide that CLUW should be open to only union women.

2. Apparently there is not going to be a problem with CLUW supporting the UFW. Several groups have done so with little or no opposition. That, of course, is good. We should understand, however, that the *major priority* for CLUW right now should be a general outreach, educational campaign to reach new women and win support and endorsement from the labor movement. Support to the UFW, as well as to other struggles, and any other activities that CLUW engages in, should be seen as part and parcel of the general outreach campaign.

3. Several areas have constituted themselves as "organizing committees for CLUW," or a similar-type body, until they have met the requirements to become official chapters. The main thing to keep in mind is that all the groups should become official chapters and go through all the procedures properly for doing so. The requirements are certainly not so difficult that they can't be met — although they have slowed things down. However, holding the three meetings necessary to become a chapter can be quite productive. Several areas have already had some very good educational meetings, and some conferences with workshops are planned for later in the summer and fall.

4. It is very important to get official endorsements. The more official endorsement that CLUW can get, the more authority and legitimacy it will have. For instance, the fact that CLUW was endorsed by the AFSCME national convention recently, as well as by the Detroit Central Labor Council, the Michigan Federation of Teachers, and several other union bodies, is a big step forward. Also, women from the different unions in an area can try to get their own unions to endorse and support CLUW.

5. The sectarians, and IS in particular, are trying to build CLUW by going around who they call the "bureaucrats." Their approach cannot be successful. CLUW at this point *needs* all the women officials it can get in order to gain legitimacy and authority. If the current leadership of CLUW gets scared off, they can very easily stop CLUW in its tracks.

We should talk to the ISers. We should point out to them that the women officials involved in CLUW are far from a homogeneous group, nor are they the female counterparts of George Meany. Some of them can be won over to varying degrees. It would be a serious mistake to approach all the women officials as part of a "monolithic, bureaucratic block." We should recommend to those who want to think through this question more that they read Farrell Dobbs' books on the Teamsters.

We should also explain to them that we know what a real bureaucrat is, and we know what's wrong with a bureaucrat. The question is how to approach them, and it's here that we have a more intelligent strategy. You don't get rid of bureaucrats by denouncing them at meetings or dismissing them. You have to know how to pressure them and how to outflank them. This puts the union bureaucracy in a position of either having to do as the rank and file wants done, or exposing themselves as being against what the rank and file wants.

Also explain to the sectarians that if CLUW becomes polarized right now it could destroy CLUW. Perhaps they won't listen or be won over to our view, but at least it will make them even more insecure about what they are doing.

Report from Boston— April 25

Following the national CLUW conference in Chicago a meeting was held to acquaint those women who knew of, but had not attended, the conference with what had happened. All who had attended were agreed that it was an important, historic occasion for women and for the labor movement. Further, all agreed that there was a lot of education and reach-out work to be done. No particular issue predominated at this meeting, but rather the need to build Boston CLUW, get our charter, involve more women and more unions. An expanded steering-committee meeting was called in order to involve leadership women from more unions in the area in the planning of CLUW's immediate future activities.

The next meeting was attended by 15 women from nine unions. Organizing the unorganized was the main thrust of the discussion. A more specific issue discussed was child care.

Basically everyone can see the need for educational outreach for the time being. We will be publicizing CLUW with newspaper articles, press releases, and talk shows. We already have a one-hour program set up on a labor radio show in Worcester. Our immediate goal is putting together literature, a newsletter, and information for mailings to unions in order to get speaking appointments before general membership meetings (or executive boards), seeking funds, endorsement, resources, and more interested union women.

There was much sentiment to include non-union women in CLUW. The decision on that was postponed, and until a decision is made we should see as primary getting union women involved; non-union women could come as visitors, but not vote.

In order to strengthen Boston CLUW we are regularizing and publicizing general meetings. The 1199 Union Hall is our meeting place every other Thursday.

Report from Portland— May 14

CLUW held a forum at the YWCA on April 27. It was

endorsed by the Washington County Labor Council. The media gave it excellent coverage.

Forty-four women attended to hear reports on the conference. A good discussion followed on the ERA. The Revolutionary Union women attacked the ERA, but all kinds of women in unions got up and defended it. A briefer but good discussion also took place on the relationship between the women's liberation movement and CLUW.

Of the 44 women there, 23 of them were in unions (most of them not in any opponent tendency). At least 12 unions were represented. Individuals of note in attendance were: the regional coordinator of the Retail Clerks, the Oregon political campaign director of the AFL-CIO, a representative of the Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women, the head of the civil rights division of the Bureau of Labor, the head of the Waitress' Union, the financial secretary of the United Garment Workers, and the Vice-president of the Communications Workers of America local.

A Democratic party woman came to the meeting and asked for endorsement for her campaign. The chair explained to her why CLUW doesn't endorse candidates.

A state convention or conference is planned for June 15. The general concept of that meeting at this point is to start with a keynote, nationally authoritative speaker; then break into workshops on fighting sexism on the job, the ERA, the legal rights of women, breaking into male-dominated trade unions, etc.; then reconvene into plenary sessions with reports and possible resolutions that might come from the workshops.

The June 15 meeting can provide a focus for carrying out an ambitious propaganda campaign—i.e., continuing good media work, organizing tours for CLUW to speak at union local meetings, getting endorsements from unions, speaking to community groups, getting articles on CLUW into union papers.

The state AFL-CIO convention is the following week and we will want to get their endorsement. One of the main jobs here is to broaden CLUW out.

REPORT ON SAN FRANCISCO SEARS STRIKE AND CITY WORKERS STRIKE

Report from the San Francisco Branch

Recently in San Francisco, a sequence of labor struggles reached a height that approached a general strike in scope. The city workers struck, setting off a series of allied and supporting stoppages. The San Francisco teachers hooked on to the city strike in solidarity and to gain momentum for the pressing of their own demands. Bus drivers (MUNI, city surface transit system) respected picket lines and stopped bus service inside San Francisco; rapid transit workers (BART) respected picket lines stopping subway service in San Francisco; Oakland-S.F. bus drivers (A.C. Transit) stopped this intercity bus service one day and then crossed lines, and finally, longshoremen had begun to close down the port. Golden Gate Transit, the bus service between S.F. and Marin county, had been shut down and reopened by police. The San Mateo Central Labor Council announced publicly that at its next meeting (the Friday the strike was settled) it would consider closing down the S.F. airport in solidarity with the city workers.

The extension of the strike by placing pickets at first one, then another, of the above transit facilities and on the last day of the strike carrying the picketing to the docks, gave a snowballing effect to the strike.

At a high point in this rapidly-unfolding display of pent-up discontent, a resolution was introduced into the S.F. Central Labor Council (CLC) calling for a one-day work stoppage. The resolution had been circulated by Sears strikers among a spectrum of leading labor bureaucrats. Reportedly (we never saw the signed list of endorsers) it was endorsed by official representatives of the Retail Clerks, Painters, Carpenters, Plumbers, Longshoremen, teachers, city workers and others. It was introduced and motivated by only two of the reported endorsers, Walter Johnson, Retail Clerks, and James Ballard, S.F. AFT. No reference by either speaker was made to other endorsers and none of these other endorsers who were present spoke.

On the one hand, the speeches for the resolution were greeted by enthusiastic applause by the council delegates. On the other hand, after opposing arguments were presented by two Sailors union representatives, there was no significant participation in the discussion by rank-and-file delegates. There was no attempt by the chair to stifle discussion.

The resolution itself was designed to avoid, to the extent such a thing is possible, the appearance of criticism or challenge to the formal leaders of S.F. labor by the makers of the resolution. For this reason, it contained no date and left implementation to the CLC executive board. Even so, the AFT's Ballard felt constrained, after speaking effectively for the resolution, to move to refer to the executive board without, in effect, any recommendation by the delegates.

It is worth noting here the highlights of Ballard's speech motivating the work stoppage resolution. Ballard motivated Johnson's proposal on the basis that the strikes

named in the resolution were not simply routine collective-bargaining disputes. He said that "labor is facing a test" both here in S.F. and throughout the country. If labor doesn't meet this test in a united fashion, he explained, it could mean greater challenges and defeats in the future.

The referral motion was carried with only a sprinkling of opposition.

Two incidents, however, underscore the tense, near-crisis atmosphere barely beneath the surface. Normally the meetings of this body are open to all members of S.F. unions to observe the proceedings. This time, without even the formality of declaring the meeting in executive session, non-delegates were excluded—even those vouched for by officials.

The second occurrence came during the discussion of referral of the resolution. An old-time rank-and-file militant was rudely interrupted and prevented from speaking by shouts from the floor that he was not speaking to the point. These shouts came as soon as it became clear that he *was* speaking on the subject—he was trying to explain why he was *against* the resolution without the body registering an opinion on the substance of the resolution. (A favorite trick of these bureaucrats is to cover their disruptive tactics by acting the part of no-nonsense business-like rank and filers who rise in impatient indignation at long-winded speakers who are not even talking to the point.) This poor old-timer had been speaking for perhaps a minute when he was shouted down. He lost his cool and was not effective thereafter.

The resolution included a call for a mass rally on the day of the stoppage. This was an echo of the previous meeting of this body, two weeks earlier. At that time Walter Johnson had introduced a resolution calling for a "general membership meeting of all S.F. unions" to consider ways and means to meet the attack on labor as exemplified by Sears' union-busting policy and related problems of working people. This resolution was referred too. It was "referred to the Secretary" (of the CLC) by the Secretary himself (Jack Crowley). Johnson took the floor at this point to ask if that meant that only the question of implementation—the setting of a date and the actual organization of the meeting—was to be referred? Crowley answered: Yes.

This little byplay reflected the backstage maneuvering going on and which continued into the subsequent meeting two weeks later. Crowley, repeatedly, would agree in private consultations to virtually any proposal made by the hard-pressed Retail Clerks to bring aid to the long strike. Nothing had come of these promises. The two meetings described above reflected a growing recognition that more than diplomatic behind-the-scenes fraternal arm-twisting was necessary.

Four days after the work stoppage resolution was presented to the CLC meeting, the city workers strike was settled.

What are we to make of the chain of events culminating

in the city strike? What was the impact of our participation, which was significantly greater in this arena than in recent years?

The Bay Area branches had taken note of some meaningful changes in S.F. unions so that from the first day of the Sears strike, in response to a call by these workers for support to their picket lines, we responded. Walter Johnson, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 1100, representing Sears workers, and Jim Herman, President of Local 34, ILWU, were the moving spirits behind previous attempts at united labor action, first in support of the more than 4-month-long strike of longshoremen in 1972 and then in organizing a general labor protest against rising prices and frozen wages in April 1973. With the start of the Sears strike, these two initiated a Labor-Community Support Coalition to rally support behind the Teamsters, Clerks, Machinists, and Electricians unions.

After four months, two Teamsters locals accepted settlements and broke a pact made by striking unions at the beginning of the Sears strike to stay out until all grievances were settled. After Teamsters began crossing picket lines, Sears made public a proposal to the union that knowledgeable unionists agree amounted to a signal of intent to bust the Retail Clerks union at Sears. Sears strikers overwhelmingly rejected the proposal even though the real losers seemed to be only the minority of higher-paid "big ticket" salespeople.

It was at this point that we offered to do more to help. One of our comrades approached the leadership of the union and the strike explaining that the SWP considered the outcome of this strike to be far-reaching for all labor and that we were deeply concerned. Our comrade indicated we were prepared to do what we could to help prevent a defeat and win a victory if possible. The authoritative strike leaders responded favorably and a meeting was set up between representatives of the strike committee, including Walter Johnson, and the two Bay Area branches. Collaboration continued along these lines up to the present.

We were extremely careful in these discussions to make clear the practical limits of our help: 1) We were far too small to affect the outcome simply through the addition of our own forces and that of those directly influenced by us. And, 2) that the key to any real change in the relation of forces was the degree to which the official union movement could be made to respond to this attempt to set back S.F. labor.

We explained further that our reinforcement of picket lines should be seen in this light. Thus, such intensified activity could only be of short duration and was subordinate to a conscious and deliberate orientation toward bringing pressure to bear on official labor bodies to take responsibility for winning this strike.

We proposed a course of action on two connected levels. First, a mass labor conference was projected which would discuss and organize concrete aid to the strike. Ideally, such a conference would be sponsored and organized by the official central labor body, the CLC. Short of that, such an assembly could take place and be meaningful if it had at least nominal endorsement from this body or something very close to that. The key that made such a project feasible—at least avoiding the disaster of a poor turnout, given the half-hearted foot-dragging likely from the labor bureaucracy—was the sizeable Local 1100 membership itself. A respectable-sized meeting could be

fairly assured justifying the risk of building it as a convening of united S.F. labor.

Second, we proposed reviving the United Labor Action Committee as the instrument to both bring immediate reinforcements to the picket lines and to increase the pressure on official labor bodies.

Both proposals were implemented, approximately at least, and were modest successes. The conference was changed to a rally to which 1,500 people came. Many politicians and some fewer labor officials were present. CLC Secretary Crowley spoke, promising aid to the strike. The representative of the State AFL-CIO promised to put Sears on the "Don't Patronize" list (for those who might not know, this is a joke). The capitalist politicians outdid each other with pro-labor rhetoric.

Just the same, with all the limits this thing had, it was positive. The *SF Chronicle* reporter who covered the story put his finger on the essential positiveness of the meeting, despite his intent. Seeking to ridicule the event, he characterized it as "an old-fashioned labor rally." It was appropriate. Here were gathered in one hall, besides those mentioned on the platform, maybe a thousand "middle class" mostly middle-aged women department-store workers, representatives from the farm workers, the Farah strike, and a sprinkling—maybe as many as 300—varied trade-union activists. Outside the entrance, most of the political tendencies to the left of the Communist Party sold their press. Inside, when one of the speakers alluded to the antiwar stand of Local 1100, a rousing cheer went up from the audience. When a woman trade-unionist supporter sent up a note pointing out the "oversight" that a rally to support strikers, most of whom were women, did not have a single woman on the platform, the chairman invited her up. This rectification was enthusiastically endorsed by cheers from the audience.

All in all, it represented, in embryo, the coming together of almost all stages of the recent radicalization process in the U.S. It was truly close to an "old-fashioned labor rally" of the kind where various oppressed groups and social movements are brought together under working-class auspices symbolizing the central position of labor in the overall struggle for social justice.

The rally, occurring some four weeks after our commitment, was also the pre-determined point we had set to take stock of our active participation. We assessed it as follows: The rally was in itself a step toward garnering needed support from official labor bodies. It served as a focus for general efforts to mobilize individual unions and rank-and-file activists in day-to-day support actions. A speakers bureau organized through the support committee spoke at many local unions explaining the issues and urging support to the picket lines, the rally and other aid. The response, especially where we had union members, was revealing of the potential. In the Painters union these were the major support actions: 1) \$50-per-month donation for the duration of strike; 2) at least 10 pickets per week organized and dispatched out of the union office; 3) an assessment of \$1 per month per member for the duration of the strike, up to six months. (The circumstances around this proposal are worth noting. It was presented a week before the rally and tentatively approved and finally voted on a couple of weeks after the rally. It passed by a 2-to-1 majority. There was opposition from the chief bureaucrat in this local, Morris Evenson, who was backed into

a corner by the sentiment of the members and a majority of the other officials.)

A similar proposal was presented in a carpenter's local here, by a union member who had been centrally involved in the 7-week carpenter's struggle. The meeting was larger than usual because of related issues scheduled to come up at the meeting, hanging over from the work stoppage. The chief official here, Joe O'Sullivan, a little smarter than his painter counterpart, offered a substitute motion of a \$1,000 straight contribution to the strikers, which passed.

Following the rally there was a series of weekly mobilizations for picketing at a selected store. The actions were surprisingly well attended and effective. Many of the participants were people we had had contact with in other spheres of activity, such as carpenter activists in the work stoppage last year. A few fulltime union officials began to emerge as regular and serious picketers. The political level of most of these union-conscious militants was symbolized by the "Alioto for Governor" buttons sported by many of them.

In this period of Saturday mobilizations a kind of "debate" shaped up over what to do next to win the strike. A number of officials, not the ones picketing regularly but others who were showing up as if to make the record and keep track of what was going on (they would not really picket, they huddled from one gate to another), began to raise anew their proposal for a work stoppage as the only solution to the strike impasse. From the beginning of our increased participation, people like Jim Herman, ILWU, for example, would counterpose this tactic to more modest proposals like the rally.

It was not an accident that those raising this idea happened to be identified with unions that had suffered marked setbacks in the way of government intervention that took away wages negotiated, signed and sealed, and in each case following strikes. (The two other vocal advocates of a one-day work stoppage were Evenson of the painters and O'Sullivan of the carpenters unions.) Being under the most heat, they felt compelled to take a demagogic stance to the left of the bureaucracy as a whole—without really rocking the boat. The six-week-long unofficial carpenters strike must have evoked the specter of a new revival of rank-and-file initiative and the thought must also have occurred to them that this surprising carpenter upsurge might be only the tip of an iceberg.

For other reasons Walter Johnson was swept up by this ultimatic approach. He was concerned, however, by our coolness to this proposal. He wanted to know why—what we really thought about it. We explained that to our mind what was important were the practical steps that led to the kind of aid that in principle underlay the work stoppage tactic—the real solidarity and support of the S.F. labor movement. From the outset we had dismissed the work stoppage proposal as unrealistic, and in the given context, demagogic and diversionary. We proposed, in contrast, another version of the general theme guiding our participation—a general membership meeting open to all members of S.F. unions. We suggested that a resolution be introduced into the CLC along these lines.

Following this suggestion, Walter Johnson, accompanied by a delegation of about 50 strikers as observers, introduced the resolution to the CLC. The exchange described

earlier took place. (Crowley had nominally agreed to implement a general membership meeting.) Inconclusive as it was, we considered the outcome a big step forward, and so did Johnson.

In our view, it fit into one of the chief tasks a proletarian leadership must carry out—to develop consciousness among workers of their power when organized independently as a class for working-class interests. Contrariwise, the labor bureaucracy consciously and unconsciously seeks to prove the opposite. At every step along the road they blame the ranks for their own cowardice, short-sightedness, corruption, impotence and paralyzed awe before the powers of capital. At every step, we sought by our actions, and proposals for action, to demonstrate that the only real obstacle in the way of the workers effectively dealing blow for blow against the bosses is the incapacity and unwillingness of the so-called labor leadership to lead workers in a fight for their own class interests.

Thus the introduction and nominal acceptance of the general membership meeting resolution was a step forward in that it pointed toward a practical path to victory for the Sears strikers and tended to put the onus for a defeat, if that should happen, where it belonged, on the class-collaborationist labor bureaucrats who would not follow the indicated class-struggle path.

Less than two weeks after the CLC meeting that put the fate of the Sears workers into the hands of Brother Crowley, who was now empowered to implement a general membership meeting to consider and organize ways and means to end the strike favorably for the workers, the city workers went on strike. The dynamic of the development of the city workers strike changed the objective possibilities open for the Sears strikers, that is, had there been a modicum of leadership in the top echelons of S. F. labor.

Besides the unexpected and impressive display of workers solidarity that gave the city workers strike a power that was inspirational, there was a parallel expression of something new in the air. That was the truly amazing sympathy for the strike by the general population. Although seriously inconvenienced—many had to walk miles each day to get to work—there was no sign of any antagonism to the strikers. The overriding justice of the workers' demands and the concomitant cold arrogance of the city officialdom, united the "public" behind the strike. It was just another expression of changing consciousness which was responsible in the first place for the dynamism of the strike.

The attempt by the bourgeoisie to whip up sentiment against "illegal" strikes by government employees never got off the ground. Even the attempt to whip up a hysteria against the "unconscionable act" (Mayor Alioto's gem) of labor solidarity of the bus drivers stalled dead in its tracks. The "sewage in the Bay" horror issue got barely little more mileage.

Mayor Alioto, campaigning hard for the Democratic Party's nomination for Governor, was hard-pressed to retain credibility as "labor's candidate." His fortunes appeared to go up and down as he maneuvered absurdly and desperately between his obvious role as employer and his patently sham role of mediator.

The hard line against the strike was narrowed to the S. F. Chamber of Commerce and a few other isolated mouthpieces of the ruling class. A particularly insidious

participant in this camp was a certain Rudy Tham, allegedly representing Teamsters who challenged the right of the SEIU (the union representing the majority of the organized city workers) to negotiate for city employees. Challenging the authority and legitimacy of the strike itself, he stood alone among labor bureaucrats with the audacity to act out openly a judas role.

However, the confidence of capital was clearly behind Alioto's soft-cop approach. At the end of the strike the Mayor summed up this assessment of the real situation. He addressed himself to the hard line espoused by the Chamber of Commerce, the Governor and the judge who almost surrealistically declared the strike illegal; ordered everybody back to work forthwith, and ordered the Mayor to order the police to enforce his original order. Alioto pointed out in a TV newscast that had he listened to these "irresponsible" voices, "we would have a general strike on our hands, now, with much violence and bloodshed." That this was not an overstatement of the explosiveness of the real situation was bolstered by a rueful reference in the same statement to the fact that "labor was united" in that struggle.

This evaluation of the changed level of consciousness and new combativity in the city workers strike corresponded to a parallel evaluation we had been coming to in regard to the serious consequences of the attack on Sears workers. We had observed a level of response that most of us did not expect. It had seemed from the beginning that our assessment would not seem credible to most workers—that this attack on this small group of workers posed a serious threat to all S. F. labor. That a setback at Sears would not only change the relation of forces between the department stores (most of which were "conglomerate" owned) and the relevant unions but also "puncture the myth" of S. F. being a solid union town. To our surprise and gratification this abstract logic was readily grasped by those workers informed of the facts. Why?

To put it in a nutshell: the meaning of Nixon's New Economic Policy, launched in 1971, the significance of which we have patiently explained since that time, has come home to many American workers. In some cases—as with the independent truckers, the carpenters, the miners, etc.—with a bang. That living standards are indeed going down, and more importantly, the feeling is growing that the underlying crises are not going to go away. Topping it off is the crass, guileless, and heavy-handed bias of government policy against the exploited and for the exploiter. Add Watergate and the Energy Crisis and it explains why workers more readily drew the ominous implications in the long-drawn-out Sears strike.

These responses may well be symptomatic of general moods nationally and harbingers of more to come on a grander scale in the not too distant future.

It was in the light of this sequence of events and our gradual understanding of their significance that the proposal of certain bureaucrats for a general work stoppage required another look.

The city workers strike was three days old. A scheduled Saturday picket at Sears was turned into a CLC-sponsored rally. It was formally called in defiance of an injunction against picketing at that Sears store (Geary Street). On the speakers platform were an assortment of labor representatives and a few politicians. (It should

be noted here that two SWP members spoke at this rally. One as a candidate for congress and the other as a supporter of the strike, representing his local union.) On the picket lines that day were several hundred pickets, including new faces from the city workers and teachers now also on strike. That morning we had issued a campaign statement for this rally, reporting the general membership meeting action of the CLC and the public calls for a one-day general work stoppage by prominent officials, naming Carpenter Business Agent and Building Trades Council President Joe O'Sullivan as one example. We endorsed both the action and the proposal and called on the labor movement to set a date. At the rally, we were told by a Sears strike leader that Crowley was going to announce plans for the stoppage. As could be expected, he didn't. Johnson and Evenson, however, did propose the action again and other officials endorsed the idea from the speaking platform.

Sears workers, with our encouragement, asked Evenson what he intended to do about it. He suggested they draft such a resolution and together on Monday morning they would circulate it among officials seeking endorsements, and then submit it to the CLC meeting that night. Sears strikers asked us to help draft it. We did that. It thereafter underwent a series of changes as it was circulated. At the last moment the date was taken out at Crowley's insistence. The outcome, as outlined earlier, confirmed our estimate of the function of the "work stoppage" proposal to the bureaucrats who had been mouthing it. Our shift to support this proposal helped to strip these fakers of their pretense of "militancy" as they disappeared into the wings when the issued was joined in the CLC meeting.

Our part may have been the weight that tipped the scales toward the issue actually being discussed on the floor of the S. F. CLC. Why was it correct now? Why at this point did it not, in our opinion, serve as a diversion from some other more practical proposal for raising the level of class consciousness? Why was it not now "off the wall?" We had to be cognizant not only of resisting the pressures of the ultra-lefts and other opportunists but also not to allow their advocacy of a given proposition to stand in the way of our responding objectively to the concrete situations as they unfold. (It should be noted here that our ultraleft opponents, displaying the knack of raising certain transitional demands at inappropriate times and in classically infantile ways, had almost no effect on the unfolding of events. It seemed as if they were a group of extras in a stageplay reading lines from a script from another play.)

The call for a one-day work stoppage before the city strike erupted was artificial and unrelated to that stage of the struggle. It had no connection with the experience workers were going through. But during the city strike where there already had evolved a spreading of the strike that closely approached a modestly effective general strike, the tactic would appear comprehensible to the workers of this city. Reports were coming in from comrades on the picket lines that the pickets were discussing a general strike. The fact that the motion was on the floor of the CLC no doubt contributed to the threat already implicit in the snowballing city strike—strengthening the bargaining position of city workers (as Alioto's comments mentioned earlier testify to).

Moreover, if the motion had indeed passed—particularly with the date, the upcoming Friday, left in—it *would* have happened, if there was no settlement. In any case, settled or not, a scheduled one-day general strike and mass rally would have driven home to both workers and bosses the fact that no union was going to be busted in S. F. without a knockdown dragout fight! It would have also put the moral authority of the entire S. F. labor movement behind the teachers' strike. It would have raised the level of class consciousness. It would have driven home the real meaning of the class struggle going on at that moment in S. F. It would have been an inspiring example for the whole U. S. working class.

At this point the Sears strike continues. To our amazement they recently voted by secret ballot by something like 150 to 2 to continue the strike! We are continuing to do what we can to help. Our scale of participation continues to be gauged to what is realistic.

Our participation was perhaps crucial in three ways. First, we brought our small reinforcements to bear when it counted for much more because of the critical stage the strike was at at that moment. Second, we helped point these workers toward the necessary task of involving the larger forces. Third, we made it difficult for the bureaucrats to blame the workers for their own defaults, inadequacies and crimes.

Most important perhaps was the exceptional teamwork, the frank discussion, argument and problem-solving approach of all the comrades on both sides of the Bay which enabled us to absorb much more from the experience than would otherwise be possible.

I think we can say with assurance that in the eyes of our comrades as a whole (which is no small factor) and of sympathizers and simple acquaintances of the party, we have made good gains.

Gains to the Party

Several comrades in various unions on both sides of the Bay were able to announce Sears support activities and in some cases form Sears support committees in their

local unions. The YSA at S. F. State University sponsored a city strike support rally along with the teachers union and student government, attended by 500 students. Major officials of the AFT and SEIU spoke at the rally. At the height of the city workers strike, the S. F. branch sold 1,053 *Militants* in the city and Berkeley sold well too. Over the past few months, several hundred *Militants* have been sold to workers at picket lines and rallies, primarily to carpenters, teachers, city workers, and Sears strikers.

The party is presently sponsoring a class series on how to build a class-struggle left wing in the unions. This class is intended as a follow-up for several trade union militants and other party sympathizers we've come into contact with in the recent labor developments in the Bay area.

Role of CP

The role of the Communist Party in the United Labor Action Committee and the Sears strike has been peripheral and at times sectarian. Joe Figaretto, a leading CP'er and business agent for ILWU Local 6, attends ULAC meetings regularly. Occasionally Archie Brown and an entourage of young CP workers would appear at ULAC meetings, but only recently have they participated in the weekly Saturday afternoon mass picketing. Coverage of the Sears strike in the *People's World* has been conspicuously absent.

In the preparation for the mass-solidarity rally of 1,500 in February, the CP intervened in ULAC meetings proposing to convert the predominantly trade-unionist-based ULAC into a broad "people's movement" coalition embracing struggles against all evils.

Red-Baiting

For a time, there was a difference of opinion in Local 1100 on our right to sell *Militants* at picket lines and rallies and we never forced the issue. We've since reached an understanding that *The Militant* should be sold since it's the only paper with good coverage of the strike.

April 20, 1974

IMPROVING OUR ELECTION WORK

by George Breitman, Lower Manhattan Branch,
New York Local

Doing some historical research recently, I was led into making comparisons between our current and recent election campaigns and those in the early years of our movement. Our work in this area now is vastly superior to anything in our past history, even in the years when our membership was approximately the same size as it is now, just as it is superior to anything done by our opponents in the radical movement today. Our political understanding of the importance of this work, the seriousness with which it is organized, the way in which the necessary personnel and resources are allocated, the professional quality of our petitioning, the geographical scope of the campaigns, our growing capacity to use them to intervene in local struggles, our increasing skill in presenting our ideas, etc., show that our election work has reached the highest level in our history (although many of our members and perhaps the party as a whole are not fully conscious of the magnitude of these accomplishments).

The above judgment is not offered in order to induce a mood of self-congratulation. It is intended, rather, to call attention to the fact that our election work—which will probably remain in the next period the most important means we have for reaching out with our revolutionary message and winning new forces to the party—merits serious, searching and critical examination aimed at improving and making it more effective. Having mastered the ABCs, we should now be in a position to go far beyond them. Let us take a look to see if this is so and what we should do accordingly.

The National Office has announced that the 1974 election campaigns will be among the points to be discussed at this year's activists and educational conference, which will probably be our last large national gathering before

the launching of our big 1976 campaign. I hope that the session set aside for this discussion at Oberlin will not be in conflict with any other important meeting, so that it can draw a maximum attendance of the members interested in election work, and that it will be long enough to permit ample discussion from the floor.

In fact, it seems to me that the best format for this session would be, following a brief introduction by a representative of the national campaign committee, to throw the floor open to discussion from the floor. This would be most effective if, before the conference, local campaign managers, candidates and other campaign activists are informed that the party *wants* their opinions, suggestions and criticisms about our election work and that the floor at the conference will be open for them (along with space in *The Party Builder*).

What useful experiences or experiments have we had in electioneering in one city that might be repeated or adapted in other cities? Are there new areas or angles in election work that we have overlooked, neglected or only touched—such as local or state referenda, whether initiated by others or ourselves? What have we learned in the last few years about increasing direct recruitment to the party or YSA through election work? How do we overcome routinism after an initial campaign or two, and how do we improve participation by the whole branch? What do the branches want from the National Office in the way of added help and supervision?

If the local campaign managers, candidates and other campaign activists will think about such questions before the conference and tell the party what they think about them at the conference, it will undoubtedly help the party as a whole to improve the final phase of the 1974 campaigns and to make better preparations for 1976.

July 11, 1974

