

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014

December 20, 1971

TO ALL BRANCH ORGANIZERS AND NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Latin American Defense Work

Dear Comrades,

Flowing from recent discussions with co-thinkers, the Political Committee has decided to step up the party's work in defense of Latin American political prisoners.

The continued economic and political instability in Latin America which often results in suppression of democratic rights emphasizes the importance of this work. At present, for example, Trotskyists are in prison in Argentina, Bolivia and Brazil. To our knowledge the number of Trotskyists in this situation comes to well over 100. Recently in Argentina a leading Trotskyist, Luis Pujals, died at the hands of the police after being cruelly tortured over a period of days.

In addition, the broad agreement we have reached to step up this work on an international scale means that new openings for collaboration and new possibilities of significantly aiding democratic struggles in Latin America are available to us.

The USLA Justice Committee will immediately launch an international campaign in defense of the political prisoners in Argentina and the party will be supporting this campaign. In addition, USLA will initiate campaigns on Bolivia and Brazil in the coming period. Materials for the Argentine campaign will be available for the YSA convention.

At the request of the Argentine political prisoners, the campaign there will be a broad one focusing on the whole body of some 399 political prisoners (according to official government listings) rather than single out any one prisoner as a focus.

We project having each party branch and YSA local assign a comrade to head up the work of obtaining prominent individuals and organizations as sponsors of this campaign and to take charge of organizing other facets of the work as the campaign develops.

The USLA Reporter will be the USLA's main propoganda tool in carrying out this work. All branch bookstores should carry it; also it can be sold on campus literature tables, at relevant public meetings, etc. In addition to carrying information on the cases of various political prisoners, the Reporter will spell out the campaigns USLA supporters will engage in.

As you will see from some of the material contained in the Jan.-Feb. Reporter, the objective situation in Argentina is quite favorable for our initial campaign. The bourgeoisie is divided on the extent to which democratic rights should be curtailed and the military junta has announced plans for elections in 18 months. An international campaign for an end to the tortures and for an amnesty to all political prisoners has a good chance of obtaining better conditions or the release of prisoners and of opening up the situation for Trotskyists not in jail to do more public work in the country.

Latin American Defense Work/2

The unsectarian approach we take in carrying out this defense campaign for the Argentine political prisoners can only aid our movement in understanding our concepts of defense and have the possibility of opening the way toward fruitful discussions of the differences that do exist on various political questions.

Please inform the national office of what comrade will be assigned to this work so that we can inform the USLA Justice Committee of who to keep in contact with.

Comradely,

Peter Camejo (R)

Peter Camejo
National Office