

14 Charles Lane  
New York, N.Y. 10014  
January 24, 1975

TO ALL ORGANIZERS AND NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is a copy of a letter from the USLA national office, a copy of their national steering committee minutes, and a copy of the revised schedule for the Coral tour.

Comradely,

*Barry Sheppard*

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SWP National Office

MINUTES OF THE NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18, 1975

A meeting of the USLA national steering committee, elected at the last USLA Activists Conference, was held in New York City January 18. In attendance were: Blanca Fernandez, Richard Garza, Dave Jerome, Jim Little, Mirta Vidal, and Debby Woodroffe. Eloise Linger was unable to attend. Also attending were Marion Crawford and Diane Landry. The meeting convened at 12:30 p.m. and adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Discussion took place under three points: 1) Tasks 2) Finances and 3) National Coordinating Committee in Solidarity with Chile. All three reports were approved by consensus.

1 - Tasks - Mirta Vidal

Vidal outlined six major areas of activity for the winter and early spring, each followed by discussion. They were as follows:

A. USLA Reporter - The January-February-March issue of the Reporter will be available shortly. As agreed at the previous steering committee meeting, the issue focuses on Argentina, with extensive coverage, and Chile. Like last year this will be a three month issue since the holiday period and other factors have delayed its publication. This will also give us adequate time to prepare the next issue in a period of intense activity.

B. Coral Tour - The Coral tour is now formally under way and chapters have begun to plan it in each area. We have also received a confirmation from Coral, accepting the invitation and the projected dates for the tour--beginning of March to end of April. The tour schedule and exact dates for each area, however, still have to be firmed up and will be finalized in the next few days. The initial run of 1,000 brochures for the tour has run out and the national office plans to have more printed shortly.

C. Maria Isabel Barreno Tour - Maria Isabel Barreno, one of three Portuguese feminists, known as the Three Marias, who were victimized for publishing the "Portuguese Letters", is currently touring the U.S. Her tour will focus on the defense of three women political prisoners--Genoveva Forest and Lidia Falcon, two Spanish intellectuals, and Ines Etienne Romeu, a Brazilian political activist illegally sentenced to life imprisonment. (An appeal on behalf of Forest and Falcon by Hugo Blanco will appear in the new issue of the Reporter.) All three cases have generated extensive defense efforts in Europe. USLA will help to publicize their cases in the U.S. and initiate a campaign around Ines Romeu. As an initial step, USL will circulate a petition demanding the Brazilian authorities review her case and protesting her illegal imprisonment. The next issue of the Reporter will carry an interview with Maria Isabel on Romeu's case and any new information on her condition.

In New York, USLA is organizing a large meeting featuring Maria Isabel Barreno which will focus on these three cases and on women political prisoners in Chile. The meeting has the potential of involving a broad layer of feminists and civil libertarians, including prominent figures that have already been involved in USLA's campaign in defense of women political prisoners in Chile, like Gloria Steinem, Rose Styron, and Kate Millet.

Richard Garza suggested that Judith Malina and Ruth Reynolds, both former prisoners in Latin America, be involved in these activities. Diane Landry suggested that USLA look into bringing the case of Ines Romeu before a body of the United Nations to focus more attention on it.

4 - Amy Conger - Amy Conger, an American teacher and former prisoner in Chile after the coup who is now living in the U.S., has agreed to be available to speak at USLA organized events. The national office will inform the chapters of this and encourage them to organize speaking engagements for her. Because of her credentials and authority on this issue events featuring Conger will be extremely valuable in maintaining the Chile issue in the spotlight.

Plans suggested that we also consider having her speak with Coral at public meetings during his tour.

5. Olga Talamante Defense - USLA is joining defense efforts on behalf of Olga Talamante, a young Chicana activist imprisoned in Argentina where she had gone to study and where she is reportedly being tortured. An article on Talamante will appear in the new Reporter. Since the defense campaign was initiated in the West Coast, spearheaded by friends and relatives, and Berkeley USLA chapter is looking into the case and will forward a memo to the national office with suggestions for coordinating a national defense effort. With the help of those already conducting the defense, we would like to issue a special Action Letter on the Olga Talamante case and are trying to raise the money to make this possible. A special effort is being made to find out more about her actual condition.

6. Concert - The main fund raising project being organized by the national office is a jazz concert in New York City, featuring the Brazilian composer and guitarist Thiago de Mello and a number of well-known musicians. The concert will be held at the Village Vanguard, the most prominent jazz club in New York, on Sunday, March 2. It is expected to raise between \$1000 and \$1500. Beyond the financial gains, the concert is an important vehicle for involving an important sector of the artistic milieu in New York which is sympathetic to the aims and work of USLA.

## 2. Finances - Jim Little

USLA has weathered the financial crisis it faced in December, during which time we had to borrow \$800, and were forced to reduce the staff from four staff members to one. We now have enough money in the bank for immediate operating expenses and have repayed all but one of the loans, which we will repay shortly. This was made possible through a successful fund appeal and the reduction in office expenses.

Projects are now underway to raise the funds needed to carry the committee through the spring, including the concert and another fund appeal.

Although the Coral tour will incur large expenses, the tour is intended to pay for itself providing that the chapters are able to meet their quotas. A large sum, however, will have to be raised before the tour to cover initial expenses. Hopefully the finances will enable us to expand the staff in order to insure the success of the tour.

We are still in need of raising some \$500 more to meet our operating expenses in the month of February. Possibilities for doing this include obtaining honoraria for speaking engagements for prominent figures such as Amy Conger and/or Michael Harrington, the congressman, and for seeking large individual contributions.

In light of the improved financial situation and given the vast amount of activity projected, including fund raising projects it was suggested that one person be added to the staff.

Vidal proposed that Jim Little be added to the staff, considering this through knowledge of the finances and overall experience working with the committee over the last 8 months. She pointed out that in December and January, several volunteers have contributed a great deal of time to the committee, including some on an almost full time basis, but that this is only a temporary situation and one full-time staff member needed to carry out our projections.

### 3. NCC

Little reported that a national conference of the National Coordinating Committee in Solidarity with Chile (NCC) will be held in Chicago February 8 & 9, and gave some background on this committee. It is still not clear what specific proposals will be discussed at the conference, which is delegated. It has been stated by conference organizers that the focus will be on defense of political prisoners, the CIA and giving financial support to the Chilean Resistance, a political group based in Rome.

It was agreed that we would attend as observers and see if any action is called out of it that USLA can support and join the NCC and other groups in building. Who should attend the conference will also be decided when more information is available.