

Annual Report, 2002-03

PSC Solidarity Committee

Responsibilities

We have defined “solidarity work” as support for working people in their unions, community organizations and coalitions around critical issues. As we participate in struggles with co-workers, neighbors, students and engaged citizens we build ties that we can depend on in our own campaigns.

We seek to build internal union strength through increasing member participation in solidarity activities. Further, we want to encourage those members already involved in labor, community and civic organizations to see that involvement as union work. We would hope, thereby, to connect to members’ already established interests, community relations and resources.

2002-03 Campaigns (initiated and run by the committee itself or in collaboration with other PSC committees and/or outside organizations)

- Campaign to get CUNY to refuse to purchase apparel produced by firms that fail to embrace fair labor standards.
- Pressure on Coca Cola to use its influence in Colombia to end the assassination and intimidation of trade unionists in the public as well as private sectors.
- Reform the Rockefeller Drug Laws: “Drop the Rock” campaign.
- Campaign to roll back CUNY tuition for foreign students
- Campaign to enact “Intro 93” which would allow students on welfare to count studies as satisfying the welfare work requirement
- Campaign for protective legislation for NYS farm workers
- Campaign in support of strengthening NY rent laws
- Build for Labor Day 2003 around the right to organize and the right to strike
- Build a campaign for immigrant rights and mobilizing for the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride.

Coalition Work

The Solidarity Committee maintains working relations on behalf of the PSC with

- New York City Central Labor Council
- NYC Alliance for Retired Americans AFL-CIO
- Progressive Trade Unionists
- Coalition of Unions in Public Education (COUPE)
- Jobs with Justice (Executive Board)
- National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice
- New York State Labor-Religion Coalition (Executive Board)

- Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition (Executive Board)
- Metropolitan Council on Housing
- Tenants & Neighbors
- Labor and Community Advocacy Network (LCAN)
- Five Borough Institute
- City Project

Union Support Work

The Solidarity Committee has worked closely with the following unions on issues of their particular concern

- CWA 1180
- TWU 100
- DC 1707
- UNITE
- SEIU 32BJ
- Laborers
- H.E.R.E. Local 100

Education & Outreach

Together with Progressive Trade Unionists, the Solidarity Committee organized three forums on labor, civil rights and civil liberties issues

- Martin Luther King and the Struggle for Workers' Rights
- Immigrant Workers and the Right to Organize
- Public Workers and the Right to Strike

These forums will resume in January 2004 with a continuing focus on the right to organize and the right to strike.

Internal Outreach and Mobilization

The Solidarity Committee has made consistent use of the union's email and website setups to keep the membership informed about solidarity issues and solidarity work. Early in the past year we produced a piece for CLARION on solidarity work as a PSC priority. Representatives of the committee made occasional visits to local chapter and executive board meetings to proselytize for solidarity efforts.

Unfulfilled Objectives

The work of the Solidarity Committee, extensive as it has been, remains the province of a small core of activists. With a few exceptions, the committee has not yet succeeded in making solidarity work, even on the campus level, a chapter priority. Neither have we been successful in broadening the interest in solidarity work sufficiently so that we have large and consistent participation in the monthly meetings of the PSC Solidarity Committee.

Focus for 2003-04

To act more effectively with the resources at our disposal, the Solidarity Committee will tier its priorities in 2003-04. We will give top priority to

- A campaign to make comprehensive, affordable healthcare a central union-wide organizing issue, in collaboration with our sister unions in NYC
- A campaign for immigrant rights with an emphasis on student and worker issues in NYC
- Defense of and solidarity with Colombian trade unionists with emphasis on the public sector, higher education in particular.
- Bringing solidarity work to the campuses: educational events, local projects, individual outreach.

On the second tier will be the other uncompleted campaigns such as Intro 93, Drop the Rock, CUNY Ant-sweatshop Initiative, etc.

We expect to continue to participate in the coalitions listed above and to engage in ad hoc support work with labor unions, community and student groups

Appendix

Attached is a calendar of Solidarity Committee activities for 2002-03. It is representative of Solidarity activities. The calendar no doubt misses some of the solidarity activity of individual committee members over the course of the year.

For the committee,
John Hyland
Penny Lewis
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