

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
January 28, 1976

TO ALL ORGANIZERS AND NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dear Comrades,

The following letters are for your information. They are letters from Chicago, Cleveland, and Seattle concerning discussions with the Nation of Islam, and discussions with the Defender and Black World magazine.

Comradely,

Malik Miah

Malik Miah
SWP National Office

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Chicago
January 15, 1976

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Dear Malik,

While Jean Savage was in town to do press work for the YSA convention and the campaign rally I went with her to Bilalian News and the Defender. We also took this occasion to see Hoyt Fuller, an editor of Black World.

We had expected to see the managing editor or a staff writer at Bilalian News, but instead John Ali, the editor, met with us. As Jean was showing him the material on the rally he commented that their new issue -- still being run -- had an article on Peter and Willie. He sent for several copies and showed us the article calling for the probe into King's death. He reminded us that they had run a number of articles on our campaign and indicated they planned to continue to do so, although he wasn't sure they'd be able to cover the rally.

We talked to him for ten to fifteen minutes or so, explaining the convention and rally. In addition to all the campaign literature, we gave him a copy of the YSA Black struggle resolution.

I told Ali I used to edit the Militant and would appreciate seeing how they put out their paper, if it wasn't too much trouble. He quickly arranged for a full tour of the building. We saw the editorial offices, the composition, layout, strip-up and platemaking departments and the press room where they were still working on their 900,000-plus run (our guide said this was several hundred thousand down from their peak run). They have a small fleet of trucks and a crew of mechanics as they truck the papers to the East Coast and other cities. They air freight to the West Coast. We also saw floors where they have various food processing operations, taking eggs, fruit, vegetables, grain and meat from their farms and freezing, packaging, etc.

All in all, a very impressive operation, and of course this is only one of a number of buildings they own and work out of in Chicago. Their press is huge -- our guide said it was a Goss "Urbanite." It seemed at least twice as large as ours. I don't know if all the people working there are Muslims -- probably not -- but the whole operation is directed and staffed by Blacks, mostly men, it seemed. The building is old but very well kept up and clean.

During our tour, Ali paged our guide who asked us what nationality Peter is, so we told him Venezuelan-American. Peter's Latin American background is clearly of special interest to them. You may have noticed that Bilalian News has just instituted a four-page section in Spanish for distribution, our guide said, in places like New York.

On to the Defender, Chicago's Black daily.

Jean asked to speak with someone about the convention and rally and the receptionist soon told us to go into the managing editors office. (While we were waiting, a woman who apparently works there and who had been chatting with the receptionist as we arrived, asked us where the heck Willie Mae's been. She said she knows Willie is traveling around the country running for vice-president, but when is she coming to Chicago?! She proudly announced she had voted for Willie last April.

Again, to our pleasant surprise, as Jean went into her rap, the managing editor, Audrey Weaver, told us the Defender just off the press carried an item announcing the convention and rally (Dec. 18, page 8, excerpts from YSA press release, quoting Ginny). She said they were at half-staff due to vacations so wouldn't be able to send a reporter, but would consider printing releases, especially on "actions" planned or called for. Like Ali, she reminded us that they had been picking up on campaign statements from time to time. In closing, she wished us luck with the campaign.

At the plush Johnson Publications building, we asked to see Fuller and had a pleasant fifteen to twenty minute discussion with him. He had not seen Baxter's article and appreciated the copy we gave him.

Our discussion ranged over a number of areas -- the convention rally (his staff of two -- counting himself -- couldn't attend and Black World, being a monthly can't be too topical); our national and local suits (he expressed interest in the Cointelpro book -- Jean said she would send him a review copy -- and urged us to read material in their January issue where they do the thing on the King Alfred Plan in John A. Williams "The Man Who Cried I Am;" the Robert F. Williams case (he's very interested and said Williams had recently exposed as a forgery a letter ostensibly sent by a figure in the Chinese government disclaiming support for Afro-American struggle and his case because of developing detente with Washington. When I showed him our interview with Williams from Baldwin, Mich., he was surprised nothing was said about this incident.

In any case, Fuller is someone worth maintaining contact with and from issues of Black World he gave us it is well worth following.

I wouldn't rule out the possibility of our members or supporters (someone of the stature of Robert Allen?) writing certain types of articles for Black World in the future. I see Baraka had a piece on Nationalism and Socialism in a recent issue.

Fuller introduced us to one of the associate editors of Jet but he didn't seem interested.

Since you're coming out here to speak on Angola, I look forward to discussing some of these things further. I think we should try for interviews with Bilalian News and the Defender.

Comradely,
s/ Joel Britton

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Cleveland
December 12, 1975

SWP National Office
New York

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is a copy of a letter I sent to Brother Love X following a discussion I had with him.

As comrades may remember we had some initial discussions with the Muslims a month or two ago. After very initial discussions, and attendance at a few of their meetings, we were able to progress no further. Numerous phone calls and meetings were put off by them.

Today's call from Love was the first contact in several weeks, and is also the first time they have called us. Love said, "the change is continuing," that he may soon be in charge of Bilalian News in Cleveland, and that he would like to attend some of our meetings. I raised the idea of attending the YSA convention and he was enthusiastic about it, said he would try to get a representative to go and would call me back on it.

I got the impression that there are some big upheavals going on in the group, at least here. He was particularly interested in information on our position on Angola, but wanted to discuss politics in general. We will follow up on this and keep you informed.

Comradely,
s/ Mike Alewitz

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December 12, 1975

Brother Love X
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Brother Love,

This note is in regard to our telephone conversation of December 12.

Enclosed you will find the last two editions of the Militant, which have coverage of the events taking place in Angola, as you requested. I have also enclosed two issues of Intercontinental Press, our weekly magazine of international events. I hope you will find the information of value.

Also enclosed you will find the Political Resolution that will be discussed at the upcoming national convention of the Young Socialist Alliance, which will be held in Milwaukee, December 28-January 1. The YSA is a national youth organization in political solidarity with the Socialist Workers Party. At the convention, activists from around the country, as well as international guests, will be taking up the questions facing the liberation struggles throughout the world as well as in this country.

We would be pleased to have a representative of Bilalian News accompany the Cleveland delegation to the convention. We will be traveling by chartered bus, and hotel information is listed on the back page of the resolution.

I will give you a call in the next few days on the possibility of a meeting to discuss an exchange of our press, meetings that are coming up, and any other things you might be interested in.

In Solidarity,
s/ Mike Alewitz
Branch Organizer
Cleveland SWP

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Seattle
November 3, 1975

Doug Jenness
New York

Dear Doug,

This letter is to give you an idea of the response of the Black Muslims to our approaches towards them over the past month. We first noticed a change in their attitude when several friendly discussions took place between their salespeople and ours. This was a change from the former response of being told to leave the area whenever they showed up. During these discussions we were told that they were familiar with the Militant and thought it was a good paper. One time I was told by one of their people that he would like to come to our campaign office and have a more lengthy discussion, although this never came about.

Based on this experience and the reports we had received from around the country, we decided to approach them and see if there was anything we could do jointly. We suggested a meeting with either Pat

Bethard, our candidate for city council, or with Peter Camejo during his tour. We also wanted to raise the idea of an exchange of information about different activities each organization was involved in. After several unsuccessful attempts to meet with their minister we did have a short meeting with one of their captains. He took a Militant and some campaign literature and invited us to attend a meeting at their temple on Sunday. During this meeting he made a comment which we felt was quite significant. He indicated that he considered us a part of the community.

Both myself and Pat Bethard attended the Sunday meeting. The meeting was mostly religious in character with a sermon that lasted almost two hours. Three things which occurred there we considered noteworthy. First, during his sermon the minister, who had just returned from Chicago, made the point that the main danger aside from Christianity was the white racist mentality and not whites per se. Second, he spent some time talking about the primacy of the Islamic religion as being superior to all other ideologies. Included in his list of inferior ideologies were communism, socialism and trotskyism. He also talked about Karl Marx and Frederick Engels and the work that they did as being important contributions, but that they were not as significant or valid as the teachings of Islam which had all the answers. Finally, during the individual witness part of the service the minister made a big point of allowing women to speak at which time he read a letter from W.D. Mohammed which said that all temples must have at least one woman minister. He added that no one could say that there was discrimination inside the Nation. One of the women got up and talked about what women's liberation meant for her; to be an equal with the men in espousing the ideas of W. D. Mohammed.

It seems that what is going on is a hardening process to hold their members together when they become more active in outside activities. Exactly when, how and if this occurs in Seattle I cannot say now. They also have not indicated a desire to carry on discussions with us at this time although they are always very friendly. All the meetings we have set up with them have fallen through with the exception of the one mentioned above which was very short and with a captain instead of with the minister as was agreed upon.

One final point. At a meeting for DeBerry at Seattle Central Community College two Muslims came to observe. They did not speak, sell or do anything else. We will continue to approach them about events and activities as it is appropriate, to see if their response gets any warmer.

Comradely,

s/ Bob Rowand