

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING No. 57, November 24, 1976

Present: Barnes, Berman, Blackstock, Breitman, Camejo,
D. Jenness, Jones, Lovell, Lund, Lyons, Miah,
Stapleton, Thomas, Waters

Guests: Jaquith, Rodríguez, Wohlforth

Chair: Blackstock

AGENDA: 1. Control Commission Report
2. Special Steel Issue of the Militant
3. National Steelworkers Fraction Meeting
4. World Movement Report
5. Membership
6. Phoenix Branch
7. NSCAR Conference

1. CONTROL COMMISSION REPORT

(Dawson and Stewart invited for this point)

Miah reported on Control Commission findings in investigation of charges brought against Musheer Fardan by Pearl Chertov and Derrick Morrison (see attached).

Discussion

Motion: To accept the report of the Control Commission.

Carried.

2. SPECIAL STEEL ISSUE OF THE "MILITANT"

Blackstock reported on special issue of the Militant to feature extensive coverage of the United Steelworkers campaign.

Discussion

Motion: To approve the report.

Carried.

3. NATIONAL STEELWORKERS FRACTION MEETING

D. Jenness reported on proposal to hold a national fraction of steelworker comrades in Chicago, December 18-19.

Discussion

Motion: To approve the report.

Carried.

(over)

4. WORLD MOVEMENT REPORT

Barnes reported.

Discussion

Motion: To approve the report.

Carried.

5. MEMBERSHIP

Miah reported on proposal to accept S.C. as a provisional member in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Discussion

Motion: To approve the report.

Carried.

6. PHOENIX BRANCH

Waters reported on the motion to constitute a party branch in Phoenix, Arizona.

Discussion

Motion: To approve the report.

Carried.

7. NSCAR CONFERENCE

(Austin, Dixon, Eagan, Hart, and Sedwick invited for this point)

Miah reported (see attached).

Discussion

Meeting adjourned.

Report of the Control Commission of the SWP

Submitted November 18, 1976

On October 6, 1976, the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party received the following letter from Pearl Chertov and Derrick Morrison of the New Orleans branch:

"We as members of the New Orleans Socialist Workers Party branch bring charges against Musheer Fardan for striking Gretta Biback on October 3. We recommend that the Political Committee take jurisdiction over this matter."

On October 7, 1976, the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party passed the following two motions:

"1) That the Political Committee take jurisdiction of these charges and refer them to the Control Commission, in accordance with Article VI, Section 1 of the party constitution.

"2) To designate Malik Miah as the fifth member of the Control Commission."

Article VI of the SWP Constitution is as follows:

"Section 1. A Control Commission of five members shall be elected as follows: the Convention shall elect four members and the fifth member, who shall be a member of the National Committee, shall be designated by the National Committee. The Control Commission shall have full authority to investigate any individual or circumstance which it may deem necessary, and shall have power to delegate any of its authority to representatives.

"Section 2. The Control Commission, on completion of its investigation in each case, shall present its findings and recommendations to the Political Committee for action. Action shall be taken by the Political Committee, or by the National Committee, in those cases referred to it by the Political Committee.

"Section 3. In those cases where the Control Commission finds it necessary to intervene, its authority shall supersede any local investigation or trial.

"Section 4. It shall be obligatory on every member of the Party to furnish the Control Commission or its authorized representatives with any information they may require."

The Control Commission is composed of the following five comrades: Wayne Glover, Helen Scheer, Kipp Dawson, and Larry Stewart, elected by the 1976 SWP National Convention, and Malik Miah, designated by the SWP Political Committee, in accordance with Article VI, Section 1 of the constitution.

On October 9, 1976, the following letter was sent to Wayne Glover and Helen Scheer from Malik Miah:

"This is to confirm our phone conversation of last night. To

facilitate the Control Commission investigation of the charges against Musheer Fardan, who is now in the New York area, Kipp, Larry, and myself propose that we three be authorized to conduct the investigation for the Control Commission as its representatives.

"Article VI, Section 1 of the party constitution states that the Control Commission 'shall have power to delegate any of its authority to representatives.'

"Naturally, we would keep you fully informed as our investigation proceeds, and if it seems necessary we would propose getting the entire commission together. We would solicit your agreement on any recommendations to the Political Committee we think advisable to make.

"Please confirm right away your agreement to this proposal."

Letters of confirmation were received by Malik Miah from Helen Scheer on October 13 and Wayne Glover on October 17.

Evidence Examined

Kipp Dawson, Larry Stewart, and Malik Miah (representing the Control Commission) conducted our investigation with a series of meetings (as a body and individually) from October 12 to November 3. This includes meetings in New York City, Boston, and New Orleans with a number of comrades. This report is based on these interviews.

In conducting our investigation, we were guided in particular by the following documents:

1. The Constitution of the Socialist Workers Party.
2. "The Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party," resolution adopted by the 1965 convention of the SWP (available in an Education for Socialists Bulletin bearing the same title).

These documents set forth the fundamental organizational principles of the Socialist Workers Party.

The Control Commission was able to examine the following evidence:

1. A factual report on the October 3 beating sent to the Political Committee by Pearl Chertov and Derrick Morrison dated October 6 (see Appendix A).
2. We were able to interview Fardan twice. At these interviews we discussed the October 3 beating, his evaluation of the New Orleans branch, and his own political development. Both these interviews (October 13 and November 3) took place in New York City.
3. Miah interviewed Maceo Dixon, Mac Warren, and Nan Bailey for the Control Commission in Boston on October 12 and 13. Both

Dixon and Bailey were in New Orleans prior to the October 3 beating. Both know Fardan well and were asked about his functioning in New Orleans (based on their discussions with him and their own observations) and his earlier functioning in Boston. Fardan joined the party in Boston in 1975 and transferred to New Orleans in July 1976. Warren was Fardan's branch organizer in Boston and was asked questions about Fardan's functioning in Boston.

4. On October 17 in New York City, we interviewed Raymelle Wood, Fardan's companion in Boston and New Orleans and a member of the party. We asked her general questions about Fardan's functioning in New Orleans and in Boston before October 3. She was not in New Orleans on October 3 but was informed by Fardan about the incident after it occurred.

5. Stewart, representing the Control Commission, went to New Orleans to conduct discussions with a number of comrades on October 23 and 24. He met with Morrison, Chertov, Biback, Tim Brooks, Patsy Cannon, Rashaad Ali, and Craig Gannon.

Evaluation of Evidence and Recommendations

Following is a summary of our findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the Political Committee.

As a result of the interviews we conducted, definite proof exists that Fardan did not merely "strike" Comrade Biback as charged by Morrison and Chertov. In fact, he seriously beat her up. According to Biback, "He didn't just slap me, he punched me in the chest...I don't know what he said while I was on the floor ...but he kicked me...even in the face...I was, you know, almost cut...but I remember screaming."

Fardan stated he agreed with the summary of what occurred on October 3 as presented by Morrison and Chertov in their letter to the Political Committee (see Appendix A). Fardan, however, emphasized the following points about the beating: First, he viewed the attack as a culmination of "personal" conflicts he was having with Biback over the last couple of months. Second, he said the illness of his mother added enormous pressure on him. He didn't want to be bothered about political problems. Third, he strongly explained that he never called Biback any sexist names or kicked her in the face.

Fardan admitted trying to rough her up. He also admitted that he called Biback a "white mother fucker" (which he does not consider sexist). More significantly, he said, "I was angry and out of control" but "I made certain remarks on purpose." When asked if he viewed his physical attack as a form of retaliation because of his personal conflicts with Biback, he said, "Yes."

At our November 3 meeting, Fardan also made it clear that he wasn't totally out of control (as might be inferred from his first answers) when he beat up Biback, since he indicated that he has been trained in the martial arts.

Furthermore, through our investigation we learned that Fardan

had lost his temper and acted in a violent manner several times before October 3. This occurred in New Orleans and in Boston. Each one of them resulted in him using either verbal abuse or physical violence to resolve the conflicts. The most significant are the following:

1) A few days before the October 3 beating, Comrade Ali was in a car accident. Because, in Fardan's opinion, the doctors at the hospital treating Ali and his child, who was also hurt, were not seriously helping them, he lost his temper. He became so agitated that another comrade, Brooks, who was at the hospital too, tried to calm him down. Fardan responded by taking two swings at Brooks when Brooks tried to dissuade him from telephoning the head nurse (a comrade), who was not on duty. Fardan clipped Brooks in the face. Fardan said he lost his temper.

2) Approximately two weeks before the October 3 beating, Fardan initiated his first verbal and physical attack on Biback. This took place after she asked Brooks, who was temporarily staying at her apartment, to find another place to live. Brooks agreed to leave. Fardan, however, became furious at her for telling Brooks to leave her apartment. He told her she "can't act like a rich person." According to Biback, Fardan grabbed her wrist and forced her to the floor. She said he called her, "You white bitch, you white bitch, you shouldn't be in the party." Brooks confirmed Biback's memory of this first attack. Brooks, a friend of Fardan, also said he considers Fardan and Biback's run-ins a result of personal conflicts. He told Stewart, for example, "...it was a matter of personalities and rivalry, not at all political." When asked about this first attack, Fardan said he called Biback names but not a "white bitch." He also said he never grabbed her.

3) While in Boston three incidents occurred. The first took place soon after Fardan joined the Young Socialist Alliance. A couple of days before the probusing Carson Beach demonstration, Fardan jumped Warren after an argument over tactics. No blows were thrown. Warren wrestled him to the ground. Fardan said he was conscious of his action. The pressure had just got to him. He said he viewed Warren as a "brother" whom he had a disagreement with. He told the Control Commission that he didn't understand that his action was wrong. He said he didn't understand party or YSA norms. He apologized to Warren and told both Dixon and Warren afterward he had been wrong for not calmly discussing out his tactical differences.

The second incident occurred at the second National Student Coalition Against Racism conference in October 1975. Fardan got in a shoving match with a member of the Spartacist League. Fardan was a marshal at the time and slugged the person in the face. Fardan said the Spartacist League person refused to take down a sign. After being talked to about the incident, after the conference, he again admitted that his action was incorrect.

The last incident occurred in the fall of 1975. Dixon was invited to appear on a television talk show to discuss NSCAR's support to busing. A leader of the racists was to appear on the

same show after Dixon spoke. As a result, there were a number of racists in the audience while the show was being filmed. For security reasons the party leadership decided to immediately leave the studio after Dixon spoke. When Fardan was told to leave the studio, he refused because there were Blacks (not brought by the party or NSCAR) still in the audience. He wanted to convince them to leave with the comrades. When Dixon and other comrades told him to leave, he got in an argument with Dixon. During this argument the YSA organizer, a female comrade, joined the argument also to try to convince Fardan to leave as had been decided. He responded by calling her a "white bitch." He told us, "I called her a bitch and told her to get the fuck out of here." He said she had no right to interfere in a discussion between two Black people. He told us he was never brought up on charges for this verbal assault on the YSA organizer. But, he said, the branch organizer, Susan LaMont, and Dixon, had a meeting with him afterward where they made it very clear that he could be brought up on charges for his refusal to leave the studio and for calling the YSA organizer a "white bitch." He said they also made it clear to him that if something like that happened again he would be disciplined, which could include being expelled. He told us that after that meeting he understood the seriousness of his actions. He also apologized to the YSA organizer.

Dixon explained to the Control Commission that the reason the leadership in Boston didn't formally charge Fardan was because he was relatively new to the party, and because he said he understood why his actions were wrong and never disputed or tried to defend what he did.

The above incident in Boston indicated the following point to the Control Commission: Fardan was seriously warned about his actions, which were in violation of party membership norms. He admitted this himself.

The organizational principles of the Socialist Workers Party cannot be bent to attempt to resolve problems that new party members have. New members, especially those with promise like Fardan, cannot be treated as special at the expense of the rights of the party as a whole. All members have the same rights and obligations. The only way to integrate new members into the party--including those members of oppressed national minorities--is by educating them in both the political program of the party and its organizational principles. The deliberate use of sexist or racist remarks by SWP members cannot be tolerated--and won't be. The use of physical violence and intimidation, likewise, cannot be tolerated in a revolutionary party. Such actions are incompatible with membership because they jeopardize the rights of all members and the party as a whole.

In our investigation we further discovered that Fardan's overall functioning in the party--independent of his use of physical intimidation and sexist remarks--also showed a dangerous and a total lack of understanding of the party's constitutional and organizational principles. This is shown by five examples:

- a) During the big petitioning effort in Massachusetts last

June, according to Warren who was his organizer, Fardan lied about the number of petitions he gathered. He attempted to take credit for petitions that were already calculated, which would have distorted the number the party needed if he had not been caught.

b) After a speaking engagement for NSCAR in the fall of 1975, Fardan at first denied receiving the honorarium for it. Once confronted with the facts, he admitted he did receive the money. He said he spent it on an emergency medical expense. He only promised to repay the money after a long discussion. He says the money was eventually repaid.

c) Upon arriving in New Orleans, Fardan decided not to stay at a comrade's home because he felt comrades were unfriendly. On his own, he arranged to stay at the home of the president of the New Orleans NAACP. He had made an informal arrangement with this person at the NAACP convention in Memphis. According to this person, in a discussion with Chertov, she told Fardan that perhaps he could stay at her place for a while until he found a place of his own. Fardan, however, told comrades that this person was his friend and that there would be no problems with him staying at her house for an indefinite period. Party leaders were apprehensive about him doing this since he had just arrived in town and the party had little contact with the NAACP prior to his arrival. But they decided not to press him on it, since he presented it as a personal relationship.

Later, after the party convention, it was learned that the NAACP president was planning to sue Fardan for damages done to her home during an accidental fire. He asked the party to help pay for it since he didn't have any money. (He hadn't worked, except a few days part-time, since he'd arrived in New Orleans.) He told Chertov that unless he paid her right away, this could harm the party's relationship with the NAACP. In fact, the NAACP president has raised additional charges against Fardan in later discussions with Chertov, including theft of items from her home, along with questions about how his actions reflect the party's attitude. Fardan still has not repaid her for the fire damage. When asked by the Control Commission if he had ever considered the political ramifications of his relationship with the NAACP, he said yes, but admitted that he never gave it serious consideration. When asked if he had a serious discussion with Chertov about staying at this person's house when he first got to town, he again said yes. Chertov said, however, that he presented it to her as an accomplished fact and brushed off any real discussion about what he was doing.

d) Fardan once took and used a gas credit card owned by another comrade without the person knowing it. He said he did so because he had to do some political work and couldn't find the comrade. Even though he isn't a friend of this comrade, he said he considered his decision correct. When we told him he was wrong, that he had no right taking a comrade's credit card (a comrade who was mad at him for freely using his phone and eating his food without asking permission), Fardan brushed it aside as not too important. He did admit he was wrong, after the

point was pressed.

e) In late September, Fardan spent a weekend in New Orleans with two female cops from Memphis. He said he met one of them at the Memphis NAACP convention and befriended her. He said they came down to visit him. He also said he was trying to get them to quit the police force and join the party. When Dixon was in town, he introduced them as two out-of-town friends of his from Memphis. Dixon didn't know they were cops until he began a discussion with them. When Dixon confronted Fardan afterward about his relationship with cops, he told Dixon they were just personal friends. After Dixon explained the party's policy toward cops--that it is incompatible with membership to have social, personal, or political relations with cops--Fardan didn't take Dixon's advice seriously. He told us neither Chertov nor Dixon clearly explained this policy when we repeated the policy in our meeting. He told us he now understood that he was wrong.

Overall, the evidence shows that Fardan's history in the party and YSA has been marked by him acting first independent of leadership consultation and without discussion, and only afterward considering the consequences of his actions for the party and himself. The Control Commission believes that even after our meeting with Fardan, where he admitted the charge made against him and the other evidence referred to, we do not think he really grasps the party's organizational principles. His series of violent confrontations, his dishonesty concerning petitioning, his unserious attitude about party and movement finances, his attitude on party-NAACP relations, and his relations with the cops all prove this. The fact that after every incident described above, Fardan so readily admitted his mistakes and claimed to understand the seriousness of his actions also indicated that he doesn't truly understand the party's organizational principles.

Based on this evidence, particularly the very serious character of the October 3 beating of Comrade Biback by Comrade Fardan, his repeated "loss of temper," and his inability to reject the use of verbal and physical intimidation when confronted with political and personal problems, the Control Commission recommends that the Political Committee expel Comrade Fardan from the party.

Fardan's actions violate the basic principles and norms of party membership as explained in the Constitution of the Socialist Workers Party and the resolution, "The Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party," adopted in 1965.

On page 20 of this document, it states: "The party as a whole has the right to demand that its work be not disrupted and disorganized, and has the right to take all the measures which it finds necessary to assure its regular and normal functioning. The rights of any individual member are distinctly secondary to the rights of the party membership as a whole."

The action by Comrade Fardan on October 3 violates this organizational principle of the party. What was involved on October 3

was not a simple loss of temper and a slap across another comrade's face (a totally intolerable act in and of itself). Instead, the action was described by Fardan as a form of retaliation because he could not get along with Biback personally and politically. Moreover, he attempted to physically harm her to the point that she would leave him alone. Considering his earlier name-calling and physical attack on Biback a couple of weeks before October 3, it is clear that he understood his actions and was not totally out of control.

This kind of activity poses a security problem for the party. Personal and political differences in or outside of the party cannot be resolved through the use of physical violence. It has been a long-standing principle of the Socialist Workers Party that such actions are incompatible with membership in the SWP and will not be tolerated. In the over forty-year history of the SWP this policy has been firmly enforced. To do otherwise would make the party easy prey to government agents and others out to destroy the SWP. Not to firmly deal with any violence or sexism and racism in the party would also make a mockery of the party's firm public stance against the use of violence to resolve political differences. In addition, toleration of such acts would create an atmosphere incompatible with party growth and the forging of a party team.

The Control Commission also wants to state that the type of disciplinary action called for after the use of violence by one member against another is determined by the seriousness of the incident. Expulsion should be recommended when no other course is justifiable. For example, if it is the first incident of the kind and no serious harm results, the disciplinary action likely to be recommended would be a censure. This would represent a warning to the comrade that if such an action takes place again, the person will be expelled from the party.

In Fardan's case, a censure is not justified. The nature of the October 3 beating and his past violations of party norms require expulsion. The Control Commission is not confident to state that Fardan, at this time, is capable of abiding by the SWP's constitutional and organizational principles. This can change in the future. After a period of close political collaboration with the party, if Fardan alters his functioning we see no reason why he shouldn't be considered for readmission into membership.

We also want to make clear that Fardan expressed no hostility toward the party or any members during our meetings. He made it clear to us that he is committed to building the SWP as a member or as a sympathizer. He expressed no political differences.

Because of this fact, the Control Commission agreed that Fardan should be encouraged to become an active party sympathizer. We therefore decided that two members of the Control Commission, Stewart and Miah, should meet with Fardan to inform him of our

recommendation to the Political Committee. On November 3, 1976, Stewart and Miah met with Fardan. He said he understood why the Control Commission was obligated to make the recommendation that we propose to the Political Committee. He also said he wanted to become an active party sympathizer. We suggested that the best way for him to do this was to submit his resignation to the party and the YSA before the meeting of the Political Committee. We also suggested that he move from New Orleans to the Newark area. Fardan agreed with both proposals and brought his letter of resignation to the Socialist Workers Party National Office on November 6 (see Appendix B).

APPENDIX A

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Report to the Political Committee by Pearl Chertov and Derrick Morrison

New Orleans, October 6, 1976

The following is an accounting of the day's events as they were reported to me. Comrade Musheer called me--I was at a meeting in the region--from Comrade Joel's apartment where he was around 1 p.m. to ask for an immediate leave-of-absence. The reason concerned news from home. His mother, who lives in New Jersey, had just suffered a heart attack. The suddenness of the decision included the proposal from him that Comrade Gretta function as the acting YSA organizer during his leave-of-absence.

The next call I got came from Comrade Musheer who told me that he had attacked Comrade Gretta. I requested of him that he delay his departure until we had an opportunity to talk.

When I got to the apartment building Comrade Joel met me outside of it. Since the incident occurred in his apartment he described what happened. I will not give you the details, just the essence of Comrade Joel's report. Comrade Gretta, who had been across the hall, at Comrade Rashaad's apartment, came over to use the phone. Comrade Musheer was using the phone. Comrade Musheer then suggested to Comrade Joel that he give Comrade Gretta that portion of the telephone bill which pertained to the YSA and to SCAR. The door to Comrade Joel's apartment was still open. Comrade Gretta looked at the bill. The bills were questioned, in particular a sixty-cent call which she considered personal, although Comrade Musheer insisted that it was political. She started to leave the apartment.

Comrade Musheer lunged at her saying, "Don't fuck with me when my mother is dying." He gave her a number of blows and she fell. By this time she was in the hall, screaming and crying. Comrade Joel grabbed his arms but he continued kicking Comrade Gretta in the back. Comrade Kathy opened Comrade Rashaad's door and Comrade Gretta ran in and they locked the door.

I then went to see Comrade Musheer. During our discussion he did not deny the attack. His explanation of the attack, in essence, was that his attitude against Comrade Gretta had been building up over a period of time. Some of the expressions he used were, "She had been bugging me," "I tried talking with her." Comrade Musheer further explained that what really aggravated matters was the fact that he knew his father had gotten sick two weeks ago. He was trying to work things out and all the work here was on his mind. He knew he was wrong. He further admitted that he had attacked a member of Spartacist at an NSCAR convention some time ago. By this time he was willing to talk with Comrade Gretta. I went across the hall to see Comrade Gretta.

I knocked on Comrade Rashaad's door; it had been locked. Comrade Gretta's description of the events concurred with Comrade

APPENDIX A/2

Joel's. Comrade Gretta had bruises on her knees where she had fallen and the back of her head hurt. The one thing that she added was that Comrade Rashaad's door was kept locked all day. She did not want to talk to Musheer and added that she wanted him out. Comrade Rasnaad had been present while Comrade Gretta described the incident and he said that he would call me on Monday to talk over his idea on disciplinary procedures.

When I went back into Comrade Joel's apartment, Comrade Musheer was on the phone talking to his brother, Comrade Ron. Comrade Ron asked to speak to me. Comrade Ron was quite concerned about the nervous state of his brother and felt he needed a rest. He was also concerned that the party not drop his brother.

APPENDIX B

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November 6, 1976

To the Membership of the SWP and YSA:

After a year and two months of membership in the revolutionary party, I feel compelled to resign from membership because of actions I have taken which are incompatible with membership in our party.

The confrontation I had with comrade Gretta Biback approximately one month ago is to be documented by the serious and fair-minded hearings of the Control Commission. Comrades did well at the convention in choosing these able-minded people. Discussions with the comrades of the commission have led me to take this most serious and painful of steps, separation with the SWP. My entire life-force in the past year has been given to the most necessary of all human endeavors, the building of the Revolutionary Party. My injury to it and my separation from it I hope will not be permanent. My commitment to the Party is unending.

I hope that comrade Gretta can overcome this unfortunate situation and continue to develop her exceptional talents. I also hope that the comrades in New Orleans who have so much important work to do will not be demoralized by my irresponsible actions. The task for me is the same as well as that for all humankind, an education of struggle in the Bolshevik tradition, a tradition of party building. I hope while working with the party in its campaigns of human liberation I will as a sympathizer be able to assist in winning new members to this tradition. I hope I will never again compromise the position of our class's party.

For Liberation,

/s/Musheer Aktab Fardan

REPORT ON 3RD NSCAR CONFERENCE AND
PERSPECTIVES FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA WORK

By Malik Miah November 24, 1976

The December 3 Militant provides a good summary of the Third National Student Conference Against Racism, which was sponsored by the National Student Coalition Against Racism (NSCAR) on November 19-21 in Boston. Upcoming issues of the Militant will have further coverage on the conference, its decisions and its importance for people serious about fighting racism.

The key decisions reached at the conference were the following:

1. NSCAR launched a national campaign against U.S. support to white racist regimes in southern Africa. The focus of the campaign will be the organization of two days of national protests on March 25-26, the anniversary of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre. As the resolution adopted by the conference explains, March 25 will provide a focus for campus activities -- forums, rallies, and teach-ins against university and government complicity with white minority regimes in southern Africa. March 26, a Saturday, will provide a focus for citywide protests, which can involve students, Black, Chicano, and women's organizations, trade unions and other forces.
2. NSCAR chapters will continue their educational campaign in support of busing and school desegregation. The resolution adopted urges SCAR chapters and the NSCAR National Office to continue to work with and encourage organizations like the NAACP, SCLC and other civil rights groups to build a movement in defense of school desegregation. Presently, the leadership of these more powerful social forces are opposed to the organization of more May 17, 1975-type marches for busing. NSCAR today is the only probusing organization that favors large-scale protests to defend busing and school desegregation. Because of this -- despite organized racist opposition and government reluctance to enforce school desegregation laws -- NSCAR sees its main task right now as one of educating the public on the importance of busing as the way to achieve school desegregation and why busing should be defended.
3. NSCAR will actively oppose the death penalty. Primarily this means organizing educational activities against capital punishment and participating in local and national coalitions like the National Coalition Against the Death Penalty, established by the ACLU. NSCAR chapters are encouraged to quickly respond to planned executions by issuing statements, telegrams, and organizing public protests.
4. NSCAR will continue its active support to victims of racist frame-ups. This includes Gary Tyler, the Wilmington 10, Paul X Moody, and Hurricane Carter and John Artis.

Quite significantly, there were representatives from most of the major national defense cases at the conference.

For the first time, a leader of the American Indian Movement (AIM), Clyde Bellecourt, attended the conference. He spoke at the Friday night rally and led a workshop on the struggle of Native Americans.

5. Numerous other resolutions were adopted including one on bilingual education, affirmative action and racism in the media.

6. Following the conference Tsietzi Mashinini, the first president of the Soweto Students Representatives Council, agreed to return to the United States next March for a national speaking tour to build the March 25-26 protests.

7. The conference adopted a new structure resolution. This includes the establishment of "National Sponsors." Prominent people who are not students will be asked to become NSCAR Sponsors.

A new national coordinator was also elected -- Tony Austin, formerly from Philadelphia.

Significant conference

Without a doubt, this conference was a great success for NSCAR -- much better than we had anticipated. Of the 1100 people who attended the conference, at least 600 were not affiliated with any political group, with about one-third of these being Black or Latino. As well, unlike the first two NSCAR conferences, this conference was visibly organized and led by Blacks -- from the chair committee to the organization of conference security.

The large number on independents (representing over 130 organizations) showed the breadth of the conference. This breadth was also registered in the number of prominent people who agreed to speak on panels or lead workshops. Many of these people became new friends of NSCAR and most expressed support for NSCAR's decisions, including the call for national protests against U.S. policy in southern Africa.

Although we anticipated some disagreements around southern African proposal from people who support the Angolan government or one or another nationalist faction in Zimbabwe and South Africa, none of this occurred. We expected that some people would demand that the focus of the southern African campaign be around support to the "armed struggle" or sending material aid to different nationalist factions. This did not happen at all. In fact, every speaker stressed the need for Americans to build a similar movement to that which was organized in the 1960s against U.S. intervention in Vietnam.

The only group that opposed the March 25-26 call was the Spartacist League, which is opposed to any action proposed by NSCAR because they think it is an organization that should be destroyed. They put forward no counterproposals

Surprisingly, none of the other opponents present at the conference played a disruptive role. There was no white-baiting (a first at an NSCAR conference) and the only red-baiting came from the Spartacist League. The Communist Party and Young Workers Liberation League sent observers to the conference, but didn't set up a literature table or sell their newspapers. Two known Stalinists, however, did speak at the conference. Ed Kennedy, a leader of the YWLL, gave greetings for the National Student Association at the Friday night rally and agreed to be on the conference chair committee. Polly Halfkenny, a leader of the Boston branch of the Communist Party, brought greetings to the conference from the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression. Neither identified themselves as YWLLers or CPers. This presence of the CP, however, was quite significant. Until this conference the CP and YWLL had boycotted every activity organized by NSCAR since they walked out of NSCAR in the spring of 1975.

Other groups sent observers to the conference too. The youth group of the Maoist October League, Communist Youth Organization, set up a literature table; Youth Against War and Fascism distributed their newspaper; a member of the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL) registered for the conference; and every sectarian group on the left was at the conference.

In terms of Black radicals who are not affiliated to any multinational organizations, a number of independent MPLA-or Maoist-leaning Pan-Africanist Blacks participated in the conference. However, no organized all-Black radical groups attended. Not even Stokely Carmichael's All-African People's Revolutionary Party (AAPRP) came. At the last conference the Boston branch of the AAPRP organized disruptions at the conference. Although they threatened to do so again, they never showed up.

Also the World Community of Islam in the West (formerly The Nation of Islam) organized a workshop and set up a booth throughout the conference.

This conference was a step forward for NSCAR and lays the basis to build viable SCAR chapters across the country. However, there were a few weaknesses in the conference that should be noted.

Party participation

The party's and YSA's participation in the conference was quite good. We sold over 300 Militants, 50 subscriptions, 100 Young Socialists, over 100 pamphlets on southern Africa by Tony Thomas, and over 30 pamphlets on busing by Malik Miah. Considering the size of our fraction (fewer than 300 comrades many of whom had other central responsibilities at the conference) this was quite good.

There are three points we should note, however, about our participation in the conference:

1. We had the largest Black and Latino fraction we've ever had at any NSCAR conference -- at least 90 comrades. This included a number of newer members who took on major responsibilities.
2. The role played by our Black comrades, particularly Black women comrades, reflects the growth and development of Black Trotskyist cadre. This made it easier to organize the conference since our Black comrades were responsible for most of the political as well as organizational leadership of the conference.
3. One weakness was that our fraction had few representatives from YSA chapters and SWP branches from the West Coast and Southwest.

Our Perspectives

This conference marked a turning point for NSCAR. At the first two NSCAR conferences, the political discussion focused on the struggle for school desegregation, since NSCAR emerged from the desegregation struggle in Boston. In the last two years, however, NSCAR has evolved into a general antiracist organization. This is understandable since there is no student or youth antiracist coalition in the United States actively fighting racism. NSCAR is attempting to fill that void, which is one reason why so many different groups and organizations came to the conference to seek NSCAR's support and aid.

NSCAR's legitimacy as a broad-based antiracist coalition was enhanced at this third antiracist conference. For example, some of the defense cases that sent prominent spokespersons to the conference, used to look primarily to the Communist Party's National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression for help. Since the National Alliance has failed to build a real united front defense for these victims of racism, they have now come to NSCAR for aid too. AIM's decision to attend this conference, in particular, marked a big gain for NSCAR's prestige and viability.

The biggest test for NSCAR, however, will be its ability to organize the major national campaign around southern Africa and also continue its support to busing, victims of racist frame-ups and oppose the death penalty. It will be important for NSCAR not to drop its other campaigns as it builds opposition to the racist policies of U.S. imperialism in southern Africa. The struggle in southern Africa can be easily tied to the fight against racism at home. We should encourage SCAR chapters to do this in publicity and other activities around southern Africa.

The role played by the YSA and party will be a crucial factor in how well NSCAR meets the challenge facing it today.

The YSA understands this and plans to make building viable SCAR chapters on college and high school campuses a priority of its southern African work. The YSA can play a big role in building SCAR coalitions on the campus to organize the March 25-26 protests. (The YSA's perspectives on southern African work will be outlined at their upcoming convention in Chicago. Party comrades who can attend that convention should try to do so.)

The party branches have two major tasks to help carry out the campaigns decided on at the NSCAR conference.

First, party branches need to closely collaborate with the YSA in the YSA's building of SCAR chapters.

Second, it is important that party branches not view antiracist work as solely helping the YSA build SCAR. The potential of reaching out to broader social forces, besides students, on the issue of U.S. policy in southern Africa is enormous. We should take the March 25-26 call of NSCAR and explore the possibilities for citywide coalitions or ad hoc committees to build activities on March 26. In some cities we may want to build a big indoor forum or rally; in other cities, like San Francisco, where the party recently helped to build an indoor rally of 1200, we may try to initiate a march and rally on March 26. What we can do depends on the response we get when calling around for endorsers for March 25-26. We should aim to get the NAACP, Chicano and Puerto Rican groups, women's groups, trade unions, and others to endorse the call, to pass resolutions, and participate in the southern African campaign in some way. The Mashinini tour especially can play a big role in reaching out to broader forces -- for news conferences, community meetings, etc.

Because there has been some confusion on how party members should build NSCAR-initiated actions, it is important to note that SWP members can and should go to other groups to endorse March 25-26 as SWP members. In some cases, however, it may be more appropriate for a member of SCAR to contact the NAACP or another community group.

Lastly, since the opportunities for antiracist work are broader than the southern African campaign, branches will have to strike a balance in their work. These decisions must be based on the real opportunities that exist. For example, if a Black youth is gunned down by a cop (as recently occurred in Brooklyn) our participation in actions demanding: Justice Now! would become a focus of branch antiracist work for a period of time.

Opportunities will arise for the party to work with other groups in coalitions on many other issues besides southern Africa. This does not take away from the fact that southern Africa will be the central national focus of party antiracist work over the next period.