

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014

January 20, 1977

TO NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is an exchange of letters between B.R. Washington and Jack Barnes that we thought the members of the National Committee would be interested in.

These are for National Committee information only.

Comradely,

Larry Seigle
Larry Seigle

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Detroit, Mich.
Dec. 19, 1976

National Office

Dear Comrades,

I would like to raise two questions with you. The first is about the report submitted by the Control Commission dated Nov. 18, 1976, with the recommendation that comrade Musheer Fardan be dropped from membership. After reading the report I completely agree with the action taken by the Control Commission. My only question is why did such a situation develop that the Control Commission had to become involved and why no trial body was set up by the New Orleans branch?

My second question is on the agenda proposed for the plenum. In looking over the agenda I notice that no report is scheduled around our anti-racist work. I would seem to me that such a report would be needed considering the activity planned for the Spring, the South African demonstrations, the struggle around the death penalty, etc.

Comradely,

s/B.R. Washington

Detroit

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14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
January 1, 1977

B.R. Washington

Detroit

Dear B.R.,

I'm glad you took the time to read the Control Commission report on Musheer carefully. The thoroughness and fairness of the report vindicates the effort and thought that you comrades on the nominations commission put into selecting the members of the Control Commission. Other comrades I have heard from also agreed with the conclusions reached by the commission.

You are right that it is unusual for a disciplinary problem to be taken up by the Political Committee and Control Commission instead of the branch. But there were unusual circumstances in this case, the kind that the constitution foresees in allowing for the Control Commission to take charge of a case that has arisen on a local level. Article VI, Section 3 of the constitution outlines this where it says: "In those cases where the Control Commission finds it necessary to intervene, its authority shall supersede any local investigation or trial."

There was no disagreement on the facts in Musheer's case, so it was clear that Musheer's past record in other branches would have to be looked into in order to arrive at any clear conclusions. The fact that a physical confrontation was involved between a male and a female comrade, and between a Black and a white comrade, made it even more important to have the most authoritative investigation and resolution of the matter possible. Thus a national body as opposed to a New Orleans body was called for. Derrick and Pearl had thought about these considerations, as well as the seriousness of the case, when they made their original request. I think the results of the investigation bear out the correctness of their judgment on this.

I don't know if we indicated it in the Political Committee minutes, but following the filing of the Control Commission report with the Political Committee, the PC sent Malik Miah and Larry Stewart to New Orleans to give a report on the case to the branch. We wanted to solicit any further questions or opinions that comrades might have, and to make sure the comrades on the scene had a thorough knowledge of what had transpired and how the case was resolved. We also made the decision not to circulate the information further than the New Orleans branch and the National Committee. That would be incorrect, as the Control Commission left the door open to a possible positive evolution and an eventual reapplication for membership from Musheer. Although the record shows that odds are pretty high against this, it is still correct to do whatever we can to facilitate such an evolution.

Your letter got me thinking about something else too. It might be a good idea for the Control Commission to give a report summarizing its work for the year to a closed session of the next convention. The Control Commission is elected directly by the convention delegates, not by the National Committee. Thus it would be appropriate to report back to the delegates. This might also reinforce the importance of the election of the Control Commission, which will play a more important role for us as we grow more rapidly, our composition changes, and we face new problems.

I'd like to know what you think about the idea of such a report to the convention delegates. Let's talk about this at the plenum. I don't know if it has been done before, but I'll check with some of the older comrades and see what they did in similar circumstances.

* * *

Last year we decided to have separate resolutions and reports on the Chicano, Puerto Rican, and Black liberation struggles given to the May plenum and then to the convention. That made it impossible to have separate reports on women's liberation work or our trade-union work. It has been a long time since we singled out either of these areas of work for separate discussion, and we felt it was especially important to do so now because of the significant changes and openings developing. So before the convention last year we decided we would take up these two points at this plenum.

At the plenum, our tasks in antiracist work will be incorporated as a central part of the report on the Political Situation and Party Tasks, which Malik will be giving for the Political Committee.

There is one advantage in doing it this way. It emphasizes the point that solidarity with the South African Blacks and the fight against capitalism's electric chairs and firing squads are not only important parts of our antiracist work but central to our general perspectives and tasks and should be integrated in all areas of our work.

We'll have another plenum around May Day probably, to organize ourselves for Oberlin. We'll be able to decide before then if we need a separate report on antiracist work.

Comradely,

/s/ Jack

Jack Barnes