

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING No. 6, October 20, 1975

Present: Breitman, Hansen, Jenness, Lovell, Seigle, Sheppard,
Thomas

Chair: Hansen

Visitors: Gersh, Jones, Miah

AGENDA: 1. Atlanta School Employees Struggle
2. NSCAR Conference and Perspectives
3. Coalition of Labor Union Women

1. ATLANTA SCHOOL EMPLOYEES STRUGGLE

Lovell reported on his discussions with comrades in Atlanta about the struggle of school employees, including teachers, for union contracts, and the party's support to this struggle.

Discussion

Motion: To approve the report.

Carried.

2. NSCAR CONFERENCE AND PERSPECTIVES

(Bailey, Manuel, Smith invited for this point.)

Miah reported (see attached).

Discussion

Motion: To approve the report.

Carried.

3. COALITION OF LABOR UNION WOMEN

(L. Jenness invited for this point.)

L. Jenness reported (see attached).

Discussion

Agreement that Militant should have coverage explaining issues involved in CLUW convention.

Meeting Adjourned.

Report on NSCAR Conference and November Action Perspectives

Malik Miah, October 20, 1975

As reported in the October 24 Militant, the National Student Coalition Against Racism (NSCAR) October 10-12 conference was a great success. Over 1,300 antiracist activists from around the country attended the gathering. At least half were independent supporters of NSCAR; 35-40 percent were Black and other oppressed minorities.

The main resolution adopted by the conference outlined a national campaign to defend school desegregation and fight racism. This resolution pinpointed the urgent need to mobilize public opinion against the antibusing views of the Ford Administration and Congress. November 22 was set as a national day of protest against attacks on busing and in support of school desegregation.

Other resolutions passed at the conference--on cutbacks, affirmative action and bilingual and bicultural education, for example --showed the diversity of activities against racism that NSCAR is involved in.

Overall the conference takes NSCAR a step forward in becoming a broadly based antiracist coalition. Both the National Student Association (NSA), the largest student-membership organization in the country and the Federacion Universitaria Socialista Puertorriquena (FUSP), an important Puerto Rican student group, assigned leaders to be NSCAR national coordinators.

A large number of students and other people came to the conference because of NSCAR's consistent and leading role in the fight against cutbacks in higher education on many campuses and NSCAR's active defense of victims of political repression like Hurricane Carter, J.B. Johnson, and others. This shows the growing recognition of NSCAR's importance and its breadth. Considering that many of these organizations and individuals disagreed on the busing issue or have questions about busing, indicates that they view NSCAR as an action organization fighting racism on all fronts. NSCAR is an organization they feel they must be a part of.

Moving toward November 22, we should encourage NSCAR to continue to reach out to broader forces on the campuses--groups like the FUSP and Chicano student groups--like the NAACP and Urban League. If possible, coalitions should be formed to organize the November 22 activities. Because of the short amount of time until November 22 it is likely these activities will be modest in size. Every SCAR chapter, however, should be encouraged to organize some type of activity or event on that day around the theme to defend school desegregation and fight racism. This will allow SCAR chapters flexibility in tying in local issues, for example defense cases to the busing issue. Where school desegregation is a major topic of debate there should be little problem in planning an activity on or around November 22. On the other hand, where this is not true local issues will play a larger role in what SCAR can do. It is important, however, that the above theme be incorporated into the November 22 events. This is the most effective way to build SCAR and to educate around its probusing stand.

Progress reports on antiracist work should be regularly sent to the National Office.

Report on CLUW

by L. Jenness, October 20, 1975

As the comrades know, we decided at Oberlin to do whatever we could to build the upcoming CLUW convention, scheduled for Dec. 5-7 in Detroit. We felt that this convention could spark new interest and recruit members to CLUW. We wanted time at the convention for a discussion of some of the key issues facing CLUW such as discriminatory layoffs, the ERA, and others.

This report is to bring you up to date on our efforts and the developments of the last two months.

A National Coordinating Committee (NCC) of CLUW was originally scheduled for Sept. 19-21 in Chicago. We had hoped that that meeting would establish some guidelines for the convention as well as set an agenda which would allow for discussion, introduction of resolutions, etc. We knew this would not be easy. Some of the officers of CLUW, including Olga Madar, want the convention to deal strictly with adopting a constitution; they have no desire to discuss the issues; and they are not interested in building the convention in such a way as to recruit more members.

The Sept. 19-21 NCC was canceled. Madar reported that a quorum had not responded to the call for an NCC meeting. Although it's undoubtedly true that a quorum did not respond, it's also true that the officers of CLUW did nothing to try to get a quorum to respond.

Another NCC has now been scheduled for Oct. 31-Nov. 1 and a combined Steering Committee and Constitution Committee meeting was held this past weekend, Oct. 18 and 19.

Only 21 people were present. This was not a quorum so the body became a working committee with no formal authority or decision making power. Of the 21 present seven were members of the October League. Almost all of the rest were women who work closely with Olga Madar.

The debate revolved around the draft constitution proposed by Madar and the proposed agenda for the convention.

The constitution proposed is an effort to give almost all authority to union caucuses and to leave the chapters with little or no authority or autonomy. One proposal, for instance, is to have the entire NCC elected by union caucus on a proportional base with no NCC members elected from the chapters. If the UAW has 1,000 members signed up for CLUW, they would get so many NCC members; a union with 500 members in CLUW would get so many, etc.

The proposed agenda which represents Madar's thinking is that the entire convention be devoted to a discussion and adoption of the constitution. She proposes that the only business be the constitution and election of officers. She also proposes that no resolutions be introduced, and that the women there meet only in

union caucuses in order to discuss and decide these things.

In addition, Madar announced that she had already invited Bella Abzug, Bill Lucey, and a Democratic party councilwoman to address the convention.

At this meeting we blocked with the October League in drawing up an alternate agenda which would allow time for discussion of various resolutions, regional meetings, chapter reports, etc.

We also agreed with OL on some proposed changes to the draft constitution such as electing the NCC through chapters, or at least some of them; and some proposed changes that would maintain the authority and some autonomy for the chapters.

The other issue debated was that of membership requirement. The OL still insists that non-union women be allowed to join CLUW. We, of course, agree with the majority of CLUW that it should be a union women's organization.

There was much pessimism at the meeting as to whether or not the NCC scheduled for Oct. 31, Nov. 1 would actually take place. Everyone agreed, however, to try to get a quorum present. Madar reported that only 40 people had returned their forms. (Approximately 90 are required for a quorum.) NCC members now have until Friday, Oct. 24 to send in their forms.

That's where things stand on a national level, which doesn't look very good.

On a chapter level, some areas report moderate success in having the affirmative action and discriminatory layoffs issue discussed in the chapters. Both Los Angeles and Chicago have panels on this topic scheduled.

It should also be reported that the AFL-CIO national convention voted not to endorse CLUW. Speaking against supporting CLUW was a woman from the American Federation of Teachers who is a member of CLUW.

We need to do what we can to help the scheduled NCC take place. If it takes place we will want to try and get a decent agenda adopted for the convention as well as democratic procedures established which will allow for discussion.

Between now and the convention the Militant will carry articles explaining what is happening to CLUW.