

14 Charles Lane  
New York, N.Y. 10014  
February 10, 1976

TO ALL BRANCH AND CITY ORGANIZERS

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed are two items for your information.

One is a report by Betsey Stone to the Feb. 6 Political Committee meeting about the "Hard Times Conference" held recently in Chicago.

The other is a report from Portland about the campaign against U.S. intervention in Angola and a meeting with the local Nation of Islam.

Comradely,

*Doug Jenness*

Doug Jenness  
SWP National Office

[National Committee members received the report on the Hard Times Conference attached to the minutes of the Feb. 6 Political Committee meeting.]

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Portland, Oregon  
February 2, 1976

Malik Miah  
SWP National Office

Dear Malik,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of discussions we have held with the Nation of Islam locally in regards to participating in a movement against U.S. involvement in Angola.

In our fraction's initial discussions, we decided to approach first the people who know us from different groups which had worked with us primarily in the anti-Vietnam war movement, as well as the Muslims, whom we have never worked with, and the Black Educational Center, which has traditionally organized African Liberation Day activities.

As is customary with them, the Muslims were very formal towards us when we approached them, which we did in our own name. Following a telephone call to set up an appointment, we then met with them and received a fairly rigorous examination, including a body search, to establish who we were and if we were really there for what we said we were there for. All of this, however, was done in a very friendly manner and the comrade then met with the Investigator of Temple No. 62. The comrade's proposal to them to participate in a teach-in specifically was extremely well received. Also, when he began to explain to the Investigator our concept of a coalition of many different groups jointly organizing such a teach-in, the Investigator cut him off and said something like "I know exactly what you mean; although we may have many different points of view on many questions, including Angola, we can work together to get the U.S. out of Angola." The Investigator wanted to strongly impress upon us that the Nation of Islam is nationally going through big changes and wants to work with other groups on specific issues when possible; he also said that before the Nation of Islam locally could even seriously consider this project they would have to have more information from us on feedback from the traditional organizations in the Black community in Portland, such as the NAACP. We were told to call back several days later.

We called back and spoke to the Captain of the Temple, who is second in authority after the Minister. He told us that despite the good response from the major older Black community church leaders in Portland, in their discussions among themselves they concluded that their national leadership had to formally permit them to participate in a coalition to build a teach-in. They wanted us to contact their national leadership.

Several things became clear to us through these discussions:

- 1) They were really excited about the teach-in idea.

2) They have a very open and non-sectarian attitude towards the traditional groups in the Black community, such as the NAACP, Black churches, etc.

3) They don't have any apparent fear or hostility to working with socialists.

4) Beyond providing speakers, they won't get involved without national sanction.

Obviously the Portland SWP is not going to contact their national leadership; however, in our discussions here we felt it would be important for you to know of this discussion.

The first planning meeting to organize activity is Feb. 11. A letter inviting people to the meeting is signed by a staff member of a local union, a member of the Democratic party local central committee, local W.I.L.P.F., local A.F.S.C., ourselves, and the President of the Albina Ministerial Alliance (the local equivalent of a Black council of churches). Also a young radical Black studies professor at Portland State University is writing, on his own initiative, a letter to invite B.S.U.s to the meeting.

As soon as this first planned meeting decides what it wants to do and when, we'll let you know. We are thinking of a debate with the State Department and a big antiwar figure. The YSA is planning to use the Tony Thomas tour in early March to build broadly sponsored meetings on the campuses.

Comradely,  
s/ Lisa Potash  
Portland SWP antiwar director