

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING No. 29, July 8, 1977

Present: Barnes, Berman, Blackstock, Breitman, Garza, Hawkins,
D. Jenness, Jones, Lovell, Lund, Miah, Sheppard, Waters

Guests: Clark, Jaquith, LaMont, Reid

Chair: Jones

AGENDA: 1. NAACP Convention
2. Gay Liberation
3. RMC Conference
4. Control Commission Report on Detroit Case
5. Control Commission Drug Policy Report
6. World Movement Reports

1. NAACP CONVENTION

(Harris, Hart, Musa, and Sedwick invited for this point.)

Sedwick reported. (See attached.)

Discussion

2. GAY LIBERATION

(Hildebrand, Maggi, and Wang invited for this point.)

LaMont reported on activities and coalitions across the country in response to the attack on the rights of gay people and on perspectives for the party's work in this area.

Discussion

Motion: To approve a probe to see what kind of national fall action can be organized to defend the rights of gay people.

Carried.

3. RMC CONFERENCE

Waters reported on RMC July 4th weekend conference and on the proposal to publish in the Discussion Bulletin the RMC fusion statement plus other material, and a report on the RMC conference.

Motion: To recommend to the opening session of the convention that we seat fraternal delegates from the RMC, elected by them on the basis of the same ratio as branches will be electing regular delegates.

Discussion

Carried.

(over)

4. CONTROL COMMISSION REPORT ON DETROIT CASE

Reid presented written report of Control Commission.
(See attached.)

5. CONTROL COMMISSION DRUG POLICY REPORT

Barnes reported.

Motion: To adopt the conclusions and general line of the Control Commission report on "The SWP's Security Policy on Illegal Drugs," and to submit it to the Discussion Bulletin for the information of the party.
(See Discussion Bulletin Vol. 35, No. 10.)

Discussion

Carried.

6. WORLD MOVEMENT REPORTS

(Baumann, Foley, Hansen, Pérez, and White invited for this point.)

Lund reported on trip to Spain to cover the elections for the Militant.

Discussion

Sheppard reported on National Committee meeting of the Liga Comunista (Spain) and on progress of fusion in Canada.

Discussion

Miah reported on convention of Liga Socialista in Mexico.

Discussion

Meeting adjourned.

REPORT ON THE SIXTY-EIGHTH CONVENTION OF THE NAACP

By Cathy Sedwick

The sixty-eighth convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was held in St. Louis, June 27-July 1. The major political proceedings and analysis of the convention were reported in the July 8, 15, and 22 issues of the Militant.

What I want to do with this report is give comrades an idea of how our fraction functioned and what we were able to accomplish at the convention with the "Full Equality Now" statement being circulated by the National Student Coalition Against Racism.

The main goal of our participation into the NAACP convention was to discuss with as many people as possible the ideas and political perspective outlined by the "Full Equality Now" statement. We knew our ability to have such a discussion on the plenary floor would be impossible because of the bureaucratic way this convention was run. We took advantage of every opportunity we could to have a discussion of the ideas in the statement. We talked to people in the hallways, over coffee, and anywhere else we could. The workshops became the main way for us to speak to large groups of people. Supporters of the statement who could get to the microphones spoke in the workshops discussing the importance of the Black movement having a national conference to discuss the problems it faced and a strategy to answer the attacks.

The response in the workshops and from the people we talked to was very encouraging. The ease with which people accepted the ideas of the "Full Equality Now" statement was shown when a shortened version of the statement was presented to the resolutions committee. Thirteen people voted for this emergency resolution to be presented to the entire convention. The NAACP youth also submitted a resolution calling for an educational campaign around South Africa, which was incorporated into a much milder resolution passed at the convention.

NSCAR was able to make many new political contacts among both the adults and the youth. NSCAR is planning to send out a letter nationally to follow up on the discussions with these individuals. Local areas will also get a list of any contacts which were made.

The main axis of the SWP's and YSA's participation at the convention was the sales of the Young Socialist and the Militant, both of which had articles discussing the crisis of the Black movement. Jon Hillson was also there promoting his new book, The Battle of Boston. On the fourth day of the convention the Militant Forum sponsored a city-wide talk by John Hawkins on "Which Way for the Black Movement?" In the workshops, comrades spoke in favor of the ideas expressed in the "Full Equality Now" statement. Comrades spoke as NAACP members, as unionists, and as socialists--and we received very good responses. It is also important to note that no red-baiting whatsoever took place

(over)

at the convention.

The significance of what we were able to accomplish points up how deep the crisis of leadership in the Black movement is today. Many people came to that convention hoping for some leadership in confronting the problems facing Blacks, but the official leadership offered more of the same dead-end strategy -- lawsuits, lobbying Congress, and voting for "progressive liberal" Democrats. We were the only ones offering any clear alternative to the turn-the-other-cheek philosophy of the leadership. This is why we were able to make so many contacts. It is important to note that most of the people we talked to were not young working people. A whole group of people from age 20 to 35 were obviously missing from the convention.

For local areas this means there are openings for us to draw the NAACP into action or to support actions around specific issues. We will want to contact them when getting endorsers and setting up coalitions around the issues of affirmative action, busing, South Africa, the death penalty, etc. The response we received at the NAACP convention also indicates the likely response we can expect from other local and national organizations in the Black movement. They face the same dilemma the NAACP has: how to respond to the government offensive against Black rights. This crisis of perspective confronting all Black organizations provides us openings to raise the points in the NSCAR statement as well as our overall socialist analysis of the attacks on Black rights.

We will be continuing this discussion at other conventions of the national civil rights organizations. Specifically, NSCAR and the party and the YSA will be participating in the upcoming PUSH convention, July 20-23 in Los Angeles; in the National Urban League convention, July 24-27 in Washington, D.C.; and in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference convention August 16-19 in Atlanta.

At the party convention there will be further discussion on how we want to use the NSCAR statement and deepen our political discussions in the Black movement on strategy.

Report of the Control Commission of the SWP

Submitted July 8, 1977

On April 5, 1977, the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party received the following letter from Mac Warren, Detroit local organizer:

"I, as a member of the Detroit local, Eastside branch, bring charges against Al Duncan for striking Gloria Swartz on April 2, 1977.

"I recommend that the Political Committee take jurisdiction over this matter."

On April 5, 1977, 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 Willie Mae Reid 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 Willie Mae Reid, designated by the SWP Political Committee on April 5, 1977, in accordance with Article VI, Section 1 of the constitution.

On April 5, 1977, the following letter was sent to Wayne Glover and Kipp Dawson from Willie Mae Reid:

"This is to confirm your phone conversations with Malik [Miah]. To facilitate the Control Commission investigation of the charges against Al Duncan, it is proposed that Helen, Larry and myself 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."

A letter of confirmation from Wayne Glover was received by Willie Mae Reid on April 14, and oral confirmation from Kipp Dawson on April 6.

Evidence Examined

Larry Stewart, Helen Scheer, and Willie Mae Reid conducted the investigation with a series of meetings on April 7, 8, and 9 in Detroit. We interviewed each of the eight members of the Detroit Local Executive Committee, one by one, plus Thabo Ntweng (B.R. Washington), and Gloria Swartz.

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," adopted by the 1965 convention of the SWP. (See the Education for Socialists Bulletin bearing the same title.)

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

In our investigation, the Control Commission heard oral reports from Mac Warren, Detroit local organizer; Marty Pettit, YSA local organizer; and Thabo Ntweng, Detroit LEC member who has since transferred to Cleveland--all who witnessed the attack.

We had discussions with Al Duncan and Gloria Swartz. In addition, we talked to the remaining five LEC members, Nan Bailey, Robin Maisel, Meg Hayes, Don Bechler, and Rachele Fruit.

Evaluation

The information comrades gave to the Control Commission was based on the part of the attack they witnessed or the general information they had about the physical violence in the relationship between Duncan and Swartz. Our findings, in summary, are reported as follows.

No one contested the fact that Al Duncan attacked Gloria Swartz, his wife, at the end of a party social, Saturday night, April 2. The violence erupted without warning. There had been no loud argument. Swartz and Duncan were talking when suddenly Duncan pushed Swartz, hurling her across the room. After being restrained he rushed downstairs and into a crowd of people to continue the attack on Swartz.

Thabo Ntweng and Mac Warren followed Duncan outside and tried to again prevent him from striking Swartz. Duncan broke Ntweng's hold. Ntweng fell, hit his head, and lost consciousness for a few minutes. Warren finally pulled Duncan away. Ntweng regained consciousness and helped to disperse everyone and end the fight.

Everyone we spoke to was aware that Duncan had attacked Swartz once before at the 1974 YSA convention in St. Louis. He knocked her out. She was taken to a nearby hospital emergency room for observation. When she returned to the hotel, two white male comrades were assigned to accompany her during the day. At night she stayed with a Black woman comrade.

Mike Kelly, the Detroit organizer at the time, Ntweng, other Black comrades, and some YSA members had all had discussions with Duncan about this incident. But no official action was taken. Women comrades also talked to Swartz then, but she had no clear understanding of the party's view of violence as it related to her situation or even her rights as a comrade.

In our discussion with Swartz, it was plain to see that she saw her relationship with Duncan as equivalent to that of a couple even though they agreed to live separately for personal reasons. Duncan felt these incidents of violence were a matter of personal disagreements between him and his wife. He initially accepted the party's intervention only because the incident had happened in public.

Duncan is recognized in Detroit as a leader by both the membership and the leadership. He had been elected a second time to the LEC with a high vote. He had also been unanimously chosen to be the candidate for mayor.

Everyone we talked to said Duncan had made a positive turn in his development beginning with John Hawkins's assignment as local organizer in Detroit. They were worried about Duncan. They saw this incident as a personal thing between Duncan and

his wife. But they also wanted the party to take some action because it was serious. No one felt Duncan should be expelled. Warren felt censure was sufficient and maybe a transfer should be recommended. Bechler felt that suspension for six months was the correct solution. Most LEC members had mixed reactions on whether or not Duncan should still be the mayoral candidate--the campaign had not been officially announced.

With the exception of Nan Bailey and Rachele Fruit, no one seemed conscious of Swartz, as a comrade or a person. Other female comrades talked about "Gloria, the victim." Male comrades mentioned her, when asked, as incidental to the attack. Fruit was concerned about how the party could develop Swartz if no serious action was taken on this matter. Fruit was also concerned about the party ability to recruit feminists if our attitude on violence between Duncan and Swartz was one of "hands off."

Several things contributed to Duncan's attack on Swartz as revealed in the discussions--their personal problems, the pressures of organizing and helping to lead a party local, the inevitable frictions when comrades are learning to work together as a team, the challenge of developing Black leadership city-wide. But Duncan's attitude toward his wife stood out. We found that he had a problem accepting women comrades as equals and working jointly with them in an assignment. In addition, his work habits indicated that he assumed he had to be available full time for party assignments in order to be a revolutionary. It seemed he counterposed working steadily to being a party leader, without having discussed this idea with the rest of the leadership.

While Duncan is seen as a leader, he is known to have a hot temper. He sometimes uses very abusive language in an argument. Leading Black comrades in Detroit over the last year--John Hawkins, Thabo Ntweng, and Mac Warren-- have worked closely with Duncan to help him see the contradiction in his personal actions and his political commitment.

Comparison With the Musheer Fardan Case

The Control Commission had been activated once before since the last convention, for the Fardan case in New Orleans. (See attachment to Political Committee minutes of November 24, 1976.) Both cases centered on the use of physical violence by one comrade against another. Both cases involved male comrades striking female comrades. Both times the male comrades were Black and violence was used to settle a personal disagreement. These are the similarities.

The differences in the two cases are more important. The key is the difference in the comrades involved as well as the two situations. The Control Commission investigation of the Fardan case revealed a pattern of violent behavior that remained unchanged from the date Fardan joined the movement in Boston in 1975 until the New Orleans incident in 1976. Fardan had physically assaulted several comrades at different times. Furthermore, Fardan demonstrated that he was incapable of understanding the error in the way he functioned in the party so that he could correct it.

As the Control Commission report submitted November 18, 1976, states: "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....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.... indicated that he doesn't truly understand the party's organizational principles."

The totality of Fardan's behavior could only have been brought to light through an investigation by an authoritative national body of the party assigned that task. As James P. Cannon put it in a letter to Reba Hansen in 1960, it is only the Control Commission--elected by and responsible to the highest body of the party, the convention delegates--that can provide the maximum assurance that any individual party member, accused or rumored to be unworthy of party membership, will be guaranteed the fullest investigation and fairest hearing or trial. The facts in Fardan's case dictated that the only course of action was complete separation from the party--expulsion. His resignation eliminated the necessity for the expulsion.

Duncan functions in the party completely differently. The Detroit leadership sees Duncan as a serious comrade, meticulous in his assignments, loyal, and committed to building the party in Detroit. Duncan's hot temper, his acts of physical violence against Gloria Swartz, show that he has the potential for violence, but he has not generalized its use in the movement.

Recommendation

The Control Commission felt that it was important to make Duncan completely aware of the seriousness of his act. We wanted to make sure that Duncan fully understood that physical violence against other comrades or women who are not comrades is incompatible with membership in the party. We did not feel that Duncan should be removed from party membership. With this in mind we decided to recommend that a strong warning would be sufficient--a warning with "teeth." This serves the purpose of forcing Duncan to bring his personal actions in line with the political program to which he agrees. We decided also that some of the problems the Detroit leadership faced could be helped if they had the opportunity to work together on an extremely crucial problem. We felt that the question of Duncan's candidacy for mayor fit this category. The team-building process already started in Detroit would be strengthened if they had to think out together the candidate, the character of the campaign to run, or whether or not to run a campaign.

Our recommendation was:

- 1) For the Political Committee to censure Al Duncan with the warning that a repetition would mean expulsion, and
- 2) That the question of Duncan's candidacy be left up to the Detroit leadership in consultation with the Political Committee.

This recommendation was adopted by the Political Committee on April 20, 1977.

Our Policy on Violence in the Workers Movement

Most comrades understand the party's principled position against violence in the workers movement. Our rich history of applying this principle in practice over and over again has made it possible to transmit our policy of opposition to violence in the movement to the entire membership.

The mountain of evidence uncovered through our lawsuit against the government is further proof that allowing violence to be introduced into internal relationships disrupts and destroys progressive movements. FBI documents show that the Counterintelligence programs (COINTELPRO) utilized a policy of instigating and using violence in the Black movement, antiwar movement, the women's movement, and the left in an attempt to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize" movements.

The Detroit case demonstrated the need to expand the understanding of the membership on our policy. There was confusion on several questions that probably reflects confusion nationally. Comrades were not sure if it is acceptable to use physical violence to settle personal differences as opposed to political differences. Is violence between individuals different if it is violence "within the family"? And, does saying that it is not different mean "interfering in the personal affairs" of comrades?

Our opposition to violence in the workers movement grows out of our goal of building an effective combat party. There must be an atmosphere where ideas flow freely, where disagreements can be expressed without fear of physical retaliation. Not only can the most effective plan of action be identified that way, but the binding effect of the decisions made will guarantee implementation. The unity in action essential in facing the class enemy again and again is thereby maximized.

Party norms flow from the same considerations. We have the task of organizing the revolutionary combat party that must lead the workers to take power from the ruling class in the United States. Our program and practices flow from the need to construct a cohesive and disciplined combat organization that must defeat the ultimate violence--that is, the fascist gangs that will be set in motion by the most vicious and most powerful ruling class in history.

We train the working class in Marxist politics by winning them to accept our program through activity. We also train our class to be disciplined when we win them to our party norms. We must be organized to effectively combat violence because violence is always used against our class. Any free-lancing, including in self-defense initiatives, would be disastrous. Within that context, the party's established position of opposition to any form of violence in the workers movement is applied to the use of violence to settle differences or disagreements in the party, whether or not they're political or personal. The acceptance of

internal violence, however limited, poses a serious threat to the functioning of the revolutionary party. The fear of physical retaliation would cut across free, open exchange. Without democracy, our ability to respond publicly as a centralized unit would be weakened. Centralism without democracy is forced discipline that would sound the death knoll of the party.

For that reason, there can be no escape hatch from party norms for any comrade. The individual decision to accept the political program and become one important part of the more important whole includes deciding to accept changes in personal habits. Taking the initiative to make the necessary changes is part of implementing the unconditional loyalty that membership implies. Anything less is hypocritical and cannot be tolerated by the party.

Violence in Personal Relationships

The decision made in Duncan's case does not set a precedent in dictating the personal life-styles of comrades. To the contrary, if anything, we are moving in the opposite direction.

The rise of the women's movement has exposed and educated about the depth of the brutality used against women by men. The women's movement has launched a campaign of education and resistance to this practice that is having an impact on the society. As the vanguard of the working class, we welcome this changing consciousness and want to help lead the way.

The Detroit case provides the party with the opportunity to take cognizance of the changed attitude toward women and among women on the acceptance of wife-beating. It is important for the membership to understand, just as we understand other party norms, the party's opposition to violence as it applies to wife-beating or spouse-beating, even when it occurs "in private."

While any case of violence should be handled on the basis of the individual facts, we must be clear that our policy is unconditional opposition to spouse-beating by comrades whether both are in the movement or only one is in the movement. This form of violence is incompatible with membership in the revolutionary party. We cannot stand for one thing in our program and act in a contrary way without appearing as untrustworthy hypocrites and losing the confidence of the working class.

Our Conclusion

A self-acting party, a political party, held together voluntarily by loyalty to program, where decisions made are physically binding on every member, functions best when each member has the opportunity to decide for themselves how they must conduct themselves as party members. The Control Commission's recommendation in Duncan's case was intended to influence him politically to make the change in his personal habits that are incompatible with party

membership. We felt we could make this recommendation because we felt Duncan could be politically influenced, unlike Fardan in New Orleans, to make that change.

Action Taken

Excerpts from the minutes of the Political Committee meetings that dealt with the Duncan case are attached. (April 5, April 17, April 20, April 28, and May 13, 1977. See Appendix.)

In an extended discussion on April 12, 1977, Willie Mae Reid and Larry Stewart informed Duncan and Swartz of the Control Commission's conclusions and the recommendation to be made to the Political Committee.

On April 20 the Political Committee accepted the recommendations of the Control Commission and adopted the following motion:

"To accept the recommendations of the Control Commission to: (1) censure Al Duncan; (2) warn him that any repetition whatsoever by him of violent acts within the movement is incompatible with continued membership in the party; (3) refer to the Detroit leadership all further decisions on assignments for Al Duncan including those connected with the upcoming Detroit mayoralty campaign."

On April 24, the incident described by Pat Wright in her letter to the Political Committee occurred.

On April 25, Willie Mae Reid and John Hawkins, on behalf of the Political Committee, had an extended discussion with Duncan during which he indicated that the Political Committee's censure was probably a moot point since he had attacked Swartz again.

On April 28, the Political Committee received the letter from Pat Wright and adopted the following motion:

"To assign Hawkins to meet with comrades involved and if facts are as indicated, to ask Al Duncan to resign from the party."

On May 5, Duncan resigned from the SWP. A copy of his letter of resignation is attached.

Two points are important to note.

First, during the discussion with Willie Mae Reid and John Hawkins on April 25 it became clear that Duncan had not been conscious of the fact that he could not beat his wife and stay in the party, that it was an act of violence that was incompatible with membership. As the discussion progressed, Duncan admitted that "I didn't know how serious this was." Following a report the same day to the Detroit Local Executive Committee, Duncan told Warren he thought he should resign. Several days later he changed his mind.

The second important thing to note was the political leadership role of Black comrades with whom Duncan consulted. While trying to make up his mind what to do, Duncan called other Black comrades both in Detroit and in New York City. His attitude was that he was being victimized; that the facts were different from Wright's description; that Swartz would not agree with Wright's version; and that he would demand a trial. It is clear he was trying to organize Black comrades to support his position.

Duncan found no support among the Black comrades whom he called. Instead he was told that he was trying to circumvent the facts and finally that this also was disloyal. Further discussions with Hawkins, Ntweng, and other Black comrades convinced Duncan to resign. Duncan said he would continue to work with the party as a supporter, and that his goal was to re-apply for membership at a later date.

Swartz was initially confused by the action taken against Duncan. She felt it was too harsh. She did admit that she felt he was definitely trying to hurt her when he attacked her on April 24. In an extended discussion with her we explained how 1) undisciplined free-lancing in combat situations; 2) use of violence to settle any kind of disagreements, political or personal, within the movement; 3) use of violence between comrades even in a personal or familial framework; and 4) any use of violence by men against women, are all incompatible with membership in the party. At the end Swartz was convinced that the action taken was correct. She felt that the party had helped her to grow and she wanted to stay in the party and become a revolutionist.

At the May 4 city-wide membership meeting in Detroit, Hawkins reported the Political Committee's action in the Duncan case. There was a thorough discussion and no disagreements were expressed.

Excerpts from the minutes of the Political Committee meetings that dealt with the Duncan case:

April 5, 1977

DETROIT CHARGES

Barnes reported receiving the following:

April 5, 1977

To the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party:

Dear Comrades,

I, as a member of the Detroit local, Eastside branch, bring charges against Al Duncan for striking Gloria Swartz on April 2, 1977.

I recommend that the Political Committee take jurisdiction over this matter.

Comradely,

/s/ Mac Warren

Motion: 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.

Discussion

Carried.

Motion: To designate Willie Mae Reid as the fifth member of the Control Commission.

Discussion

Carried.

April 17, 1977

CONTROL COMMISSION REPORT

(Dawson, Glover, Reid, Scheer, and Stewart invited for this point)

Reid reported on Control Commission findings

in investigation of charges brought against Al Duncan by Mac Warren. (See Political Committee minutes of April 5, 1977.)

Discussion

Agreed: To schedule another meeting of the Political Committee on April 20 to finish discussion.

April 20, 1977

CONTROL COMMISSION REPORT

(Dawson, Reid, and Stewart invited for this point)

Discussion continued from April 17 Political Committee meeting.

Motion by Barnes: To accept the recommendations of the Control Commission to: (1) censure Al Duncan; (2) warn him that any repetition whatsoever by him of violent acts within the movement is incompatible with continued membership in the party; (3) refer to the Detroit leadership all further decisions on assignments for Al Duncan including those connected with the upcoming Detroit mayoralty campaign.

Motion by Breitman: To amend the recommendation of the Control Commission by recommending to the Detroit leadership that Al Duncan not be the party's candidate for mayor in the upcoming election.

Vote on Breitman motion: 1 for
12 against

Defeated.

Vote on Barnes motion: 12 for
1 against

Carried.

Motion by Barnes: To refer to the Secretariat assigning a reporter from the Political Committee to present to the Detroit leadership the broader issues in this case discussed in the Political Committee.

Carried unanimously.

[Hawkins and Reid assigned]

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Agreed: To circulate to the National Committee the report of the Control Commission as soon as it can be finished.

April 28, 1977

AL DUNCAN

(Reid invited for this point)

Reid reported on new incident involving Al Duncan. (See attached letter from Pat Wright.)

Motion: To assign Hawkins to meet with comrades involved and if facts are as indicated, to ask Al Duncan to resign from the party.

Discussion

Carried.

May 13, 1977

AL DUNCAN

(Reid invited for this point.)

Hawkins reported on Al Duncan's resignation from the party. (See attached.)

Discussion

New York, N.Y.
April 26, 1977

Political Committee
Socialist Workers Party
14 Charles Lane
NYC 10014

Dear Comrades,

On the weekend of the NOW conference in Detroit, April 22-24, I stayed at Gloria Swartz's home. (A Black woman comrade in one of the Detroit branches) On Sunday morning, April 24, I witnessed an act of violence against Gloria by another comrade, Al Duncan.

It happened about 7:00 am, when Gloria came home, and Al had been waiting for her there. He was extremely upset that she had come in at that hour, and proceeded to yell, curse, and push her around the house. He pushed and chased her from the living room to the dining room and then to the kitchen, where he shoved her against the refrigerator, and again against the wall. During this time he was calling her names such as "bitch," "mother-fucker," and accusing her of so called acts of adultery. When he first started pushing her, I called out to him to stop, but he told me to mind my own business. I told him this was my business because he had no right to treat another comrade that way. He continued to push and shove her around, and when I told him to get himself together he said "I'm always together." Al continued to curse and shout at Gloria about where she had been, and she pleadingly asked him to calm down so they could discuss it.

For a short while (5 minutes or so) he did calm down, and when I asked him if he realized what he had done he told me "he didn't give a fuck" and that I could "go ahead and press charges" against him. He even began to yell and swing his arms at me as if he wanted to strike me.

Things calmed down again, and I tried to talk to him about why he was wrong. He didn't seem to think so and responded, that he was always the blame. He then began to yell again, telling me to take Gloria with me because he would "kill the bitch." He also made this last statement earlier. We ended the conversation shortly and he quieted down. I had to leave for the convention, and Al was still there. But Gloria tells me there were no other incidents after I left. She says also that he apologized and admitted he was wrong.

Although Gloria was not injured, she was very shook up, and I felt this should be reported, and action taken as soon as possible. Gloria also told me the next day over the phone that there have been worse incidents that have not been reported. (This was her decision not to do so) I feel very strongly that

this cannot be tolerated, and that although Al has agreed to change, Gloria says, it will not happen while he continues to be a member of the SWP, in my opinion.

Gloria tells me this was a small incident compared to others, but I do not feel we can measure physical violence within the movement, letting some go by, and others not.

I feel I should also report that some comrades have mentioned to me that one incident of violence in New Orleans between a white and Black comrade, caused the attacker to be asked to resign. But here an incident between a Black and another Black comrade does not get asked to resign. I think this has to be explained.

I recommend a discussion with Gloria and Al. If Gloria does not want to press charges against Al, I feel that I should. I think Al should be asked to resign from the party until he and the party think he has solved his problem. I also think he should be encouraged to continue to work with the SWP. I'm hoping that his political expertise will enable him to understand this move and force him to more adequately grapple with his problem.

I think, finally, that if something is not done soon about this situation, it will set a bad example for the party as a whole.

Comradely,

s/Pat Wright

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May 5, 1977

Political Committee
14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y.

Dear Comrades,

In view of repeated physical attacks on another comrade by me, I ask to be released from membership in the party. I am fully aware that violence as a means of solving personal differences is incompatible with membership in the party.

I still support and agree with the program of the party, and will therefore do all that I can to accomplish its stated goal. If I can successfully resolve my current difficulties, then I will request that I be readmitted to the party based on previous work and agreement with the party's program.

In Struggle,

s/ Al

cc: Mac Warren