

P.O. Box 471 Cooper Station
New York, N.Y. 10003
December 9, 1976

TO ALL ORGANIZERS AND ANTIRACIST WORK DIRECTORS

Dear Comrades,

A proposal calling for March 25-26 actions against U.S. support to the racist regimes in southern Africa was passed by the third national conference of NSCAR. We want to actively build these protests as part of the national campaign we launched this fall against U.S. complicity with the southern African regimes. It will be important to begin thinking out a list of endorsers for March 25-26 so they can be approached as soon as possible. Helping NSCAR obtain these endorsements will be the most important thing we can do between now and the YSA convention to broaden out the action.

A number of new materials to build these actions will be available from NSCAR at their table at the upcoming YSA convention. A new button and pamphlet on southern Africa and a new fact sheet on the U.S. role in southern Africa are some of the items that will be available. We should encourage NSCAR chapters to order these materials so they can be prepared to begin building the actions as soon as campuses re-open this winter.

Improving the financial situation of the NSCAR national office will be very important in seeing this campaign through. Two substantial pledges have already come in to defer the cost of the new pamphlet and the proposed tour of Tsietsi Mashinini, a leader of the Student Representative Council in Soweto. Payments on back debts by SCAR chapters across the country will be an important part of the spring operating budget of NSCAR.

Attached is a report by Malik Miah of the Socialist Workers party national office on the third national conference of NSCAR and the tasks of the SWP and YSA in helping to win support for the March 25-26 actions.

There will be a report and resolution on southern Africa at the YSA convention where we will have a discussion about building the March 25-26 actions.

Comradely,

Cathy Sedwick

Cathy Sedwick
YSA Antiracist Work Director

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.

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, 60 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.

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.