

14 Charles Lane  
New York, N.Y. 10014  
March 26, 1971

TO SWP ORGANIZERS, NCers, BLACK AND THIRD WORLD DIRECTORS

Dear Comrades,

The attached report on Black antiwar work by Clifton DeBerry should be shared with the comrades active in antiwar and Black work.

Comradely,

*Joel Britton*

Joel Britton  
National Office

REPORT ON BLACK TASK FORCE AND THIRD WORLD  
PARTICIPATION IN SMC WASHINGTON D.C. CONFERENCE

by Clifton DeBerry

At the N.P.A.C. Conference held in December, 1970 in Chicago, Illinois, two Black comrades helped set up the Black Task Force to build the N.P.A.C. Conference. A list of Black organizations was compiled, about 50 altogether, including the NAACP, Urban League, SCLC, campus organizations, Democratic Party clubs, etc.

We called or visited these organizations, explaining that we were the Black Task Force against the war, the need to support the Black GIs, etc. All organizations indicated support for the Black Task Force and agreed on the need for opposition to the war in Vietnam. Some asked for leaflets, others said they would attend the N.P.A.C. Conference.

We got entry into a meeting of Black news media people which meets every week at Lake Meadows. We were promised coverage at the Conference.

We got entry into a meeting of Black union officials who meet once a week at the Packinghouse Workers Hall. We got entry into a Black community council which owns a night club in the Black community. They said they would be willing to give fund raising affairs.

The lessons drawn from this experience were:

- 1) There is a growing opposition to the war in Vietnam in the Black community.
- 2) There are increasing opportunities for building a Black segment of the antiwar movement.

Riverside, California's Black Moratorium and the coalition in Detroit, Michigan, are further examples of this potential. The endorsement of NAACP and SCLC to the April antiwar actions is a sign that the most conservative sections of the Black community can be brought into open opposition to the war.

The SMC Conference in Washington, D.C., February 19 to 21, 1971, is the best example of the potential for bringing more Blacks into opposition to the war in Vietnam.

We began the work two weeks prior to the SMC Conference, but accelerated it the week of the Conference. The results were as follows:

Several hundred Black people attended one or another session of the Conference. There were 90 participants in the Third World Workshop, predominantly Black, with a few Chicanos, Puerto Ricans and Native-Americans.

Several participants were from the District of Columbia: they included representatives of Pan-Africanist organizations, community organizations, poverty programs, and the President of the Student Association at Howard University. Some were just D.C. residents.

Prior to the Conference contact was made with the Student Black United Front -- who came up to the SMC office to discuss the war and the Conference. They took 1500 leaflets, a stack of new Student Mobilizers and a stack of the High School Rights issue of the Mobilizer to distribute. They indicated their plan to hold a meeting to get all of the Black students to endorse the April 2 to 4 actions and the April 24 demonstrations. Some attended the Third World Workshop.

A Black militant working in the SMC office is from the Angela Davis Defense Committee. He was helpful in making contact with the Black Student United Front and presented the Third World Task Force proposal to the workshop.

At the Third World Workshop, independents played an active role in arguing against the CP line of opposing the April 24 action and opposing Black and Brown people organizing their own antiwar formations.

The Chicano proposal was made and passed without any hassle. The Third World Task Force proposal was presented and was being discussed when the CP decided that instead of a separate proposal their proposal would be an amendment to the Third World Task Force's proposal. A motion was made and passed by an overwhelming majority to split the two proposals. The Third World Task Force proposal was passed by a very decisive majority.

The CPers tried again to put forward their proposal as an amendment. A Black retired army officer summed up the proposal this way: "I am glad that the proposals were split because they are different. The Third World Task Force is for action. The second proposal was rhetoric." When the motion was made to adopt the CP proposal it was defeated almost unanimously.

People from the D.C. area met after the workshop to set a meeting date to work out their participation.

The attendance of Blacks at this SMC convention is the largest of any antiwar conference. For the first time there were many representatives and individuals attending who are indigenous to the area in which the conference was being held.

The response of the Black media people in D.C. was very similar to the response in the Chicago area -- friendly and helpful.

We were able to get some coverage for the conference through the Black radio stations. Two stations gave one minute spot announcements plus discussions with Andrew Pulley and Herman Fagg.

If the more conservative organizations in the Black community such as SCLC and NAACP are being forced to move on the war question, then the radicalism and the pressures in the Black community are marking the possible eve of a new stage in the Black liberation struggle.

This means that there are new openings in the Black community for the antiwar movement. Through the Third World Task Force or the Black Moratoriums we can go to every kind of organization in the Black communities -- student groups, community organizations, unions, Black news media, churches, etc. We can bring more Black forces into the antiwar movement -- break the isolation of Blacks from the living movement which is imposed on them by the Black ultralefts and the Black opportunists.

Our Black comrades can actively intervene in this process, calling on Black organizations to endorse and build the April actions and support the Black GIs in their struggle against the war and the racist U.S. army. It will give our comrades an opportunity to counterpose independent mass actions to the do-nothing rhetoric of ultralefts and opportunists in the Black movement.

It will expose young Black militants in large numbers to our strategy for mass action against the war.

What is necessary is for the comrades to grasp the significance of the changing attitudes in the Black community and move immediately to take maximum advantage of the ripe situation. The key tasks are to build the King Memorial actions April 2-4 and to build the largest possible Black contingents in the April 24 marches in Washington and San Francisco.

The local Peace Action Coalitions, SMCs and Task Forces oriented toward mobilizing Black people in these actions should keep the National Third World Task Force in Washington informed. Their address is 1029 Vermont Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20002.