

POLITICAL BUREAU MINUTES.....5 December 1966

Present: Full: Henry, Nelson, Robertson, Stoute, Turner      Alts: Glenn, Harper  
Other: Gordis  
Absent:      Alts: Gaillard, Janacek (exc.)      Staff: Martin

Meeting began at 9:00 p.m.

- Agenda:
1. Minutes
  2. General Information
  3. Personnel
  4. Organization
  5. Publications
  6. Univ. of Calif. Student Strike
  7. Beating by Healy
  8. SDS

1. Minutes:

Motion: To adopt minutes of 10, 17, 24 and 31 October with the clarification below. Passed

Clarification: In meeting of 17 Oct. we voted 3 motions, all intended to be counter-motions, and 2 received more "yes" votes than "no"; the motion receiving the greater number of "yes" votes passed.

2. General Information: (Heavy volume of correspondence received since last PB minutes.)

- a. Europe: 2 letters received from Rose, 1 from Victor. V.O. translates and circulates much material from SPARTACIST and ESPARTACO. Healy approached V.O. salesman in Paris and out of the blue told him if V.O. continued to talk with Spartacist, Healy would stop talking with V.O.--shows Healy is obsessional in regards to Spartacist. V.O. is planning to print our Negro document; we will request them to wait until revisions are completed. Rose is expecting to see 2 others soon. Victor is writing article for us on recent elections in Germany.
- b. Wohlforth: Wohlforthites at last session of their class carried out general exclusion of 8 Spartacist members--very interesting in view of their having been specifically instructed by the IC to recruit Spartacist members. They cannot endure facing our questions. Also shows which of 2 groups is in the political offensive.
- c. Letter from Malcolm Bruce: Founding leader of the Canadian CP, later became a Trotskyist, and is now a sympathizer of our position, a famous figure of the class struggle in Canada. He is now over 90 and has recently had his leg amputated after gangrene set in from bed sores. Yet he remains as mentally alert and committed to the revolution as ever. Letter expresses regret over failure of Spartacist-ACFI unity.
- d. Draperites: appear to be planning a new publication patterned somewhat after SPARTACIST.
- e. FREEDOM SOCIALIST #2, organ of the Seattle FSP, carries a good report of the Spartacist Founding Conference.
- f. Anti-SANE picket. N.Y. Spartacist is sponsoring an anti-SANE picket line Thurs. at SANE mass rally at Madison Sq. Garden. Theme of SANE rally is "America calling, Mr. President."
- g. Kennedy Assassination: In response to comrade Glenn's question as to whether Spartacist had a line on who killed Kennedy, an REB poll taken at the time showed majority of members felt Oswald killed Kennedy. However, this was a merely informational poll, not a vote, and we have no particular line on this.

- h. Welfare: ACFI has split from the Militant Caucus and is forming a caucus of their own. In programmatic statement they are secretly circulating, they make no attempt to justify formation of a new caucus, and hardly differentiate themselves from the present union leadership (which they criticize merely for being "pragmatic").
- i. Exchange of correspondence between Lou of Phila. and Wohlforth read in which Wohlforth mentions some of his work in NY and states they are planning a Founding Conference shortly.

### 3. Personnel:

- a. Houston: Applications received from Leslie and Margaret K., endorsed by Ramon and Clara.

Motion: To accept Leslie and Margaret K. as candidate members. Passed

- b. N.O.: Comrade Gordis is now available for N.O. work.

Motion: To reappoint Comrade Gordis to N.O. and editorial staff. Passed

### 4. Organization:

- a. National Office: We have secured a 18' by 20' office which is to be partitioned into 2 rooms, for \$95 monthly incl. utilities, at 260 West Bwdy. (near Canal St.) We have night access and use of freight elevator. Will move Monday. (NOTE: This is not a public headquarters; the address should not be made casually available to non-members. All political mail should go to the P.O. box including that formerly sent to Robertson at 195.
- b. Baltimore: Bob K. has paid the settlement on his back dues.

Internal discussion, both written and oral, within all bodies of the SL is regulated by the C.C. The Balt. O.C. has deliberately and wantonly defied this as a wilful provocation against the cohesion of the organization and the authority of the central leadership.

At the end of November our former Downtown Organizer, Shelly, received a phone call saying Baltimore O.C. wanted to come up the following Saturday to meet with members of the Uptown and Downtown Locals to reply to the "false information circulated by the PB" about them and to report on the activities of the Baltimore O.C. This was an attempt to go over the heads of the existing National and New York district organizations. Baltimore comrades are functioning now as a fully-articulated faction which, however, has never presented any political statement to the organization as to where they stand and the political basis of their faction. Political responsibility demands that before people unleash factional struggle they must define where they stand. Balt. has attempted to open multi-local oral discussion despite the fact that there has been no evident reason nor authorization to open it up. On written discussion our general current attitude is that as long as the writers assist in its production, we will circulate material of reasonable length. We have a tighter attitude toward oral discussion (in wider cases than individual locals). If oral discussion is not to lead to a decision the only other purpose is preparation of a split. After getting caught in trying to organize what was in effect an East Coast factional conference from below, Baltimore tried to cover selves by sending formal written notes.

The Baltimore comrades have sent out a circular (attached) to the membership at large (under cover of the title "To Central Committee members and alternates", while actually only one copy was sent to N.Y. (necessitating duplication of this material in the Center so that the C.C. can see it). The material being circulated is inaccurate, dishonest, and deliberately

provocative, e.g. compare what they "quote" as "Policy Point" in PB minutes of 26 Sept. re return of Sherwood material with actual Policy Point. Material in Circular consists only of localist and terribly subjective carping to a degree that the proportions of reality have been qualitatively altered; e.g., "Motion by Kaufman: ...The apparent motivation behind these slanders [by the P.B. of Baltimore] is to lower respect for Comd. Bob Sherwood, Baltimore Spartacist Chairman, who we now commend for his continued exemplary contributions and leadership, especially for his herculean efforts in the recent electoral campaign.

Passed unanimously (sic)"

Letters from Lou D. and Joe V. read (attached). Phone call from Hainline reported; he finds from comparing Baltimore claims with the record that they are without merit. Excerpt from B.A. minutes read. Settle, who has visited Chicago, has wired Baltimore and told them to stop using his name and not to split.

Sherwood and Kaufman feel they are victims, but in actuality the N.O. has not yet done a single thing about the Baltimore situation due to the press of other work, especially as there is no political basis to the goings-on there. But the situation has become serious. Baltimore is attempting to rip up an orderly discussion process and wilfully denying the existence of a national leadership. A number of PB members should go down to Baltimore on 17 Dec., writing the O.C. in advance to arrange meeting. This will be an extreme attempt to clarify the dispute and arrive at a satisfactory basis for continued functioning. The provocative procedures they have been carrying out will have to cease; if not, charges will be brought for the violations.

Disc: Stoute, Turner, Henry, Nelson, Glenn, Robertson

Motion: We note that the attempt to meet with the NYC membership and this latest mimeo'd circular of documents constitute wilful violations of our democratic-centralist procedure, and by written admission are deliberate provocations, challenging the authority of the C.C. not only to regulate discussion but to run the organization. A meeting should be arranged as soon as possible between a strong PB delegation and the Baltimore O.C., in Baltimore, at which last effort short of charges will be made to bring compliance with the procedures of the organization. Failing that, charges are to be instituted. Lou D. will be invited.

Disc: Nelson, Henry, Robertson

Passed unanimously

#### 5. Publications:

a. ESPARTACO #2. Now ready.

b. Critique of SPARTACIST #8: Issue as a whole quite well received. Most criticism over article on Maoism. Hainlines' comments read. Letter from Cunningham, Iowa Maoist, read, praising article as best Trotskyist effort to date(!). C.Kinder comment read. Turner has prepared written criticism of Maoism article and report on these (along lines of his position in China discussion prior to article's being written).

Disc: Nelson, Robertson, Turner

Motion: To continue discussion at next meeting, and to table rest of meeting except for announcements (next meeting to be held at Comrade Stoute's).

Passed

Announcements

- 5c. SPARTACIST #9. 8 page issue planned, partially for financial reasons and also 16 pg. issue would have been badly balanced.
6. Berkeley Student Strike. Strike exceedingly serious and comes at bad time. We have entre, due to arrest of non-student C.Kinder shortly before strike. Special issue of SPARTACIST WEST planned. Geoff's article on last student strike reprinted as pamphlet and distributed.
7. Healy gangsterism: Robertson proposed N.O. write an Open Letter in SPARTACIST #9 to the SLL, taking out the SWP in passing (in response to SWP's letter asking us to dissociate ourselves from Healy's use of violence within working-class movement).
8. Tripartite proposal (attached)(Confidential). FSP of Washington State has proposed a 3-part committee of them, us, and Foxites to plan national conference. We will discuss at later PB meeting.
9. SDS: We have as yet made no literary impact despite opportunity. B.A. mailing special issue of SW to SDS addresses.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 p.m.