

POLITICAL BUREAU MINUTES.....21 May 1967

Present: Full: Robertson, Turner, Nelson Alts: Harper, Janacek, Glenn
Absent: Full: Henry(exc.), Stoute(exc.) Alt: Gaillard(l.o.a) Staff: Gordis(exc.)

Meeting convened at 8:40 p.m.

- Agenda:
1. Minutes
 2. General Information
 3. Organization and Personnel
 4. Anti-War
 5. International
 6. SDS National Conference
 7. Lord Russell Tribunal

1. Minutes: Minutes of 26 Dec. and 2 Jan. in draft; minutes of 23 Jan. partly stencilled; minutes of 8 May drafted.

2. General Information:

- a. Malcolm Bruce: Died at 87. Comrade Bruce was a leading founding member of the Canadian CP, spent 5 years in Calif. penitentiary for organizing, and was then deported from the U.S. He was exceedingly well known in Canada as a trade union organizer and revolutionist. He broke from the Stalinist movement over the No-Strike policy during World War II. In 1963 he broke from the Pabloists and oriented towards us and the Wohlforthites, pressing for unity. Of all tendencies he was probably closest to us at the time of his death. He was a remarkable man, even in advanced old age, focusing his whole attention not on his own personal suffering or past glories but on the present problems of the revolutionary movement. A memorial meeting was held in Vancouver; such was his role in the class struggle that even the CP was forced to participate.
- b. New Zealand: Their broad publication Dispute has reprinted the lead article in SPARTACIST #9, "Facing 1967."
- c. ACFI: Healy is organizing as large an international youth conference as he can in the late summer, and ACFI is sending 15--all going by air and paying their own expenses at a total cost of approximately \$4,500. In addition, ACFI members' dues are being increased. The size of their delegation is to impress Healy, and to help Healy impress others. For the kind of organization ACFI is building and their method of building their cadre, bringing these people close to the "great leader" is probably a smart move. They have a perspective for the coming year, of doubling their NY size and building to 3 strong locals nationally (NYC, Minn. and B.A.). Jeff Goldstein has been sent to San Francisco to help build a Bay Area organization for them. In elections for local union delegates at Harper's welfare center, their man did not vote for our candidate while ours voted for theirs. In other words, they preferred to support candidates who had given some measure of support to the prevailing TU bureaucracy rather than vote for that candidate whose programmatic positions most closely paralleled their own! Under reverse conditions, Healy would have charged a rotten bloc.
- d. Houston: The Houston cops have savagely shot up Black college students in Houston whom they felt were "causing trouble." The cops charged into the dormitories; there was some shooting, and one cop was killed. They then fired 2000 bullets into the dormitory, invaded it, smashed everything, and arrested and beat hundreds of students. John S. of Austin was phoned and

asked to contact Houston comrades, urging them to prepare a strong statement in our name and calling for demonstrations and protests by existing organizations or a special united front. A black militant was recently shot to death by cops in the streets of Jackson, Miss., during a similar clash.

- e. Socialist Current: Latest letter read. They acknowledge our acceptance of their proposals for fraternal relations.

3. Organization and Personnel :

a. Baltimore:

Motion: To expel Sherwood and Kaufman for the reasons set forth in the N.O. letter suspending them, and to drop from membership (for non-payment of dues and failing to align themselves when requested with the national organization), Joe C., George L., Paul W., and Jaime S.

Passed unanimously

Motion: That our general line towards "The Workers Party of Maryland" be to strenuously avoid polemicizing with them and to avoid even the simple recognition of the existence of their group.

Marcus and Lawrence are brain-trusting the WPM. Sherwood-Kaufman-Marcus-Lawrence are an inherently unstable grouping--4 quivering, ultra-sensitive egos. There is considerable evidence that they are trying to engage us in polemic. They can hold together only by centering around a fight with some external enemy, like us. We shouldn't give battle or afford them any recognition, but rather let them stew in their own juices and disintegrate. They don't even present themselves as a Trotskyist organization. We have refused their request for a bundle order in view of their deliberate political smearing of our name; however, in the interests of workers democracy, we will honor requests for individual subscriptions.

Vote on motion.

Passed unanimously

- b. New Orleans: Mark is leaving in early June. South continues to be hot, and situation boiling in Mississippi. Jan writes us, begging for a Black comrade to be sent. We have obtained extensive contact list in Atlanta, Ga., need someone to visit Atlanta, New Orleans, and Miss. We will press Stoute to make trip, could furnish bus fare and \$10 weekly; if possible she should leave in a week. In New Orleans we now have 5 comrades, 2 of whom are leaving. We must reinforce the area which is of key importance; otherwise the comrades there could be demoralized despite the hard, active work they have been carrying on. It is not presently feasible to send Austin comrades. S. of N.Y. is on special assignment, and Rose is in Europe. We must shake someone out from the West Coast and/or New York and send them to New Orleans.

Motion: To commend the New Orleans Local for their work, particularly running a book service and sending out a literature list, mailed throughout the South, and for preparing an excellent statement, "The Left and Revolution", for SSOC. The New Orleans comrades are acting like a serious regional bureau.

Passed

Motion: We should encourage Stoute very strongly to spend a couple of months in New Orleans, and try hard to secure another comrade either from the West Coast and/or NYC to send South. Passed

- c. Western Educational Conference: The main question at this point is when it will be held. Joanne raised question of postponement due to SDS Conference. We urged proceeding for June Conference. We then received copy of Seattle letter suggesting postponement till fall.

Motion: That the comrades in Seattle and the Western Regional Bureau negotiate, by phone if necessary, and promptly arrive at a concrete decision, one way or the other, as to when the Conference is to be held.

Passed

- d. Seattle: Comrades are planning a CAMPUS SPARTACIST.

Motion: To write them encouragingly and inform them of the PB conditions for local publications. Passed

The PB has established a series of criteria for local and regional publications in order that they not conflict with our broader publication. Western Regional Bureau should assist Seattle comrades on points of political question, i.e., take over PB responsibility to review copy.

- e. Misc: We have received a \$100 windfall from the Kinders, enough to permit us to proceed with placing the order for the Graphotype. Acquisition of this piece of equipment will result in a great savings in labor, time and money to the organization, and raises other possibilities such as running off the Bay Area mailing plates. Comrades in the main are continuing to carry out their financial responsibilities to the organization the Downtown NYC Local is \$300 in arrears. Our formal national membership, which due to certain technical necessities is somewhat less than our effective membership, is as follows:

East Coast (New York, Hartford, Ithaca, Phila., & D.C.) - 34
 South (New Orleans, Austin, and Houston) - 12
 Midwest (Chicago, Iowa, Detroit, Columbus, Youngstown) - 7
 West Coast (B.A., L.A., Seattle, Eureka) - 20 Other - 2
 Total - 75

4. Anti-War:

- a. "Anti-War Friday": At the Student Mobilization Conference in Chicago our comrades functioned well, sold lots of literature, collected 20 names and got out a leaflet "For An Anti-War Friday". However, there was little reaction one way or the other to our proposal, and our comrades were not able to get the floor. Our B.A. comrades felt the line was premature and were not too enthusiastic, although there may be some misunderstanding as to what the proposal really is. This raises the question as to whether or not we should go ahead and spend \$75 for a quarter-page ad in the National Guardian at this time.

Disc: Janacek, Nelson, Glenn, Harper, Turner, Nelson, Robertson, Janacek, Robertson, Glenn, Nelson

Motion: That Robertson and Harper work up draft copy for the ad and bring it back to the next PB meeting. Passed

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- b. Trade Union SANE (TUSANE): A TUSANE chapter has just been set up in B.A. Several comrades attended the first meeting, which immediately dissolved into factions, many coming out for withdrawal of U.S. troops. This brings the group into conflict with national and Northern Calif. SANE. Several TUSANE chapters are presently in opposition. White called to see whether N.O. had any objection to B.A. comrades pressing our line in SANE, in view of our picket of SANE here. We urged B.A. to proceed. Our trade union comrades in the area have found a fruitful arena for struggle for our line and in which to broaden our base.

5. International:

- a. European Trip: Gordis had opportunity for free trip to Europe for 2 wks. First report received today; failed to make contact with Rose who is presently visiting Spain; however, did make contact with V.O. people who have been most comradely and helpful. Trip falls at opportune time, when Rose and V.O. comrade are planning trip to London for talks with S.C. in approx. 10 days; now Gordis will also be able to be present. N.O. prepared memo on Rhodesian line; another memo offering our criticisms of V.O.'s method of work is planned but not yet prepared. Gordis will also contact Irish Workers Group, left Pabloites ("Militant"), and Red Flag people while in England.
- b. Memo on S.C.'s British Troops to Rhodesia line (attached): Copy also sent to New Zealand. Main point--in making demands upon the bourgeois state must keep in mind what will be the effect if the demand is met, i.e., you get what you asked. It must be kept in mind that the main swing of the bourgeois sword is against the Left. A classic example is the question of civil rights for fascists. If we called upon the state to suppress civil rights of fascists, it would be us, not the fascists, who would be deprived of civil rights once the precedent were set. Instead we call for the mobilization of the masses to suppress the fascists, but not for state suppression. When the state is ours, then we will pass laws against fascists and racists, because the enforcement will be up to our class. When making demands of the bourgeois state in order to expose it, the first question to raise is if the demand is granted do we really want it, does it lead to the forward motion of the masses? There is no qualitative difference between calling for British troops to Rhodesia and calling for federal troops to the South in the U.S. In either case, though they might restore bourgeois "law and order" they would also suppress any revolutionary motion of the masses. It is proper to raise demands on the Labour Party, as a supposed political organization of the working class, that cannot be raised on the Labour government, an agent of imperialism.

Motion: To adopt the memorandum.

Passed unanimously

6. SDS National Conference: One week, in late June, at Antioch, Ohio. Hainline has written a circular letter to comrades who might attend.

Motion: (1) that we seek to secure maximum attendance at the Conference, and in this connection those comrades involved who have not yet done so should immediately take out SDS membership;

(2) That we prepare several "position papers" for introduction to the Conference, including the following: (a) our line on "We Won't Go," S2 deferments, the draft and military service; (b) necessity of the anti-war movement basing itself on class struggle, advancing the slogan for a

one-day political strike against the war; (c) proposed orientation for SDS embodying two qualities, that the work of SDS embody the thought and orientation of a Marxist youth organization and seek in a reciprocal way to be the student-youth arm of the workers class struggle, involved both in the mass movement, over strikes, the Negro struggle, etc., and at the same time carrying into the petty-bourgeois youth milieu the programmatic needs of the working people.

Disc: Nelson, Glenn, Robertson, Nelson, Turner, Robertson

Passed

Comrade Ross has been in contact with Robert Speck and Tom Condit (2 of 17 leading members of SDS who have set up a faction and claim 1000 SDS members support them; yet at the same time being eager for our support). They are running Speck for president as Condit has a personally unsavory reputation, as well as being a well-known third camper; they are planning a split from SDS sooner or later. On the other hand, we are trying to get into SDS, which is presently non-exclusionary. About the worst thing we could do is identify ourselves with a dubious faction that is planning a split. However, we are willing to discuss with Speck and Condit, and propose our participants be Ross, Tishman and Robertson.

Motion: That prior to the SDS Convention we will not give support to any slate unless the PB finds that slate to be qualitatively superior to any other slate. Disc: Janacek

Passed

Comrade Rader has proposed a post-SDS Educational Conference in Chicago.

Motion: That we encourage the proposal of the Chicago O.C. for a Spartacist post-SDS Educational Conference, and that if this proves practical we will undertake to have at least one member of the PB participate.

Passed

6. Lord Russell Tribunal: The tribunal did a good job of exposing some of the grossest atrocities of the Americans in Viet Nam. However, we cannot place political confidence in the Tribunal which represents a fusion of radical bourgeois opinion of some European intellectuals who would immediately sell out should any class questions arise. Disc: Nelson, Turner

Draft Statement by Turner: In attempting to place U.S. capitalism on the dock before world opinion for its imperialist assault on the Vietnamese revolution, the Tribunal has merited the honor of attacks by the spokesmen for U.S. capitalism and its lackeys in other countries. The SL recognizes that only the action of the international working class, and, in particular, the U.S. working class, and not classless appeals on a national basis, can destroy U.S. capitalism, the main pillar of world imperialism and the threat to mankind's future.

Motion: To adopt the line of Turner's draft and request that he expand it.

Passed

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 p.m.