

Present: Full: Stoute, Robertson, Turner, Nelson(late), Henry(late)
Alts: Ellens, Janacek Staff: Rogers, Gordon Other: Mark T.
Absent: Alt: Small(l.o.a.) Staff: Cunningham(exc.), Martin
Meeting convened 9:15 p.m.

Special Agenda:

1. 19 June Poor People's March
2. Trade Union
3. French Crisis
4. Press
5. Internal Situation
6. Supplemental General Information and Correspondence

1. 19 June Poor People's March: Several trade unions are sending delegations down to D.C. on 19 June. We should organize some attendance and produce some propaganda intervention; will turn responsibility over to NYC local Executive Committee for draft leaflet, to be written by Mark T. in collaboration with Stoute. This presents an opportunity to tie in our electoral line with economic, rather than purely anti-war, demands. Suggested title: "Don't Beg--Take It!"
2. Trade Union:
 - a. Philadelphia: Unfortunate experience indicates way not to do trade union work. Our comrades made an excellent attempt to capitalize on a hot situation where we have a comrade working, in a large electrical plant with a rotten union. Our comrades drew up and passed out two leaflets, and also got some radical SDSers from around campus involved in helping with this work. Decision to intervene in this plant was dramatically vindicated when, a few days afterwards, one department went on sit-down strike. But: within 2-3 days the company and union got together and tracked down our comrade, threatened him with loss of his job. This was facilitated in large part by the information in the leaflets, which was specific in regard to only one department in the plant, enabling the company and union to pinpoint where our comrade works. The N.O. was not informed in advance of the action and the situation, or it would have been able to advise our comrades to think in terms not only of what they were going to do but also of what the company and the union were going to do about us. Disc: Ellens
 - b. Texas: Texas State SL Conference was held during the visit of Comrades Henry and Martin; John S. (Austin) and Ramon (Houston) tape-recorded reports on their situations and activities for the information of the N.O. The Austin Labor Committee has passed out a leaflet to telephone strikers, made contact with a shop steward. Austin SDS is dominated by Maoists, who refused to have anything to do with the Labor Committee's actions in solidarity with the communication workers' strike. Austin comrades are considering propagandistic intervention into a service union which is largely black and Mexican-American; also have contact with a black cab driver. The Houston Labor Committee has successfully organized the cafeteria workers on a campus where we have contacts and is considering a continuation of work along these lines on other campuses.

Both groups have made efforts to involve SDSers, campus radicals and other individuals in this work and have argued in their SDS chapters for a pro-working-class orientation.

Disc: Henry

- c. Kingsbridge SSEU Job Action: Kingsbridge Welfare Center has the highest case load in the city and has had four weeks of client demonstrations. Kingsbridge leadership consulted the union-wide leadership in planning a one-day work action, ostensibly a wildcat. This was the first action since the defeat in the last strike. A meeting of the Kingsbridge delegates and Ronnie Roberts (ACFIite and grievance chairman) and the union leadership was held to work out the details. Local 371 (representing supervisors) tried hard to get out of having to support the action, and the clerks' union pulled out. On the morning of the action, Roberts turned up with a leaflet ("All out for one-day work action") attacking the Militant Caucus and the union leadership. The action was quite successful--only 21 of 270 caseworkers came to work that day; a majority of the supervisors and even some clerks also stayed out. The Kingsbridge delegates have proposed a motion to censure Roberts for public violation of a secret work action; this is a genuine scandal, of the sort that Healy always likes to push his opponents into and then denounce them for.

Disc: Nelson, Robertson

- d. Midwest Trip: Comrades Turner and Nelson spend a weekend in discussion with a trade unionist of 20 years standing who had applied for membership. His local was key in a recent wildcat strike. The Iowa City comrades have done an excellent job in working with him. Turner and Nelson made it clear to him that we are not trade union experts; we can provide him with a broader view and some historical knowledge and insights but do not have "all the answers", seeking to give him a modest and accurate impression of what he is joining. The difficulties of functioning in isolation were discussed. The comrade is very serious and thoughtful and seemed to understand the limitations of our size and experience and what help and advice we will be able to give him. He had no previous history in the radical movement and his ideas are mostly the result of his own thinking--he arrived at ideas which he thought were only his own and then found that the SL's understanding meshed with his. Disc: Mark T., Turner, Nelson, Robertson, Henry, Janacek, Turner, Nelson, Mark T., Robertson His membership application is strongly endorsed by Iowa City comrades and by Nelson and Turner.

Motion: To accept Bill O'C. as a candidate member.

Passed

Disc: Turner, Nelson, Mark T., Robertson

Motion: The PB agrees to the transfer of personnel from Iowa to Detroit provided they can spend 2-4 weeks in NYC in transit.

Disc: Turner, Ellens, Stoute, Nelson

Passed

3. French Crisis: Even the SWP's propaganda and analysis regarding France looks pretty good, as the situation has gone so far. Under pressure of these events, the SWP calls for a revolutionary party, makes the obvious demands. They enormously exaggerate, however, the role of the students, assigning them the key role in

carrying through the revolution--poses question of what they mean by vanguard party. The students played the role of igniting the situation. We have heard from Pabloist and Healyite sources that: (1) a unity-of-action pact has been made, under the pressure of the events, between the Pabloist adult and youth sections (PCI, JCR) and Voix Ouvriere, with the Healyites staying out; (2) Pierre Frank in the Militant has called for "reunification" of the French Trotskyist groups; (3) the 15 May issue of VO said that the working class was "demoralized", for which outstanding failure of analysis they were attacked--after the fact--by the Healyites. We do not consider it likely that VO will capitulate to Pabloism and go along with "unity"; but we fear that VO may exhibit a too-gentlemanly attitude toward the Pabloists, shying away from trying to effect a regroupment along revolutionary lines--i.e., they may see the present attempt at cooperation in action as a non-aggression pact with other members of the so-called "family of Trotskyists". However we certainly do not take Healy's word for anything.

The situation in France has been acute, and can be described as "pre-revolutionary". One should not simply believe the bourgeois press when they say the strike is "over", but evidences are that it is weakening. The iron grip of the CGT may well be turning what was a revolt by the workers into a drive by the left section of the French establishment to administer the bourgeois state, parallel to their betrayals of 1934 and 1936. The working class was extremely combattive during the popular front; this was not crushed finally until the onset of World War II. Even under the worst conditions, the PSOP (centrist grouping) was formed by 20,000 workers and others in 1939. It was dissipated within 18 months, finally by the German occupation of Paris. But the situation now is more hopeful--there is no immediate perspective of having the workers killed off in a war and the Trotskyists are stronger now. At the worst, this is the opening of a new period of militancy by the workers. The key question is whether the hold of the Stalinists can be shattered. The French uprising has gone as far as one can demand of spontaneity. In "Class, Party and Leadership" Trotsky noted that the Spanish workers had actually gone further toward dual power than the Russian workers had--the difference, of course, was the absence of a revolutionary proletarian vanguard party. Disc: Nelson, Turner, Mark T., Ellens, Henry, Janacek, Nelson, Gordon, Robertson, Turner, Ellens

4. Press: Tabled because of illness of SPARTACIST editor.

5. Internal Situation:

a. Espartaco: Espartaco staff has resigned from the organization. The reason given following their visibly growing alienation, differences and disinterest in the SL was that the organization, especially Robertson and the NYC organizer, had demonstrated a light-minded attitude toward security which placed the Espartaco people in jeopardy. PB recommends to NYC local that PB should handle the resignation, as this was the body on which Espartaco people had been functioning. We must defer consideration of the resignation pending investigation of:

(1) report that a member of Espartaco staff took up with a new comrade the opinion that the SL was in the grip of a social-democratic leadership clique, while under party assignment to instruct this new comrade in basic Marxism; (2) report from a member of the Philadelphia O.C. that this member of Espartaco staff and another member of the Minority discussed similar criticisms of the organization with him several months before he became a member. In discussion regarding the resignation, another member of Espartaco staff expressed the opinion that the SL would be willing to collaborate with the cops against them.

- b. Minutes: We need a new arrangement on N.O. work. In the past two weeks we have gotten the files reorganized (a job taking a few hundred man hours by itself), produced the PFP intervention material, gotten out 51 pages of 26 December 1966 minutes which were required for the internal discussion (as they contained the Turner memorandum on China and were stipulated by the Minority as being necessary to get out before mailing the minutes which were already produced), and produced two documents for our SDS National Conference intervention. This has cost us probably about a week on the paper, as it has been SPARTACIST staff overwhelmingly which has done this work. If we are to have an internal discussion the comrades of the Minority are going to have to pull their share.
- c. V.: Our comrade in Germany is not actually a member of the SL but has always received all PB minutes and internal material. As he is a personal and political associate of Espartaco staff we need clarification on where he stands. If he stands ready to respect the confidences of the SL, he should participate completely in the discussion. A problem regarding Der Klassenkampf is that Comrade Syrek has pulled up his stakes in Berkeley and we will need new arrangements for the technical production.

d. Espartaco publication:

Motion: To suspend the Espartaco publication because of (1) lack of staff: (2) problem, also recognized previously by Espartaco, of the drying up of Espartaco's audience due to increasing repressions of Latin American Trotskyists and difficulty of getting our material through at all, as the publication was always geared to the Latin American movement rather than to the Spanish-speaking minorities in this country. Passed

- e. Robertson Presentation: Robertson feels he now can define 4 points which Minority comrades hold in a somewhat overlapping way which will clarify what the Minority stands for and what brings them into opposition. Had intended to write up this presentation as a document for attachment to the minutes but sees no reason why shouldn't present it here so that Minority will know what he has been thinking before these minutes come out. He ascribes to the Minority the following views:

(1) That the SL has basically non-revolutionary origins; that the SWP and other organizations and individuals whose past contributions we recognize were never essentially revolutionary; thus, that the heritage from which we spring is basically flawed and non-revolutionary;

(2) On the organizational question: That the leadership of the SL is bureaucratic and a personal cult and that the organization is shot through with social democrats and social-democratic practices although we give lip service to Bolshevism;

(3) That we should be clandestine in our functioning and that our not functioning in this manner is further evidence of (2) above;

(4) i. That if we are what the Majority says we are, then we are already an embryonic revolutionary party; ii. that therefore we can go direct to the mass; iii. if we can't this is further proof of (2) above.

The difference over Mao is not included in this conception of what defines the Minority, as this is not a living difference today, and is presently important only as past history and the record and as a test of the individuals involved. Disc: Ellens

[11:50 p.m.: Janacek left at this point]

Disc: Mark T., Turner, Nelson, Stoute, Robertson, Ellens, Mark T., Turner, Nelson, Stoute, Gordon

Motion by Robertson: To hold up consideration of the resignation of Espartaco pending inquiry into accusations against Espartaco and Ellens of gross factional improprieties with new members and non-members.

VOTE: For: Full: Robertson, Henry, Turner, Nelson
Consultative: Mark T., Gordon, Rogers
Opposed: Alt: Ellens [will submit statement]
Abstain: Full: Stoute

Motion by Robertson: To leave open to the Minority the option of co-editorship of the minutes if they have a qualified person who can put in the necessary time. Passed unanimously

Motion by Nelson: That Comrade Ellens take immediate steps to make secure PB minutes and pertinent correspondence either by a locked box or by removing such material from her present quarters. Passed unanimously
Disc: Turner, Robertson, Ellens, Robertson

Meeting adjourned 12:50 a.m.