

Present: Full: Robertson, Nelson, Cunningham Alt: Small
 Staff: Rogers, Gordon, Salant
Absent: Full: Henry(exc.) Alt: Seymour
Meeting convened 8:55 p.m.

- Agenda:
1. Minutes
 2. General Information and Correspondence
 3. Personnel and Organization
 4. Trade Union
 5. Woman Questionn
 6. Press
 7. National Conference
 8. SWP

1. Minutes: Two recent sets and two back sets of minutes have been produced. Several other sets have been corrected.

Motion: To accept PB minutes of 23 January 1968, 1 July 1968, 12 February 1969 and 24 February 1969, noting the following correction: In the minutes of 1 July point 3 (g), it was reported that Joel had never met Comrade Tom in January 1968. Comrade Joel notes that he had met him by then, although he hardly knew him. Passed

2. General Information and Correspondence:

- a. UFT: A rather good (pro-strike) account of the recent strike, The Teachers' Strike 1968 by Martin Mayer, is available in paperback for \$1. It complements the good (anti-strike) account in the 17 November 1968 Ramparts.
- b. Guardian: Comrade Libby S. has been featured twice in the Guardian as a leading clean-cut young New Left campus militant.
- c. Hildegarde Swabeck: Died; obituaries appeared in both the Militant and Challenge. The latter makes no bones about her Trotskyist past but made clear they had never taken her into PL.
- d. Labor Committee: Their rationale for Papert's writing for New America was that there was a press blackout on the left on them and they had to get their views around somehow. However, at the recent NYC SDS regional conference we circulated the reprint of the article; they groaned. If they didn't know writing for the SP was unprincipled and were really anxious to get their views heard, how come they didn't circulate the article themselves? This proves they really knew what they were doing and that it was anti-left wing.
- e. G.I. Voice: Has produced two recent leaflets. The most recent involves the 6 April anti-war G.I. action, taking a critical attitude. The "Better Red Than Fred" leaflet, which has received a very favorable response from our comrades in several areas, so infuriated Halstead that he attacked it from the speakers' platform at one recent meeting! We note that the Militant's report of an SWP Plenum makes it clear that soldiers' work is now a primary focus of their work.
- f. "Boutelle letter": The East Village Other of 1 March carried a letter signed "Paul Boutelle" which was virulently anti-Semitic. Robertson phoned the SWP for comment; they denied he had written any such letter. EVO has now printed a retraction and disclaimer by Boutelle. The incident has all the marks of

- a frame-up by some unscrupulous, if inventive, anti-SWPer.
- g. Lutte Ouvriere: 8 January issue article, "Cuba--10 Years of the Revolution", represents a serious capitulation to Pabloism. The article abstractly explains LO's line that Cuba is a capitalist state, but this formal analysis is completely divorced from the rest of the article, which enthuses over the revolution and the leadership glowingly and sets forth Cuba as an inspiration to the underdeveloped world. One gets the impression, if the revolution is capitalist and this is how they describe it, that they are pro-capitalist revolutionaries. There is no hint of the necessity for any kind of struggle in Cuba (against the presumed capitalism, against Castro). It is becoming incumbent upon us to raise publicly our criticisms of LO.
- h. Turner: Is mailing 4 items widely around the country, including to some of our comrades: (1) cover letter to SL membership; (2) letter to Jerry E. and the Ellensites; (3) "groveling" letter to Healy; (4) NYC SL local minutes on London IC Conference. The letter to Healy shows Turner as a destroyed man; he has capitulated on virtually every point. More revealing for us is the letter to the Ellensites. Their attitude toward him is made clear as he pathetically complains they don't even bother to ask for his documents. He also makes the incredibly damaging admission that he knew Ellens' conduct in the SL was flagrantly dishonest. We have reproduced and are circulating this revolting material to the membership.

3. Personnel and Organization:

- a. Austin: Plans an intervention at the SDS National Council meeting scheduled for Austin, 27-29 March. We have shipped 4 cartons of literature to the comrades there, including copies of the Cunningham material on Papert's New America article.
- b. Organizing Committees: This is an official review of the status of the OC's around the country. We note that in order to have been recognized as an OC originally, the minimums are 3 comrades who meet regularly as an OC and meet minimum norms of functioning over a consistent period. Once recognized, if the membership of an OC falls below 3, the PB can at its discretion keep the group as an OC if its functioning continues acceptable. Groups falling below these norms are not OC's; rather, the comrades in the area are individual members-at-large. In addition to other rights, OC's may elect delegates to a National Conference; in our organization m-a-l's do not, as without OC meetings there is no possibility for interchange of views and in general in many organizations m-a-l's have functioned as voting cattle for the leadership, as only the leadership has ready access to them. The following SL groups around the country are already OC's: Texas, Ithaca, Philadelphia, Chicago. (New York, New Orleans and the Bay Area are chartered locals.) However, the 3 people in the Chicago area no longer function collectively at all.

Motion: To recognize that Chicago is no longer an OC, and to recognize Detroit as an OC since it has 3 comrades who have now begun to hold OC meetings and have met other minimum norms of activity, contact, sustaining pledge, etc. Passed

c. Salant: Is now functioning as a part-time staff member.

Motion: To add this comrade to staff. Passed

d. Reuben: We note that this otherwise excellent comrade has made several security violations of others, including the threat to the maintenance of an N.O. functionary and an incident which has caused the Detroit comrades to make formal protest, and has sometimes shown bad tactical judgment elsewhere.

e. Henry: Comrade Henry has requested postponement of the consideration of his functioning to next meeting.

f. Gallatin D.: Has paid up his sustaining pledge recently but otherwise has had no contact with the center. Our friends contacted him for G.I. Voice; the NO's urgent circular on the New Orleans situation was written specifically to him and one other comrade; because of his command of Spanish, we sent him the expensive Xerox of the Bolivian manuscript requesting a reply--he has not responded to any of these. He has, however, remained in active contact with the comrades in the Midwest.

g. Joanne S.: Wants a \$200 loan from the League for Mutual Aid. Her financial situation is very insecure, so it would be hard for her to repay it. She has requested that members of the SL furnish the required two guarantors; Kinder will be first signatory. The only way we could ask a comrade here to co-sign would be to guarantee absolutely that the organization will assume responsibility for the debt in case of default.

Disc: Nelson, Cunningham, Gordon

Motion: The PB cannot approve taking this responsibility. Passed

h. South: Our temporary field organizer, having an outside means of support, can do political work full time. The Tallahassee trip was very successful. The New Orleans comrades are feeling cheerful, partly because Ed Clark is reportedly in opposition and on his way out of PL, having joined a small tendency which views the CP as rotten at least since the early 1930's. (Clark is now very cynical however and claims to identify with the old Ruthenberg faction before Lovestone took over!)

i. Wisconsin State Historical Society: Has requested records of the SL including documents, minutes and correspondence, and also Robertson's personal papers from other movements, for their archives. Obviously: (1) we would not now consider this request for our current working, personally confidential or security materials; (2) while Robertson solicits the PB's advice on his own files of pre-SL/RT material, no relevant problems seem raised; (3) after only a short period our mimeographed membership discussion material and bulletins are in the public domain in any case. But these extremes leave a large gray area (particularly centered on back minutes of SL bodies) for which we need criteria as well as an estimation of the value to the movement of the W.S.H.S. offer itself.

Disc: Nelson, Gordon, Cunningham, Salant, Gordon, Cunningham, Nelson, Robertson, Salant, Gordon, Nelson, Cunningham, Robertson, Cunningham, Salant, Gordon, Nelson, Robertson, Salant, Cunningham, Gordon

Motion: To table decision to next meeting. Passed

j. Bay Area: Local minutes of 28 January report lengthy "Discussion of the state of the local". The local appears weak and vulnerable to any disease that comes along. The section of Robertson's letter of 7 March to Rick dealing with the exper-

ience of being involved in the faction fight as active participants has particular application to the Bay Area.

- k. Seattle: Latest letter of 11 March from Rick S. shows a beneficial change of tone. More importantly, however, he makes no reply regarding moving to a functioning local. We have also written Miriam directly asking her about this also, but have heard nothing.
- l. Philadelphia: Letter to us from Lou D. in response to Turner's mailing solidarizes with the Majority.
- m. Bill G.: Has written very good introduction to Marxist Studies #1. He co-signed a leaflet on the Brandeis struggles with a sympathetic YSAer; the political content is good but the leaflet includes a fat plug for the YSA organizationally.

4. Trade Union:

- a. The Beacon: This is an oppositional rank-and-file paper in the NMU. Editorial in first issue raises need for a labor party against the bosses' parties and the Vietnam war, thus making clear that these are not just militant "business unionists". Back page statement, "Why the Beacon", could be interpreted as red-baiting the CP by those who do not know the role of the CP (the wartime no strike pledge) in the union. The Beacon is separate from the Morrissey caucus while still supporting it; this separation is good, as Morrissey is politically qualitatively the same as Curran--the difference is that he is not corrupt. The paper also handled the race question well, not sliding around it. The paper's policy strongly opposes the tactic of militants taking a union before the Federal courts. The paper is perhaps not as pervasively political as possible, a bit excessively trade union-ish. We note the Japanese transport union has refused to handle Vietnam war goods; this sort of demand is a better focus for opposing the war than such reasons as high taxes, etc. Disc: Gordon, Nelson, Cunningham, Salant, Nelson, Small, Robertson
- b. SSEU: Memberships of both SSEU and 371 have voted for merger, but 371 leadership is holding back a bit over when to implement fusion of leading bodies. Caseworker title is essentially being destroyed--plans for reorganization of Welfare Dept. are to cut down caseworker staff "by attrition" from 8,000 to 2,400. Contract deadlines are being extended, with no strike threat by union. New York Times recently extended its editorial congratulations to the SSEU for being the only union in recent years to apply proper trade union policy, in contrast to the ordinary rapacious unions who ignore the public interest.(!) Membership generally is showing growing demoralization and apathy, evidenced by very low attendance at meetings. We expect the Militant Caucus to go downhill in response to the general apathy, as militants are extremely cynical about the union in general now. However, recruiting to the SL remains possible, so our fraction is concentrating on that.
- c. District 65: We now have several comrades who are members or applicants to the union. Work is difficult as it is a fragmented union. One problem is that the best union prospects are young black men, making it difficult for a fraction entirely of young women to do political contacting without being misunderstood.

- d. Black unionism: There may be a propaganda opportunity for us in the growth of the "revolutionary" Black Nationalist union movement in the Midwest auto industry. These workers are organizing their grievances along color lines. Detroit Revolutionary Union Movement has been written up in Militant and in Guardian of 8 March. We have urged our comrades there to contact them to get a feeling of the moods and try to engage in discussion with them. Disc: Nelson
- e. CLP: Good summary received, written by Kinder, from last November of Committee for a Labor Party's history--a critical discussion of its efforts, tactics and perspectives.
5. Woman Question: There has been a groundswell of interest in the question in the SL. Our Bay Area comrades are working in it as an arena. Judy M. of Ithaca has written expressing interest; we heard via Harper that Miriam R. is working in the group in Seattle. Copy of letter from John S. to Bay Area [appended, along with extract of Bay Area reply] makes a well taken point, that this is not just "women's work". Regarding who makes the line in our organization, the involvement of interested male comrades is indeed a question of principle. Tactically, however, we are willing to work in women's liberation organizations which exclude males, while raising our political criticisms of their line that the struggle is one of separatist "self-determination". We are soliciting those comrades interested in formulating policy and propaganda on this to let us know, in conjunction with the forthcoming National Conference.

The women's liberation movement is an excellent place for us to recruit political young women. Most of the written material we have seen from these groups does not transcend the immediate social problems of young petty-bourgeois women. Some have raised the necessity for a separate women's revolution, on the grounds a socialist revolution would not abolish male chauvinism. This shows no concept of what a social revolution requires and means in terms of equalitarian consciousness in the mass. The women's liberation movement is essentially derivative from the New Left, rather than an analogue of the anti-war movement. One area where our propaganda would be distinctive is over the virulent male chauvinism of the Black Nationalists--e.g., ad in February 1969 Liberator magazine entitled "BLACK GOLD" (the old slave traders used to call their merchandise "Black Ivory"). The main copy is: "I am the Black Woman, Mother of Civilization, Queen of the Universe. Through me the Black Man produces his Nation." (!)

Motion: To seek to inaugurate a nation-wide consultative fraction of comrades interested in this question to work up line material.

Passed

Disc: Cunningham, Nelson, Robertson, Gordon, Salant, Robertson, Nelson, Gordon

Motion: To table balance of agenda to PB meeting next week. Passed

Meeting adjourned 12:00 midnight.

Attachment, PB Minutes of 17 March 1969

Austin, Texas
11 March 1969

Bay Area SL
Local Committee

Dear Comrades,

We noted the leaflet on Women's Liberation that you sent us and the letter that Jim sent you about your work in this arena. The opportunity to participate in this type of work is excellent and it is good that comrades are involved. One point comes to mind, however, and that is, why are only women comrades involved in this arena? This is a bad development because of the tendency on the part of the male comrades to take the attitude that this is "women's work", thus reinforcing the subordinate role atmosphere that women are in. This is not to say that comrades should be drawn out of other arenas or that there should be a token man at each meeting but that it does seem to us (from the tone of your letter) that there is a relegation of this work to only the women comrades (Bad, Bad, Bad). Particularly, this is bad in view of the leaflet itself which contained the statement--"The issue is self-determination." It would seem that such an orientation must be fought before these groups begin to develop possible exclusionist and anti-Marxist ideas and programs which would be the worst possible thing. We already have this to contend with in the Black Nationalists and if we can beat it at this stage, it would make our work that much easier.

Of course the issue is not self-determination. The issue is that women must be freed from oppression and suppression to realize their full potential as human beings. Self-determination in their context means, I suppose, the right to determine their own lives as men do. But men don't either and in the present social context this is impossible--the final liberation of women requires the destruction of capitalism and the development of a socialist society. We must fight to link up the struggles of these groupings to the rest of our program and to that of the working class as a whole. And, we must also begin to think about a program for this area of our work. I'm sure that you comrades realize this, so I won't belabor the point.

Secondly, I want to say that Jim's letter was excellent in that it hit at the exact point from which we should start. The family in bourgeois society is the key social unit in the maintenance of that society. I urge you to pick up on Jim's suggestions and develop your perspectives and programs from this key concept.

Comradely,

John S.

cc: PB
file

Attachment, PB Minutes of 17 March 1969

Bay Area
18 March 1969

[excerpt]

Austin

Dear John,

Good to hear from you. I thought the points in your letter were well taken. Right now, only women comrades are involved because, mainly, the women's liberation groups have prohibited male members. Our comrades have, of course, opposed this line. The women in them are very radical however, the problem is that they are new to politics and naive. Our comrades are making contacts and finding that the problem of women, and the points raised in Jim's letter to me, when thought about seriously by these women, have an extremely radicalizing effect on their consciences.

Your point on the "self-determination" line was also well taken, and our comrades worked on that leaflet (and the action it called for) after having raised criticisms and been over-ruled. It wasn't a leaflet of ours in any sense other than any leaflet from any broad organization that we're in is "ours", or course; we just sent it around for general interest in what this new movement is doing here.

Enclosed is an announcement of a class on the question which we will be having here on April 4th, with a presentation by Helene. Helene is going to write Miriam about women's liberation work, in line with the national consulting fraction on the question, but Helene is not a facile writer, and you and Anne should take initiative in sending your thoughts around to other comrades, such as Judy in Ithaca, on the subject.

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Comradely greetings,

Chris K.

cc: files
N.O.