

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES No. 22, August 4, 1966

Present: Barnes, DeBerry, Dobbs, Halstead, Kerry, Novack, Shaw, Sheppard, Jones.

Visitor: Ring

Chairman: Jones

AGENDA:

1. Soldiers Defense Case.
2. Airline Strike.
3. International.
4. Publications.

1. SOLDIERS DEFENSE CASE

Halstead reported:

Cases other than that of the Fort Hood Three are appearing among soldiers. The question has been posed whether the antiwar movement should initiate some type of broad defense committee for all such cases or add cases involving civil-disobedience, etc. to that of the three soldiers.

Discussion: Shaw, Halstead, Kerry, DeBerry, Novack, Barnes, Dobbs, Sheppard.

General agreement that we should not help initiate or engage in a generalized defense committee at this time.

(1) The current case is a test case involving the legality and constitutionality of the war. Such test cases cannot be confused and watered down by the inclusion of all comers on whatever basis.

(2) The current case, as a legal court battle, could not include practitioners of civil-disobedience in the Army, for example, or others consciously violating clearly established laws.

(3) A separate broad committee to defend AWOL's, conscientious objectors, pacifist types and all others, would not be a defense committee as we know it. It would go beyond legal angles and necessarily become a propaganda and recruiting center for pacifist causes with which we are in principled disagreement.

(4) At the present stage of developments the best tactics are to avoid any steps toward a generalized defense committee and to think in terms of various ad hoc committees specifically devoted to one and another of the key cases of differing kinds that can be expected to arise spontaneously in the next period.

2. AIRLINE STRIKE

Dobbs reported:

The airline strike is indicative of the mounting reaction within the union ranks to attrition and the high cost of living. The Johnson Administration is attempting to break the strike and wants to make both political parties responsible for the antistrike legislation.

There are four major points around which we can orient our propaganda and news coverage of the strike:

(1) This brings to a higher level the attempts of the capitalist class to smash strikes through the government. Workers everywhere should defend the airline workers against this attack.

(2) The high profits being made by the airline companies with the help of government subsidies and the need for an escalator clause to help protect the workers' living standards.

(3) The slogan for a labor party and its importance as illustrated in the airlines strike.

(4) The need for nationalization of the airlines under workers' control.

Recommendation: That the Political Committee issue a statement on the airline strike, centered on labor's defense against governmental strikebreaking. Paper carry other items on escalator clause, labor party and nationalization.

Discussion: Ring, Dobbs, Barnes.

General agreement.

3. INTERNATIONAL

Shaw reported clarification of the information reported to the Political Committee July 28, 1966 (Minutes No. 21). Hugo Blanco has been arraigned for trial by a military court. The Peruvian government is attempting to keep it secret. He has been denied legal defense procedures. A death sentence is possible.

4. PUBLICATIONS

Novack reported that Grove Press will publish a paper back edition of Malcolm X Speaks. The book is also to be printed in Japan.

Discussion: Jones

Meeting adjourned.