

POLITICAL COMMITTEE NO. 13, DECEMBER 23, 1974

Present: Barnes, Camejo, Finkel, J. Hansen, Horowitz, Jenness,
Lovell, Morrison, Seigle, Sheppard, Thomas

Consultative: Kerry, Novack

Visitors: Dixon, Lyons, Miah, Mirelowitz, Seidman

AGENDA: 1. Boston
2. Political Bureau
3. World Movement

1. BOSTON

Seidman reported on the actions in Boston December 13 and 14,
and on plans for the National Student Conference Against
Racism to be held in Boston February 14.

Discussion

Motion: To approve the report.

Carried.

2. POLITICAL BUREAU

Barnes reported on the proposal that Horowitz, Sheppard,
Thomas, and Waters replace Britton, Jones, Morrison, and
Stone on the Political Bureau.

Motion: To approve the proposal.

Carried.

Motion: To publish for the N.C. the report adopted by the
Political Committee at its November 15 meeting (see attached).

Carried.

3. WORLD MOVEMENT

Barnes reported.

Discussion

Meeting Adjourned.

Political Committee Perspectives

Report by Barnes:

One of the points on the coming National Committee plenum agenda will be the election of the Political Committee.

It is useful to recall the decisions we took at the Spring 1973 plenum. At that time a process of transition in leadership was underway. There had been some changes, and we knew there would be more changes to come in the forms and composition of the leading committees, and in the way they functioned. Prior to the plenum, Farrell had given a report to the Political Committee. His remarks and those of George Breitman, George Novack, and myself were published for the party prior to the 1973 convention in Discussion Bulletin Vol. 31, No. 4.

I gave the report for the Political Committee at the Spring 1973 plenum, outlining our perspectives. We thought it was still premature to go to a small elected Political Committee. We elected a large Political Committee. But we did propose some transitional measures.

Farrell, Tom, and George Novack, who were Advisory members of the National Committee, became consultative members of the Political Committee, with all rights on the Political Committee except decisive vote.

We then also set up an international sub-committee directly responsible to the Political Committee. We placed on it Gus, Mary-Alice, Peter and Joe, and then later we added Ed. They were responsible for our work and also for initiating the more general policy discussions in the Political Committee on world movement developments.

We also elected a Political Bureau, a smaller body than the Political Committee, responsible to the Political Committee. We wanted a body that had all the formal authority of the Political Committee, that could meet very easily on call, and was composed mainly of the regular National Committee members that were responsible for the day-to-day leadership of the party in the center. It was composed of nine comrades -- Joel, Al, Doug, Frank, Lew, Derrick, Betsey, Jack, and a comrade elected by the YSA NEC, in this case, Rich Finkel.

The spring 1973 National Committee plenum approved this perspective and at the Political Committee meeting immediately following the plenum we elected the Political Bureau and delegated all the authority of the Political Committee to it.

In our discussions at the plenum it was also clear that an evolution of these forms was to be expected. Remember, this was the plenum when we decided to assign Barry to California for a while, Lew went on the desk, Peter's travels abroad were going to consume most of his time, and the timing on Farrell's moving to California was not yet settled.

Now the situation has evolved, and I think that at the coming plenum we should elect a different kind of Political Committee which reflects the further evolution of this process.

The Political Bureau has gotten pretty small. Lew has gone out to California, Joel and Betsey have gone to Chicago, and Derrick is

going to Philadelphia. So, there are only five of us left in the center who are formally members of the Political Bureau -- Al, Doug, Frank, myself, and a YSA representative. Barry has come back to the center and gone on the desk. Earlier, we had pointed out that it was abnormal that Gus, Mary-Alice, Peter and Ed were not on the Political Bureau, but this was necessitated by the division of labor as we headed toward the world congress. That perspective has changed too, with the world congress behind us. Our perspective now is that of leading our regular and permanent international responsibilities. This work should be integrated into the Political Bureau.

Now, when the Political Bureau meets, the minutes often show the names of only three or four Political Bureau members present, along with several visitors, usually Political Committee members responsible for day-to-day work. The top line listing official members gets shorter and shorter, and the bottom line listing the visitors gets longer and longer.

The August 1973 convention elected a large number of young comrades to alternate membership on the National Committee. Today we have resident in New York 28 comrades who are members of one of the three categories of the National Committee. Of the alternate members elected at the last convention we have Bev Scott, Les Evans, Wendy Lyons, Caroline Lund, Linda Jenness, Judy White, Andrew Pulley, Dick Roberts, Syd Stapleton, Andrea Morell, Frank Boehm, Dick McBride, Maceo Dixon -- they are all here in New York for one assignment or another. Dick Garza, who is a regular member of the National Committee, is also resident in New York now.

There are two steps we can propose to the coming plenum of the National Committee that would formalize the next stage of the transition in leadership.

First is that we elect a Political Committee that is smaller than the current Political Committee, but larger than the current Political Bureau. It would be composed of the comrades who are now on the Political Bureau plus those regular members of the current Political Committee who have taken on day-to-day responsibilities. Under these conditions we would have no need for a Political Bureau.

Second, I think it would be useful to begin having occasional meetings of all the resident members of the National Committee. Such meetings would have no formal standing, of course. The Political Committee would be the body elected by the National Committee with formal responsibility. But a meeting of the resident members can do what we often did in the past in the Political Committee, that is, get together to think out loud on the broader political questions. It would include all resident members of the National Committee -- regular, alternate, and advisory members.

Occasional resident meetings would also serve an educational purpose. The comrades who are elected alternate members of the National Committee are expected by the party to carry leadership responsibility. The party expects us to find ways to draw these comrades into more responsibility as national leaders, and to get their thinking on broader questions. Occasional resident meetings would help this process.

As part of this perspective we could, at the coming plenum, eliminate the category of Consultative members of the Political Committee. The Advisory members of the National Committee would take part in resident National Committee meetings like all other members of the National Committee at the center. Of course, the Political Committee could ask a non-member to attend a given meeting if it would be useful. This would be another step forward in the transition in leadership.

Meanwhile, between now and the Spring 1975 National Committee plenum we can take several steps in this direction. Sometimes when we have broader things to discuss we could call together the resident members and not just the Political Committee.

We can also continue to invite Political Committee members who are carrying a lot of day-to-day responsibility to the meetings of the Political Bureau.

And, since the Political Bureau is a sub-committee of the Political Committee, we can elect four comrades to the Political Bureau to replace those who are leaving New York. We can do this shortly, if there is agreement.

November 15, 1974

Regular members elected to the National Committee:

J. Barnes	J. Hansen	L. Seigle
C. Bolduc	G. Horowitz	A. Sharon
G. Breitman	D. Jenness	E. Shaw
J. Britton	J. Johnson	B. Sheppard
P. Camejo	L. Jones	B. Stone
P. Chertov	C. Lipman	T. Thomas
C. DeBerry	F. Lovell	J. Tussey
D. Garza	D. Morrison	M. Waters
F. Halstead	H. Ring	N. Weinstein
A. Hansen		

Alternate members elected to the National Committee:

1. B. Scott	9. D. Styron	16. S. LaMont
2. L. Evans	10. D. Roberts	17. P. Seidman
3. W. Lyons	11. J. Benson	18. F. Boehm
4. C. Lund	12. N. Blackstock	19. J. Hawkins
5. L. Jenness	13. L. Henderson	20. D. McBride
6. J. White	14. S. Stapleton	21. M. Dixon
7. D. Wulp	15. A. Morell	22. J. Mackler
8. A. Pulley		

Advisory members elected to the National Committee:

M. Alvin	F. Dobbs	J. Liang
J. Cannon	A. Harer	G. Novack
B. Chester	T. Kerry	E. Reed

Members elected to the National Control Commission:

A. Chester	B. Matson
D. Ferguson	H. Scheer

Regular members of the Political Committee:

J. Barnes	G. Horowitz	E. Shaw
G. Breitman	D. Jenness	B. Sheppard
J. Britton	L. Jones	B. Stone
P. Camejo	F. Lovell	T. Thomas
A. Hansen	D. Morrison	M. Waters
J. Hansen	L. Seigle	R. Finkel (YSA)

Consultative members of the Political Committee:

F. Dobbs	T. Kerry	G. Novack
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Members of the Political Bureau:

J. Barnes	D. Jenness	T. Thomas
A. Hansen	F. Lovell	M. Waters
G. Horowitz	B. Sheppard	R. Finkel (YSA)

December 23, 1974