

Xs; PC

UWS Branch Minutes

October 30, 1978

Chair: ~~James H.~~ James H.

I. Agenda Read and approved.

II. Special Point by Michael M

Statement by Hedda G to branch read by Michael M. **Statement Attached.**

Motion: That Hedda G be invited to branch meeting to participate in discussion of her membership application. ~~Discussion.~~ Discussion. Motion defeated.

III. Executive Committee Reports

1. Motion: That Barbara K be admitted to regular membership as her 3 month provisional membership has expired. Discussion. Motion carried.

2. Executive Committee Majority Report by Michael M.

Motion: That Hedda Garza's provisional membership be terminated and to reject her application for party membership. The political committee would be immediately informed of this action.

3. Executive Committee Minority Report by Diane  
Discussion on reports.

Motion: To invite Hedda G to meeting. Discussion. Motion defeated.  
9 for, 19 against, 3 abstentions.

~~Motion:~~ Motion: To proceed with speakers list and see where we are at 10 p.m. Motion Carried.

Motion: To take a final speakers list, cut speakingtime to 3 minutes, and then proceed to summaries of 5 minutes each. Motion Carried.

4. Motion: To not approve the executive committee majority recommendation and continue Hedda G. provisional membership.

5. Motion: restatement of executive committee motion and procedural motion that it be voted on first. Discussion. No objection to voting on e. c. majority proposal first.

Motion: "To terminate ~~the~~ the provisional membership of Hedda Garza and to reject her application for party membership. The political committee would be immediately informed of this action." 24 for, 12 against, 1 abstention. Motion Carried.

III. Branch Weekly Schedule by Hank.

Report and discussion included sales, forum, and campaign activities planned. Discussion. Motion to approve report. ~~Re~~ Motion Carried.

IV. Announcements

Note: Announcements made during break on financial needs of branch and after point 3 on upcoming activities.

Xs: PC

Text of Oct. 30, 1978, message to branch by Hedda G and  
Executive Committee Majority Report by Michael M

"Comrades:

"I was informed by Michael M. last night that the executive committee is bringing in a motion to drop me from provisional membership. The executive committee has not informed me of the reasons why they are asking the branch to do this, and I have not been provided with the opportunity of meeting with them to learn these reasons and to present my answers. I consider it a violation of the democratic rights of branch members to have them hear everything except my own testimony in my behalf. This is an extremely important decision, and I urgently ask the branch to provide me with the chance to answer comrades' questions and to prove the sincerity of my desire to be in the Party, my loyalty to the Party, and my total fitness for Party membership."

/s/ Hedda G.

E.C. Majority Report

Last week, the branch voted to refer Hedda's assignments ~~xx~~ and the general discussion of the last branch meeting to the executive committee for further discussion. Informal discussion among the executive committee and discussions by branch members with me revealed that the situation would not be most constructively resolved simply on the level of a further discussion of assignments, but that a more general discussion was needed in the executive committee and a more exact statement of the branch leadership's position to the branch was necessary.

Yesterday the branch executive committee met for four hours to discuss our views and a report by the organizer. This is the majority of the executive committee's report on that discussion. ~~xxx~~ The vote in the exec was 7 in favor, 1 against, and 1 abstention.

Everyone on the executive committee felt one very definite thing which ~~x~~ should be clearly stated and understood by the entire branch.

Last week, Peter E made a motion on assignments in conflict with the executive committee recommendation. That was perfectly in order and his remarks were to the point and were political.

I disagreed with the points he was making, but I didn't think and the executive committee doesn't feel that there was anything out of order with his motion.

The same thing is true about the other motions made at the branch by others and all of the discussion that took place.

If every assignment the executive committee proposed was discussed at length, however, it would be a sign that the e.c. was seriously out of step with the branch and that the membership would have to have a discussion about the e.c. and what to do about it.

The only bad aspect of the discussion on assignments was Hedda's remarks to the branch. They consisted of a simple request to be assigned to everything under discussion and not to be released from any one area of work to focus her activity on the defense work as part of the emergency campaign. If her remarks represented her honest opinion, there would have been nothing wrong. The problem was it was not her honest opinion. She did not say her honest opinion. Her real views were saved for the corridors -- outside the regular branch channels, outside the control of the membership.

My discussions with Hedda about assignments were routine. In the course of meeting with all members of the branch, I had an initial discussion with Hedda over the phone almost three weeks ago. In the process of the executive committee discussions on assignments, I consulted about my proposals on all assignments with members of the executive committee. I then proposed to Hedda that she serve on the campaign committee and take immediate responsibility for lining up the Columbia University debate we hoped to get with Charles Ringle and that she take on defense assignments of Marroquin and Leo Harris work.

We had a routine discussion of this and she requested that she have an external assignment in something ~~like~~ like the divestment work. I said enough people were on that for the time being, and no one was being added until after Debby had gotten into the work and we have had more discussions with the YSA and got a better feel for the work on campus and with the community groups. Either she or I suggested antinuke work -- I don't remember which -- but in any event I agreed. She asked which was more urgent, the campaign assignment or Marroquin, I said the campaign because of the importance of getting someone on top of the debate.

I brought this into the branch meeting without consultation with anyone thinking it part of the routine adjustments that are inevitable in a branch of this size ~~with~~ with such a broad spectrum of activities. This was a mistake, but not a big deal.

But in consulting with other executive committee members, including Jean S as the head of the antinuke work and other members of the executive committee -- more than one raised a question about the Marroquin assignment. I said I had no other proposal on how to fill it at that time, but because of the press of work, it was less urgent because there was no specific activity we had to carry out immediately.

Midway in this process, which is completely routine, the emergency appeal came. This change in the political situation made it necessary to look at this work again. We needed someone with experience who could jump into it immediately and do the things that were necessary. Hedda's name came to mind again and I told Jean to wait on moving with the antinuke assignment ~~xxxxxxxx~~ until I had another opportunity to raise the Marroquin assignment with Hedda. This is the routine way of proceeding, this procedure has been used a hundred times in the past and will continue to be the standard way of working out assignments on a week by week basis in the future.

I went on Thursday, I had the first opportunity to meet with Hedda to discuss this proposed assignment change.

I motivated it was the important assignment that it was. She had not started to function on the antinuke fraction so it would not be pulling her out of a group where she had started to function and take on responsibility, and no one else in the branch was available.

To my surprize, Hedda blew up. She said this was a dishonest political maneuver against her personally and that it was really motivated because Jean hates her. Hedda said that I was in this with Jean because she knows I don't like her either. She went into a long tirade against Jean and said it was because of our subjectivism and the fact ~~xxx~~ we are incapable of overcoming our deep hostility toward her. She said we were trying to keep her away from new people and contacts.

She said that if I lived up to my responsibilities as an organizer I would not bend to Jean's subjective hatred ~~xx~~ of Hedda, but would call Jean to order.

I explained to Hedda that there was no conspiracy to deny her assignments, that this proposal on assignments was exactly what I said it was -- a proposal to respond to the Hector Marroquin emergency appeal, and while we were doing that, help contribute to the Leo Harris defense work.

I tried to convince Hedda that Jean was innocent of any conspiracy as well.

I reminded Hedda she was a provisional member and that Jean had voted for her to be a provisional member, and in fact, was the first member of the Chelsea exec who had agreed to my proposal to bring her into provisional membership.

I told Hedda she had the option to turn down the assignment, as she, I, and others have turned down assignments before, and it would go no further. But it would be very bad if she turned down the assignment because she felt that she was being persecuted because of a conspiracy behind the backs of the party by two or more party leaders.

She ~~said~~ she would take the assignment under protest, and would talk to her ~~friends~~ friends, as she put it. I cautioned her against going to anyone who was not yet a full member of the party, and I mentioned Barbara by name, with this story of persecution conspiracy and leadership subjectivity. In the strongest possible terms, I warned her against taking to the corridors -- that was an option she did not have and if she did that it would inevitably reflect badly on her application for membership.

She repeated that she would do it under protest. I asked what she meant, since the usual next step would be to go through the exec along with the other assignments and be brought up to the next branch meeting. But more importantly, the Harroquin emergency appeal work had to begin immediately since there was only 8 days to do it anyway.

She said there was nothing more she had to say then, she had to think it over and discuss it with a couple people.

I said fine, and we agreed that this would be taken up along with other assignments in the next short period of time.

On Saturday, before the exec., she told me she had begun the Harroquin work and was in the process of calling the office and different comrades to get the appropriate lists.

By the exec., that afternoon, I thought there was no problem, ~~xxx~~ that this was simply going to be an episode between Hedda and me like others before. So I didn't say anything about the discussion or the nature of the accusations and the assignment~~s~~ was passed on as a routine matter.

Informally, however, comrades started to come to me with reports of discussions Hedda had with them. Hedda called Peter E. Peter and I had a discussion of the work and exchanged opinions. We discussed the merits of Hedda doing one or the other assignment simply on the ~~xxxx~~ level of assignments without hidden conspiracy charges. We ended the discussion still disagreeing on the relative importance of the work and Peter said he wanted to raise his point on the branch floor -- I told him that I thought this didn't ~~xxxx~~ warrant a discussion on the branch floor, but that it was entirely within his rights as a party member.

But Steffie told me that Hedda had initiated two discussions on this assignment that did not go into this leadership subjectivity and persecution paranoia and urged me to reconsider the assignment. I pointed out that Hedda had agreed to the assignment, had begun work, that it had gone through the executive committee, and most important--merited the importance of the stress we were putting on it politically.

This conversation and the report of Hedda's remarks was disturbing. Not just because Hedda had been going into the corridors with these accusations, but because Hedda really believes there is a conspiracy.

And there was a new element in this report by Steffie which went beyond Hedda's discussion with me. Steffie was sympathetic to Hedda's situation and took an interest in trying to help Hedda. Steffie suggested Hedda go to Linda J, the local organizer, with this if she really felt that there was this problem with the branch leadership.

Hedda said no, she couldn't go to Linda -- Linda didn't even trust her enough to meet with her alone.

So Steffie suggested Doug J in the national office. Hedda said no, she couldn't go to him because of the bitter experiences of the IT fight, had a hard time communicating as she put it, and would not be able to deal with Hedda objectively.

Steffie suggested Hedda go to any other member of the political committee. She named the ones she could think of off-hand -- Jack B or Mary-Alice W. Hedda said no, no she couldn't go to anyone.

It is part of our conception of the democratic centralist nature of the SWP, that the leadership will act in an objective, political manner and not out of petty personal concerns. This is true of our branch leadership and leadership of the fractions and committees and not just the political committee.

I expected the branch meeting to go smoothly last week. I knew that Peter was going to make ~~his~~ his proposal and it would be discussed. Fine. There was nothing wrong with that. And I expected Hedda to do the assignment she agreed to do. But the branch meeting revealed that people felt very strongly about this assignment question and that it had been blown all out of proportion.

The remarks by Diane, Dan, Peter, Lisa, and Barbara were in order and obviously germane to the discussion although there was a lot of confusion -- much more than I expected.

The bad point in the discussion came when Hedda spoke, because she had a choice to make. She could have disciplined herself and simply go through with the agreement we had, or she could help push the discussion forward and keep it confused by not giving her real reason for disputing the assignment in the first place. Had she said that the reason I don't want to give up the antinuke assignments ~~is~~ is because it would be a concession to the secret persecution campaign of the subjective leadership of this branch, it would have at least put the real issue before the membership to decide. But no, she saved that for the corridors.

As Robin was speaking and saying that he was confused by the discussion and wondering out loud what was going on that provoked this discussion, because he said that the reason certainly wasn't revealed by the discussion, Hedda leaned over to Ken M who was sitting next to him and said that the leadership was trying to put her behind a desk and trying to get her. Ken told her to get up and say that. Hedda said that she couldn't because she was gagged.

I didn't know about this until the next day.

The resolution of the **discussion** on the assignment was simply to refer the point back to the executive committee.

In consulting with members of the executive committee and branch members during the week, it became clear that the problem was not the discussion that did take place on the branch floor and was not ~~the problem~~ not with Diane, Dan, Lisa, Peter, and Barbara, and Lisa and their opposition to a simple assignment motion by the executive committee.

The problem is Hedda Garcia and her deep hostility to anyone in leadership. She viewed a simply political proposal on assignments as a conspiracy maneuver against her and she took it as another opportunity to peddle corridor stories about the leadership.

To accuse the leadership of "subjectivity," "gagging her," and "conspiracy against her" are very serious things to say. If true, our leadership would be pretty rotten.

It is not possible to discuss this incident alone, without ~~pointing~~ out why we are having this discussion in the first place.

Hedda is no longer a member of the party because she not only joined, but helped lead, a disloyal, unprincipled combination in the party. It engaged in years of sabotage of party activities. It had a secret view that the party was reformist and that the Fourth International should be split, that the SWP should be destroyed, and a new party -- their party -- should be the representative of authentic Trotskyism in a reorganized Fourth International movement.

In May 1974 this grouping, known as the IT, held a delegated convention, heard and voted on reports, and elected a leadership to carry out their perspectives against the SWP democratically

decided line -- both in the SWP and YSP which they intervened into and with other groups on the left which they ~~had~~ held more political agreement with than the rest of the SWP which they shared membership in. In fact, they set up a ~~xx~~ rival party, a party hostile to the Socialist Workers Party, and aimed toward splitting and destroying our movement. This is the clearly established record and the party's position. This is not up for discussion and vote tonight, but Hedda and her membership is, and why it is up tonight is that is clear to us that her functioning as part of the IT and the methods she used there are not simply historical questions, but is similar to the way she functions today.

Her very deep hostility to the party led her to split from the party. Since July 1974 she was not a member.

But even this drastic action by the party, taken with virtual unanamous agreement by the party was not warning enough.

The IT split after it no longer had to maintain a united front against a leadership it had such hatred for and against a membership it had such contempt for.

Some like Al G eventually joined the Spartacist League, Bill M joined the Workers World Party, some ITers formed some thing called the Internationalist Tendency (New Faction), some drifted out of politics or back to the SWP, and some, like Hedda Garza, joined and helped lead a hostile opponent organization called the Revolutionary Marxist Organizing Committee, RMOC. Its stated platform was to ~~xxx~~ split the SWP from the Fourth International and destroy the SWP.

But her activity in RMOC didn't last all that long and RMOC split and went various ways, with Hedda maintaining her hostile opposition to the SWP as an independent activist.

Sometime later, isolated and alone because of the course of action she herself selected, she reevaluated the SWP. She is a revolutionist and a socialist and sees the need for organization, the need for a revolutionary socialist combat party of the Leninist type. So in the spring of 1977 she approached the party leadership and began discussions about readmission.

What was clearly stated then and all along, was that there was no checklist of activities for her to do in terms of sales and sustainer or anything else or any positions she had to recant ~~xxx~~ in order to join. The one thing she had to do was work with a branch and convince our members that she could function in our party in a disciplined, loyal fashion. That she would be an asset to the party. It was to be a period of testing for her in the eyes of the party, she had to prove herself to us. No member of the party was on trial, no member of the party's loyalty or objectivity was even up for discussion, and certainly the party and its program and norms were not in the spotlight.



It is for our membership to decide who joins our ranks. Our members vote their own best political judgment on the one and only question -- will the applicant for membership be able to build the party, contribute to the development of a political cadre. Will the applicant be an asset to the party.

So Hedda got a special status in the Spring of 1977 and took branch assignments and worked with Chelsea. My first discussion with Hedda was in early November 1977, when I became the Chelsea organizer. At that time, we decided that I would wait before putting her membership on the executive committee agenda so the branch would go through more experience with her.

It wasn't until March 1978 that the branch formally took up her membership application, and after a thorough discussion when comrades ~~we~~ discussed a variety of antileadership remarks and a too modest record of activity, the branch voted ~~xx~~ 35 to 1 to reject her application for membership at that time, but continue to seek to involve her in the political campaigns of the party. Her special status was continued.

She was surprised by the rejection, but I discussed the reasons with her frankly. This was a severe warning by the branch that she had to change in order to get admitted to the SWP and it was not the subjective reaction of one or two leaders. It was the decision of the branch on two clearly stated criteria.

She wanted to continue to seek admission although I encouraged her to accept the status of sympathizer.

She maintained that she wanted to get in. I believe she does, very desperately. This is certainly not in dispute.

She tried to turn over a new leaf on both counts. She knocked off the antileadership talk and there was a dramatic rise in the level of her activity. This impressed everyone around Hedda and it worked to her credit.

We recruited several people over the spring and summer who knew Hedda and she had a role in their joining our movement.

At the first meeting in September, the Chelsea ~~xxxx~~ branch voted Hedda into provisional membership unanimously, after hearing the unanimous recommendation of the executive committee which I brought in.

But now we are faced with a situation when Hedda has continued to engage in petty personal slanders and these corridor discussions even reached the point of underlying ~~x~~ her approach to the first assignment to come her way.

The assignment dispute was meaningless and almost irrelevant to this discussion. The important thing for the branch to consider is an evaluation of the meaning of the slander campaign Hedda has waged -- with her view, can she pitch in to party activity in a selfless manner, working with comrades she doesn't necessarily like or might really dislike?

The executive committee discussed this thoroughly and the majority

came to the conclusion that no, she can't be a disciplined party builder.

She has a deep, hostility against the leadership that led her into a split with the party and into active public opposition to the party. That experience and others since, like not getting a simple assignment she wants, makes it impossible to discipline herself and contain this hostility.

No one has to like the political committee members, or even just half of them. No one has to like the organizer of their branch or their city to be active in the SWP. But we have the right, and the political obligation, to look at Hedda and her entire record and evaluate if she can build the party if she can't contain her remarks about the bureaucratic, undemocratic expulsion of her tendency, of the subjective SWP leadership that goes into wild persecution campaigns against people they do not personally like, and who can't go to the national leadership with a problem because they are subjective too and won't help a branch leadership do the political thing.

The executive committee majority feels no, this person can't build the party. And for this reason alone, should not be a member.

There is a tragic side of this on the personal level for Hedda. She is a revolutionist and is committed to the need for a party. She agrees to the activities of the party, but in the concrete circumstances of the political life of the party she cannot function.

The party will never have all revolutionists in it or even all people who see the need for a party of the Leninist type. She is not the first and she will not be the last. Even someone like Bill Brown, who was a real mass leader of the Minneapolis Teamsters local 544, who was a revolutionist, and a working class fighter, was too undisciplined on the personal side of his political activity and he could never be a member of the party no matter how closely he was associated with the party and no matter how much he supported it.

The executive committee majority wants to work with Hedda as a sympathizer, not a member. We feel that this is how Hedda's talents can best be used and how the party can best be built.

We cannot say now how this will work out, but we hope political collaboration with her will be possible.

The motion from the executive committee majority is to terminate Hedda's provisional membership and reject her application for party membership. The political committee would be immediately informed of this action.