

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES, No. 52, July 13, 1967

Present: Barnes, Dobbs, Halstead, Hansen, Novack, Shaw,
Jones.

Chairman: Novack.

AGENDA:

1. Resolutions.
2. Presidential Ticket.
3. International.
4. Antiwar Report.

1. RESOLUTIONS

Discussion on draft of political resolution: Dobbs, Hansen,
Halstead, Barnes.

Motion: To approve general line of
draft political resolution.

Carried.

Novack reported on draft resolution on independent
black political action, based on Breitman's report to
recent plenum.

Discussion: Hansen, Dobbs, Shaw, Novack.

Motion: To approve general line of resolution
on independent black political action.

Carried.

2. PRESIDENTIAL TICKET

Shaw reported conclusions of Administrative Committee
discussions on presidential ticket.

Discussion: Halstead, Shaw, Dobbs, Barnes, Novack, Hansen.

Motion by Dobbs: To poll the National Committee
on a recommendation to nominate Fred Halstead for
president and Paul Boutelle for vice president,
the National Committee nomination to remain sub-
ject to ratification by party convention.

Carried.

3. INTERNATIONAL

Hansen reported.

Discussion: Novack, Dobbs.

4. ANTIWAR REPORT

Jones reported. (See attached.)

Discussion: Barnes.

Halstead reported physical harrassment of Parade Committee petitioners by PLers who are pushing their own separate antiwar referendum campaign.

Discussion: Hansen, Halstead, Barnes, Dobbs, Shaw.

Meeting adjourned.

Note:

The following votes in the National Committee poll on the June 22 P.C. motion recommending the suspension of Swabeck from party membership were received after the P.C. meeting of July 6 where the vote was reported.

Regular: Sharon and Chester for suspension.

Alternate: Graham and Scheer for suspension.

Antiwar Report -- L. Jones.

The October 21 March on Washington is now three months away. The movement must begin now to take concrete action both on a national and local level to build the mobilization. Time that is lost or frittered away will become progressively more difficult to make up at a later stage.

The date, place, and theme of the march have all been reaffirmed by vote of the administrative committee of the National Mobilization Committee. The problem for the National Mobilization Committee is to turn these decisions into concrete action in the form of publicity, calls, buttons, and posters.

The April 15 demonstration produced, among other effects, a flowering of diversionary projects. Among them were the Washington nonviolent project and Greenblatt's draft resistance project in Brooklyn. None of these, as we expected, has materialized to any real extent.

Similarly, the Vietnam Summer Committee and its activities, have not proved to be an insurmountable obstacle to October 21. In spite of difficulties in some areas, reports indicate that the VSC and its activists expect that October 21 will occur and expect that the National Mobilization Committee and the Student Mobilization Committee will organize it. The VSC projects dissolving itself at the end of the summer.

Further, King and an assortment of similarly politically inclined individuals from SANE, clergy, etc. have held a meeting where they showed interest in the October 21 demonstration. Their participation either formally or informally, in the preparations, will have two sides to it, as we have recognized before. On the one hand, it brings new forces and assures that the demonstration will be sizeable, while on the other, it brings leaders into the coalition who are interested in exclusion and toning down the radical politics heretofore maintained.

That the demonstration can be a large and successful one is attested to by several recent developments. Most notable is the Los Angeles demonstration, which was one of the largest in the antiwar movement's history. Other signs are demonstrations in Houston and Austin of sizeable numbers, and a continuing participation of high school students in the Student Mobilization Committee. Also showing the kind of spirit that is beginning to develop is the "peace torch" caravan that is being organized in Berkeley. Although still being planned, the caravan is scheduled to begin in Hiroshima where the mayor will light the torch, which will then be flown to Berkeley and from there carried across the country accompanied by a bus load of activists and literature, stopping in over 100 cities.

The unresolved question before the national coalition is the question of the character of the demonstration. Large segments of the coalition desire to have a civil disobedience demonstration in Washington. We do not disagree with this, so long as it is part of a demonstration that is massive and as long as it does not victimize or alienate those numbers that come to Washington. A slogan that is beginning to catch on is "Confront the warmakers in Washington on October 21."

Since this report was given to the P.C. the Communist party in the Worker and in a SMC meeting, has indicated that their position on the October 21 demonstration has changed. They now feel that the demonstration should either be small or not held at all. Their reason is that no one is interested in October 21. The real reason is they now see the National Conference for New Politics Convention as the vehicle for promoting their peace and freedom ticket and wish to involve the SMC and the NMC as key organizations in this formation. The CP correctly sees October 21 as an obstacle to their plans. They have so far run into difficulty and we anticipate further difficulty for them, in as much as the October 21 demonstration is too far along now to be reversed.

In many respects the preparations for October 21 are in better shape than the April 15 preparations were at a similar time. Nonetheless, now is the time when concrete organizational efforts must take form. These steps are now taking place in three areas:

1. Washington. Preparations will soon be beginning to organize this end of the demonstration.

2. Local areas. Antiwar committees and united front formations should begin the propagandistic and organizational steps. Local calls for the march can be utilized. It is also not too early to begin to make the arrangements for transportation. A recent Texas-wide antiwar convention made the decision to participate in October 21 and are now looking into the transportation problem.

3. New York. The Parade Committee, the Student Mobilization Committee, and the National Mobilization Committee will probably assume a large portion of the organizing.

- A. The Student Mobilization Committee will be the workhorse for the demonstration. It has already printed two posters, has several brochures, including a call, in preparation, and buttons are on their way to the manufacturers. Besides doing much of the organizing, the Student Mobilization Committee has and will continue to exert pressure on the NMC to proceed with its preparations.

B. The Parade Committee will also assume a major share of the organizing. It is presently engaged in a campaign to put an antiwar referendum on the New York City ballot. The forces it mobilizes around this effort will be valuable activists for the preparations for October 21.

C. The National Mobilization Committee has experienced a series of delaying tactics by the officers and other individuals. In addition to these tactics, proposals have been made to include several more officers of a more conservative stripe to the exclusion of the left wing of the movement, the radical parties and the SMC. All these proposals have been delayed and fought, but they still represent a threat to the action. The best means of off-setting their effect will be the organization of October 21. Along these lines a October 21 committee has been set up with Al Evanoff at the head. This committee will meet this week to make initial plans. High on the agenda is the initial publicity.

The character of the demonstration is a prime discussion article at this time. What is sought is a dramatic focus for the demonstration. One idea that has gained some prominence is the international focus. Attempts will likely be made to get leading figures from around the world to lead the Washington protest. Additionally, favorable responses to the international call have already returned. The leading national French Vietnam committee has endorsed the action and will have a mass demonstration. The Canadian Student Association Against the War in Vietnam has decided similarly, and will hold demonstrations across Canada. A meeting of peace figures from around the world met recently in Stockholm and has endorsed the action, pushing for demonstrations around the world. Finally, it is possible that the next session of the War Crimes Tribunal will be held around the October 21 date.

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