

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES NO. 10, April 21, 1966

Present: Barnes, Dobbs, Halstead, Hansen, Kerry, Shaw, Sheppard, Warde, Jones.

Chairman: Warde

AGENDA:

1. International
2. Anti-War Movement
3. Organization Secretary Report

1. INTERNATIONAL

a.) Hansen reported on a projected book to be published in India containing documents of 4th International Congresses. They have requested that we supply English language documents to be included for the early years and period during the split.

Discussion: Kerry, Dobbs, Shaw, Warde, Barnes.

Motion: To collaborate and send as much material as we can.

Carried

b.) Letter announcing availability of further material on the World Congress and on Quebec situation.

Discussion: Kerry, Dobbs, Shaw, Barnes, Hansen, Warde.

Motion: That the administrative committee prepare an International Information Bulletin containing pertinent material available.

Carried

c.) Kerry reported on letter from Africa. (See attachment)

Discussion: Dobbs, Shaw.

Motion: To append to the minutes excerpts from the letter.

Carried

d.) Warde reported on a meeting with some foreign students.

Discussion: Kerry, Halstead, Barnes.

2. ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT

Barnes reported on recent developments in the Berkeley VDC and elections for a steering committee there, and plans for a rally on May 21 in Berkeley.

He also reported on a Women's March "To Bring Our Men Home From Vietnam" for May 7, in New York.

Jones reported on recent NCC meetings in New Haven and proposed meeting in Nashville this week. Chicago, New York and Philadelphia will send people. John B. has been in Atlanta and will give a report on his return.

Discussion: Halstead, Warde, Dobbs, Hansen, Shaw, Kerry, Sheppard.

3. ORGANIZATION SECRETARY REPORT

Shaw reported a proposal to publish book on Vietnam. Book to be composed of articles from the Militant dating back to 1945. Will be in the form of a journalistic history of U.S. intervention in Vietnam as reported in a Marxist paper. We have a special contribution to make this publication possible.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Attachment to the PC Minutes No. 10, April 21, 1966

The following excerpts are from a letter recently received from Africa.

I must say I was highly impressed with the great political potentialities in the U.S. Nowhere else have I been so acutely conscious of the powerful subterranean forces albeit diffused and unchannelled. You will notice in my speech delivered in London that I speak of the unfolding revolutionary process in Africa. While this is true as an overall picture, you have at the same time to acknowledge that in the immediate, imperialism is redoubling its efforts to reverse the process and the signs are that it is at present on top.

Once more, we see that history does not develop in a straight line. It goes in zigzags. That Africa which stimulated the revolutionary potential amongst the Negroes in the United States of America is now threatened with a slump, while the American continent is gathering momentum for a mighty thrust forward. We have been discussing this matter amongst ourselves here and we have come to the conclusion that the tour was well timed, that is at a time when the Americans themselves were moving out of their traditional insularity; when red-hot issues like Vietnam afforded us an opportunity of directing their attention to Africa which is going to be the focal point of imperialist machinations.

It is my view that if the African struggle is kept alive as an agitational issue, it will facilitate the organization of the Negroes in the near future, more especially since they are going to be used by the army as instruments for subjugating their brothers in Africa. As it is, agitation is mounting not only against the presence of the American soldiers in Vietnam but against the disproportionate use of the Negroes for the suppression of the Brown peoples of the East. The agitational appeal would be much more powerful when the same Negroes are used against the Blacks in Africa. From this point of view it seems to me that it would be possible to capitalize on the present sympathy of the Negroes and a section of White Americans towards Africa.

It can be used as one of the means of uniting the Negro organizations into a powerful body while at the same time bringing home the realization that their struggle is inseparably bound up with the struggles of the oppressed peoples throughout the world. A side effect of such a movement in America would be to heighten the consciousness of the people in Africa and spur them on to greater efforts in the struggle against imperialism

and neo-colonialism.

After discussing this process amongst ourselves we likened it to our own experiences at home. Very often there would be periods when we were confronted with a political slump. Then all of a sudden the Herrenvolk would attack a section, perhaps in the town. We would seize the opportunity to rally the masses on a specific issue using it as a basis for our general propaganda. On these occasions we usually succeeded in attaining a high degree of political consciousness and militancy. This in turn had an effect of stimulating the countryside which because of its sprawly nature took a long time to gather momentum. But then we found that the towns quickly exhaust their energies and begin to sag. At such times the upward swing of the pendulum in the country served to stay the downward swing in the towns. It seems to us the same process and the same inter-relationships are observable now on an international scale. This will become more and more evident as the oppressed become aware of the inter-dependence of their struggles.