

Minutes of Political Committee for
March 14, 1972

Present: Comrades Winston, Hall, Hallinan, Jackson, Johnson, Lightfoot, Lumer, Meyers, Pittman, Potash, Rubin, Storey, Weinstone, Winter, C., Winter, H., Zagarell.

All other comrades were absent with excuse.

Also present for first point - Comrade Pauline.

1. Peace Movement Perspectives -- Comrade Zagarell opened. At a time when mass sentiment against the war is at an all-time high, the organized peace movement is in a deepening critical situation. Also, there are important problems in our own peace work. There is a decline in the size of peace actions and a drift away from unity and toward a break-up of a number of coalitions. There is demoralization in traditional peace circles.

Nixon is attempting to defuse the peace issue for the elections while using racism and busing as his main weapon. Vietnamization, though to some extent a stall and a retreat, is also part of a strategy of trying to go over to the offensive. It has caused confusion among the masses. U.S. casualties are down but the war's role in relation to inflation, costs of the war, taxes, impact on the economy against the interests of the workers and people, have never been more. Middle-class people reacted morally to the killing but have a hard time orienting to such economic aspects. But the war has become more intertwined with the needs of labor and the Black liberation movement, while a petty-bourgeois-led movement has not found the means to link up with the working class and Black community.

NPAC is also in some degree of crisis. The four coordinators who had resigned rejoined but there is dissatisfaction with its concept of 2 or 3 demonstrations a year, its failure to relate peace and Black liberation, its refusal to support the 7 points of the Vietnamese, and tight Trotskyite control. Its April 22 action will not be as massive as a year ago. PCPJ is not an official sponsor but will participate.

Instead of PCPJ getting stronger as a result of NPAC internal problems, it shows signs of weakening. Aside from the April 1 Har- riskurg action it has been unable to agree on any national actions.

April 15 has become a tax resistor pacifist type action. Attempts by us and others to get a mid-way Washington, D.C. electorally-oriented action have not been successful and the outlook toward July 9 and the Democratic Party Convention is very vague.

In order for our policies to have a greater impact in the peace movement, we need to build an anti-imperialist intermediary form that will be independent of PCPJ but yet in it. It should be action-oriented, Black and white, and oriented toward workers. It should have a newsletter and be an alliance itself of left intermediary forms in various fields, but with peace and anti-imperialism the center.

Our work reflects influences of wrong ideas. The Peace Commission is not oriented enough toward industrial concentration and it does not play much of a role in mobilizing the whole Party. Our labor work tends to put off till later the peace struggle. The two commissions are meeting to overcome this. The Political Committee does not give peace enough attention.

Within the peace movement there are big weaknesses on racism. No literature emphasizes that question. NWRO and SCLC are not really consulted and are drawing away. The leadership is almost all white. An anti-imperialist center from within the Black Community would be very helpful. There is some growth of the vets in Harlem under good leadership.

PCPJ has no student base. We need to single out certain campuses and help others build a national union of students type organization.

In response to the elections, there is a pledge card and we have made a little headway in orienting to the electoral arena but not what is needed.

To strengthen mobilization of the Party, the Peace Commission should issue a monthly memo to districts, Central Committee, National Council and peace activists. A tour of the districts should be undertaken to evaluate and organize our work better and a more concrete plan of work is needed.

Discussion:

No movement can be successful that is not electorally oriented

in this period. We need to build a peace political action form related to PCPJ but yet independent. Major focus is needed on forms of mass action around the Democratic Party Convention and the drafting of its platform. Demands to set the date, end the bombing and dump Thieu are very important.

While central peace actions are needed, community grassroots peace groups are more able to draw in workers, Black and white. We also need to relate people active around such grassroots issues as housing and education to the peace struggle. One means would be through a referendum on using the war money for other needs.

In the absence of national initiatives by PCPJ, and even when it has them, often there is no literature out; NPAC is the only visible force organizing for peace. We cannot be in the position only of denouncing them. There must be alternatives for action. We should participate in April 22 but with an independent position on the issues and trying to broaden control of it. We should work to strengthen PCPJ everywhere and orient it as much as possible toward the elections, working class and Black community. Maximum effort to build the March 25 Children's March for Survival and April 1 in Harrisburg was called for.

There was agreement that a new effort is needed for an anti-imperialist intermediary organization, but there were several views on its character. The failure to get further with this idea was attributed both to such different approaches and recurring ideas that more was needed at different turns of events.

The tendency for some comrades and Party organizations to pay less attention to the peace struggle was seen as an internal reflection of moods in the peace movement plus a weakness in understanding why peace remains the overriding issue and that building in a grassroots way cannot be posed against the peace struggle.

Conclusions: 1. The direction of the report and discussion was approved and especially the electoral emphasis.

2. A special discussion is to be organized on the character of an anti-imperialist center and also on NPAC.

3. A national tour on peace activity is to be organized.

4. We are to work toward a peace political action form and place major stress on mass actions around the political conventions, especially the Democratic.

2. Struggle for freedom of Angela Davis -- Comrade Winston opened. Prior to a trip to San Jose, Comrade Winston briefly outlined developments around the jury selection, working out of the legal strategy, and in fund raising. The fight for Angela Davis' full rights while out on bail was stressed, as was the need to broaden further the mass fight and fund-raising effort. The need to demonstrate fully Black and white unity in every aspect of the trial and mass fight was stressed. Whether or not Angela takes the stand as a witness was viewed as a tactical and not principled question.

3. Black Political Convention -- Comrade Lightfoot made a preliminary information report.

The Convention, regardless of individual trends and personalities who may be playing a leading role, has a logic of direction. It marks a new step forward toward political independence such as no other strata has taken. The Call spoke of the history of dependence on whites politically but both parties betrayed the Black masses. The need to change systems and build a new society was posed in this and in the Black political agenda or programmatic document. Mayor Hatcher was for fighting inside the Democratic Party this last time, but expecting not to succeed. He cited in his keynote, DuBois, Robeson, Carlotta Bass, Ben Davis and William Patterson as previously carrying a militant fight in the political arena. Jesse Jackson favored a Black political party. While there was pressure for Chisholm, there was no-one endorsed and the position of the nationalists for a Black political party was not approved.

While Diggs, Hatcher, Jesse Jackson and Baraka shared leadership, Baraka was dominant, but he compromised a number of questions and did not push his Newark positions. The nationalists were most vocal and the many political officials more or less went along. Mrs. King was there but not Reverend Abernathy or the major NAACP forces.

Labor people were relatively few and were badly treated, not

being considered a special category like others. A meeting took place of labor people which expressed their dissatisfaction. The Michigan delegation walked out. Resolutions on peace, So. Africa, Angela Davis and political prisoners were passed.

The 50 states are to form on-going assemblies as a form of continuation of the convention. Without active attention, the nationalists will tend to dominate these even more.

We were better organized than on other occasions but there were weaknesses. Our role on labor is even more necessary. We got over to 6,000 delegates and 18,000 Gary citizens the 20th Convention program on Black liberation demands. It was well received, as were 1500 extra copies of the DW and a literature table.

It was agreed that the Black Liberation Commission would meet to evaluate the Convention and on that basis a P.A. article would be drafted and thinking would be presented to the P.C.

4. 1972 Elections -- Comrade Johnson opened.

There are many mass developments of great importance. These include the Black Political Convention. Labor is aiming for 400 delegates at the Democratic Convention. But they are divided up. Henry Foner is all out for Muskie, Harold Gibbons is for McGovern, and Fitzimmons is for Nixon. Youth caucus people are aiming for 300 youth delegates. There is much motion among women around Shirley Chisholm and Bella Abzug. There is the Hispanic people's conference coming in Denver. The problem is how these will be fully registered in the primaries and at the conventions, and our role in drawing them together. The New Hampshire primaries show there is no real front-runner. Muskie by no means has it sewed up.

In E. Pennsylvania, our Party is a new Party. Comrades Patrinos and Monteiro deserve great credit for that. Comrade Monteiro is a candidate, as is Comrade Teixeira in Massachusetts.

Discussion:

It focused around the question of whether it was possible to defeat Nixon and elect a candidate who would end the aggression in Indochina. The estimate was that the present type of campaign and opposition in the Democratic Party cannot defeat Nixon. Unless the issues are brought forward in a fighting way, it cannot be done. The issues must be forced. Nixon is trying to take peace and economic issues out of the election and push racism and busing.

There is a certain impact at the appearance of winding down the war and summery. We have to take that into account. In relation to labor, they are moving from Jackson to Humphrey, with Muskie acceptable. We need to develop independent developments in labor around the wage freeze. It may be that issues can be best brought forward here by helping to stimulate groups for particular more responsive personalities and then pressing them to come out more on labor issues. Local labor candidates in primaries are very important.

Humphrey is emerging as the front-runner based on old labor, Black, Jewish and machine connections, while appealing to the right in competition with Wallace. Kennedy could emerge as a powerful candidate from a deadlocked convention. The weakening of Muskie needs to become an opening to the left rather than to the right.

Dump Nixon or hostility to him will not be enough. There is hostility to all politicians. Forms have to be built around grass-roots issues, pressing the candidates on those and general national issues.

We need to strengthen the division of labor in which white comrades take on expressions of racism in the campaign and Black comrades take on cultural nationalist expressions.

Corruption should be brought forward as a major issue. The Lowenstein forces around the Youth Caucus have soft-pedalled its activities for fear they would support McGovern instead of Muskie. We need to build a more developed grouping within the youth caucuses and try and activate them.

Our Party has a very big role to play through its own campaign in pressing on the issues. The campaign is changing the Party. All leading people must become involved. To date we are not satisfied with the response in both California districts compared to else -

where in the country.

Conclusions: 1. There are no guarantees that Nixon and his war policy can be defeated unless the issues are forced in a new way.

2. The Labor Commission is to discuss how to get more independent motion in the labor movement.

3. A meeting is to be held on how to get some activity and a committee of intellectuals around our campaign.

4. Means of integrating the D.W. much more are to be discussed and a special edition with the Platform.

5. Following the Central Committee meeting, the pace of the campaign must be stepped up and stepped up still further after August 1.

5. Nixon Trip to China -- Comrade Jackson gave an information report

Various bourgeois commentators such as Doak Barnett in the March 6 issue of U.S. News and World Report. In these, the trip is viewed as part of a world strategy in which the aim is to isolate the USSR and create a new four-power balance among the USA, China, Japan and the USSR. But Barnett advises this be done carefully and not openly; slowly, so there is no apparent gang-up on the USSR. Hsinhua rationalizes what happens by identifying world revolutionary interests with narrow nationalist interests. Nixon, of course, is using the trip for all it is worth to create pre-election illusions.

We should assess it very soberly as a most serious development, the full meaning of which is yet to unfold. What we have in China is a military dictatorship on a socialist base. There is both a local economy and a national one which is most directly under military control. Maoist doctrine is only tangentially related to Marxism-Leninism.

6. Financial Crisis -- Comrade Rubin opened.

In the past 3 years we have increased expenditures by 75%, but income has gone up only a little. The rest has been financed by borrowing at the end of the year and repaying out of the new year's income. This has now reached the point where we have already spent all major income for 1972, mostly in repaying loans of prior years. Wages had to be cut again. We must cut our annual rate of spending this year by one-fourth by cutting staff, by cutting transportation spending in a big way, and in other ways. More money has to be raised by a number of means and we must find a fund-raiser and treasurer. We cannot fly any more on credit but must pay cash. We owe commercial outfits some \$50,000.

There was a very sharp discussion about political irresponsibility in spending money and in failure to raise it, mainly in the center but also related to many districts.

Conclusions: 1. A committee of Comrades Rubin, Johnson, Lightfoot, Meyers and Winter, H. was set up to study how to make such cuts in spending, how to raise more money and work on finding a treasurer and fund-raiser, and report back to the Political Committee.

2. A fund appeal and drive for the election campaign is to be made.
