

POLITICAL BUREAU

NUMBER 15

November 4, 1974

Present: Barnes, Jenness, Lovell, Morrison

Visitors: Horowitz, Jaquith, Miah, Morell, Novack, Scott, Seigle,
Shaw, Sheppard, Stapleton, Waters

Chair: Barnes

- AGENDA:
1. Boston
 2. Mineworkers Strike
 3. ACLU Suit
 4. CP Election Campaign
 5. Baltimore
 6. Plenum

1. BOSTON

Sheppard reported on possibilities of national mobilization to counter the racists and our relation to the effort.

Discussion

Motion: To approve the report.

Carried.

2. MINEWORKERS STRIKE

Lovell reported on possible support work for the mineworkers strike.

Jaquith reported on her recent visit to mine fields.

Discussion

Motion: To correspond with branches along the lines of the discussion.

Carried.

3. ACLU SUIT

Jenness reported the Committee for Democratic Election Laws has proposed to organize support for the suit against disclosure laws (see attached).

Discussion

Motion: To approve the report.

Carried.

4. CP ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

Jenness reported on the 1974 Communist Party election campaigns and our use of the CP campaigns for opponents work. (See attached.)

Discussion

Motion: To approve the report.

Carried.

5. BALTIMORE

Sheppard reported on the possibilities for building the Trotskyist movement in Baltimore.

Discussion

Motion: To approve the report.

Carried.

6. PLENUM

Barnes reported on the following proposals:

At our August 13 Political Bureau meeting, when we discussed making leadership personnel changes, organizing the 1976 presidential election campaign, and the coming IEC meeting, we thought it might be useful to have a one or two-day truncated plenum in St. Louis at the time of the YSA convention.

This would primarily serve two purposes: to report on the IEC meeting if it had just been held or was to be held in the next week (the IEC was originally called for Christmas); and the second was to use this plenum to nominate our presidential ticket.

We agreed that it would be premature at that plenum to formally call a late-summer convention or to have any resolutions ready at that time.

Since then two things have happened. One is that the IEC has been postponed so that it is about six weeks later. The second thing is that the Political Committee decided that we should not wait for a plenum to nominate our presidential ticket. Comrades remember the discussion: if we waited until the plenum, once we began thinking about the campaign literature and so forth, it wouldn't work out. That is, NCers would really have no chance of raising any alternative views if they thought that the PC nominees were unwise. We would be sitting there with the rally planned for the next evening and the initial literature ready to be distributed.

Instead, we polled the National Committee so that we would have time to consider any objections or doubts or alternative slates that comrades might have, and after getting this we would begin preparation of initial campaign literature.

It looks like the proposals from the Political Committee will be unanimously accepted. We have gotten back most of the ballots. And it has been very helpful. Helen Scheer, Jean Tussey, Susan LaMont, and others have taken advantage of the poll to write down some ideas and suggestions about the campaign and about campaigning in general. Doug will report this out in detail to the Political Committee and we can publish the comments of the comrades in the minutes.

Thus, it would be better to plan a full plenum for early spring, rather than an abbreviated, short plenum at the YSA convention.

This ties in with another thing that we've been thinking about and discussing in the N.O. for a while. One of the things that it would be very good to do at our next convention this summer is to consider having two resolutions that are long-term and programmatic, not conjunctural.

One would be bringing the Transitional Program for Black Liberation up to date. It was written over six years ago, and there have been significant changes in the country and lessons in the Black struggle since then. We updated it in pamphlet form a little bit by having Andrew Pulley write a new introduction incorporating into it some things that had transpired since writing the resolution.

The comrades involved in leading the Black work have thought for some time that we should update the resolution. It would not require anything gigantic but the changes would make it much more useful for our work in the coming year or so and can be a basis for the party's discussion on the current stage of the Black struggle.

To do this well we would need to do a draft of it prior to the plenum, circulate the draft prior to the plenum, and then have the NC draft out to the party in plenty of time for discussion.

The second thing is a basic programmatic resolution on American perspectives, an updating of the American Theses.

We've been thinking about this for some time too, mostly from the positive point of view of the opportunities and responsibilities in a period of growing social, economic, and political crisis that faces the American workers.

It will also be valuable in a presidential year to have a very basic resolution to give the comrades, the YSAers, those we draw around us that are interested in

our fundamental ideas and basic perspectives -- one that reaffirms our concept of the American revolution and the role the party will play in it.

From another point of view, many of the basic, underlying assumptions of the American Theses and some of our additions to it over the years since 1946 are being challenged by critics here and there. The perspectives of the American revolution and revolutionary party in the framework of the world revolution is not an unsubstantial question. A draft resolution like this would facilitate discussion and clarification on a world scale.

Of course, it would be very important to get a draft to the N.C. before the plenum. Then we can have the best discussion. It was very valuable to do that in the spring of 1971 for our political resolution.

I leave aside the question of the other reports or resolutions we may need for the convention in August. We will need a conjunctural political resolution or report and we will undoubtedly want several other reports.

If comrades agree, we can discuss this more at the next P.C. meeting and decide, if there is agreement, on responsibilities to start working on the drafts.

Discussion

Motion: To approve the report.

Carried.

MEETING ADJOURNED

ACLU SUIT

Report by Doug Jenness

The Committee for Democratic Election Laws (CoDEL), which was established to challenge unfair and discriminatory election laws, has proposed to organize support for national and state-wide suits and hearings which seek to exempt the SWP from identifying their contributors under the campaign disclosure laws.

CoDEL is sending out a letter early next week to its activists and sponsors urging the formation or reactivation of local CoDEL chapters to fight for SWP exemption. A new brochure about the disclosure suits will be published by CoDEL.

CoDEL chapters will be obtaining support from unions and union officials, Black organizations, professors, and other prominent persons, organizing press publicity, etc. They will be helping to distribute the open letter to Common Cause. They will also be raising funds to pay for their activities and literature.

In those places where the ACLU or some other civil liberties committee or law firm is handling the legal expenses, CoDEL will be making it clear that the money it raises is only for publicity, etc., and not for the legal expenses. Before initiating CoDEL activities, local plans should be discussed with local ACLU chapters or other attorneys handling the suit. This has already been done nationally.

Representatives of the Political Rights Defense Fund have spoken at hearings offering evidence to show that the SWP is victimized by these laws. However, because its statement of aims limits it to organizing support and raising money for the SWP and YSA suit against government harassment and surveillance, PRDF cannot take on the job of organizing support for the disclosure suit.

Of course, PRDF literature will be central to explanations of why the SWP should not have to disclose its contributors. CoDEL will want to approach PRDF sponsors to ask them to endorse CoDEL and to send messages, etc., on behalf of the disclosure challenge.

CP: ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

Report by Doug Jenness

This year the Communist Party ran its most extensive election campaign in a non-presidential year in many years. For the November elections it fielded 32 candidates in 13 states and Washington, D.C., including states where it had not run candidates for state office in a long time, like Wisconsin and Minnesota. (See attached list of CP candidates). The Daily World gave these campaigns considerable coverage and either Gus Hall or Henry Winston spoke at most of their wind-up rallies.

We did very little opponents work in respect to the CP campaigns other than confronting a few of their candidates directly on television or radio engagements won through the equal time law or at other debates. Many other opportunities to reach their members and other radicalizing people with a comparison between the CP program and ours were not utilized.

One tool we did not utilize was the tactic of critical support. There were eight CP candidates, unopposed by SWP candidates, in cities where we have comrades. Although in some of these cases it may not have been advantageous to use this tactic, in others it could have been if thought out far enough before the elections and in conjunction with a rounded orientation of opponents work toward the CP.

LIST OF COMMUNIST PARTY CANDIDATES FOR NOVEMBER 1974 ELECTIONS

Connecticut

Joelle Fishman, U.S. Congress, 3rd C.D. (New Haven)

Illinois

Ishmael Flory, U.S. Senate

Lorraine Ashby, state treasurer

Jay Schaffner, Univ. of Ill. Bd. of Trustees

Valerie Witzkowski, Univ. of Ill. Bd. of Trustees

John Lumpkin, Univ. of Ill. Bd. of Trustees

Indiana

Mike Bayer, state senate (Gary)

Simon Boorda, state leg., 35th Dist. (South Bend)

Massachusetts

Laura Ross, U.S. Congress, 8th C.D.

Michigan

Thomas Dennis, governor

William Allan, lt. governor

Peggy Goldman, bd. of education

Minnesota

Erwin Marquit, governor

James H. Flower, lt. governor

New York

Mildred Edelman, U.S. Senate

Jose Ristorucci, governor

Carol Twigg, lt. governor

Daniel Spector, comptroller

Mike Zagarell, attorney general

Carolyn Black, state senate, 29th dist. (Harlem)

Jeanette Gomez, state senate, 31st dist. (Bronx)

New Jersey

Paul Schiff, U.S. Congress, 15th C.D. (New Brunswick)

Ohio

James Steele, U.S. Senate* (knocked off ballot because of age)

Pennsylvania

Sondra Patrinos, state legislature, 198th dist. (Philadelphia)

Washington

Juana Mangaoiang Brodine, U.S. Senate

Elmer Kistler, state legislature, 35th dist.

CP Candidates/2

Wisconsin

Fred Blair, governor
Mary Blair, lt. governor

Young Workers Liberation League candidates

Maryland

Simon Jeffries, state legislature, 45th dist.
Margaret Baldrige, state legislature, 39th dist.*

Washington, D.C.

Robert Lindsay, city council at-large
Maurice Jackson, city council at-large

*write-in candidate

14 of the above CP and YWLL candidates were unopposed by SWP candidates.

Of these, 8 ran in cities or states where there are SWP branches or large YSA locals.

We did not use the tactic of critical support in relation to any of them.

November 4, 1974

To the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores

Comrades:

Many of us in the Socialist Workers Party personally knew Comrade Cesar Robles. He had won our admiration and respect for his consistent dedication to the struggle against all forms of tyranny and oppression and for a socialist world. His role as leader and participant in Argentine working-class struggles was unblemished.

Although Comrade Cesar lived and carried on the struggle as part of the Argentine working class, his fight for justice was not limited by national boundaries; it was international in scope and effect.

The cowardly murders of Comrades Cesar Robles, Juan Carlos Nievas, Ruben Bouzas, and other working-class militants by fascist goons bring home to us the need to solidarize ourselves more firmly than ever with their struggle, which is also our struggle.

We pledge to redouble our efforts toward building a world-wide movement of solidarity with those now fighting against the terror unleashed by the oppressors in Argentina.

We are confident of final victory.

Political Bureau
Socialist Workers Party