

POLITICAL BUREAU MINUTES.....12 February 1969

Present: Full: Robertson, Nelson, Cunningham, Henry Alt: Seymour
Staff: Rogers, Gordon Other: Joel S.

Absent: Alt: Small(exc.)

Meeting convened 10:15 p.m. [following urgent expanded meeting of NYC Executive Committee]

- Agenda:
1. Minutes
 2. General Information and Correspondence
 3. Factional Situation
 4. Organization
 5. National Conference
 6. Press--SPARTACIST #13

Motion: To refer General Information point to secretary for inclusion into minutes, in view of the lateness of the hour. Passed
[Only the most urgent point dealt with in the immediately preceding NYC Executive Committee meeting, on the SDS Labor Committee, was reported. The balance was held over to next PB meeting.]

1. Minutes: The last time that a full review of the minutes situation was made was the PB of 19 Feb. 1968. We have had a crash program for the last five weeks of getting caught up with the minutes. We have made good progress in clearing up the backlog; additionally, we note that we meet this evening with the minutes of the last meeting already produced.

There remain 10 sets in draft. We have produced and approved in a year's time 9 sets. Minutes of 8 July 1968 are being stenciled and there are 5 sets produced to be approved tonight.

<u>Still in Draft</u>	<u>Approved This Year</u>	<u>For Approval Tonight</u>
19 Dec. 1967	26 Dec. 1966	29 July 1968
26 Dec. 1967	4 March 1968	4 Nov. 1968
23 Jan. 1968	11 March 1968	18 Nov. 1968
19 Feb. 1968	25 March 1968	16 Dec. 1968
20 May 1968	1 April 1968	20 Jan. 1969
3 June 1968	22 April 1968	
10 June 1968	6 May 1968	
1 July 1968	22 Aug. 1968	
5 Oct. 1968	16 Sept. 1968	
28 Oct. 1968		

Motion: To accept the PB minutes of 29 July, 4 Nov., 18 Nov., 16 Dec. 1968 and 20 Jan. 1969, noting the following corrections to the last set, 20 Jan., in the Economics Report, point 4: (a) what was threatened in 1967 should better have been described as a downturn, not a depression; (b) DeGaulle's difficulties following the May-June events are not as a result of loss of production but of the increased cost of production in the future because of the increase in wage level; (c) two measures under Castle were described by the reporter--a 60-day cooling-off period and a provision that contracts will become legally binding if both parties agree. Passed

2. General Information and Correspondence: [from the earlier meeting of the NYC Executive Committee]
 - a. SDS Labor Committee: 22 Jan. issue of New America (official organ of the Socialist Party) carried article by Tony Papert, leading Marcusite activist, attacking SDS and PL, entitled "SDS Activist On: New Left's Bourgeois Impulses". The same issue also carried an article, "SDS-YAF: A Convergence?", insinuating that SDS is a symmetrical, "left-wing", fascism. The SP is not alone in seeking "left" arguments to try to legitimize impending rightist attack on the civil liberties of the "student crazies"; Theodore Draper, writing for the Jewish liberal Commentary, discussed social fascism in Germany, claiming relevance to today's "left anarchistic currents" while the CP's Daily World featured recollections of a Red Army marshal on how awful anarchists were in Spanish Civil War, explicitly relating this to today. Papert's article represents a political bloc with the red-baiting "State Department socialists" against those who aspire to be revolutionaries. If the Labor Committee upholds Papert's action, this will terminate our continuing friendly relation to the group; we must wage a fight demanding they repudiate this course. The Marcusite cadres broke from PL-SDS toward the working class; but after a few months of disappointment with their pet projects they have gone over, hardly knowing it themselves, to attacking PL and SDS from the right.
 - b. Toronto Trip: Cunningham went to Toronto with the Marcus group. In addition to hearing Papert's justifications for his New America article from the horse's mouth, some other information was gained. The purpose of the trip was to meet with some contacts and try to set up a Labor Committee there. Instead, the delegation found 80 or so people representing all kinds of tendencies--6 different and mutually antagonistic Maoist groups, Marcuse-ites, IWW, Guevarists, Sherwood.
3. Factional Situation:
 - a. Turner: Cunningham found out on his trip to Canada that Sherwood is bringing out Turner's factional documents. Therefore we need to bring out our bulletin on Turner soon. Three things are still pending: (a) the last few pages of Cunningham's "Letter to the Austin Comrades" need to be written; (b) a short reply to Turner's resignation statement by Robertson and Nelson; (c) a preface making the point that Turner is not very serious in many respects, but nonetheless he precipitated a considerable theoretical discussion which was valuable for us and which will arm our movement, making reference to other materials not included in this bulletin, especially Seymour's documents I through VII.
 - b. Internal: The Sebestas phoned after receipt of the 16 Dec. PB minutes. They strongly protest any implication that their wanting more details on Turner meant that they disagreed or were dubious about the PB's handling of the issue. Dave Rader's letter of 28 Jan. to us states his position: "It is hard to verify what is really true from a distance. I do not find the explanations for the PB conditions particularly convincing." A letter in reply has been written him by Cunningham.

- c. Wohlforth: In order to trap the Wohlforthites by their own cupidity, we sent them a \$10 check for the Sherwood Defense Committee. The cancelled check has come back to us, cleared, endorsed by Sherwood. By their own criteria, in view of their accusation in print that "the Spartacist League acts as the finger man for the world capitalists", the Workers League openly takes money from police agents! (or alternately, they know they lied about us).
- d. Membership Clarification: We have some people scattered around the country whose membership status is dubious. These are people whom we have not heard from recently or regularly, who have been neutral or noncommittal regarding the faction fight, and who have not been acting like members. Some are security risks, some are undecided between us and our factional antagonists who now stand outside the organization, some are people who have just out of the SL without bothering to mention it to us. All of these people are isolated, so we simply don't know what category they fall into, whether they want to remain members or not. Our late factional opponents have called us racists and police spies; no SL member can really remain neutral between such distant and mutually antagonistic poles. All our quasi-members will be sent all the documents and all the minutes bearing on the faction fight before they will be asked to take a stand. SL membership is self-defining in accordance with our application of Bolshevik norms.

Motion: To proceed to secure re-affirmation of membership of these isolated, marginal members. As a whole, we want to know: (1) if they consider themselves members--i.e., willingness to meet minimum norms of finances, activity, contact with the center and nearby organized locals so they can receive political direction; (2) we must have assurance that organizational integrity will be protected--i.e., there must be no contact with opponents except as opponents, in which the line of the organization is defended. Passed
Disc: Cunningham, Gordon, Seymour, Nelson, Cunningham, Robertson

Motion: To formally drop Maury K. from membership, noting that he has become an activist for Vietnam G.I. and has not responded to our letters for a long time. Passed

Motion: We note receipt of Geoff White's resignation, but drop him for non-payment of sustaining pledge over a period of many months prior to his resignation. Passed

4. Organization:

- a. Finances: Eleven areas outside New York have been written regarding the 1968 record of payments. Partly in response, about \$400 has come into the organization in current and back sustaining pledges from outside New York since the beginning of the new year. Around the first of the year we had built up a cash reserve of \$1100, but operating expenses have cut this to about \$700. This means we can pay for the next issue of the paper. We note with appreciation that Comrade Steve S. of Chicago has been the best individual in terms of payment record (completely without prodding and in semi-isolation, and with an extremely high pledge), and the Bay Area has been the best local outside NYC.

- b. National Office: The business side is very much behind, through no fault of the Circulation Manager; the level of work is much too high to be handled by one person alone. We will establish Tuesday evenings as a regular business staff work night in which other comrades can be trained and utilized.
Disc: Seymour, Gordon
- c. Work Schedule: Our present priorities are: (1) minutes backlog and factional documents (completion of discussion); (2) SPAR-TACIST #13; (3) Southern and/or other tours by Robertson; (4) draft of Perspectives Resolution; (5) Constitution--Organizational Rules.
- d. New Orleans: The National Office's circular letter has been fruitful. Both immediately temporarily and particularly on a longer-term, semi-permanent basis, colonization prospects are bright. The local HUAC is bringing out its Report #10, on SDS, which may mention us; a right-wing Catholic paper has just done an "expose" on the New Orleans SL with heavy emphasis on personal details (addresses, jobs, etc.), probably on information supplied by the police. The comrades have reprinted the NYC leaflet on PL's gangsterism.
- e. Seattle: Two letters received from Rick S.
- Motion: We note that with the transfer of Lynne H. to the Bay Area and the death of Glen R., our membership in Seattle fell below the statutory minimum of 3 members to charter an Organizing Committee. More importantly, they have neither met as an O.C. not paid dues nor functioned for us in any other way for six months. Therefore Seattle is not an O.C.; rather, the two people in the area are no more than individual members-at-large. We certainly hope that the comrades in Seattle will reactivate themselves, meet, recruit, etc.--i.e., begin to function as members. Passed
- f. New England: The contact situation continues to ripen. We urgently need a visit there. Disc: Gordon, Seymour, Robertson, Joel S., Gordon, Robertson, Cunningham

Motion: To table balance of agenda to an early next meeting. Passed

Meeting adjourned 11:35 p.m.