

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 16, April 22, 1975

Present: Barnes, Breitman, Clark, A. Hansen, J. Hansen, Jenness, Lovell, Seigle, Sheppard, Thomas, Waters

Consultative: Kerry, Novack

Chair: Clark

- AGENDA:
1. Draft Political Resolution
 2. Political Committee
 3. National Committee
 4. National Officers
 5. Plenum Organization and Schedule
 6. Convention Call

1. DRAFT POLITICAL RESOLUTION

Barnes reported.

Discussion

Motion: To approve the general line of the resolution and submit the draft to the National Committee for consideration.

Carried.

2. POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Barnes reported:

At a PC meeting last November 15 we decided to propose to the coming National Committee plenum the election of a Political Committee smaller than the present one. It would be composed of the comrades who are now on the current Political Bureau plus those regular members of the current Political Committee who have taken on day-to-day responsibilities. Under the new conditions we would have no need for the Political Bureau.

We agreed that this change would formalize the called-for next step in the transition in national leadership and provide the kind of Political Committee that would best serve the party's needs at this juncture. (See attachment to December 23, 1974 P.C. minutes.)

I've discussed the decision once more since then with the consultative members of the Political Committee in New York, Tom Kerry and George Novack, and they still believe it is the correct and needed step.

I also talked over the proposal with Joe Hansen and George Breitman. Upon my urging George agreed to stay on the Political Committee.

Joe said he had thought about the proposal and decided to go off the Political Committee for the same reasons in

the transition in leadership as the three consultative members of the P.C. Joe reminded me that, while he had not formally become a consultative member of the Political Committee, he was one of the four long-time central leaders we had designated as possible members when the National Committee established consultative membership on the Political Committee at the Spring, 1973, plenum. He believes we should now go forward from that stage.

I want to call special attention to one thing. Since we decided that the new Political Committee should be able to meet regularly and on call we have not included on the proposed committee four of the current Political Committee members responsible to the National Office who are presently on national assignments of the kind that precluded their attending committee meetings regularly. These four are Betsey Stone, who is doing field organizing; Peter Camejo, who is serving as presidential candidate; and Ed Shaw and Gus Horowitz who are on international work.

I will double-check with these comrades before the plenum and, if any of their situations permits attendance, they will be included as part of the proposed Political Committee.

It is understood that we will elect the Political Committee again in less than four months at the post-convention plenum and we can review the situation at that time.

Discussion

Motion: To recommend the following motions to the plenum:

1. That the Political Committee consist of ten members.
2. That the outgoing Political Committee nominates Barnes, Breitman, A. Hansen, Jenness, Lovell, Sheppard, Seigle, Thomas, Waters, and YSA NEC representative.
3. That the category of Consultative Member of the Political Committee be eliminated.

Carried.

3. NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Barnes reported:

In discussions about the Political Committee with Tom, George N., George B., and Joe each raised with me their opinion that the coming convention should eliminate the category of advisory membership on the National Committee. They all felt that going beyond the stage of consultative membership on the Political Committee marked the end of a certain process.

Of course, the category of advisory membership on the National Committee, originally set up to facilitate the transition in leadership, was never intended to be a permanent form. No one ever proposed such an institutionalization and probably the comrades who initiated the form did not expect it to last as long as 13 years. Yet it served a very important function and in my opinion it would have been premature to have eliminated it earlier than now.

In the broadest sense, the transition process began with the first central leadership generation, around Jim, and went through the second older central leadership generation who took the consultative membership status on the Political Committee at the Spring, 1973, plenum.

These steps helped make possible an orderly transition in leadership of a kind no other revolutionary party has had to grapple with, nor has done so well in solving smoothly. We seem to be in agreement that we are entering a new stage. This means, in my opinion, that the generation on the National Committee ranging from comrades of Frank Lovell's and George Breitman's age group down to the age group of those like Al Hansen and Ed Shaw will not have the perspective of moving on to any advisory membership, but will remain available for active regular membership on the National Committee. Thus the convention delegates would face the normal task of weighing each candidate in preparation of a proposed slate reflecting a balanced National Committee as they did before the initiation of advisory membership on the National Committee.

Of course any individuals formerly holding advisory membership on the National Committee could make themselves available as National Committee candidates if they so desire.

A couple days ago I asked Evelyn Reed, who is an advisory member of the National Committee and resident in New York, what her opinion was. She said she was in agreement with the proposed change.

So I think we should place this question on the agenda and solicit the opinion of the National Committee to see if they hold similar views about the party's needs at this stage of our development.

Discussion

Motion: To recommend to the National Committee the following motions for presentation to the convention:

To recommend to the convention the elimination of the category of advisory membership on the National Committee by striking section 3, paragraph 3, article V of the party constitution.

Carried.

4. NATIONAL OFFICERS

Barnes reported.

Discussion

Motion: To recommend to the plenum the nomination of Barnes as National Secretary and Sheppard as National Organization Secretary.

Carried.

5. PLENUM ORGANIZATION AND SCHEDULE

Sheppard reported.

Discussion

Motion: To propose the following procedural recommendations to the National Committee plenum:

1. That in cases of procedural disputes, discussion be limited to two speakers, one for and one against, and that each speaker be limited to two minutes.
2. That general discussion be limited to ten minutes per speaker and that no one speak twice until all who wish to speak have already done so.
3. That the Presiding Committee consist of the Political Bureau (Barnes, Clark, A. Hansen, Horowitz, D. Jenness, Lovell, Sheppard, Thomas, Waters).
4. To designate Eidsvik and Rupp as secretaries.
5. To invite as observers: Control Commission members, heads of national departments, members of the youth NEC, branch organizers, campaign committee officers, and special guests.
6. To give voice to organizers and department heads who are not members of the National Committee during discussion of the Tasks and Perspectives report and Youth report.

Carried.

Motion: To approve the following agenda and reporters:

1. World Political Situation - Horowitz
2. Political Resolution - Barnes
3. Black Struggle Resolution - Thomas
4. Youth Report
5. Tasks and Perspectives Report - Sheppard
6. World Movement Report - Waters
7. Election of Political Committee - Barnes

8. National Committee Perspectives - Barnes
9. Election of National Officers - Lovell
10. Convention Call - Jenness

Carried.

Motion: To propose the following schedule to the National Committee plenum (see attached).

Carried.

6. CONVENTION CALL

Sheppard reported (see attached).

Discussion

Motion: To recommend that the National Committee adopt the proposed convention call.

Carried.

Meeting Adjourned.