

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING No. 19, February 20, 1976

Present: Barnes, Blackstock, Breitman, Garza, Gersh, L. Jenness,
Jones, Lund, Stone, Thomas, Waters

Visitor: Morell

Chair: Stone

- AGENDA:
1. Campaign Director
 2. Boston
 3. World Movement
 4. San Antonio, Berkeley, Oakland
 5. Membership
 6. Branches, Districts, Locals
 7. ERA Campaign
 8. GMR and GSTQ Conventions
 9. Spark
 10. McReynolds Correspondence

1. CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR

Motion by Barnes: To assign Morell as national campaign director and invite her to attend Political Committee meetings.

Carried.

2. BOSTON

Barnes reported on events in Boston.

Discussion

3. WORLD MOVEMENT

(Sanchez invited for this point.)

Thomas gave preliminary report on International Executive Committee plenum.

Discussion

4. SAN ANTONIO, BERKELEY, OAKLAND

Stone reported on requests by 12 party members in San Antonio, 28 members in Berkeley and 21 members in Oakland to establish party branches in each area.

Discussion

Motion: That the Political Committee authorize the members in San Antonio, Berkeley, and Oakland to constitute party branches in those cities.

Carried.

5. MEMBERSHIP

Waters reported on proposal to accept EM and NM as provisional members-at-large in Bowling Green, Ohio.

Motion: To approve the proposal.

Carried.

Waters reported on proposal to readmit Tim Wohlforth into membership in the party and to assign him to work in the Lower East Side branch. Propose to treat this as similar to a fusion; to invite Wohlforth to National Committee plenum and make National Committee material available to him. Will run interview with Wohlforth and Nancy Fields in the Militant. Propose Wohlforth continue correspondence with dissidents as internal disintegration of Healy current continues. (See attached

Discussion

Motion: To approve the proposal.

Carried.

6. BRANCHES, DISTRICTS, LOCALS

Jones reported on progress of discussion about party structure and organization with branches and locals.

Discussion

Motion: To approve the report.

Carried.

7. ERA CAMPAIGN

(Brown, Jaquith, and Hildebrand invited for this point.)

Jaquith reported about efforts to organize the national demonstration in Springfield and responses that have been organized to defend abortion rights (see attached).

Discussion

Motion: To approve the report.

Carried.

8. GMR AND GSTQ CONVENTIONS

Waters reported on the invitations to attend as observers the Groupe Marxiste Révolutionnaire and Groupe Socialiste des Travailleurs du Québec conventions February 26-29.

Discussion

Motion: To assign Thomas and Lund as Political Committee representatives to the respective conventions.

Carried.

9. SPARK

Waters reported on discussions in Detroit and Baltimore with members of Spark.

Discussion

Agreed: To set up meeting to discuss collaboration with their national leadership and to propose exchange of internal materials and discussion.

10. McREYNOLDS CORRESPONDENCE

Barnes reported (see attached).

Discussion

Agreed: That Blackstock and Stapleton maintain contact with McReynolds.

Meeting Adjourned.

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SECOND ATTACK ON THE WRP'S EDUCATIONAL CENTRE IN DERBYSHIRE

FINAL EDITION

WORKERS PRESS regretfully announces that it has no alternative but to cease publishing after today's edition. This follows the decision of our printing firm, Pough Press, to cease trading from midnight last night.

The company is not going into liquidation and all financial obligations to suppliers, creditors and employees will be met in full.

The continuous daily publication of Workers Press since its founding on September 27, 1969, has been a magnificent achievement. It has won the respect and support of thousands of workers and youth in Britain and been an inspiration to the revolutionary movement throughout the world.

The background to Pough Press's financial situation is well known. The British Printing Industries Federation issued a statement on Thursday saying: 'Rises in general expenses over the last three months have increased

average printing costs, excluding materials, by 1.3 per cent, bringing the total rise since January 31, 1975, to 27.6 per cent.

Workers Press pays tribute to the unstinting devotion and sacrifice of its readers and supporters and subscribers. We can say without fear of contradiction that no other movement could have carried forward the fight for the daily revolutionary newspaper like ours.

We pledge to fight on. To complete the Workers Press Monthly Fund for February and to raise the final £14,000 for the £50,000 Crisis Fund. Our movement has the experience and the confidence to obtain the resources to carry the fight forward.

We call upon all our members and readers to rally to the Workers Revolutionary Party and fight as never before to raise the February Monthly Fund and complete the £50,000 Crisis Fund.

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

February 13, 1976.

£50,000 CRISIS FUND

IN THIS the last issue of Workers Press, we appeal to all our readers to complete the £50,000 crisis fund.

We are determined to raise the outstanding £14,000. We wish to thank all the readers and supporters of Workers Press who responded so magnificently to our fund and gave so generously.

We are well aware of the sacrifices that this involved, at a time when prices everywhere are soaring. For six and a half years Workers Press fought tirelessly against capitalism and its agents in the labour movement. That would not have been possible without your support. Now keep in to complete the £50,000. Yesterday we received: North London £26.56, Edinburgh £2, Glasgow £2, Chelmsley Wood £2, East Midlands £21.32, West End Theatres £10, Lewisham £15, Berley £9, Upton Park £20, Essex £31, Kilburn £1, Chelsea £1, Paddington £1, Willesden £10, Acton £7.10, Tottenham £5, South London £26.25.

TOTAL in so far as £35,548.90. Post all donations to: Crisis Fund 186a Clapham High St London SW4 7UG.

single person and £21.20 for a married couple—is only £3.84 and £15.55 respectively. Pensioners are an additional 18p a week worse off because of the government's decision not to pay the £70 Christmas bonus.

Blind and handicapped hit by cuts—see centre pages

TURN TO PAGE TWO



Free Shrewsbury
picket Des Warren
from Lincoln jail

THE SUNDAY TIMES, FEBRUARY 15 1976

The Workers Press goes down fighting

The Workers Revolutionary Party newspaper died yesterday. ANTHONY HOLDEN delivers an obituary

AFTER 77 months of reporting the crisis of capitalism, the Workers Press yesterday became its latest victim. Edition number 1922 of the world's only Trotskyist daily was the last, coming out with a fiery denunciation of "the capitalist Press the machine" it leaves behind.

We Expose Press Which-Hunt, announced the last headline to be produced behind the padlocks and barbed wire which guard the paper's Chapham office. Workers Press died as it had lived, defending the party it served—the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP)—against "the lies from the Fleet Street sewers."

It was timely that Friday's denunciations from the Daily Mail to The Times Educational Supplement, should have trumpeted stock and horror at council-subsidised schoolchildren watching at the WRP's country house in Derbyshire. Workers Press the same day printed a letter from Derby-

shire's chief constable, confirming that no charges would follow a police raid on the house last year, which had itself followed the Observer in the

On Friday night the pencils of Workers Press sub-editors reached white heat countering the lies. Tomorrow the paper's 15 editorial staff will be on the dole, and its 25 printers will join the heroic ranks of the unemployed.

What went wrong? The money, quite simply, stopped coming in. Workers Press was launched on capital of £28,000, and has since run a monthly fighting fund to keep going. A £30,000 crisis appeal launched last December had brought in only £30,000 by its February 1 target date. Another £9,000 has since dribbled in, but the £14,000 deficit proved too large to survive.

Several such crises have been averted in the past, sometimes by the party's leading lady, Vanessa Redgrave, who has coughed up unstintingly, and has been writing and dining potential showbiz converts. All in the end, to no avail. Phoenix Press, the paper's printing company, consented to trade two days ago, Friday the 13th. All outstanding debts will be paid.

Alex Mitchell, the paper's editor, said a price increase was not even considered. Fleet Street's regular price rises are a ludicrous way to run newspapers. We don't want to hack away at our readership by making Workers Press into a luxury commodity? Going weekly was not less ideal, as it would have left the Foreign Presses expensively idle too much of the time.

Mitchell, who will now devote his energies to the party, stoutly claims Workers Press was the world's best newspaper. He is especially proud of the role it played in toppling the Heath government, its exposure of CIA

agents in Britain, and its world-wide investigation into the real facts of Trotsky's assassination. The irony is that a herald of revolution should be silenced by the crisis it thrived on. At a time of high unemployment, blamed on right-wing Labour government, such a paper might be expected to flourish. "But the crisis has hit the working class so hard," says Mitchell, "that 429 a week is something they have to think twice about."

He angrily denies a popular theory that both party and paper have never really recovered from the deflection last year of Alex "The Mole" Thornhill's crucial trade union power-base. He was expelled, along with some 100 supporters, for "reformist" questioning of the party line, unchanged since Trotsky laid it down in 1938. "That was another episode grossly inflated by the capitalist Press," says Mitchell. Sales of the paper, he maintains, have remained steady. Circulation figures, like party membership, are not officially revealed. He is happy with a privately published estimate of between 10,000 and 20,000.

Never carried by newspapers, Workers Press has had to survive by subscription, and was Crayke sales in pubs and on street corners. Its death is part of the same trend as the collapse of two rival Communist papers, the Labour and the Free Nation, and of the fine Free Nation, and of the fine Free Nation, and of the fine Free Nation. Let them see, says Mitchell, "They work best."

WRP, he says, certainly will have no doubts. In Britain's last-remaining edition of Workers Press, which announced six days' closure, readers were invited to take out a £2 annual subscription.



Yesterday's last edition thanks to the revolutionary leadership of WRP's high-paid members. The party's leading lady,

FEB 15 1976

Report on May 16 National ERA Demonstration

by Cindy Jaquith, February 20, 1976

The May 16 national march on Springfield, Illinois, to demand ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment is rapidly gaining support around the country and has the potential to be a large and important demonstration for women's rights. Called by the National Organization for Women (NOW), the action is a rallying point not only for NOW and other women's liberation groups, but also for students, trade unions, Black organizations, and other supporters of the ERA.

On several campuses in the Midwest, there are already strong ERA-May 16 coalitions. In Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey NOW is discussing plans to charter trains to Springfield. A recent regional meeting of the UAW Women's Commission in Illinois endorsed the action. In Los Angeles, an ERA conference of 300 voted unanimously to hold a May 16 solidarity march in Los Angeles.

In every city, we should be actively involved in building May 16. We can begin right away to get endorsements for the march from women's groups, student governments, unions, chapters of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, the NAACP, and from church groups, as well as from prominent politicians, feminists, labor officials, and Black community leaders.

We can start organizing buses on the campuses and in our unions. Both male and female comrades should be introducing resolutions in their unions backing May 16, urging the unions to set up May 16 or ERA committees to mobilize the membership for the demonstration.

We want to go to union conventions, women's conferences, student meetings, and Black gatherings to ask support for May 16. At the March 6-7 meeting of CLUW's National Executive Board, in Washington, D.C., we will be urging the delegates to put national CLUW on record in support of May 16 and to urge local CLUW chapters to mobilize union support for the action.

The International Women's Day activities March 6-8 will provide a very important way to get the word out on this demonstration. "On to Springfield!" should be the theme of the ERA actions we are organizing. In some areas, we have invited leaders of NOW to give keynote speeches on the May 16 demonstration. We will also want to participate in the many other International Women's Day activities planned, distributing literature and talking to people about May 16. Although there is no national literature on the demonstration available from NOW thus far, ERA coalitions and NOW chapters can put out local leaflets right away to build the action.

In general, our approach is to begin right away building for May 16 through whatever organization we can--whether they be ERA

coalitions, NOW chapters, campus women's liberation groups, or unions. The exact type of group through which we do ERA work will vary in different cities; the key is to begin working with whatever forces are ready to move.

Since NOW is the national sponsor of the action, we want to work as closely with NOW as possible, both as NOW members and through our unions.

* * *

We also want to pay close attention to the stepped-up campaign by the right wing against abortion, exhibited by President Ford's recent blast against the Supreme Court decision and by the large anti-abortion demonstrations that took place in January. These attacks have alarmed supporters of abortion rights, opening up the possibility of actions to counter the anti-abortion offensive. At a national board meeting in January, for example, NOW called for local pro-abortion demonstrations in May, around the time of Mother's Day, and for a national demonstration sometime this summer in Philadelphia, when the Pope visits that city.

We want to help build these and any other activities in response to the attacks on abortion. Our candidates and campaign literature, articles in the Militant, and forums will be an important part of this stepped-up campaign in support of the right to abortion. We also want to sell widely the revised Pathfinder pamphlet that has just come out, Abortion: Women's Fight for the Right to Choose.

COPY

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Fred Halstead
Los Angeles, California
February 9, 1976

John Studer
Organizer, New York Local SWP, city wide.
New York, N.Y.

Dear John,

Enclosed find a copy of a letter I recently received from Dave McReynolds. As you can see he wants two things: to establish a liason with the SWP through some individual he can get along with who is also authoritative in the SWP, and to discuss this electoral idea.

Quite aside from the electoral idea, I think it would be useful to have someone assigned to this liason. It wouldn't involve much time, just someone who would keep in touch, make sure the WRL had an exchange of our publications, and have an occasional informal talk. For one thing it won't hurt for us to know what is going on in pacifist social democratic circles, and also to know whatever Dave knows about what is going on in the CP.

However, I am not familiar with or au current on who is around New York. Could you send me a suggestion or two for such a liason person, which I could pass on to Dave. I'll show this letter to Doug when he visits here, which I understand he is going to do in the next few days.

Regards,

s/ Fred Halstead

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War Resisters League
New York, N.Y.
February 4, 1976

Fred Halstead
Los Angeles, California

Dear Fred,

I have an idea that I want to raise with some of the groups in the city here, including--at an early point--your Party. I am a little hampered by not knowing who is the appropriate person. So my request is to find out who you think I ought to approach--perhaps as an ongoing contact between WRL and the SWP, which is realistically to say between myself and the SWP. I maintain liason with the CP through Gil and this is the kind of thing where someone who was not totally hostile to pacifists makes a better contact than someone who was. If you were here, it would be you.

The idea is to think about a united Left ticket in 1977 for Mayor, one which might be clearly socialist but the candidate not a member of the existing parties. Such a clear "left" ticket could, I think, pull 15% of the vote, mobilize the Left out of its various shells and sub-groups, and giving [sic] it some working unity. If the city crisis won't do it, nothing will.

I've raised the idea with Gil and assume he will pass it on. I've raised it with PSP. I would like to raise it directly and informally with the SWP. (Assuming again, as with Gil, that you would also let them know what I had in mind). But the moment isn't ripe to bring together groups to explore this--a little personal discussion here and there is needed.

The Japanese can do it. The French and Italians can do it. I think here in New York we might at least think about it. It would mean possibly a single ticket for Mayor with various groups making arrangements for Council candidates. Many possible variations on a theme. But some trust is needed, some goodwill, and I am raising the idea entirely on my own, without any prior consultation with the SP, WRL, etc. So who might be the person here I should approach?

Fraternally,
/s/
Dave McReynolds