

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES, No. 56, August 24, 1967

Present: Barnes, DeBerry, Halstead, Kerry, Novack, Shaw, Sheppard, Jones.

Visitor: Boutelle.

Chairman: Jones.

AGENDA:

1. Membership.
2. Resident National Committee Meeting.
3. Defense Case.
4. Antiwar Report.
5. Election Campaign.

1. MEMBERSHIP

Shaw reported request of New York branch to approve their recommendation that Leon D. be readmitted to party.

Motion: To concur with recommendation of New York branch.

Carried.

2. RESIDENT NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Shaw reported that co-thinker from Ceylon will be in New York next week. Recommendation to hold resident N.C. meeting during that week, the exact day to be determined.

Discussion: Sheppard, Shaw, Kerry, Novack.

3. DEFENSE CASE

Novack reported.

Efforts are being made to facilitate the release of co-thinker imprisoned in Mexico. He has the best legal help available. The most effective defense effort at this point is widespread publicity and support for the entire group of witch hunt victims who have been imprisoned.

Discussion: DeBerry, Boutelle.

4. ANTIWAR REPORT

Jones reported on personnel in national office of Mobilization Committee.

Discussion: Barnes, Novack.

5. ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Barnes reported. (See attached.)

Discussion: Boutelle, Barnes, Halstead, Novack, Sheppard.

Motion: That Clifton DeBerry be National  
Chairman of the 1968 SWP Campaign Committee.

Carried.

Motion: That George Novack be National Treasurer  
of the 1968 SWP Campaign Committee.

Carried.

Meeting adjourned.

### Election Campaign Report by J. Barnes

Next week we will publicly launch our presidential campaign. We will present our candidates at a national press conference on August 30, mailing announcements of the campaign to the press around the country, and then on August 31, we will intervene in and seek endorsements at the National Conference for New Politics convention. While there we plan at least one press conference with our candidates, and hope to get out the first layer of our literature, obtain the initial list of names of young people who will be interested in Young Socialists for Halstead and Boutelle, get some initial endorsers of the campaign, and solicit enough endorsements to announce Afro-Americans for Halstead and Boutelle.

### Campaign Finances

The perspective we discussed at the plenum of raising significant sums for the campaign seems realistic. We have people around us that we didn't have before and because of the character of the Vietnam war and the uprisings in the ghetto, many seem amenable to contributing to our campaign as a meaningful alternative. Even at this early stage we have gotten a couple of significantly large contributions which have enabled us to go ahead on the scope we had planned with quantities of attractive literature, a large initial mailing of publicity material and a sizeable intervention at the NCNP convention. We propose George Novack be the treasurer of the National Socialist Workers Campaign Committee.

### Ballot Status

We have already filed 20,000 signatures in Michigan. The petitioning in Michigan is an indication of the beginning spirit of the campaign. The response of the comrades asked to go out petitioning and particularly the response from other locals was excellent. Detroit reported the response among those approached for signatures was friendly also. This bodes very well for successful petition campaigns in other states. Many of the petitioners said, "put a socialist party on the ballot," or "put a party against the war on the ballot," and it went quite well.

We have reviewed the ballot requirements in all the fifty states. These qualifications change from year to year, and we think that this year we might have the funds and forces to get on in a few more states than before if the requirements are not too forbidding. Briefly the situation can be summed up like this:

In the previous several presidential campaigns, we have been on in the same twelve states; in 1964 we were on the ballot in eleven states, mainly due to a technical oversight

in Utah. Thus we have those twelve states to begin with, and since the laws in these states have not changed appreciably, there is a good chance we can get on again in those twelve states.

In addition to that, there is a layer of several states in which the requirements are not forbidding and which, depending on the number of forces we can release to go and do the work there, we can probably get on the ballot. Two states in New England are a possibility, Rhode Island and Connecticut. Kentucky has minimal requirements, and a voting age of 18, which would make it easier to get electors.

We have been particularly checking the deep south states. For the publicity value during the campaign it would be very good if we were actually on the ballot in one of the deep south states. Texas, although not usually considered in the deep south belt, is a relatively easy state to get on, the main problem being electors. This year, given the contacts we have in the antiwar movement and the activity of our sympathizers there, this may not be an impossible block. So we want to tentatively shoot for Texas.

In the deep south itself, the three states that are potentialities (the others are excluded because of election law changes) are Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. All of them have different requirements, but none of them are in the impossible category like Ohio and California. The past problems regarding these states have been electors and money. In these states you have to file a complete set of electors, and file money, unreturnable, for each elector. But none of these requirements are prohibitive, and we should go ahead and see what we can do. There may be sources outside of the party from which we can raise funds for this purpose, and getting the electors may not be out of the question in the altered political climate in the country.

Several additional states in the Northwest and Southwest are possibilities. Here it is mainly a question of the number of teams that can be organized by the West Coast branches; how many states the comrades can realistically cover.

\* \* \*

There are two main areas to which we hope to aim the bulk of our campaign and from which we hope to recruit -- the Afro-American community and the radical youth movement. We have given some thought to what we can do outside of the general campaign activity to take advantage of some of the openings that exist in these two areas.

First, the Afro-American community. In consultation with the black comrades and after reviewing the experiences of the past campaigns, none of us felt there was any pos-

sibility at the beginning of the campaign for an active membership organization of Afro-Americans in support of the campaign. What we did think was realistic from the very start of the campaign, is a listing of endorsers entitled Afro-American Committee for Halstead and Boutelle. This would be people who say, "While I don't necessarily agree with every plank in the platform of the Socialist Workers Party, I am supporting the ticket of Halstead and Boutelle in 1968 instead of the war-making and racist Democrats and Republicans.

We should not aim for only major figures or figures whose names would be useful in ads, but should approach and ask for campaign endorsement from all of the active Afro-Americans we are in touch with in the black freedom movement. We can thus begin building up a list of names and addresses of people from the very beginning who are endorsers of the campaign. As the list of endorsers grows, the most useful thing to initially do will be to utilize them in an ad in either the black press or the radical press. This will depend on the rate at which the names come in and also if we raise money we can use for this.

We propose that Comrade DeBerry be National Chairman of the Socialist Workers National Campaign Committee. Paul will be away from the center on tour a good share of the year, and it would be fruitful for Dee to have a public position in the campaign, thus enabling us to take advantage of openings and opportunities that the candidate would normally cover if he was in town, and in essence giving us a third national campaign spokesman.

#### Youth Committee

We face a different situation among youths. It's a milieu which we think we can get to join the campaign in an active sense from the beginning. The key thing is that the youth locals establish a tone and method to their campaigning that projects the most minimal conditions and minimal commitment for a young person to become a Young Socialist for Halstead and Boutelle. There are basically three presidential tickets in the field as of this weekend; the Democrats, the Republicans, and Halstead and Boutelle. Everything else is problematical. That is the idea we want to push. American youth have only three alternatives: to be a Young Democrat, a Young Republican or a Young Socialist.

We have learned from past experience that there are really no big obstacles to getting young people involved. It is simply a question of how much energy we can throw into it, how much attractive literature we can provide, and how much meaningful activity we can provide to youth who at the beginning are willing to campaign against the Democrats and Republicans with no further commitment. That is another reason we hope to get out as much literature as we can the

first month of the campaign, so that there can be a variety of things to paste up, stick up, lick up, pin on, and pass out. That is the way we can get young people initially involved in the campaign -- through activity.

There are numerous openings and opportunities to draw young people around the campaign, but many of these young people are not yet ready to join the YSA. Setting up a separate structure and making the requirement for membership as minimal as possible, will facilitate drawing these young people into the campaign over a period of time and lay the basis for the broadening of the youth movement over the next year and a half.

After careful consideration the youth came to the conclusion that there would be significant advantages in calling the youth campaigners Young Socialists for Halstead and Boutelle.

1) If, as it is possible, some sort of "peace" ticket appears on the ballot in several states, this would be the main rival attraction to radical youth. To all the young people from SDSers on, who consider themselves socialists to one degree or another, the approach we would want to make would not be just against the Democrats and Republicans, but the fact that if you are really against the "system" you must support a socialist campaign. Once some sort of peace ticket does get in the field, especially if it has a "radical" program on the war question, this will be the main differentiation that we will have. We will be the socialist, anti-war, pro black freedom ticket, and they will be the "independent," "new politics," antiwar ticket, or whatever they are going to call themselves.

2) We want to continue the work we've begun in the anti-war movement influencing the young people who are under the influence of the CP. We should point out over and over to them that if you are a socialist, you may disagree on a number of different things, you may not even be ready to join any socialist organization, but the one thing that defines you as a socialist is that you support the socialist ticket as opposed to the capitalist ticket -- Democrats, Republicans, or third party. We found in the past, even in 1964, that this was an attractive argument to young people who were influenced by other tendencies, and who weren't yet in the YSA.

3) By taking this path, we can get to and begin drawing these young socialists around us on a minimal level, and not try, through some administrative gimmick, to change the current character of the YSA to do it. In fact, the existence of the YSA as a clearly separate socialist youth organization is one of the key conditions necessary to make it clear that joining Young Socialists for Halstead and Boutelle is not the same thing as joining the YSA, doesn't require that kind of commitment.

4) We cannot forecast how history will develop the next fifteen months. If the war continues, if the uprisings in the black communities continue, by November 1968 we will have attracted a very large number of young people to our campaign. This is a possibility we should keep in mind. Young Socialists for Halstead and Boutelle will then be faced with the pleasant necessity of calling some kind of conference and deciding what to do next.

Finally, it is very unlikely that any young person who wanted to join in on some activity of the campaign would not do so because it was called Young Socialists and not students or youth.

The most important thing will be the minimal character of activity or commitment that we establish everywhere to be a Young Socialist for Halstead and Boutelle. If you sign a mailing list, and put up a poster, you're a Young Socialist for Halstead and Boutelle.

Hopefully a call will be signed by a number of leading YSAers and a number of leading independents in the student movement, which will call for a big rally in Washington the evening of October 21 to actually kick off the national campaign of Young Socialists for Halstead and Boutelle. The young comrades in several areas have indicated that they think they can come up with the names of various independents so that by the time of the October 21 demonstration we can pass out tens of thousands of this call.

Immediately following the NCNP convention, on September 8 through 10, there are two national youth gatherings. One is the YSA national plenum and the other is the DuBois Club national convention. The candidates will attend the YSA plenum and a focal point of discussion will be our presidential campaign.

The DuBois Club national convention is also important. It is in many ways a crisis convention for them. They have gone through a serious decline in the past year, losing members, their influence decreasing, and even having a wing of the CP propose their dissolution. A few months ago their Afro-American national chairman, Franklin Alexander, resigned as national chairman to go back to school, and we know there are disagreements with their line on black power. They informed a YSA officer that the YSA would be excluded from attending. It will be important for our candidates to go, ask for the floor, and say a few words about the socialist campaign against the war, in support of black power, and ask for the endorsement and support of the DuBois Club membership.

During the period of September 15 - October 21, we thought it would be wise not to try to organize a tour through the branches, mainly because that will be the last weeks before the October 21 demonstration with all the work entailed in the branches in the final push. Fred will have

to be in New York most of that period organizing for October 21.

We thought that it would be valuable to use that time from September 20 to about October 20 for Paul to take a short swing through the main black campuses in the south and a couple of the areas where we have contacts like Lowndes County. Plans now call for starting the tour at Howard University, making a swing through Alabama and Mississippi all the way over to Texas Southern University and Houston, to Fisk, and then back to Howard University on October 20.

There would be two main things in the tour:

1) Paul would be building the October 21 demonstration in Washington, urging people to make the black contingent as large and militant as possible, and 2) touring as the vice presidential candidate of the SWP. It won't be time to have an extensive tour, but there will be time to hit eight or ten of the most important campuses. It will also be an initial opportunity to do a sounding on the possibility of presidential electors, building up a mailing list, and introducing Paul to the black youth in these areas.

As part of the October 21 march a black march is being organized. It will start at a rally at Howard on the 21st and then wind through the ghetto meeting the main body of the march at the bridge going across to the Pentagon. Paul will take part in this rally and march.

In the evening of October 21 there will be a big rally to kick off Young Socialists for Halstead and Boutelle. We will have a massive intervention in the October 21 mobilization for the campaign. We will have additional new literature out by then, probably a twelve page Militant, ads in the radical press and the printed call signed by the independent figures for Young Socialists for Halstead and Boutelle.

Beginning at the NCNP convention there will be young comrades circulating interest sheets, signing people up if they are at all interested in the campaign. This will give us a broad mailing list early in the campaign, and possible contacts for setting up meetings.

By mid November following the party convention we will begin the national tours of the candidates through the party and youth branches.

There are great advantages that would accrue to the campaign if it were possible for Paul and Fred to make a couple of swings outside of the country during the campaign. Visits as candidates to Cuba, Saigon, Hanoi, for instance, would be in keeping with their responsibility to the American electorate.



We want to run a campaign that we can present to the young people and the black militants that should support us, as a campaign that is doing everything in its power to bring the ideas of black power, getting out of Vietnam, and the vision of a socialist America, to the whole country.

### Concrete Tasks

There are several tasks which should begin in each branch as soon as possible.

1. Name a local campaign manager who can be corresponded with. Even at this early stage there may be some radio and television openings and speaking engagements which we will want to take advantage of. Campaign literature will be coming out regularly.

2. Sources of funds. As indicated before, we have found that we can tap resources outside of the party for funds for the campaign. There may be progressive or antiwar figures not formally thought of as contributors of the SWP, but who give to the antiwar movement and may contribute to a campaign against the war in Vietnam. Comrades should begin to contact some of these sources, or inform the center of possibilities for large contributions which would be better contacted from the national campaign office.

### 3. Activities:

There are several activities which can begin immediately. These all should be viewed within the framework of the fact that our main campaign push now is building October 21 and building the Student Mobilization Committee as the central axis of that push. In all likelihood we will be preparing for a national convention of the Student Mobilization Committee after October 21. Within that framework, comrades can begin to:

1) Sign up youth interested in Young Socialists for Halstead and Boutelle. Sign up sheets are included with the basic campaign literature each area will receive. These sheets should be sent to New York after local copies are made.

2) Obtain endorsers of the campaign for all three categories -- youth, Afro-Americans, and general endorsers.

3) Organize some initial paste-ups of posters, stickers, especially around campuses and in black communities to get out the message of the campaign.

4) Set up tables on campuses for distributing brochures, stickers, buttons, signing up young people, etc.

The initial steps of the campaign have indicated an opening for an extremely fruitful campaign. The next fifteen months will give us a tremendous opportunity, and it is important that we make the most of it.