

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING No. 50, December 16, 1977

Present: Barnes, Breitman, Garza, Hawkins, Heisler, Hrowitz, Jaquith, D. Jenness, L. Jenness, Jones, Kramer, LaMont, Levine, Lovell, Miah, Petrin, Reid, Rodriguez, Stapleton, Waters

Guests: Britton, Morell

Chair: Barnes

- AGENDA:
1. Women's Liberation Work Perspectives
  2. Philadelphia SWP-SLP Joint Membership Meeting
  3. Fall Speaking Tours
  4. Membership
  5. Political Committee Representative to YSA Convention
  6. Mideast
  7. National Committee Assignments
  8. World Movement

1. WOMEN'S LIBERATION WORK PERSPECTIVES

(Sedwick invited for this point.)

Reid reported. (Report to be published in the Party Organizer.)

Discussion

Motion: To approve.

Carried.

2. PHILADELPHIA SWP-SLP JOINT MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Stapleton reported on December 11 joint membership meeting between the Philadelphia SLP and SWP to discuss programs of both organizations.

Discussion

3. FALL SPEAKING TOURS

(Farley and Sedwick invited for this point.)

Barnes initiated discussion on observations made during recent speaking tours for the Militant.

Discussion

Barnes reported on Louisville Communist Party Club's decision to call for a vote for Debby Tarnopol for mayor in recent elections. (See attached correspondence which was postmarked November 1 but received only on November 17, due to postal delay.)

Motion: To refer to secretariat further discussion with Louisville comrades on how to take advantage and follow up on this important development, and how to handle it in the Militant.

(over)

Discussion

Carried.

4. MEMBERSHIP

Rodríguez reported on recommendation of the East Los Angeles branch that A.H. be readmitted to the party.

Discussion

Motion: To concur with the recommendation of the East Los Angeles branch.

Carried.

Rodríguez reported on the recommendation of the Milwaukee branch that K.J. be readmitted to the party.

Discussion

Motion: To concur with the recommendation of the Milwaukee branch.

Carried.

5. POLITICAL COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE TO THE YSA CONVENTION

Waters reported on the proposal to designate Miah as the Political Committee representative to the YSA convention, and to discuss outline of report at next Political Committee meeting.

Discussion

Motion: To approve.

Carried.

6. MIDEAST

(Baumann, Frankel, Seidman, and Wattenmaker invited for this point.)

Frankel reported.

Baumann reported.

Discussion

Motion: To approve the general line of the reports as guides to comrades writing on the Mideast for our press.

Carried.

## 7. NATIONAL COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Waters reported on the following proposed changes in National Committee assignments:

To release Miah from his current assignment as national Black work director and make him available for assignment as Chicago local organizer, following National Committee plenum in February.

The Boston local has agreed to release Dixon and Williams for transfer to New York. The proposal is that Dixon replace Miah as national Black work director and that Williams be available for assignment as part of New York local leadership.

Stone, who is currently Chicago local organizer, will be transferring to New York after transition in Chicago has been completed.

### Discussion

Motion: To approve the proposed National Committee assignments.

Carried.

## 8. WORLD MOVEMENT

Barnes reported on recent developments in Costa Rica and Colombia.

### Discussion

Meeting adjourned.

COPY

# DEBBY TARNOPOL FOR MAYOR VOTE SOCIALIST WORKERS

1505 W. BROADWAY, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY 40203

Phone 587-8418

10/11/77

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Louisville Communist Club;

On November 8th. some of the people of Louisville will elect a new mayor. For too many years a working class alternative to the parties of the capitalist class has not existed in Louisville. But this year the racist, big business parties of the Democrats and Republicans are being challenged by a working class alternative; the Socialist Workers party candidate for mayor Debby Tarnopol.

Copies of the "Tarnopol for Mayor" brochure and the "Bill of Rights for Working People" are enclosed for distribution to your membership. These documents detail the positions of the Socialist Workers party on the vital issues facing the working class and members of the oppressed nationalities in Louisville, the United States and ultimately on an international level.

Despite our political differences we feel it is essential that parties representing working class currents be supported as an expression of opposition to the parties of the bosses. In Louisville we have recently been able to unite around actions in defense of a woman's right to choose abortion. Members of our two organizations travelled together to Chicago to participate in a

conference to organize support for working women. On several occasions the Socialist Workers party has offered support to Communist Party candidates who were running against bourgeois parties.

As the only working class alternative on the November ballot we ask our brothers and sisters in the Louisville Communist Club to endorse the Socialist Workers/Tarnopol for Mayor campaign. We will be calling in a week to see what you have decided.

In struggle,



Dennis Rosa

Campaign Director

cc to Ann Braden

COPY

October 31, 1977

Dear Friends of the Louisville SWP:

We of the Louisville Communist Party Club have discussed your letter asking us to endorse the Socialist Workers Party/ Debby Tarnapol campaign for mayor.

It is our collective opinion that Debby's campaign, along with that of Henry Owens, has been an important break-through for this city. The fact that alternatives to the Democratic and Republican Parties were effectively offered in the race for mayor this year has given the citizens of this community a way to begin breaking away from the dead ends of the two old parties. Debby's campaign has also made it possible for people here to look at a socialist alternative at close range. For the most part, we also admire the manner in which Debby has conducted the campaign --- and especially the effective way she has forced the community to look at alternative candidates as "legitimate" ones.

We are therefore urging our friends to reject the Democratic-Republican trap by voting for one of these alternative candidates. We have crystalized our collective thinking on this campaign into a brief position statement, which we enclose. You are free to make any use of this which you wish.

We cannot, however, give an "endorsement" to the SWP/Tarnapol campaign as you request. We have not included our reasons for this in the enclosed position statement, since its content is not something we care to include in any statement that might be publicized; we do not think public discussion of differences among groups on the left is helpful in Louisville at this time. But we do believe we owe you an explanation of our reasons for refusing to make the endorsement you request, and these are outlined below:

1) The first reason is that an endorsement of the SWP/Tarnapol campaign implies a statement of full agreement with its entire program and all the positions Debby has taken. We disagree with some of these positions which we consider to involve basic questions. Specifically:

(a) Although this is not included in the SWP printed platform, Debby in spoken presentations has attacked the Soviet Union and told the Louisville public that that country "taints" the concept of socialism. We certainly acknowledge the right of all groups and individuals to hold differing opinions and make differing analyses of the past and present situation in the Soviet Union. But we believe that to live in the heartland

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of world imperialism and attack the Soviet Union at this point in history puts one objectively on the wrong side of the world class struggle. It also gives aid and comfort to U.S. imperialism and to those forces within the U.S. government which are pushing to revive the Cold War and lay the basis for hot war against the socialist world. Furthermore, in a place like Louisville, where socialism is still a partially taboo word, it gives aid and comfort to those who in effect take the position that "you can be for socialism if you'll just make it clear that you are against the socialist countries that U.S. imperialism considers to be enemies."

(b) Debby and the SWP locally has refused to support the struggle against the firing of Shelby Lanier by the city of Louisville. We understand (or think we do) your thinking on this --- and your position that police departments are hopelessly the tool of the ruling class. However, at this point in time, the firing of Lanier was the cutting edge of the blatant racism in our local government, and the fight against it was and is the cutting edge of a fight-back against that racism. We think it is an abdication of that fight to sit this one out.

Since these two matters involve what we believe are absolutely key issues in our world today --- the struggle against U.S. imperialism and the struggle against racism --- we cannot endorse a campaign that we believe is wrong on these issues.

2. And secondly, we do not want to take a position that closes the door on support for a Black candidate who also offers an alternative to the two old parties. We believe that Henry Owens, although he does not present a socialist analysis, has in his campaign dealt with the issues facing poor and working people in this community and we believe he also poses a challenge to the city's ruling circles. We believe that voters should give serious consideration to both of the alternative candidates.

We want to make it clear that our refusal to endorse this campaign does not in any sense mean that we are opposed to cooperating with the SWP here in Louisville on specific issues and efforts, where the positions of our two groups coincide. We have done this in the past; we hope such coalitions can be achieved in the future. We believe that there have been friendly and cooperative relationships between individual members of our two groups here in Louisville --- to an extent that may not exist in some other communities in this country. We hope these will continue to exist and will make continuing coalitions around specific issues possible here where they might not be so likely in some other places. In a place like Louisville, joint action on issues from the left is especially important, we believe.

We also want to say that our refusal to endorse this particular campaign does not mean we are closing the door to some future united left campaign for a local office here in Louisville.

(continued)

3.

We believe, however, that if such a united campaign is to happen, it must come about from the outset as exactly that. That is, we think it can't happen by one group drawing up a program, selecting a candidate and then going to other groups for support. Instead, there would have to be a coalition committee to map out a campaign, determine points of agreement, draw up a platform that would not violate the basic principles of any group --- and from there move on to joint selection of a candidate. If such an approach interests the SWP, our club would be quite open to discussing this possibility for the future.

Yours in struggle,

The Louisville Communist Club

Position Statement by Louisville Club of the Communist Party

Re: 1977 Race for Mayor of Louisville

Regardless of the personal characteristics, good or bad, of their individual candidates, neither the Democratic nor Republican Parties offer any hope of solving the critical problems that face the working class of this city. Both represent the interests of the wealthy --- so they cannot and will not deal in any real way with the issues of poverty, unemployment, racism, poor housing, soaring utility rates and a multitude of other problems that plague our citizens.

Ultimately, the working class, Black and white, must break away from the dead ends of these two old parties, form their own party or parties, and run their own candidates.

Fortunately this year in Louisville a way to begin that breakaway has been offered by the campaigns of two alternative candidates. Debby Tarnapol, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor, has presented Louisville citizens with a socialist alternative. Henry Owens, an independent candidate for the same office, has offered a new and grass-roots approach to the problems of the poor.

We believe that a strong vote for either or both of these alternative candidates will help lay the basis for an on-going independent people's politics in this community. We urge Louisville voters to reject the Democratic-Republican trap and to consider voting either for Ms. Tarnapol or Mr. Owens. We agree with Eugene Debs who used to say, "It is better to vote for what you want and not get it than to vote for what you don't want and get it."