

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 7, February 23, 1979

Present: Barnes, Britton, Clark, Hawkins, Horowitz, D. Jenness, Kramer, Lyons, Morell, Ring, Sedwick, Seigle, Stone, Waters

Guest: Zimmermann

Chair: Waters

AGENDA: 1. China-Vietnam  
2. Miners  
3. Gelfand Letter  
4. Opening of Literary Discussion

1. CHINA-VIETNAM

(Baumann, Evans, Feldman, Pérez, Rose, and Shilman invited for this point.)

Barnes reported.

Clark initiated discussion on line of Militant analysis.

Discussion

Motion: To approve reports and the editorial line of Militant.

Carried.

2. MINERS

(Rose and Shilman invited for this point.)

Shilman reported on developments in the miners union and progress toward establishing a miners fraction.

Discussion

Motion: That Lyons will organize discussion with comrades in Pittsburgh and Morgantown about establishing a Pittsburgh-Morgantown district of the party.

That Morgantown branch be requested to release Shilman from current assignment as branch organizer to be available to become district organizer of proposed Pittsburgh-Morgantown district.

Carried.

(over)

3. GELFAND LETTER

Seigle reported on proposed reply to Gelfand letter.  
(See attached.)

Discussion

Motion: To approve proposed letter.

Carried.

4. OPENING OF LITERARY DISCUSSION

Seigle reported. (See February 23 letter.)

Discussion

Motion: To approve.

Carried.

Meeting adjourned.

14 Charles Lane  
New York, N.Y. 10014  
February 24, 1979

Alan Gelfand  
Los Angeles

Alan Gelfand,

The Political Committee has received your letter of January 29, 1979. In this letter you "reject" the fact that you have been expelled from the SWP. You assert that you "have been purged, not expelled; and that this action was taken by the government, not the SWP."

By taking this position you have placed yourself outside the constitutional framework of the Socialist Workers Party.

You also confirm that you filed the "friend of the court" brief that formed the basis for the charge against you of undisciplined and disloyal behavior. You boast that this treacherous act constitutes "the highpoint of my persistent and principled struggle to expose the agents within the SWP."

By taking your stand as a "friend of the court" in an action deliberately and clearly designed to disrupt the party's prosecution of our case, you have placed yourself in the camp of the government and its cops. By this deliberate action you have placed yourself outside the workers movement altogether. As a matter of elementary class hygiene, our party is not in the habit of discussing our affairs with partisans of the government camp.

No further correspondence from you will be acknowledged.

*Mary Roche*

Mary Roche  
for the Political Committee

January 29, 1979

FEB 5 1979

Dear Political Committee,

I have received a letter dated January 15, 1979 from a Mary Roche, which indicates that I have been expelled from the SWP.

Initially one must ask who is Mary Roche? She is not a member of the political committee and holds no elected party office; yet she was given the task of not only responding to my telephone inquiry of Jan. 8, 1979, but then proceeded to sign a most critical party communication which notified me of my expulsion from the SWP.

I of course must reject Ms. Roche's contention that I have been expelled from the SWP as well as the other essential allegations contained in her letter. I acknowledge that I have been purged, not expelled; and that this action was taken by the government, not the SWP.

This purge is the result of my persistent and principled fight over the last 18 months to obtain satisfactory answers and explanations to the various questions raised by Joseph Hansen and Sylvia Franklin's relationship's with the FBI and GPU. Despite my writing numerous letters to the political committee about this subject as well as my attempts to discuss this subject with numerous leaders of the SWP, including Jack Barnes, Peter Camejo, Pearl Chertov, Larry Seigal, and George Novack; no one has ever answered the most fundamental questions raised by these relationships. Most importantly Joseph Hansen has never confirmed, denied, or otherwise explain any of the multitude of government documents which have been published since August 1977; documents which on their face suggest the most sinister and criminal relationships with both Stalinism and imperialism. Unlike Trotsky, who fought everyday of his life to refute and expose the charges lodged against him by the Stalinists, Hansen, who I have been informed has recently died; goes to his grave with a reputation that is protected only by a shallow and cowardly wall of silence.

The highpoint of my persistent and principled struggle to expose the agents within the SWP was my filing of an amicus curiae brief on behalf of the SWP in the Federal Court of Appeals. The essence of this brief was to inform the court of the vital necessity of disclosing government informants within the SWP.

Such disclosure is of particular importance today in light of the threats as well as actual physical attacks perpetrated against the SWP this past year, including the murder of a member in Salt Lake City. These factors coupled with Larry Seigal's remarks at Oberlin in August as well as at a PRDF rally in December in which he clearly intimated that a monetary settlement for the SWP's lawsuit against the government was openly being considered as a satisfactory alternative to having the informants disclosed; compelled me to file this brief in order to give further support to the argument that the informants must be disclosed. This action was certainly consistent with any revolutionary's fundamental duty to protect ones party from governmental infiltration

Jack Barnes, however, considered this brief to constitute an "attack on and slander against the party" and as a consequence thereof

filed charges against me. In that even a cursory reading of this brief will indicate that it attacks the government, not the SWP, one can only conclude that it was the government faction within the SWP that took objection to this brief and that charges were filed against me in an attempt to protect their threatened informant status.

When I was apprised of these charges I immediately attempted to contact the political committee. Curiously, however, the only person who would speak to me was Ms. Roche. Contrary to her letter of Jan. 15, 1979 Ms. Roche never informed me that the political committee would be acting as a trial body and in fact informed me that I only would have had a right to have a trial if a branch executive committee was the body designated to hear the charges. Since the political committee was assuming this task instead; no right to trial attached. It was only after I read to Ms. Roche Article 8 Section 3 of the SWP constitution which expressly provides for a trial did Ms. Roche then suggest that perhaps if I submitted a written statement, the political committee "might" consider it. My specific request for a trial, for my right to attend this trial to present my position, to call witnesses in my behalf, and to confront and cross-examine my accusers, was denied by Ms. Roche. At no time did Ms. Roche ever inform me that if I came to New York the political committee would consider inviting me to the "trial". This is further confirmed by the fact that I was never informed either in writing or orally, of where and at what time my "trial" was to be held.

Clearly the proceeding that did take place was a rubber stamp in camera which was in conformity with those procedures implemented by the Stalinists during the infamous Moscow Trials. It is also consistent with the position of the government today with respect to the their informants in the SWP; that is they must not be disclosed and any proceeding that is held to discuss these informants must be conducted in secret.

It is not surprising therefore that a guilty verdict was obtained from a proceeding that was conducted in direct contravention of the SWP constitution (Art.8 Sec.3) as well as the most basic institutional and organizational principles of the SWP.

I pledge, however, to continue this fight and in doing so hereby formally notify the political committee that I am appealing this action to the national convention as is provided for in Art.8 Sec. 5 of the SWP constitution.

In order to adequately prepare my appeal I request that the following be provided to me forthwith:

1. A copy of any transcript, tape recording, notes, or other record of the proceeding which was held on or about Jan. 11, 1979 in New York City which resulted in Alan Gelfand's expulsion from the SWP.
2. Names of all persons present.
3. Names of all persons who testified against Alan Gelfand.
4. Names of all persons who testified on behalf of Alan Gelfand.
5. A list describing all documents and other exhibits introduced against Alan Gelfand.
6. A list describing all documents and other exhibits introduced on behalf of Alan Gelfand.
7. Copies of any items listed in requests 5 and 6 which the political committee knows or should know that Alan Gelfand does not have in his possession.

Alan Gelfand offers to reimburse the SWP for any reasonably expenses incurred in providing Alan Gelfand with any of the above-enumerated items.

Sincerely,  
  
Alan Gelfand