

POLITICAL BUREAU

Number 2

September 24, 1973

Present: Britton, Jenness, Jones, Lovell, Morrison, Stone, Pulley

Visitors: Scott, Stapleton

Chair: Jones

Agenda: 1. Political Rights Defense Fund
2. St. Louis and Pittsburgh
3. Membership
4. Transfers
5. Election Campaigns
6. Puerto Rico

1. POLITICAL RIGHTS DEFENSE FUND

Stapleton reported on the status of the legal suit and outlined the activities that can be carried out in all areas of the country. (See attached).

Discussion

2. ST. LOUIS AND PITTSBURGH

Britton reported on his preconvention visit to St. Louis and Pittsburgh.

Motion: The Political Bureau authorizes the party members in St. Louis and Pittsburgh to constitute a party branch in each city.

Discussion

Carried.

3. MEMBERSHIP

Jones reported on the recommendation of the Detroit branch that Judy H. be readmitted to the party and the recommendation of the Philadelphia branch that John H. be readmitted to the party.

Motion: To concur with the Detroit branch recommendation that Judy H. be readmitted to the party.

Carried.

Motion: To concur with the Philadelphia branch recommendation that John H. be readmitted to the party.

Carried.

4. TRANSFERS

Scott presented a list of transfers to be approved and another list of requested transfers about which further information is needed.

Discussion

Motion: To approve the proposal.

Carried.

5. ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

Stone reported on discussions with a number of branches on their local election campaigns.

Discussion

6. PUERTO RICO

Jeness reported. Since April four different trips have been taken to Puerto Rico. Their purpose was to learn more about Puerto Rican politics, gather material for Militant articles, and follow the unfolding internal struggle in the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP). At the PIP convention earlier this month, a walk-out occurred by a group that wants to form a Marxist-Leninist Party. Generally those adhering to this opposition reject Moscow Stalinism, Maoism, Castroism, and Social Democratic parliamentarism. Some of the younger more serious adherents to this group are reading Trotsky.

Discussion

Meeting adjourned.

REPORT ON THE POLITICAL RIGHTS DEFENSE FUND (PRDF)
GIVEN TO THE SEPTEMBER 24, 1973, POLITICAL BUREAU BY SYD STAPLETON

Initial PRDF activities have begun in local areas and the national PRDF tours are about to commence. The purpose of this report is to review the legal situation of the suit and the various tasks we have in regard to PRDF.

Federal marshalls have served the necessary papers on all the defendents, except John Mitchell, whom they have had trouble finding. Each of the defendents will now file their answers and make preliminary motions. Each one either has or undoubtedly will ask for and receive extensions of the allotted time for preparing these answers. Tom Charles Huston has already filed a motion that he be dropped from the case and PRDF's attorneys have already answered. A decision on this motion and others are not expected until the extensions expire in mid November. Preliminary hearings and other court dates will be established then.

The response to appeals to support the case have been good. The present endorsers of the suit, including recent additions of John Leonard of the New York Times, Ron Dellums, Erich Fromm, Arthur Miller and Eugene McCarthy indicate the suit will receive broad and enthusiastic support. PRDF national staff estimates that the sponsor list can be quite large and is urging local units to work on this area especially.

PRDF's fundraising efforts have been quite impressive, but still more contributions are required. PRDF has raised about \$6000 in the last two months and also has borrowed an additional \$7000. This total amount has enabled the suit to be launched, paid initial legal fees and paid for the initial publicity material. Additional amounts are needed very soon to pay additional legal fees and other expenses.

Several local areas have begun activities around sponsorship, fundraising, and publicity and the response they have received indicates that there is much potential for interesting and involving people in PRDF activity. There is a continuing interest in Watergate and a desire to do something about it. The PRDF activities can tap and organize this interest.

There are several areas of tasks for the party during the fall and especially around the upcoming PRDF tours.

1. Sponsorship. Given the initial response, PRDF would like to accumulate during the fall period a large and authoritative sponsor list.

2. Building PRDF. Areas report a readiness to participate in PRDF activities. In Philadelphia, for instance, almost thirty people signed a PRDF mailing list at a campus table in about three hours. Such tables have been useful in raising money, acquainting activists with the case and obtaining lists of those interested in working on PRDF projects. PRDF mailing lists, if regularly circulated at all meetings around the case, can also provide an important source of PRDF activists. In Detroit and Houston PRDF committees have involved independent activists--from interested attorneys to younger activists--in meetings and other PRDF activities.

Some areas have begun to set up public PRDF meetings, such as panel discussions on the meaning of Watergate and what to do about it. Such panels could include speakers for the SWP and YSA, a PRDF spokesperson, Farmworkers, CPers, civil libertarians, spokespeople for other defense cases, attorneys, "impeach Nixon" people, and many others.

3. Fundraising. Given the broad range of support to the suit, fundraising efforts can be particularly fruitful, as the initial efforts have indicated. In addition to the day-to-day fundraising activities, PRDF is looking to the tours and other events to do some important fundraising during the fall period.

4. Publicity. In addition to the general propagandizing for the suit through circulation of the PRDF material, local plaintiffs and PRDF spokespersons will want to approach radio and TV talk shows, friendly reporters, etc., for coverage of the case.

The PRDF national tours will help all this activity. The PRDF endorser drive, publicity on the case through radio, TV and newspapers, and fundraising should all be given a boost by the availability of a representative of the PRDF national office. The touring PRDF spokespeople will also have reports prepared on the legal state of the case and the kinds of activities that are producing results.