

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014

July 25, 1974

TO ORGANIZERS AND CAMPAIGN DIRECTORS

Dear Comrades,

The July 23 hearing before Minnesota's State Ethics Commission requesting an exemption for the Socialist Workers 74 Campaign Committee from disclosing the identities of contributors has been continued. After hearing only three testimonies, the Commission voted to continue the hearing on Tues., July 30, and to subpoena a list of heads of intelligence agencies (including the FBI) to appear with their records before the Commission on Thurs., Aug. 1.

This is a significant opening both for the challenge to the election "reform" laws on a federal and state level and for the PRDF suit. We want to redouble our efforts in winning support for our right to be exempt from these disclosure provisions.

A letter to national PRDF sponsors asking them to send statements of support will be mailed soon. We are asking that local campaign committees continue to gather statements of support from prominent individuals in their area and wire or air mail them to the State Ethics Commission, 74 State Office Building, St. Paul, Minn. 55155. Copies of all messages should be sent to the Socialist Workers Campaign Committee, 25 University Ave. SE, Minneapolis, Minn. 55414.

Although the crucial time for sending these statements will be during the next week leading up to the Aug. 1 hearing date, the Commission has thirty days after the hearing ends in which to make a decision. This means that statements can be sent through the month of August.

Attached is a fact sheet on the Minnesota hearing which comrades may find useful in approaching potential supporters. In addition, you may want to use materials sent out in earlier mailings, including the original ACLU letter to the House and Senate, the April 5 Militant article by Larry Seigle explaining our position on the "reform" laws, and various PRDF materials documenting government harassment of the SWP.

Comradely,

Frank Boehm

Frank Boehm
National Campaign Director

F A C T S H E E T:

ISSUE

The Minnesota Socialist Workers 1974 Campaign Committee is requesting exemption from compliance with the provision of the new Minnesota Ethics in Government Act that requires disclosure of the name, address, and place of business of its contributors of more than \$100.

BASIS OF REQUEST

The Ethics in Government Act contains an exemption provision, Section 20, Subdivision 8, which states: "The commission shall exempt any association or any of its members or contributors from the provisions of this section if disclosure would expose any or all of them to economic reprisals, loss of employment or threat of physical coercion."

It has been a persistent pattern that individuals associated and identified with Socialist Workers Party activities in any way--as candidates, contributors, workers, members or supporters--have been the target of official and unofficial government harassment, surveillance, violence, interrogations, discrimination, deprivation of employment, and general denial of rights.

EVIDENCE

1. Recent government admission of an FBI SWP Disruption Program. It is clear from this directive that the electoral activities of the SWP are viewed by the government as the basis for stepped-up harassment. The far-reaching extent of the FBI's operation was graphically illustrated recently when it came to public attention that a New Jersey high school student became the subject of an intensive FBI inquiry merely as a result of having written a letter to SWP headquarters seeking information for a school assignment. Her letter was filtered through a "mail cover" on the SWP headquarters.
2. Government answers to interrogatories in litigation of SWP vs. Nixon et al, admit utilizing illegal wiretaps against SWP since 1945.
3. Socialist Workers Party answers to government interrogatories in litigation of SWP vs. Nixon et al, documents 200 recent incidents of harassment, surveillance, bombings, burglaries, interrogations, discrimination, deprivation of employment, and general denial of rights.
4. Index of affidavits documenting approximately 50 recent local incidents of federal, state, and local police agency harassment, as well as right-wing harassment inspired by and carried out in collusion with government agencies.

CONSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT TO REQUEST

First amendment rights to associational privacy is centrally involved in the Socialist Workers Campaign Committee request for exemption from disclosure. The Supreme Court has repeatedly upheld and reaffirmed the right of anonymity of members and supporters of controversial organizations. NAACP vs. Alabama, 357 U.S. 449 (1958), struck down a requirement that the NAACP give up its list of members and contributors. The decision noted: "Inviability of privacy in group association may in many circumstances be indispensable to preservation of freedom of association, particularly where a group espouses dissident beliefs."

A December 5, 1973, memorandum to Senator Robert North from the Office of Senate Research regarding the constitutional issues involved in the Ethics in Government bill, which was then being considered, noted: "The prevention of corruption in politics is a compelling state interest to justify disclosure of large contributions. If the contribution is small there is no compelling state interest and disclosure violates the freedom of association. Moreover, the state cannot compel disclosure when that disclosure would invite reprisals and discourage participation in the political process."

PARTIAL LIST OF SUPPORTERS OF SOCIALIST WORKERS REQUEST

National:

Hon. Ron Dellums, U.S. Congress, D - Calif.
Hon. Bella Abzug, U.S. Congress, D - New York
Gloria Steinem
Sanford Gottlieb, Executive Director, SANE
Warren Widener, Mayor, Berkeley, Calif.
Robert Christman, editor, Black Scholar magazine
Hosea Williams, President, Metro-Atlanta SCLC
J.L. Ware, editor, Atlanta Voice
Ed Sadlowski, District 31, United Steel Workers
Norman Mailer

Minnesota:

Hank Fischer, Chairman, Minnesota Democratic
Farmer Labor Party
Earl Netwall, alderman, Minneapolis
Avis Foley, Chairwoman, Minority Woman's Task
Force, Minn. Women's Political Caucus
Senator Alan Spear, DFL
State Representative Phyllis Kahn, DFL
Senator Thomas Keefe, DFL, co-author of Ethics
in Government Bill
Professor Mulford Q. Sibley, Univ. of Minnesota
Rev. Vince Hawkinson, Grace Lutheran Church
John D. Foley, Robbinsdale Federation of Teachers