

POLITICAL BUREAU

NUMBER ~~24~~ 25

March 10, 1975

Present: A. Hansen, Jenness, Lovell, Sheppard, Thomas, Waters

Visitors: Boehm, Finkel, L. Jenness, Seigle

Chair: Sheppard

AGENDA: 1. Attack on USLA Meeting
2. Edelin Defense
3. Right-Wing Attacks
4. Boston Demonstration
5. Demonstrations on Jobs
6. IT Correspondence

1. ATTACK ON USLA MEETING

Sheppard reported on attack on USLA meeting for Coral in Chicago.

Discussion

2. EDELIN DEFENSE

L. Jenness reported on effects of Dr. Kenneth Edelin's conviction and on efforts to defend Edelin and abortion rights.

Discussion

Motion: To approve the report (see attached).

Carried.

3. RIGHT-WING ATTACKS

D. Jenness reported on right-wing attacks and our response.

Discussion

Motion: To approve the report.

Carried.

4. BOSTON DEMONSTRATION

Sheppard reported on building of Boston May 17 demonstration called by the Boston NAACP, national NAACP endorsement, and our participation in coalitions to build the march.

Discussion

5. DEMONSTRATIONS ON JOBS

Lovell reported on recent and projected demonstrations for jobs around the country.

Discussion

6. IT CORRESPONDENCE

Sheppard reported (see attached).

Discussion

MEETING ADJOURNED

Report on Defense Efforts for Dr. Edelin

by Linda Jenness

The February 15 conviction of Dr. Kenneth Edelin, a Black physician in Boston, is a dangerous victory for the "right-to-life" forces. Dr. Edelin was convicted by an all-white jury of manslaughter for having performed a legal abortion for a young woman. His case is now being appealed.

Edelin's conviction is having national repercussions. Within a week after the conviction, hospitals in at least Pittsburgh, Detroit, Nashville, New York, and Boston placed harsh restrictions on the availability of abortions. Other areas will undoubtedly follow suit.

The "right-to-life" organizations in Massachusetts have used the conviction to introduce new legislation into the state legislature that would, among other things, declare any abortion performed after the 24th week as first degree murder and would guarantee civil rights to a fetus from the moment of conception. We can assume that similar bills will be introduced in other state legislatures.

This is a serious attack on a woman's right to choose abortion. It is also a racist attack on the Black community. The same forces who are behind the racist assault on school desegregation in Boston are behind the persecution of Dr. Edelin.

Thomas Atkins, president of the Boston NAACP, has appealed to chapters of the NAACP around the country to protest Edelin's conviction. There have also been articles and editorials in several Black newspapers which denounce Edelin's conviction and draw the connection between the "right-to-lifers" and the racists.

A coalition of Boston organizations supporting abortion rights met at Boston University on March 2. Although called on short notice, the meeting was quite broad, involving campus women's liberation groups, abortion clinics, Catholics for the Right to Choose, and others. The meeting called for a Boston protest rally on March 20 around the theme "Defend Dr. Edelin--Defend Abortion Rights." Through the March 20 rally, the Boston coalition hopes to broaden out the coalition, particularly in the Black community, and to initiate an on-going campaign in defense of Edelin and abortion rights.

We will want to defend Dr. Edelin and defend abortion rights on a national scale wherever feasible.

Edelin's case has received extensive media coverage nationally, and particularly in areas where Edelin's conviction has had an effect on local laws, hospitals, or clinics, there already exists some sentiment to respond to this attack.

We should discuss the possibility of establishing local coalitions around this issue with women's organizations, Black

Edelin Defense/2

organizations such as the NAACP, civil liberties groups, and others. Meetings could be called with an eye toward building teach-ins, rallies, or other protest activities.

It is not out of the question that over the next month or so the Boston coalition could appeal for nationally coordinated activities.

Although the fight is centered right now around Dr. Edelin's conviction, the struggle to defend abortion rights in Boston will be a prolonged one. Three other doctors will be going on trial in Boston in June. They have been charged with "grave robbing" for having performed scientific experiments on dead fetuses. Through their trials the "right-to-lifers" are further attempting to designate fetuses as persons under the law.

Branches should keep the national office informed of the effects of the Edelin conviction in your area, as well as the results of discussions or meetings with other organizations. Also, The Militant will want to cover actions concerning Edelin's defense.

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14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
February 29, 1975

Political Committee
Internationalist Tendency
[street address]
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Comrades,

This is in regard to regularizing distribution of the International Internal Discussion Bulletin to you. We propose the following: You should place a standing order with us so that we can automatically send bulletins to your national headquarters in Chicago as they come out. You would be responsible for distributing the bulletins to your membership nationally.

You should send us \$50 which we will credit in advance to your account. We will bill you from time to time so you can keep an advance deposited in the account. This will speed up your receipt of bulletins, as we will not have to wait for your payment before sending out your bulletin order.

Before each bulletin comes out we will send you a notice so that you will know which is coming and you can order additional bulletins when necessary.

You can place prepaid orders for any of the back International Internal Discussion Bulletins listed in the attached catalog. Since these lists were compiled the following bulletins have been published:

[list follows]

Comradely,
s/ Diane Rupp
SWP National Office

[This proposal has been accepted by the IT -- dr]

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Internationalist Tendency
c/o John Barzman
[street address]
Chicago, Illinois
February 28, 1975

Political Committee, SWP
New York

Dear Comrade Barry,

Thank you very much for returning the phone call which Bill made to the National Office of the SWP. As you requested, we will from now on direct all correspondence to yourself, with copies to the USFI Bureau.

We are presently in the process of reporting and explaining the recommendations of the IEC to our faction. Enclosed, you will find a copy of the report which was approved by the Political Committee of the IT, and circulated in our ranks. If you have a similar report, we would be interested in receiving it.

Speaking of the IT, the IEC resolution stated: "its members would be members of the F.I. if they were not barred from this by reactionary legislation." Please send us a bundle of 100 each of International Internal Discussion Bulletin #2, and the part of #3, which has already been published. As agreed in our phone conversation, please send the bundle to this address. Please let us know how you wish to have them paid for. It would be helpful if they could arrive in Chicago before our plenum March 15. Also, please notify us of other bulletins made available to members of the F.I. as a fraternal courtesy of the SWP, so that we may decide how many to order.

We will be holding a plenum of our Steering Committee the week end of March 15 and 16 in Chicago. It will discuss the recommendations of the IEC and the forms of our collaboration in the coming period. We request that you send a representative of the party to outline your position and proposals for collaboration. We believe this move would go a long way in creating a much needed climate of openness.

We will submit further concrete proposals on the forms which this collaboration could take as our discussion proceeds. We have already discussed some aspects and consider collaboration on building the May 17 anti-racist demonstration, on socialist propaganda (elections and press), and on the Coral defense tour, as particularly important. If you have any thoughts on the matter, we would appreciate your communicating them to us as soon as possible as we wish to know what you consider to be the criteria of your decision on our reintegration.

Comradely,

John Barzman
for the Political Committee, IT

cc: USFI Bureau

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14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
March 4, 1975

John Barzman
Internationalist Tendency
[street address]
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Comrade Barzman,

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of February 28 and enclosure. Barry Sheppard is out of town on tour now, but I will call it to his attention when he returns.

I assume our letters concerning International Internal Discussion Bulletins crossed in the mail, so will wait until I hear from you before doing anything.

Fraternally,
s/ Diane Rupp
SWP National Office

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14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
March 10, 1975

John Barzman
Political Committee
Internationalist Tendency

Dear Comrade Barzman,

In reply to your letter of February 28, 1975.

You will recall that the motion unanimously adopted at the IEC meeting took note of the fact that "two members of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, Jack Barnes and Joseph Hansen, have pledged that they will urge the National Committee at its coming plenum to weigh favorable implementation of the proposals commonly agreed on by the International Control Commission in its investigation." It would be inappropriate for an SWP representative to attend the Steering Committee plenums of your organization before the SWP National Committee meets and decides on this recommendation of Comrades Barnes and Hansen.

* * *

Concerning your desire to help build the May 17 march on Boston called by the NAACP, it's my opinion this can best be done by joining the National Student Coalition Against Racism as well as the broader coalitions being set up by the NAACP, NSCAR and many other groups and individuals.

You also indicate you would like to support the SWP election campaign and distribute The Militant. The SWP national election campaign is presently engaged in a big effort to distribute the Bill of Rights for Working People. This piece of campaign literature and other election materials should be ordered from the Socialist Workers 1976 National Campaign Committee, 14 Charles Lane, New York, N.Y. 10014. Financial contributions to the socialist campaign can be made to the same address. Checks should be made payable to the Socialist Workers 1976 National Campaign Committee.

The Militant is currently conducting a campaign to increase its street sales. Bundles of The Militant should be ordered directly from The Militant business office, 14 Charles Lane, New York, N.Y. 10014.

The Coral tour is being organized by the United States Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners. You should write to USLA concerning his tour. The USLA address is: 156 Fifth Avenue, Room 600, New York, N.Y. 10010.

Comradely,
s/ Barry Sheppard
National Organization
Secretary