

May 17, 1972

SF
MAY 19 1972

Dear Barry,

The California Marijuana Initiative (CMI) is an attempt to put a referendum on the Nov. Calif. ballot to legalize possession and personal use of marijuana. The apparatus behind it is large and will probably get the hundreds of thousands of signatures they need.

About a month ago we learned accidentally that the campaign office in L.A. had a statement ready to send out calling for support to the CMI. We asked them to hold off until all the Calif. branches had approved it. Besides the obvious formal reasons for this, we were in the midst of the internal discussion in S.F. on security, and the campaign statement would have confused things here at that time.

So L.A. sent copies of their statement to Berkeley and S.F. for discussion. The S.F. campaign steering committee made some changes in the statement and emphasized the following points: 1. We support CMI although it is limited in omitting the question of sale, because it seeks to remove a government prohibition on a drug used by millions and considered relatively safe by medical studies. 2. We support the efforts of Raza and Black communities to stop the drug traffic which preys on them. 3. The government which claims to be fighting drugs through laws such as the marijuana laws in reality is the main support of the drug traffic through the complicity of the police agencies and the pushers of illegal drugs. 4. The Vietnam war has exposed the role of the government as a pusher and profiteer on drugs, through the activities of the CIA and the Saigon regime; the drug control program of the U.S. Army and the U.S. government domestically victimize the addicted and do nothing to solve the drug problem. 5. We call for Federal funds to support drug control programs decided on and run by the Raza and Black communities. 6. The solution to the drug problem lies in the eradication of the oppression and alienation of this society which individuals seek to escape through drugs — this can be accomplished only through the actions of the majority of people in the socialist transformation of society.

A heated discussion of this proposal in the E.C. resulted in tabling it pending consultation at the plenum. We want to avoid tying up the branch in an emotional argument during a period of intense external activity. It's not an important enough question to warrant a minority report from the E.C. and a discussion which would reflect disagreements on the level of personal morality and opinions of the virtues of various drugs; the E.C. discussion derived its heat from those factors, I think.

The disagreement expressed in the E.C. by Nat was with taking any position on what he considered "a petit bourgeois movement of self-gratification." One specific reservation he had was the possibility that support to CMI by us would be misunderstood in the Black and Raza communities where anti-drug sentiment doesn't differentiate between marijuana and hard drugs and legalization would be an unpopular stance.

Although the CMI provides a local focus for us to take a position, this issue is raised in all our campaigns, and our candidates de facto make party policy on it. Nowadays they take similar positions, but the absence of a thought-out national position can lead to odd situations. For example in 1970 at a news conference in Phila. Pearl and I were asked about marijuana legalization during an informal interview. Both of us spoke at once and took different positions. I don't know if this question came up during Nat's campaign here last year, but I'm sure if it did his position was not the same one Jenness and Pulley take.

We are not under the gun to take this into the branch right away, since the election is not until Nov. and the other branch organizers agree it is not worth disrupting the S.F. branch for Calif. to come out for the CMI. I think it would be best for the party to have a national position which the P.C. or the national campaign office could put out and the local campaigns could use.

Comradely,

Fred Stanton

Fred Stanton
S.F. Branch org.

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MAY 15 1972

LA

Benny
AEN. : Political Editor

CALIFORNIA MARIJUANA INITIATIVE DESERVES SUPPORT

Statement by Bonnie Aptekar, Socialist Workers Party Candidate
for US Congress, 28th Congressional District.

I support the California Marijuana Initiative (C.M.I.)
The C.M.I. is a state-wide campaign to place a proposition
on the ballot which would, if adopted, eliminate all criminal
penalties for persons over 18 for the "planting, cultivating,
harvesting, processing, otherwise preparing, transporting, or
possessing marijuana for personal use or by reason of that use."

Medical research from individual researchers through the
National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse has to date
shown that marijuana has no more harmful effects than such
drugs as tobacco, alcohol, barbituates (downers) or amphetamines
(uppers), and cannot be equated with hard drugs like heroin.

I make a sharp distinction between marijuana, which is
harmless, and hard drugs. The hard drugs are a particular
vehicle of oppression, particularly in the Black, Chicano, and
Asian communities.

Only a deathly sick and profoundly alienating society
like this forces people to turn toward drugs like heroin,
which sooner or later kill the user. There is a growing opposi-
tion to hard drug use by Black, Chicano, and Asian community
organizations and I solidarize myself wholeheartedly with this
sentiment. The government does virtually nothing to stop the

pushers who make millions trafficking in hard drugs like heroin. The official government prohibition of hard drugs has had the same effect as alcohol prohibition: driving the drugs underground, supporting organized crime, and forcing the users into desperate acts to secure the drugs.

Hard drugs should be available to those who need them. This would reduce the price, guarantee the purity of the drugs, eliminate the pushers, and make unnecessary criminal acts by the addicts.

Some people see drugs and individual escape as an alternative to political action. But the marijuana and hard drugs will not deter a government which has shown its willingness to drop the atom bomb. The only way to assure humanity's survival is through the revolutionary transformation of society to socialism.

Despite an important contradiction in the California Marijuana Initiative, in not legalizing the sale of marijuana, I believe that the decriminalization of marijuana possession will remove an important control the state now wields over the lives of many individuals. I favor the lifting of all criminal penalties for drug possession and use for these penalties serve definite social interests.

The arrest, trial, and conviction of violators of the marijuana ban aims at instilling fear in the power of the capitalist government over the personal lives of individuals. The laws are selectively enforced against the young, the minorities, the poor, and political radicals. Can you imagine the

children of the Rockefellers or Kennedys getting jail terms like these: 10 years for radical John Sinclair in Michigan, 15 years for Black activist Lee Otis Johnson in Texas, and, yes, 50 years to Texas shoe-shine operator Richard Dorsey for violation of the marijuana laws.

If elected, I will support the legalization of marijuana by the US government. 330,000 valid signatures of registered voters are needed by May 1, 1972 to qualify this proposition for the ballot in California. I urge all who support democratic rights to help in this effort. Please contact C.M.I. at 2214 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, Calif. 90026, telephone (213) 381-5071 or our campaign office at 1107½ N. Western, Third Floor, Los Angeles, Calif. 90029, telephone (213) 461-8131

APR 19 1972

INITIATIVE MEASURE TO BE SUBMITTED DIRECTLY TO THE ELECTORS

MARIJUANA. INITIATIVE. REMOVES STATE PENALTIES FOR PERSONAL USE. PROPOSES A STATUTE WHICH WOULD PROVIDE THAT NO PERSON EIGHTEEN OR OLDER SHALL BE PUNISHED CRIMINALLY OR DENIED ANY RIGHT OR PRIVILEGE BECAUSE OF HIS PLANTING, CULTIVATING, HARVESTING, DRYING, PROCESSING, OTHERWISE PREPARING, TRANSPORTING, POSSESSING OR USING MARIJUANA. DOES NOT REPEAL EXISTING, OR LIMIT FUTURE, LEGISLATION PROHIBITING PERSONS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF MARIJUANA FROM ENGAGING IN CONDUCT THAT ENDANGERS OTHERS.

An act to add new Section 11530.2 to Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code: THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 11530.2

(1) No person in the State of California 18 years of age or older shall be punished criminally, or be denied any right or privilege, by reason of such person's planting, cultivating, harvesting, drying, processing, otherwise preparing, transporting, or possessing marijuana for personal use, or by reason of that use.

(2) This provision shall in no way be construed to repeal existing legislation, or limit the enactment of future legislation, prohibiting persons under the influence of marijuana from engaging in conduct that endangers others.

- PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE SIDE -

(OFFICE USE)

Table with 8 columns: FOR COUNTY CLERK, SIGNATURE AS REGISTERED, DATE 1972, PRINT LAST NAME, PRINT ADDRESS AS REGISTERED NO. STREET, CITY OR TOWN, ZIP CODE, PRE CINCT. Rows numbered 1 to 18.

(DO NOT SIGN (AS CIRCULATOR) UNTIL YOU SEND IN PETITION.)

DECLARATION OF CIRCULATOR

I am, and during all the time while soliciting signatures as hereinafter set forth was, a qualified and registered elector of the County (or City and County) of ... and of the State of California; I am the person who circulated the attached and foregoing section of the initiative petition of the State of California; all of the signatures to the attached section were made in my presence and upon the date shown after each signature and were solicited by me within the above named County (or City and County) of the State of California; to the best of my knowledge and belief each signature is the genuine signature of the person whose name it purports to be; that all signatures to said section were secured by me; that my residential voting address at the time of execution of this declaration is as shown below, and that this declaration is executed in the State of California. I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

SIGNATURE OF PETITION CIRCULATOR PRINT REGISTERED ADDRESS CITY (IN FULL) ZIP DATE

PLEASE SEND ME MORE PETITIONS.

PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME