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7/6/71

Dear Comrades:

Enclosed is the material which Tom Cagle presented to the Exec. last night. It was agreed that copies of the material would be sent to the same individuals who received my letter of June 25.

The xerox copies were made by Tom and he presented them to members of the exec in this form.

It was agreed to postpone any consideration of this material presented by Tom until the next Exec. scheduled for next Monday night.

Comradely,
s/Nelson

July 5, 1971

Comrades I wish to challenge and vigorously deny the false assertions and slurious allegations made by comrade Nelson Blackstock in a letter dated June 25 1971 in which he accuses me of knowingly breaking party discipline in the improper way my name was used in the United Caucus Action Caucus official endorsement slate of candidates. I in no way authorized the use of nmy name on this caucus slate and when it was used without my authorization I confronted these UAC caucus leaders and demanded that they print a retraction immediately in order to prevent serious political repercussions from my party leadership over accepted policies already agreed to in our trade union situation. The Stalinist Saul Wachter who draws up all caucus printed matter objected to my demand of a printed retraction as tending to embarrass and hurt their election campaign but consented to print a retraction in the next leaflet which of course he did not do. Again when I confronted him on this he stated that he did not have room on the leaflet but would give me a written statement if it was needed. It is only because he (Saul Wachter) is presently on a one month vacation out of state that I will have to wait for his statement when he returns in order to clear up this matter. In the meantime I would like to refer comrades to the statement of Larry Gibson until at such time I am able to obtain Saul's statement. Comrade Blackstock absolutely incorrect in his allegation that I gave him a statement as well as Mary Henderson over the phone alleging that I stated "That I agreed to run on the program of the United Action Caucus as a blatant lie." I did not agree to "run on the program of the UAC" being tactfully in agreement with the program of the UAC is not the same as running on their program as Nelson alleges. I had emphasized over and over again in the phone conversation with comrades Blackstock and Henderson that I was an independent candidate who did not even bother to campaign. I had previously submitted to our branch Executive board for advisement on a request from the UAC for me to head up their slate for President which was declined. I did not make an issue over this. Quite the contrary I have been walking a political tightrope for six months now waiting for the political pre-convention discussion period knowing full well the comrade Nelson would like to build a case against me. Comrade Nelson states that I cannot do anything anymore without party approval is nothing more than organizational harassment to prevent my presenting my political opinions during this pre-convention discussion period. This is not in the Leninist traditions of democratic centralism. The party must not condone this kind of activity.

Comradely,
s/Tom Cagle

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3144 Coldwater Drive
San Jose, California 95122
June 27, 1971

An open letter to whom it may concern in the SWP

As chairman of the United Action Caucus of UAW local 1364 and as a long time sympathizer and subscriber to your press the Militant I was aware of the precarious position of brother Tom Cagle as a member of your political party who was forced by your party decision to sever his relations with the United Action Caucus which he was instrumental in helping to organize.

This caucus was once closely associated with, influenced and supported by your party. I do not pretend to know or understand all of your differences that have developed or objections towards continued support.

I do know that at the social organized by Paul Montauk as a fund raising benefit for the United Action Caucus which was held at Paul's house Jan. 31 1970 in which I had the pleasure of meeting Frank Lovell was the highlight of our mutual cooperation. I have over the past four years considered Frank's advice and articles in the Militant as an valuable aid in the formation, program and trade union work of building our caucus, together with his close association with Pete Kelly's United Caucus in Detroit.

It is with grave concern with brother Cagle's problem which I may have inadvertently aggravated in relation to his continued good standing in your party that I wish to make the following statement in his behalf; I did, during the recent election campaign, take certain liberties with the usage of Tom Cagle's name as an "endorsed" candidate on our United Action Caucus slate without prior knowledge or approval of brother Cagle who was an independent candidate for Executive Board at large along with 49 other candidates. Brother Cagle had clearly indicated to me the necessity of totally severing all relation with his former caucus under threat of being expelled from his political party and stated that he was in hopes of clearing up these problems and changing his party's political attitude towards work in trade unions during his pre-convention period which I concurred with at that time. I even went so far as to get our steering committee to attend and endorse SWP candidates in the election last fall in hopes of relieving the restrictions on brother Cagle.

When brother Cagle objected to our taking liberties of using his name on our slate of endorsed candidates, I must add that our caucus had taken these same liberties with other independents such as Ed Malone and brothers Sam Perry and Ed Williams of the Black Panthers, I immediately apologized and offered to make amends to his party if any difficulties arose over this incident, this offer still stands --- I am prepared to appear before any representative body of your political organization and answer any question in this regards in order to clear up this difficulty that I feel responsible in creating.

I remain respectfully yours, s/Larry Gibson
Chairman of UAC, UAW local 1364
3144 Coldwater Dr., San Jose, Calif.

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July 5, 1971

Comrade Tom and myself had previously discussed and both agreed to run for Executive Board at large in the recently concluded local elections as a couple of independents which we have done in past local elections with full party approval, in order to take advantage of the opening to project our party's political line and Transitional Program into that plant. We have functioned in past elections in the same manner careful to avoid involvement in electoral opportunist formations that give the appearance of contesting for power as being a premature trade union tactic in full concurrence with our National Political Committee's trade union policy. At the union nominating meeting, I was unable to attend, so comrade Cagle submitted my name for nomination along with his own name with the understanding that I was to submit within five days my acceptance letter to our local Recording Secretary in accordance with our election laws. Because of the rush of my own personal business, I was unable to submit this acceptance letter which meant that my name was automatically dropped from the ballot. I notified comrade Cagle of this on the last day for acceptance -- too late for comrade Cagle to withdraw his own name which he decided to merely let his name ride as independent without engaging in any type of a campaign or leaflet or support of any other candidates slates or caucuses. He in fact did just that.

Comradely,
Ted
Theodore Dennis

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873 Broadway
New York, N. Y. 10003
March 31, 1967

Asher
Pete

Dear Comrades:

This is in reply to your separate requests for an informal opinion from here about modifying our policy of caution in trade union work. Pete's letter asked for advice on our general approach to this work as an aid in dealing with specific union matters locally in auto and at the University. Asher sent an informative tape of a discussion with local auto comrades and added a postscript to the tape asking for an opinion about running for the executive board in a local union election. Since it does not pay to undertake from a distance a precise assessment of concrete tactical nuances in a specific situation, the reply will have to be couched more or less in general terms.

Under adverse conditions stemming from the cold war and witch hunt, we were compelled years ago to orient toward a general policy of caution within the trade unions. We drew back from running for union posts because there was too great a danger of comrades so involved becoming either compromised or victimized. Little more could be done than for the comrades to hang on, analyze events and explain them in a future upturn in the objective situation. What comrades in the unions couldn't say, the party undertook to say for them through the press.

Today's trend toward growing labor militancy is beginning to open up better prospects for us that will entail a process of change in our course within the unions. At this stage the key task is still to educate and prepare for more active intervention in internal union life as circumstances may permit. Our immediate objective will be to gather left wing forces around a class struggle program. Suggestions on policy questions to put forward at the present juncture have been included in articles on labor that I have been writing for the paper and I will not repeat them here. Precisely how few or how many points to concentrate on will have to be determined by the realities of each concrete situation. In general, we should be neither sluggish nor hasty in adjusting and readjusting our vanguard role in a manner that squares with changing reality.

Important -- and oftentimes delicate -- matters of timing will be involved in proceeding from educational projection of a class struggle program to formation of caucuses and from there to running for union office. Concerning union elections, there will be occasions where lesser-evil tactics can legitimately be applied, as in the steel union election where our comrades supported the groundswell against Mc Donald without taking any responsibility for Abel. (See 1965 political resolution; Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 25, No. 2.) If the given circumstances are propitious, such a move can sometimes help to loosen things up for us, as the resolution notes.

Concerning our running for union posts several factors should be kept in mind. It would have to be determined whether the step would help along or if it might short-circuit our efforts to build a left wing based on program. A related question would be the relative strength of our forces in any caucus formed to contest for union office. Also to be considered would be the matter of being able in the given over-all situation to do the necessary in an official post. That would depend only in part on local conditions. The local union's situation in relation to the international union would also have to be taken into account.

In general, the union movement is as yet only in a preliminary state of change. There are uncertainties as to the scope and pace of developments in the period immediately ahead. Under these circumstances it is better in our tactics to move a bit slow rather than try to go too far, too fast.

Coming now to the taped discussion, I will undertake to summarize the points made that seemed especially important and generally valid. The mood in the local, most notably among the big percentage of young workers in the plant, reflects the trend toward guerrilla warfare against the top bureaucracy that seems to be spreading throughout the UAW. Many workers want to fight the company and they are not afraid to lose some work time because of a strike. They want some union democracy in order to get loose from the bureaucrats' grip and go up against the company.

In the local situation our initiative has led to formation of a caucus which includes CPers and is attracting young workers on the production lines. Strategically, the comrades are working to shape a strong caucus based on a clear program and oriented toward a fighting perspective. They have begun by launching an educational campaign designed to influence restive young workers and they are getting an encouraging response. The aim is to show the workers that there is a way out of their difficulties, given a meaningful program and the forging of a leadership that is prepared to fight for what the workers need and want.

In their tactics the comrades will seek to avoid giving any appearance that they are just another group of "outs" trying to get elected to union office. All steps taken will be geared toward building a group in the union based on program. They will keep to the fore the fact that their fight is aimed directly at the company, being careful to avoid giving any mistaken impression that their primary aim is to oust the local union officials. By advancing a fighting program aimed at the company, and organizing rank and file support around the program, the incumbent leadership will be put on the spot. It must either respond to the will of the membership or stand exposed as unreliable, doubly so since our comrades will make it clear that their concern centers on a fighting program and they will support any and all efforts to carry it out. Instead of the incumbents being in a favorable position to attack our comrades, it will become increasingly clear to the membership that a change in official leadership is needed.

In his postscript to the taped discussion briefly summarized above, Asher reported that the auto comrades feel that the caucus they have been instrumental in forming is in a position to run candidates

for the local union executive board in the June elections and that a couple of them might be elected. It is felt that direct responsibility for carrying out official policy could be avoided in these posts and caucus members so situated would be in a better position to play an influential role in coming developments. An opinion is requested as to whether such a step seems feasible at this time.

The comrades directly involved are in the best position to judge whether the desired advantage could be gained without risking either being compromised over the carrying out of wrong official policies or getting into a premature fight at the executive board level. Assuming that, other thing being equal, the desired aim could be attained in an executive board post, there still seem to be some other questions that should be weighed in reaching a decision: Is the caucus strong enough internally to run candidates for the executive board at this time without risking dislocations in the primary objective of building a left wing based on program? What policy course would the CPers in the caucus be inclined to shape concerning such an undertaking? Are the young workers recruited to the caucus from the production lines far enough advanced in their programmatic education to be able to peg and resist possible off-beat capers by the CPers? Is our relative weight in the caucus sufficient to assure that it would stay on the beam in the proposed intervention in the June elections?

If the comrades having an intimate feel of the specific situation think the answers to these questions are generally on the positive side, it seems in order for them to make the try. I would add, however, that at this early stage of change in internal union conditions tactical matters of this nature will have to be weighed separately in each particular case according to specific circumstances. It seems too early for adoption of a general line of running for significant union posts wherever an opportunity seems to present itself.

Since the other Bay Area NC members will be interested in the subject discussed, copies of this letter are being sent to them.

Comradely,
s/Farrell Dobbs

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The Militant

March 4, 1970

Dear Tom:

One of your letters is featured in the Letters Column of the forthcoming issue of the Militant (March 13) which we thought would be of some help in your campaign for delegate to the UAW convention.

Enclosed is a copy of the United National Caucus paper just in case you haven't yet received this. It might be of some use to you there in the course of your campaign. If so, you can order directly from Detroit.

You will notice that Roger McFadden has an article about Reuther (pg. #2) which comes, for the most part, from Bea Hansen's pamphlet, "The Political Biography of Walter Reuther."

I have learned that this pamphlet by Bea is not selling well in the branches. You have copies there in Berkeley and I have spoken with Ove about the value of it. You should get a copy of this -- if you don't already have one -- and look it over with an eye to what use you can make of it.

Recently I spoke with Doug Jenness from Atlanta and he tells me the branch there has had success with the pamphlet. Right now the ALA is putting on a very big union organizing drive in Atlanta. So there is interest in Reuther. Bea's pamphlet about his political life sells well to workers. Also Doug says they have used the pamphlet very effectively on campus where there is now a renewed interest in unions generally and ALA in particular.

I have mentioned this "Political Biography: here because it should sell well in conjunction with your pamphlet. "Life In An Auto Plant" is now in the print shop and I'm expecting it soon (not saying how soon) so that you will be able to make some use of it in the campaign.

One suggestion I have: try to find enough good, young candidates for the trip to the Convention to make up a full slate. Of the large number nominated there must be at least four more who would support the general idea that delegates ought to remain sober, attend all sessions of the convention, and bring back to those who pay their expenses an honest account of what actually goes on at these conventions.

Comradely,
s/Frank Lovell

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3536 Telegraph Ave.
Oakland, Calif. 94609
July 12, 1971

SWP NO
NYC

Dear Comrades:

This letter is to inform you of a motion unanimously adopted by the Oakland/Berkeley branch tonight.

The motion reads as follows:

"1. The Oakland/Berkeley branch instructs Comrade Cagle to take immediate steps to publicly disassociate himself from the United Action Caucus at the UAW local in Fremont. The exact form this takes is up to Comrade Cagle. It could be a letter to the UAW local paper or a statement in the newsletter of the United Action Caucus or another means.

"2. Before the next meeting of the Executive Committee Comrade Cagle is to submit to the Organizer in writing what steps are being taken to comply with these instructions."

The motivation for this motion emphasized that what was involved was Comrade Cagle's functioning in the union as a member of the SWP and the right of the party to have its decisions implemented.

Comradely,
s/Nelson Blackstock
O/B SWP Organizer.

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July 18, 1971

Nelson Blackstock
SWP Organizer
Oakland-Berkeley Branch

So as to fulfill my promised obligations to the party and the branch as to severing all relationships with the United Action Caucus of Local 1364 UAW Fremont, I hereby intend to have printed a retraction of my being endorsed as a candidate on the UAC slate of the recent concluded election in the next publication of the HOT LINE. I wish to once again protest the over-reaction of Comrade Blackstock in his haste and anxiety to prove disloyalty against myself because of political differences and criticism I have raised during this pre-convention discussion period, as being unprincipled organizational harassment. I wish to emphasize once again that I had complied with all previous party mandates and was resolving this problem of getting a retraction (printed) for UAC and did not need the overbearing mandate from Comrade Blackstock.

Comradely,
s/Tom Cagle

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July 18, 1971

Nelson Blackstock
SWP Organizer
Oakland-Berkeley Branch

Because of leave of absence, I hereby request a absentee ballot and will be accepting nomination as delegate to Oberlin convention, if nominated. I intend to meet all requirments.

Comradely,
s/Tom Cagle

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July 18, 1971

Nelson Blackstock
SWP Organizer
Oakland-Berkeley Branch

I hereby request leave of absent from July 23, 1971 to August 20, 1971 for purposes of vacation and attending convention at Oberlin, Ohio.

Comradely,
s/Tom Cagle