

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
January 13, 1976

To Branch Organizers, Trade Union Directors, and Steelworker Members

Dear Comrades,

The following correspondence between Frank Lovell and a comrade employed in the steel industry on the West Coast about the Sadlowski campaign is for your information.

Comradely,

Doug Tenness
Doug Tenness
SWP National Office

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Dec. 1, 1975

Dear Frank:

The Sadlowski campaign has made two probes in the Los Angeles area. The first was at a conference of the Mexican American Union Council (MAUC). The second was a visit by Sadlowski.

The enclosed press release gives an account of the MAUC conference. Sadlowski was represented by John Chico, a Staff Rep. from Local 65, Republic Steel, who in turn was assisted by Gabriel Galvan, a full time official of Local 1010, Inland Steel. They were unsuccessful in getting the body to declare in support of Sadlowski, but an unofficial poll is supposed to have shown that 70 to 80% of those present favored his campaign.

Sadlowski was in L.A. around Nov. 15. He spoke at MAUC chapters in the area, where I am told, he made a good impression, and visited Dave McDonald, whom he supported in 1965. His line was that he was exploring the feasibility of a campaign for USW president. He said that he was not part of any ticket or slate, and that the only person he felt he had enough in common with to consider as a running mate at this time was Dir. Lajoie, Dist. 5 in Canada (5 is one of the smallest districts in the USW).

MAUC was organized by Manuel Sierras who left (he's an honorary but non-active member) to become Chairperson of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement in the L.A. area. The LCLAA was organized by the AFL-CIO. Unlike MAUC which is practically all steelworkers, it is made up of Chicanos (primarily functionaries) from various Internationals, both AFL-CIO and independents (it has UAW members and it may include some Teamsters as well). Its primary purpose is to round up votes for the Democrats. It also pressures the bureaucracy for more jobs for Chicanos, and takes issue with AFL-CIO policies that involve Chicano interests (it supports the Tunney Bill for a moratorium on deportations).

In line with this type of thinking, Sierras has organized all 10 of the Chicano Staff Reps. in Dist. 38 to act as a group. They are considering running a Chicano for Dir. If this is not feasible for lack of money, they will then bargain with one of the other candidates for more Chicano Staff appointments and for Sub. Dist. jobs (38 is divided into 6 Sub Districts.) While this may seem an aside from the Sadlowski campaign, it is one of the many divisions that exists among Chicano Steelworkers. The Sierras group plans to campaign for the Abel slate.

In the McKee, Consiglio, Barasa race for Dir. of 38 in 1968, MAUC was the backbone of the Barasa campaign. Consiglio started with the Chicano vote in his camp and it was his failure to retain a majority of this vote that cost him the election. Following this election, MAUC made a strong effort to include Consiglio Chicano supporters. Now that Sierras is gone, they are influential in MAUC.

Whether or not Consiglio is a candidate for Dir. again is undetermined. His opponents say yes, his supporters say no because he is sick. The only thing he ever had going for him was his seemingly inexhaustible supply of campaign funds. He is active in the L.A. and Calif. Italian-American community. He was the only Staff Rep. in 38 present at the MAUC meeting for Sadlowski. It may be, that as an anti-Abel man, he is considering campaigning for Sadlowski. I think through the years he has maintained a personal relationship with McDonald. Although he is not a left winger by any stretch of the imagination, he has established loose ties with the radicals (mainly ultralefts and some CP) who have carried out the anti-Abel agitation in this area as well as nationally.

The main breakthrough for the ultralefts has been in the Bethlehem mill. This local (1845) is more than 50% Chicano with the remainder being about equally divided between Blacks and Anglos. The local has a Black president, Charles Bratton. He has kind of a Black nationalist background which is also sprinkled with a good deal of opportunism. Fifty percent of the workers are in layoff status. Bratton has kept control of local meetings by blocking with the ultralefts. They have set up an independent (non-USW and AFL-CIO) unemployed organization which has been trying to become a rallying point for all radicals. It is open for membership for people who are not 1845 members. It is a multi-issue coalition which appears to be a snakepit for the ultralefts to fight out their differences. The only other local involved is 2058. It affiliated on a tie vote which was broken by the local president, Harry Sivley. He is an old McDonald-Consiglio supporter who was in the forefront of the anti-red purges in the local. The real leadership in the local is in its Ex. Bd. which is overwhelmingly against him. Like Bratton, he is playing around with the ultralefts with a view to using them to control the local. This has been hurting him in the shop since his own base is the worst ultrarights. Affiliation was opposed by a few on the basis that the USW and the AFL-CIO were obligated to carry out the functions that this rump unemployed committee was supposed to perform. Sivley appointed a couple of ultralefts to represent the local and so far there have been no reports of its activities. At the last meeting (Dec.) the ultralefts tore Sivley to pieces.

While all of this may not seem germane to a Sadlowski campaign, it does have bearing since both Bratton and Sivley would probably be active in any anti-Abel movement. It remains to be seen if either can be re-elected in April, '76. Richard Castro, the candidate I will support in my local, is a strong Sadlowski supporter.

38 Dir. Frank McKee is supposed to be the Abel forces candidate for Int. Sec-Treas. His assist. Dir., Bob Petris, is supposed to be their candidate for 38 Dir. Another supposed candidate for 38 Dir. is Staff Rep. Wampler or Wamper who is said to be strong in the north-west. Wampler is from Mine Mill. Dist. 38 now takes in 15 states and there is talk that it will be split at the Nov. 1976 convention. If this is correct, Wampler could be the Abel candidate for the northern portion of 38. I have not been able to get any information about him. The Chicanos want the split since they believe it would open the door for the election of one of their own in the southwest.

The only officially announced candidate for 38 Dir. is Chacon. The union won his and Romero's discharge cases in arbitration. They are still involved in a maze of company, union and personal court actions around the issue. Although not invited Chacon spoke at the MAUC meeting for Sadlowski. He apparently is not a very good speaker and I am told made "a very poor impression." Since then, young people have been handing out his campaign literature at plant gates in the L.A. area.

This move combined with RAFT literature from Youngstown, Ohio, indicates that the CP is making a move in the Sadlowski campaign. I don't believe the CP has much of a force in steel in the L.A. area. There were some sizable gatherings here around defense support for Chacon and Romero, but they were put together with the use of the ultralefts rather than its own forces. My local voted money to the defense effort and some of the ultralefts and the individual, who may be a CP member, were apparently involved. I did not participate in the campaign.

I would like to urge that you get a copy of The Right to Challenge by John Herliang. The book deals with the Abel-McDonald campaign. It is written from the Abel point of view. The facts of which I am personally aware are reported accurately, and the entire book has the "ring of truth" to it. Herliang was a labor reporter for the Washington Post.

I think this book is important for two reasons: 1) It gives the reader some insight as to how the bureaucracy functions, and it is well enough written to supply a feel of a USW election campaign. 2) In this area, L.A., our radical opponents hold the Trotskyists responsible for Abel's election in 1965. After reading this book, I think any sensible radical would willingly plead guilty to the charge. It should serve to clear up any confusion that our opponents might try to disseminate in our own ranks by making this charge. The book sells for at a rather fancy price, but I might be able to get some copies at about \$4.00 a piece if you feel it merits circulation in our party.

Comradely,
/s/

P.S. I am preparing a more lengthy report aimed at trying to relate a Sadlowski campaign to some of the concrete problems the USW faces and to place it in perspective with the deteriorating circumstances which is encompassing ever wider layers of rank and file unionists as the depression continues to deepen.

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14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
January 8, 1976

Dear Comrade,

This is to acknowledge receipt of your Dec. 1 letter and the packet of material enclosed with it.

It appears from your report and all other material we have seen that Sadlowski is the indicated and recognized candidate of the opposition in the 1977 campaign for president of the Steelworkers union. The Abel machine does not yet have an outstanding candidate and seems to be having trouble finding one.

The local union elections this year will probably bring a turnover in local union presidents, as usual. But it now appears as if most of these local contests will be between the "ins" and the "outs" pretty much limited to the small group of union politicians, perennial office seekers, and hangers-on. Some of them may run for local office on the promise that they will bring some changes "like Sadlowski stands for." But such promises can be taken no more seriously than all the others they have made in the past and will make in the future. Those who get elected will wait to see how the wind blows after the elections this year. Most of them will line up with Sadlowski or the machine candidate according to which one seems to have the best chance of winning as the 1977 election draws near. Probably a good many will take a "neutral" position, hoping to prove their usefulness to the new president, whoever wins.

According to our reports, verified by your account of Sadlowski's appearance in California, he is seeking at this stage to line up support within the bureaucracy, or to find the chinks in the bureaucratic machine. There will undoubtedly be some splits there. But at the present time as the locals begin to prepare for the local elections this year, every local union president and the challengers are trying to establish their own base of operations. Not very many of them are looking forward to the 1977 election for top officials. They are too busy with their local problems, to them the first and most important hurdle.

The district representatives are usually chosen by the district director and are loyal to him, but their wages and expense accounts are paid by Abel's office in Pittsburgh. That makes them subject to control of the office of the president. (At least this is the way it works in Dist. 31 where Sadlowski, despite his election as District Director, finds himself isolated and unable to control the staff in that district because the checks are issued in Pittsburgh, not Chicago, and signed by Burke, not Sadlowski. I understand there is only

one staff rep. in Dist. 31 who supported Sadlowski and remains loyal to him.)

It is very important for us, wherever we have members in the USWA and wherever we meet members, to learn all we can about the politics of the local unions and about the official personnel of the district. This does not mean that we will become avid supporters of one slate or another in the coming local elections; but we may, in some instances, become involved in the campaign and run for office on one of the popular slates if urged. We ought to be talking about the social and political and economic forces that bear upon the union movement today and upon the Steelworkers -- the economic crisis, unemployment and inflation, the crisis of the cities and of education, the pollution from the mills in the steel towns, the corrupt two-party political system and the need to organize a labor party. In this way we have a chance to introduce our politics and our 1976 presidential campaign. This does not mean that we will want to form a caucus or run for union office on these issues. But if we talk about these issues, explain them, and become identified with the socialist solution to all the problems of this society, we are better able to explain why the steelworkers need a democratic union. Most likely, democracy in the union will be a big issue in the elections this year and in the campaign next year for top union officers.

We are not able to give any of the local union campaigns a "socialist" character, nor will we be able to convert the Sadlowski campaign for president of the USWA into a programmatic basis for the future left-wing of the union movement. We should not attempt this. We will support Sadlowski because he represents change in the union, a break with the past practices of close labor-management collaboration, and tuxedo unionism of McDonald which Abel deplored and then adopted.

The Steelworkers union is one of the few that elects top officers by referendum of the entire membership. It is a form inherited from the miners union where the bureaucracy, until 1971, counted the votes. Philip Murray undoubtedly thought this would always be the case when he drafted the Steelworkers constitution.

We want to identify with the rank and file of the Steelworkers union, to win as many as possible to our understanding of politics, and in this way to influence as many votes for Sadlowski as possible and become the best supporters of his campaign. We do not ask him or other union politicians to endorse our politics in exchange for our support, but neither do we intend to suppress or deny our political convictions. We think this will work out well to the advantage of all concerned. . . on our side. The union will benefit.

I am anxious to receive the report you are preparing about how the Sadlowski campaign relates to the concrete problems of the USWA.

Comradely,

/s/

Frank