

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING No. 51, October 22, 1976

Present: Blackstock, Jones, Lovell, Lund, Seigle, Stapleton,
Thomas

Guests: Morell, Rodríguez

Chair: Seigle

AGENDA: 1. Milwaukee Critical Support
2. Membership

1. MILWAUKEE CRITICAL SUPPORT

Seigle reported. (See attached.)

Discussion

Motion: To concur with the recommendation of the Milwaukee local to extend critical support to the campaign of Michael McGee.

Carried.

2. MEMBERSHIP

Seigle reported on recommendation from Louise Armstrong of Seattle local to admit S.P. as a provisional member at-large in Spokane, Washington.

Discussion

Motion: To concur with the recommendation.

Carried.

Seigle reported on recommendation from Caroline Fowlkes of Phoenix Organizing Committee to admit A.D. as a member of the party at-large in Tucson, Arizona.

Discussion

Motion: To concur with the recommendation.

Carried.

Seigle reported on recommendation from the Albany Organizing Committee to admit M.K. and S.L. as provisional members at-large in Albany.

Discussion

Motion: To concur with the recommendation.

Carried.

Meeting adjourned.

COPY

COPY

COPY

October 19, 1976

Political Committee

Dear Comrades,

A week or so ago a special election was called, the primary for November 2 and the final election November 30, to fill the First District Common Council seat after the incumbent resigned to take another city job.

The regular election for this seat was held last spring and at that time the Branch recommended and received approval to give critical support to an independent Black candidate for that office, Micheal McGee, a former leader of the Black Panther Party and, for the past two years, a central leader of the United Black Community Council.

At the time there was considerable debate in the Branch over whether support was appropriate, not because McGee might not be independent. We felt this was clear. The dispute revolved around the impact of his campaign. The UBCC counterposes community control to desegregation and in the local context we were unsure about whether his campaign might strengthen the anti-desegregation forces. and whether this consideration might outweigh the positive feature of an independent Black campaign.

The person who took this position, George Dolph, is no longer in this Branch so he could not speak on this new campaign. However, in private conversation he indicated to me that he thought the Branch made the right decision in recommending critical support last Spring.

In last night's Branch meeting there was no opposition to recommending critical support to Michael McGee, who is again running for the First District seat in the November 2 election. The Branch felt that this campaign is essentially the same as the last one. No real advance has been made in clarifying programatic questions like desegregation, of the vagueness on such questions as how jobs can be provided to deal with unemployment which the campaign identifies as the number one problem in the Black community. But in the intervening months the UBCC has continued to move in the direction of an independent Black political party. This summer they held a forum which included Willie Mae Reid and several Democrats which had the effect of pushing independent Black politics, and shortly thereafter they passed a motion to begin organizing an independent party. They had apparently hoped to field partisan candidates in the November elections but did not realize that a recent law change had advanced petitioning time requirements. In a recent interview I did with McGee he indicated that the UBCC is continuing to work on a party locally which it hopes can join with other forces nationally to develop an independent party. Although he indicates agreement with our concept of a labor party he does not really distinguish this from the various reformist projects being proposed by other forces like Arthur Kinoy, but he does not yet see anything as viable. It is only

McGee/2

through discussion of concrete developments and continued contact with the UBCC that we will be able to clarify this question. However on the local basis they seem quite clear on opposing the Democratic Party and have resisted all the blandishments to join it thus far.

The Executive Committee recommended to the Branch that we not only ask the Political Committee to permit us to extend critical support but that we take certain concrete steps. The first was to interview McGee. I did this yesterday and sent an article to the Militant which they have probably already received. Since I did not have time to do a thorough job I included the tape of the interview which you may find interesting in evaluating McGee's campaign. I also asked him during the interview whether he would indorse Camejo and Reid which he did, signing the ad form. He indicated some interest in the NSCAR conference and we will make a big effort to get him and others to go to it.

The other action proposed was to distribute McGee literature if we get approval on critical support, and to issue a statement in my name as a Senatorial candidate. The literature is not out yet but based on the position papers that are out it will probably be almost identical to the brochure used in the last campaign, a copy of which I have enclosed.

The objection raised to using this literature was that since we don't agree with the programmatic points, or at least some of them, we should distribute our own literature. While everyone agreed with the observation that we oppose some of the points raised in this literature, they felt that to refuse to distribute literature would be unnecessarily sectarian. We feel this is not a fraudulent campaign of the Aptheker type but an honest attempt to develop an independent political voice for the Black community in opposition to the Democrats and Republicans and that our disagreements with it should be handled in the course of individual discussion or a few pedagogical points in a generally favorable article or statement. But the thrust of the campaign is wholly positive and we should not simply say we support it but actually help build it. One very clear way of doing this is to take some of the brochures along with us when we go canvassing in the First District. If we had more time and more comrades we might even assign some comrades to help with the campaign, but that would be a more complicated action which we are not contemplating.

After a very good discussion the Branch voted to distribute McGee literature along with our literature if the PC approves critical support. One person voted against this action and three abstained.

Comradely,

/s/Bob
Bob Schwarz
Milwaukee

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
October 25, 1976

Bob Schwarz
Milwaukee

Dear Bob,

As I told you on the phone, the Political Committee met on Friday and concurred with the recommendation of the Milwaukee branch to extend critical support to the McGee campaign.

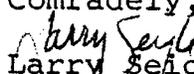
The political gains we can make through using this tactic will be sharply limited by the short time available to us. This time problem, of course, is not one of our own making, but is a result of the fact that this special election was called on such short notice. Despite this limitation, however, we agree that the tactic is worthwhile in these specific circumstances.

The branch had a thorough discussion on McGee and the United Black Community Council last Spring, and decided to call for a vote for McGee in the earlier election for the same Common Council seat. Since this campaign will be in many ways a rerun of that election, and since the UBCC has basically the same positions and approach as it had then, we can approach this campaign in a similar way.

It will be important for us to have a leaflet clearly explaining why we are urging a vote for McGee. This statement, along with our other campaign literature, should be the things we concentrate on distributing. While it may be worthwhile for our canvassers in the First District to carry some copies of McGee's brochure (if he gets one out in time), this can't take the place of our own statement.

Although there's not much time, it might be a good idea to try to set up a forum where McGee could speak along with one of our candidates. This would give us a chance to discuss the key issues confronting the Black community, and provide an opportunity to talk with members and supporters of the UBCC. If it's not possible to hold such a meeting before November 2, it might still be valuable to do it after the elections, as a discussion of what was accomplished through the campaign, and where we should go from here.

We would like to get a report from you as soon as the election is over on how the critical support tactic was implemented, and what lessons we can draw from its use in this case. Such a report will be useful to comrades in other branches who may face similar situations in the future.

Comradely,

Larry Seigle
for the Political Committee