

COPY

COPY

COPY

COPY

14 Charles Lane  
New York, New York 10014  
June 17, 1974

Milt Alvin  
Los Angeles

Dear Milt,

We received your letter to Jack today concerning the question of critical support to the Communist Party. Jack thought that it would be better, rather than having the letter read aloud to the plenum under the point on opponents, to make copies of it for the National Committee members' kits, so they could read and consider your points before they hear the report and discussion on our opponents.

Comradely,  
s/Bev Scott  
National Office

COPY

COPY

COPY

COPY

Los Angeles, Calif.  
June 14, 1974

Jack Barnes  
National Office, N.Y.

Dear Jack:

Because I am unable to attend the Plenum, I request that the following be read to the session where opponent parties are discussed.

The leaflet recently distributed by the San Jose YSA in support of a Stalinist candidate for tax assessor is a considerable improvement over other propaganda pieces put out by party branches in recent years where critical support was given to Communist Party candidates.

Gone is the formulation that the Communist Party is a "party in the Socialist movement," which was used on several occasions by some of our branches. This alone represents a gain.

Also, the San Jose leaflet exposes the CP campaign for a relatively unimportant office "as a cover for their basic policy of supporting Democrats..." (emphasis in original). This is another gain, being a truthful statement of fact which was missing in other instances of critical support to CP candidates.

I think the San Jose leaflet could have been improved if it had gone on to say that this cover represents a deception which is designed to pull the wool over the eyes of CP members and supporters. Its purpose is to take the heat off leaders of the CP who are pressed by their ranks to run candidates. This point is not made clearly enough in the leaflet.

Exposures of CP skullduggery in electoral politics should be so worded that those under Stalinist influence cannot mistake just what kind of campaign they run. That is, for tax assessor in San Jose this year and controller in Los Angeles in 1973, instead of for the mayoralty which was open in both cases. Other similar instances could be cited.

I believe that this should be called to the attention of the Plenum. Exposure of Stalinist fakery in running candidates for relatively unimportant offices when top offices are being contested and when CP leader want to support capitalist candidates for such top offices, is the most important part of any maneuver that we engage in with them.

It should be stressed that it is our duty to make full and complete exposures of such Stalinist policy. This will influence members of the CP and their followers far more than any incidental calls to vote for their candidates.

I think the Plenum should frankly be told that our policy for some time past has been wrong and that the San Jose leaflet takes a long step in making a necessary correction. This is the best way to educate the National Committee on this question and through the National Committee, the entire party.

There is no substitute for open admission of errors, when they are made. For example, the transcript of the Political Committee discussion of the critical support question, held Nov. 21, 1973, reports Jack Barnes saying, "It's true that the Pittsburgh comrades made an error; we made the bigger error in running it in The Militant without discussing it with them. And then we made a little bit of an error in our New York open letter." The party can learn something from this. N.C. members at the Plenum should be encouraged to explain this point to the branches when they make their reports.

I make this suggestion, among other reasons, because of the failure of the reporter to the Jan. 26, 1974, city convention of the New York branches to mention this error in last year's elections. Since the Political Committee has selected the same comrade to make the report at the Plenum on opponent parties, I believe it is necessary to call attention to the necessity of open admission of errors so that the most can be gained from not repeating them.

Also, because I am unable to be present at the Plenum, I want to call attention to some misrepresentations of my views that were made at the Political Committee meeting last Nov. 21st when the question of critical support was discussed. Because not one of the 15 members of the P.C. present at that meeting corrected the speakers, I must do so in this message.

One such misrepresentation went as follows: "Milt's wrong about the CP in a very important aspect. The CP is no longer composed exclusively--or even primarily, as far as I know--of hardened Stalinists." I don't know where the speaker who made this point got his information. I do know that he did not get it from anything I wrote or said as I do not hold this view.

Another statement made by the same speaker was, "Secondly, he's wrong because the composition of the CP has changed." This flows from the previous remark about the present composition of the CP. I deny that I have ever stated, hinted or written anything that would justify this misrepresentation of my views. I have advocated more and not less attention to the CP as my articles and letters testify.

Still another off-the-cuff and without proof statement was made by another speaker who said that, "Milt's approach seems off to me." I invite the comrades to consider, in light of the San Jose leaflet, just whose approach was off.

Finally, the reporter at this PC discussion, Comrade Doug Jenness, did not have his remarks included in the transcript of the discussion because, I have been told, they were similar to the letter he sent me giving the Political Committee's opinions. This was distributed to all N.C. members.

In this letter he makes allusions to the fact that perhaps I am trying to alter our fundamental position on the class nature of the Communist Party. Coming from one who swallowed without any strain the idea that the CP was part of a "socialist movement," this is ironic. I want the Plenum to know that I am not trying to make such a change in our position. I merely insist that the party go back to the traditional Trotskyist position of thoroughly exposing all Stalinist crimes, large and small, as a reading of my letters to the PC makes clear.

Comradely,  
s/Milton Alvin