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MAR 12 1979

EASTSIDE LOS ANGELES SWP
2554 Saturn Avenue
Huntington Park, CA 90255

March 6, 1979

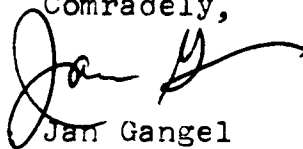
Doug Jenness
National Office SWP
14 Charles Lane
New York, NY 10014

Dear Doug:

February 24, 1979, the Eastside Los Angeles branch voted to accept Paula Reimer's resignation from membership in the SWP and that her status become that of sympathizer. This followed several discussions with Paula in which Pearl C and I explained to Paula that membership in a church, attending services, church school, etc. were incompatible with party membership of a leader of the party.

Enclosed is a copy a copy of the report I gave to the Eastside L.A. branch meeting. Also enclosed is Paula's statement of resignation which was read to the branch.

Comradely,



Jan Gangel
Eastside LA Organizer

Report to Eastside Los Angeles Branch, February 24, 1979: On
the Resignation from Membership by Paula Reimers

Paula Reimers has been a member of the Socialist Workers Party for over ten years. She has led in helping organize many areas of party work, including work in the teachers union in Detroit, our work in CLUW, women's liberation, and she ran as a candidate for the party in Detroit.

Within the past few years Paula has rejoined the church. She regularly attends weekly religious services. She attends church sponsored classes, has participated in a church choir group. She gives a regular financial sustainer to the church, and, for a period of time, recently considered becoming a priest.

When these church meetings conflicted with party activity, Paula chose to go to church. For example, though she was a member of the executive committee of the old Southeast L.A. branch, she often attended choir practice rather than EC meetings. She missed many branch meetings when the Southeast L.A. branch met on Sundays because these meetings conflicted with church services. In the new Eastside L.A. branch she has missed most branch meetings and forums because of attendance at religious functions.

The party is not neutral on the question of religion. As Marxists we take a position. The church is a counter revolutionary organization. Religion does not explain why and how the working class can achieve control over the means of production. Historically religion has played the opposite role. Religion disorients people who are struggling for social change. It rationalizes the existing system by saying you will get your rewards later -- in another life

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after death. It is when people overcome the answers presented by the church that they are able to struggle against the class enemy.

What about new people who join the party, who are still religious, who believe in god, who go to church? A revolutionary party is in battle with the institutions and ideologies of the ruling class. Just as we have to win working people away from reliance on bourgeois politicians, so we have to win them away from the church -- to become builders of the vanguard party, to become a part of the working class leadership in the struggle for the American revolution.

Membership in the church and the demands of the church are in conflict with the needs of the revolutionary party. It is the obligation of the party to set up classes and to work with new comrades in fractions and committees. Through action in the class struggle we're confident we can win a majority of these workers away from religion.

What is the dynamic when a new person joins the revolutionary party but still carries the baggage of religion and the culture of this society? Joining the party is a progressive step. The new comrade is beginning to look for answers elsewhere. It is the case of someone moving from the right to the left.

The situation with Paula is different. She's been in our movement for many years. It's not a question of setting up classes on Marxism to educate Paula, to win her away from the church.

At our last meeting on February 22, Paula requested a transfer from the Eastside L.A. branch to the Westside. The reason she proposed that the organizer give for her transfer was for personal

reasons." She said that if she could attend a branch with meetings on Monday night it would make it possible for her to continue attending church services and church classes. I, as the Eastside branch organizer, and Pearl Chertov, as local organizer, explained that we couldn't recommend a personal transfer in this case because the reasoning was that it would make it easier for Paula to attend church. Religious activity is incompatible with membership in the SWP.

Paula has a strong commitment to the church at this time. The branch and local organizers have had many ideological discussions with Paula. And she has accepted the party's proposal that she resign from membership in the SWP and become an active sympathizer.

Paula says she has no political differences with the party. She plans to continue work with us on joint activities. Right now she is working the ~~the~~ Marroquin support committee and plans to continue that work.

The motion from the executive committee is to accept Paula's resignation from party membership and that her status become that of sympathizer.

Report given by Jan Gangel, Eastside Los Angeles Organizer

Submitted by Paula R Feb 24, 1979

I have been asked to resign my membership in the SWP. The reason given for this request is that I attend church services; that seems to be the bottom line once extraneous issues are removed. I was asked if I could state that I would no longer attend services; I said I could not so state. My resignation was asked for.

I was asked to agree to this action. That I cannot in conscience do. I believe a mistake is being made. Clearly the SWP can, as a volunteer democratic centralist organization, can decide its membership policies. I will submit, but I do not agree.

So that there may be no confusion, let me say that I support the program, strategies and tactics of the SWP. I believe that the socialist revolution is the only hope for the liberation of humankind, that the working class is the only class capable of making that revolution, and that the SWP is the party which will lead that struggle to victory. I also believe that the historical materialist method, the Marxist method, is the only way to analyze, understand and interpret this world - both our physical and social environment -

I do not believe in pacifism. I do not believe in a divine intervention to end the evil and injustice of this world. That is our task, yours and mine. I do not believe that people should accept oppression, exploitation, racism, sexism, poverty or war passively, waiting for some "pie in the sky;" rather we must fight with all our strength against them today, tomorrow. "Life is beautiful," wrote Trotsky. "Let future generations cleanse it of all evil, oppression and violence, and enjoy it to the full." That is our charge, today and always.

It is a fact that I do believe in God, and that I do attend church services. I love and respect the party too much to lie to it. It was with a desire to be honest with the party that I began the discussions with leading comrades which have led to this sad day.

I do worship God, but I do not defend all the evils ever committed by those who have called themselves Christians. To tar me with that brush would be as ^{much a distortion of my beliefs} incorrect and unfair as those who tar the SWP with the crimes of Stalinism because both call themselves socialists. (By the way, the church I attend supports abortion.) I wish to state that I am open to discussions with comrades, without disrupting party functioning, with a view to winning me back.

↪ I want to help to build the party actively and loyally.

I wish to be active on party campaigns and activities, insofar as my schedule permits. I hope that leadership comrades will keep me informed of on-going projects - it is hard to know what is going on in a city or the world if one can't attend branch meetings. I will conduct myself as a person loyal to the SWP, and I hope for the closest working relationships. I hope especially to be invited to class series and educational especially the Cuban discussion.

I do not dispute the party's right to define its norms of membership in any way it sees fit. I simply state that, in view of my broad agreement with the party's line and my willingness to publicly defend it, I do not feel my resignation is called for because I attend church services. I think the party is making a mistake. However, I do not wish to disrupt on-going party building work. Therefore, I submit to the decision; but I will not agree to it, because I think it is wrong.

I stand with you in fighting against capitalism, for the liberation of the oppressed and exploited of this and every land, for the socialist future.

Hasta la victoria siempre!

Long live the Socialist Workers Party!