

OCT 4 1973

To: SWP "Political" Committee

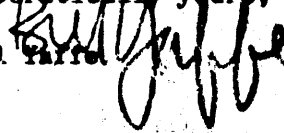
Bill Yaffe
B-9 Hoosier Courts
Bloomington, Indiana
47401

Dear Comrades,

We feel that there are some serious errors in your letter dated 9-29-73. National sections of the International function in all ways under the direction, control and discipline of the Fourth International. As members of the SWP and the Fourth International we shall continue to abide by the statutes of the Fourth International even if you do not. We are prepared to defend all of our actions and will continue to publically defend the political positions of the Fourth International in our speeches and written statements. If you have any further questions please address yourselves to the International Control Commission; this is the correct procedure to follow. We shall see that your letter gets adequate circulation in the International as we feel that Trotskyists around the world will be interested in this - the latest example of the collective stupidity of the SWP Political Committee.

Democratically yours,

Bill Yaffe



cc: United Secretariat
Internationalist tendency
Bloomington ISA executive committee

Several weeks ago, we the undersigned individuals who were members or supporters of the Revolutionary Internationalist Tendency (RIT), were expelled from the SWP/YSA for our adherence to a principled Trotskyist program. Our expulsion, and that of the remainder of the tendency was a bureaucratic frame-up engineered by the party majority; far from demonstrating any breach of discipline, the majority's case against us was based on lies, distortions, and perjured testimony. Using the methods of Watergate, the party majority set up agent-provocateur, Steve Beumer, a YSA member who falsely claimed to have programmatic agreement with the political positions of the RIT and attempted to join our tendency. This was a deliberate attempt by the party majority to provoke us into breaking the SWP's bureaucratic norms of Youth/party relations in which the party discussion can not be brought into the youth organization. The members of the RIT acted in a serious and disciplined fashion and did not break party discipline despite provocation. The nature of the SWP leadership which uses an agent-provocateur instead of a political debate is further illuminated by the fact that the SWP majority ignored the very bureaucratic discipline that they sought to trick us into by drawing a YSAer into the political inner-life of the party as an agent; only days after approaching us, Beumer was loudly proclaiming programmatic agreement with the SWP majority and was accepted as a party member; after our expulsion we learned that this same Steve Beumer was, during this period, seeking out the Spartacist League and claiming programmatic agreement with them in an attempt to uncover acts of collaboration between the SL and SWP oppositionists.

Mike Kelly, who is well known for his penchant for undercover work for the Barnes clique (e.g. in the 1970 Boston opposition) descended even further into outright lies. He claims that Comrade Gerry Clark, a member of the RIT from Oakland/Berkeley, was observed at the SL summer camp, when in fact Clark was witnessed that week by several members of the SWP in Oakland and has indisputable proof of his whereabouts (e.g. Clark was at an SWP branch meeting the same day that he was "observed" at the SL summer camp which was 2,000 miles away!) For several months the SWP majority attempted and failed to provoke us into breaches of discipline in an attempt to obscure the principled political opposition we were waging inside the party.

Our own serious questioning of the SWP/YSA's political character began when we opposed the openly reformist Student Action Slate during the Wayne State elections for Student-Faculty Council. This plus the fact that the SWP called the cops on the NCLC and our questions on the nature of the Cuban state, forced us to re-evaluate the program of the SWP. In doing so, we came to see how the SWP majority had distorted and abandoned the very fundamentals of Leninism and Trotskyism. Lenin and Trotsky taught that any struggle in the epoch of imperialism against national, racial, and sexual oppression could be consummated only in a socialist revolution and that these struggles had to be fused with the proletariat's struggle against the bourgeoisie through the ceaseless intervention of the vanguard party's program. Abandoning its own past, the SWP has gutted this formula and contrived another one: that any struggle against oppression, "in and of itself" does and will lead to socialist revolutions; even if it is a peti-bourgeois movement such as black nationalism or feminism. The SWP not only has abandoned the working class, but has taken its class-collaborationist politics to its logical conclusion. Thus, in the 1968 New York Teacher's strike, in the name of black nationalism and community control, the SWP actually lead people across the picket lines. The desperate desire to grow at any cost in the women's movement has led to erase all memory of the Comintern's method of work among women; instead, the SWP has attempted (unsuccessfully) to build an on-going popular front with the "liberal wing" of the Bourgeoisie--Bella Abzug, etc.

Further study convinced us of the popular-front nature of the SWP's anti-war work. We rediscovered the Leninist strategy for combatting imperialist war: revolutionary defeatism--turn the imperialist war into a civil war. Rather than seizing the opportunity to spread a class-struggle approach at a time when the credibility of the Nixon administration was in deep shock, the SWP provided all the leg work necessary to keeping NPAC well within a singular plank accepted by the liberal congressman, epitomized by Sen. Hartke sitting on the steering committee of NPAC.

Starting in the late 50's and early 60's and moving to today's outright reformism, the SWP's work in all these arenas has been motivated primarily by a desire to grow by abandoning the Trotskyist program in favor of "whatever was happening." In the women's liberation, black nationalist, and anti war student movements, the SWP's work has been characterized by the essence of opportunism; the preference for quick organizational advantage at the cost of principle.

The USec faction fight, despite its intensity and polemics, offers no pole around which to rally a principled opposition. Both whings are profoundly pabloist and share deep appetites for the same political liquidationism, which each whing frantically trying to discredit the revisionism of the other by loud protestations of superficial orthodoxy. In 1963 the SWP wholeheartedly endorsed the "guerrilla road to power" as codified in the reunification documents of that congress. With the logical extension of this policy being actually implemented by USec sections (e.g. in Argentina) the SWP is terrified lest its liberal bourgeois coalition partners begin to look askance, and thus jeopardizing the fulfillment of the SWP's reformist goals of becoming the full-fledged American Social Democracy. Similarly, Mandel's USec centrist majority seeks popularity with the petit-bourgeois by adapting to "third world" guerrillism, and seeks to dissolve itself into the "new mass Vanguard". While self-righteously denouncing the SWP Mandel continues to defend some of the most wretched of the SWP's positions, for example on black and chicano nationalism and anti-war work. The two wings are united in their opportunist adaptationist projection that some social force other than the working class led by the vanguard and based on some program other than the program of the Fourth International can defeat the bourgeois state and create a healthy workers state comparable to Russia 1917. The programmatic implication is clear: liquidation of the vanguard party and its program.

Because of our principled opposition to pabloism we refused to join the other oppositionists in the SWP. The Internationalist Tendency, who while making many good criticisms of the SWP's program and practice (e.g. Femimism and Nationalism) ~~we~~ have totally sold out to the International majority tendency. Only the documents written by Comrade Clark were a sufficient basis for a principled tendency and we came to form and support the RIT. We feel that the logical ^{thus} extension of the politics of the Revolutionary Internationalist Tendency is to join the Spartacist League. Every ostensible Trotskyist grouping must confront the Spartacist League, as has been demonstrated in the motion of the Revolutionary Tendency out of the International Socialists (now the Revolutionary Socialist League), the Communist Tendency, out of the SWP and the Leninist faction (some of whom joined the Spartacist League, the remaining members which the class struggle League). ~~The SWP majority itself knows this only too well; Kelly said he thought "there were Spartacists everywhere".~~ We for our part, recognize that the Spartacist League represents the living continuity of Marxism and joining the Spartacist League is the task of all principled communists. We therefore declare our solidarity with the SL and the Revolutionary Communist Youth and call on all members of the SWP to do the same.

October 5, 1973
Michael Canjar
Irene Gorgosz
Michael Milin

Spartacist League
Box 663A, G.P.O.
Detroit Mich 48232

(Labor Donated)

* WORKERS VANGUARD SUB BLANK *
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* ADDRESS _____ *
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* _____ ENCLOSED IS \$3 FOR 24 ISSUES OF WORKERS VANGUARD *
* _____ ENCLOSED IS \$1 FOR 8 ISSUES OF WORKERS VANGUARD *
* *****

O-B

October 10, 1973

OCT 11 1973

Political Committee
Socialist Workers Party
14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014

This letter is to inform the Political Committee, and the United Secretariat, of remarks made to the Berkeley/Oakland branch of the SWP on October 1, 1973, by Branch Organizer, and National Committee Alternate Frank Boehm. Speaking on behalf of what he termed "leading members" of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction in the branch, Boehm presented a motivation as to why representatives and supporters of the views of the International Majority Tendency (IMT) should be excluded from the Executive Committee of the branch, which was about to be elected.

Among other things, Boehm stated that SWP members who support the IMT's views, had been designated as "disloyal" at the recent SWP convention; therefore, the election of any of them to the branch Executive Committee would necessitate holding special exclusionary meetings or caucus meetings every week, in order to hide information from IMT supporters with which they could not be trusted.

Boehm also charged that in the past, supporters of the IMT's views had never played any significant role in the branch, were inactive, and had only been elected to the Executive Committee by the good graces of the SWP's majority. It is true that since the Fall of 1971 when over 50 supporters of the SWP majority were suddenly transferred into the area, no adherent of a majority point of view has been permitted to play an important role in the branch. Nevertheless, we believe it can be demonstrated that Boehm's statement is exaggerated to the point of being false, and that the responsibility for failure to integrate comrades with opposition viewpoints rests squarely on the policies of Boehm and this artificially implanted leadership -- who now comprise 13 out of the 14 seats on the Executive Committee.

However, what concerns us at present is the charge that all United States supporters of the IMT (no individual names were mentioned) are ipso facto "disloyal" to the extent that they can not be trusted to serve on the Executive Committee. This means that a repudiation of the views of the IMT is a requirement for serving on the Executive Committee. Therefore the Executive Committee is not of the branch but of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction; and the Organizer (Boehm) of the Executive Committee is in reality the paid fulltime Organizer of the Faction -- just as all the fraction and committee heads, functionaries, and the very headquarters and facilities themselves, are also for that Fraction and not our party as a whole.

In no way have supporters of the IMT's views indicated an unwillingness to carry out the decisions of the recent SWP convention.

To the contrary, supporters of the IMT participated in the major branch activities that immediately followed it; the moving of the headquarters, the sales campaign, the special internal fund drive for the new branch offices, U.S.L.A. work, Farmworkers Support, Public Forums, branch social and fundraising activities, etc.

In contrast, the branch leadership started off the post-convention period with a trial and expulsion, and a statement (again by Boehm) of the intention to expell IMT supporter Mike T. A Leninist-Trotskyist Faction meeting was held the following week, but in the subsequent month the Organizer has not even bothered to inform IMT supporters when this threatened expulsion is to take place. Furthermore, IMT supporters who have requested transfers to other branches have met with extremely slow responses and even the suggestion that such transfers may be denied.

Clearly the local branch leadership is trying to create an impossible situation here for the supporters of the IMT. We are not now requesting, nor have we ever demanded, the automatic right of representation on local branch Executive Committees. Although we think that such representation is in the best interests of the party and the building of the International, that decision is up to the SWP Majority. However, Boehm's proclamation states that no matter what we do, our alleged "disloyalty" precludes us from becoming a real part of the branch in advance.

Such a position is tantamount to perpetrating a split in our branch along the lines of the International dispute. We believe that this runs counter to the spirit of the recent proposals unanimously passed by the IEC. We doubt that Boehm was unaware of that information because at the same meeting he mentioned having talked to Barry Sheppard of the National Office that very day; and the following evening the IEC decisions were read in the neighboring San Francisco branch.

The charge of "disloyalty" against supporters of the IMT has created a thoroughly divisive atmosphere in our party. It clearly implies the expulsions of the IMT supporters for their views are likely. We believe it is being used to scare SWP and YSA members from giving the IMT's views a fair hearing -- it is employed to line them up in advance on the "organizational" question. Now the use of that charge to exclude us from responsible positions has made the situation intolerable. We urge the Political Committee to consider a repudiation of the point of view that IMT supporters are disloyal and cannot therefore participate as full members of the Socialist Workers Party, including service on the branch Executive Committee.

Signed by supporters of the International
Majority Tendency in the Oakland/Berkeley branch:

Gerard Guibet
Sandy Hall
Tim Kissner
Ralph Levitt

Fran McPoland
Lew Pepper
Beth Semmer
Debbie Shayne

Celia Stodola
Mike Tormey
Alan Wald

cc: United Secretariat
Bill Massey

Pittsburgh

OCT 11 1973

SOCIALIST WORKERS CAMPAIGN

Le Blanc for Mayor/Adachi & Nakrin for City Council

October 10, 1973

POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Dear Comrades,

Last night the Pittsburgh branch voted to critically support the CP's campaign for City Council this Nov. This letter outlines the facts of the situation so you can make a decision on this as soon as possible.

Beth Edelman is on the ballot as CP candidate. All seats are at-large, so she is not formally running against our candidates. They have no candidate for Mayor; they gave back-handed support to a liberal Democrat who lost in the primary. Their campaign has been almost invisible -- a fund mailing, a sticker which has not been circulated, and just a few public appearances by the candidate, who is also their district org. and available full-time. They say their platform will be out by mid-Oct.

Despite the token nature of their campaign, we see some openings because of the special situation we have here for using the critical support tactic. We are in touch with a layer of CPers and their periphery who are sympathetic to our campaign. Extending critical support would put us in a ~~non~~ non-sectarian posture to approach the CP for support to our campaign, which is seen as a serious one by wide layers of radicals -- the local chapter of NAM just gave us critical support. Thus we would be able to discuss our politics with YWILLers and some CPers, as well as gain more support from people on the CP periphery, while making it clear that we are for anti-capitalist political action, not sectarian splitters. If the CP campaign gets more active in the home stretch, we would be in a good position to talk with any new people they draw around it. Edelman has made it clear to comrades who called or went to the CP office to pick up campaign info that they do not want our support. They have plenty internal problems, and know we can hurt them.

If you approve our decision, we will go ahead with a statement and use it to formally ask the CP to endorse our campaign, as well as have discussions with the CP types we are in touch with.

Comradely,

Fred Stanton

Fred Stanton

304 South Bouquet; Pittsburgh 15213; (412) 682-5019