

SEP 25 1973

1849 University Avenue  
Berkeley, Calif. 94703

September 21, 1973

SWP N.O.  
New York

Dear Comrades,

I wanted to bring you up to date regarding the status of several members of this branch.

On September 9 the branch sent letters to Lauren and Margaret Charous informing them that their prolonged period of inactivity was incompatible with continued membership in the SWP. The letter went on to indicate that they could continue membership only if they agreed to work out a program of party building activity with the organizer, and then consistently carried it out.

You should have received by now a copy of Lauren's letter of September 15, addressed to myself, where he indicates his plans to move to Chicago. That should be considered his formal request that his "transfer" be approved. Aside from the considerations of his move to Chicago as being part of a national reshuffling of minority comrades, I would strongly urge against approval on the basis of his prolonged period of inactivity. To my knowledge, it is not the practice of the party to approve the transfer of comrades who have been totally inactive for such a long period of time that they are almost dropped from membership.

Several mistaken impressions contained in Lauren's letter should be corrected. First, while we did have a conversation last spring (in early April, to be more precise) he did not leave me with the impression that he was moving to Chicago, nor that he would be moving in September. The reason we had the phone conversation was because he requested that a meeting we had scheduled to discuss his inactivity be cancelled. Further, he gives the impression that I have been aware since last spring that he intended to transfer because of problems in his immediate family as well as his job ending. That is not the case. I knew nothing of these matters. In fact, at that time he told me he was thinking of moving "back east" because of an allergy he allegedly had. Finally, he states: "I told you at that time that I expected to remain inactive for several months because of the considerable number of night and summer courses I have had to take to fulfill Illinois teacher credential requirements." He never indicated to me that the courses he said he was taking were designed to fulfill Illinois requirements.

As mentioned above, letters were sent from the branch on September 9 to Lauren and Margaret. It was only after they received these letters that Lauren announced his plans to me.

2...2...2

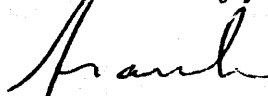
Margaret responded with a letter resigning from the party. A copy of that letter is enclosed.

One of the other comrades who moved, John Chairet, recently wrote me indicating the reasons for his moving to New York. Enclosed is a copy of his letter which should constitute his request for transfer.

Finally, as you know Casey moved to Sacramento for personal reasons. I met with her last weekend, following her receipt of a letter from me indicating that if her situation were not cleared up by September 23, she would be dropped from the party. She indicated that she did not want to be dropped and would request that she be allowed to transfer to at-large status. In our conversation I made it clear that it was not normal practice for comrades in branches to transfer to at-large status, except in exceptional circumstances such as the building of new branches, simply because the basic unit of the party is the branch. It was also my opinion, I told her, that her request to be transferred to at-large status tended to indicate her priorities, and was a very grave step to take for any serious party member. Because of her work situation and her age (she's 26), we agreed that she should be reassigned out of the YSA. That step was taken at the last branch meeting. You should have received her letter requesting a transfer by the time you get this.

With these three comrades included, there are presently four comrades who are formally on the books here but are in reality in different cities. I appreciate all the considerations that must be taken into account. Let us know as soon as any action is taken one way or the other.

Comradely,



Frank Boehm

September 12, 1973

To: Executive Committee and Branch,  
Oakland/Berkeley SWP

Dear Comrades:

This letter constitutes a request by me to be dropped from membership in the SWP, to the status of sympathizer. I ask that it be read to the Oakland/Berkeley branch, as is the tradition, so that the membership will know the reasons.

Although I have had some political differences with the Party for several years, I do not believe that this alone warrants my leaving. However, it has become increasingly apparent to me since the 1971 convention that SWP members with different opinions are simply not wanted in the party. This was most graphically demonstrated to me by the refusal to permit National Committee representation to oppositional tendencies either in 1971 or again, in 1973. In each case special reasons were declared by the national leadership as to why an "exception" should be made and representation be denied. In my opinion this exception has become the norm. ^ It is ABC that if a tendency is denied representation on the National Committee, it is being declared illegitimate. And if it is illegitimate it is being imputed with disloyalty -- which means that the threat of expulsion is continually being held over the heads of its supporters, whether or not this is said openly.

In addition, it became clear to me that a major campaign had been organized to push opposition supporters out of the party when a group of about 50 transfers arrived in our branch and YSA in the Fall of 1971. Perhaps many of these comrades thought they were doing the right thing at that time. Nevertheless in my case they have undoubtedly succeeded in accomplishing what I think was the real goal -- to which this resignation gives testimony. It simply became impossible for me to really participate and contribute when it was crystal clear that I was regarded as disloyal and as an object of suspicion -- and when I saw other individuals, with whom I politically agreed, being eliminated from membership in the YSA and SWP by questionable means.

I think that the national and local leaderships have made a serious mistake in using these kinds of tactics; and I feel they are to some extent becoming normalized within our party and unless stopped now will be around to hurt the movement for a long time to come. I do not believe that a truly revolutionary party can thrive with only one point of view. I do not see any advantage in the leadership's automatic equation of dissent with disloyalty. I do not see how all the useless and excessive factionalism which has been employed against minorities inside our party -- and which is now being used in a full-scale battle against the Fourth International -- can help build our movement.

Fraternally,

*Margaret Charous*  
Margaret Charous

20 John Street  
Roosevelt, New York 11575  
September 15, 1973

O-B SWP  
3536 Telegraph Ave.  
Oakland, California 94609


Dear Frank,

It is hard for me to understand what needs further clarification, and another unnecessary delay. The situation is quite simple. It was never my intention to separate from my family. At the time I talked to you I did not concretely know what my plans would be, which was why I asked for the extended leave of absence. Subsequently, since the convention, I have found it unnecessary to return to the Bay Area to work or finish up business. Any saying that a revolutionist is never allowed to change the order of unsure plans, or that it was planned to be surprising is a pure formulistic absurdity.

I would like to be transferred to New York City, effective immediately. I am paid up financially through August. I currently am carrying no sustainer which was another indication of my unsure plans, not trying to surprise anyone. If my transfer is approved I can pay my September dues in New York, or mail them to Oakland; whichever is proper.

I have currently been selling Militants in New York and attending branch meetings on the Upper West Side as a visitor, which was what Doug Jeness suggested I do in the meantime. Thus I want to make it clear that my leave was not a cop out for inactivity, but was used because my personal plans were unsure then, but have now become concretized. I have gotten my things in order as quickly as possible, sooner than expected, which I hope clarifies the discrepancies of impressions received.

Comradely,

  
John Chairret  
Oakland-Berkeley Branch