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14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
September 29, 1973

Estelle Yaffe
Bill Yaffe

Dear Comrades,

It has come to our attention that on a number of occasions recently your names have been quoted publicly as "spokespeople" for the Socialist Workers Party. Your functioning in this capacity must be the result of a misunderstanding.

As members-at-large of the SWP your functioning is governed under the direct control and direction of the Political Committee and its subsidiary bodies; namely, the Political Bureau, the Administrative Committee and the National Office. Members-at-large are not freelance operators attributing at will to the SWP views and opinions on various and sundry subjects without either consultation or approval of the national center.

The Political Committee discussed this problem at its last meeting and decided to instruct you to cease and desist from the practice of acting in any capacity whatsoever as "spokespeople" for the SWP. If there is any occasion to make a statement or take any other action in the name of the party you are to communicate the facts of the situation to the national center and proceed according to directions received from the authorized national party representative.

In the meantime, as SWP members affiliated to the YSA, you are to function in all ways under the direction, control and discipline of the YSA unit of which you are members.

Comradely,

Lew Jones for the
Political Committee

cc: Bloomington YSA organizer
YSA national center
YSA national office

19 September 1973

Dear Comrades:

Several additional disturbing incidents with the Yaffes have come about recently which merit your attention.

1) Yaffe is continuing to act on his own as a spokesperson for the Socialist Workers Party. Wednesday afternoon Robin H. informed me of a "press release" on Chile that Bill Yaffe had turned in to Indiana Daily Student (IDS) for the "Bloomington Socialist Workers Party." Robin asked Yaffe if he had consulted the YSA organizer (myself) about this. Yaffe replied no and he wasn't going to do it, especially after my having approved a YSA letter which Yaffe had been very upset about. When I asked him at the September 16 YSA business meeting if he had contacted either the regional or national SWP office, Yaffe impudently replied, "Why should I, I'm a member of the SWP."

Thursday, September 13 part of Yaffe's press statement appeared in an article for the IDS (copy enclosed). The following Tuesday's IDS (yesterday's) carried another letter from Yaffe which is also enclosed. The second "press release" or "statement" or whatever seems even more serious in that it is questionable that the SWP would write a letter with formulations stated as such.

As a YSA-er I am in no position to tell Yaffe whether or not the SWP authorizes him to do this or not. Since he wrote SWP letters to the IDS with impunity throughout last spring and summer and continues to do so Yaffe is seriously miseducating people about his duties as an SWPer as well as the line of the SWP. I feel that it is very necessary that someone in this local gets some sort of word from the National Office about this very soon.

2) At the September 16 YSA meeting, in the discussion around the Exec. report, Bill Yaffe got up and gave a big speech about Chile, criticizing the organizer for not calling a YSA action of Chile sooner (the exec report talked about a demonstration for Hands Off Chile set for September 19) and for not writing a YSA letter about Chile for the IDS. Although this was the first I heard of these criticisms Yaffe, when I questioned him, claimed that he had tried to phone me twice. Neither he nor his wife, who I had seen several times before the meeting, several days before the meeting in the case of his wife, had said nothing about this at all. Yaffe claimed that the organizer needed a "more activist attitude."

Yaffe went on to claim that this was the problem with the SWP and YSA nationally. Although there had been demonstrations throughout the country, he said, YSA and SWP did not participate in them. He specifically mentioned a demonstration in Washington D.C. over the weekend, saying that we had not participated in it. Then Bill and his wife Estelle made a motion that the executive committee write a letter to the national office asking why YSA and SWP didn't call for solidarity actions with Chile and criticizing them for not doing so. Bill Yaffe called upon the

regional organizer to "explain" this. When the new Militant (September 21, 1973) was brought to Bill's attention, Bill said that this was not enough, that YSA and SWP should have mobilized sooner.

The Yaffes' motion was voted down.

3) Rudi Zeller, the regional organizer, later on in the meeting delivered a report which dealt with our analysis of the current period and tasks; more specifically, the UFW work we're doing, PRDF, sales of the press, and the 1974 election campaigns.

Under the discussion, Estelle Yaffe, the first "questioner" (Bill Yaffe and Paula Westfall were next), started going into a lengthy criticism of Rudi's analysis of the period, saying that it was a "description and not an analysis" and urging that we needed to do much more trade union work, such as "implantation in the factories."

Rudi firmly responded that we were a democratic centralist organization and our meeting was not to discuss the line of the YSA. Meetings of that sort would be set aside during pre-convention oral discussion period, he added, and urged comrades with differences with the line of the YSA to write pre-convention documents and/or participate in pre-convention oral discussion.

Although after this clarification from Rudi the questions from the Bloomington supporters of the Internationalist Tendency were somewhat more subdued Paula Westfall managed to criticize our PRDF because it "may miseducate people... about the bourgeois courts" and Bill Yaffe asked about having a trade union fraction within the YSA.

Estelle asked about 3 comrades in Detroit who had been expelled, and from her description, expelled undemocratically. Rudi explained that their expulsions had been carried out democratically and that they had been expelled for disloyalty (i.e., attending the Spartacist League summer camp). Then Estelle asked about Gerry Clarke, whether if what she heard about him being expelled was true. Rudi didn't know about this so he told them he didn't know and if they wanted to know they should write the national office.

4) At a party Friday, September 14 night, Bill Yaffe asked a comrades who was transferring out to San Francisco, "Which side are you going to be on when the SWP leaves the Fourth International?"

The comrade replied that she didn't think that there was going to be a split.

Yaffe persisted, asking her where she would go in the case there was a split.

She replied that she would go with the SWP.

Yaffe, according to her, went off like a ruptured duck, saying, "If the SWP leaves the Fourth International it will be

like a 'stinking corpse'" quoting Rosa Luxemburg on the Second International after the First World War's outbreak.

She responded that if there would be any stinking corpses around that the comrades of the IT would be much more suitable material for its composition.

Yaffe, by then quite distraught, began yelling how they would bring over Mandel and would have hundreds of people asking them to join, etc., etc.

5) On the night of Monday, September 17, Bill Yaffe told Brian Elam, a comrades transferring out to Boston, that the IEC was meeting currently, and it "looks like our (internationalist tendency) days are numbered." He explained that there were 200 people in both the YSA and SWP who were ready to split. He stated that they were going to bring over Ernest Mandel to speak as soon as they did so.

Yaffe also told Brian that "there are conscious elements in the SWP which are trying to form a social democratic type of organization." He was speaking of the leadership, not of his tendency.

6) The local voted on doing a united front demonstration around Chile on Wednesday (today) around demands of "ITT/CIA out of Chile," "Hands Off Chile," "Free Chilean Political Prisoners." Three comrades volunteered to work on building the demonstration. Those comrades were Bill Yaffe, Estelle Yaffe, and Paula Westfall--the entire Bloomington contingent of the Internationalist Tendency.

Enclosed is a copy of the leaflet they put out on it since I don't think it is quite our idea of a leaflet for a united front type of demonstration around the above mentioned demands.

After the convention it appeared that the Yaffes had cooled off a bit, as if they were serious about observing discipline as members of the Socialist Workers Party. Events in the past week or two, especially Estelle's letter, seem to indicate that the situation is quite different from what I had first thought. This trend is flowing thicker and faster with each passing day. Hardly a day goes by without another Yaffe incident arising for me to report. I would greatly appreciate it if you could very seriously consider what I have had to tell you and send me some response soon.

Comradely,

s/ Steve Millen
Bloomington YSA
Organizer

cc: SWP National Office
Regional Center

From the Indiana Daily Student, Thursday, September 13

The Socialist Workers Party in Bloomington released a statement Monday night concerning the Chilean disorder.

Bill Yaffe, party spokesman said, "It's possible the coup d'etat has opened a period of civil war with the masses of workers and peasants on one side fighting against the bourgeoisie and the military imperialists on the other side."

Yaffe said the coup "confirms some of the classic tenets of Marxism that there can be no socialism without revolution."

From the Indiana Daily Student, Tuesday, September 18

To the editor:

What we see today in Chile confirms some of the classical themes of Marxism: there can be no socialism without a violent revolution. The coup probably opens a long period of civil war with the mass of workers and peasants on one side fighting against the bourgeoisie, the military, the fascists and the imperialists on the other side.

The bourgeoisie is certainly stronger than the working class and its allies from a military point of view, especially since the masses must make their way empirically without the benefit of a real revolutionary leadership.

The militant Socialist Workers Party of Bloomington feels that it is the duty of all revolutionists to show their active solidarity with the armed struggle of the working masses in Chile. The bourgeois press in this country has developed a news black-out on the arrest and murders of leftists in the course of fighting throughout Chile.

The fascists are given free hand to carry out their much publicized "Operation Djakarta." There is no peaceful road to socialism--the bourgeoisie will never allow itself to be dispossessed little by little.

The key question in social revolution is the destruction of the bourgeois state, its institutions and its armed forces and its replacement with the dictatorship of the proletariat based on a revolutionary workers army. Victory to the armed Latin American socialist revolution!

Bill Yaffe
Socialist Workers Party