

Houston, Texas  
April 1, 1974

Houston Branch  
Socialist Workers Party

Dear Comrades:

This letter is written to inform you of my intention to resign from membership in the Socialist Workers party. This has been a long and difficult decision to make, however I feel that it is the only one which I can honestly make at this point.

I joined the Young Socialist Alliance 7 years ago primarily because of my support to the anti-war movement. I felt at that time, as I do to this day, that the SWP and the YSA were the only organizations capable of providing a true mass action perspective for the anti-war movement.

About the same time as I joined the YSA, a new voice was raised within the growing youth radicalization--that of the women's liberation movement. I vividly recall many female comrades, including myself, at that time anxiously <sup>awaiting</sup> some national perspective from the party leadership for our intervention into this potentially powerful movement. At the 1971 SWP convention we were given such a line. We were told that there was only one issue which was capable of mobilizing masses of women--that of abortion law repeal. We were told that sisterhood was powerful, that consistent feminism could only lead to revolutionary consciousness. I fully supported this line, and came to identify myself completely with the feminist movement and feminist ideology, as did most female comrades. I clapped the loudest when the party leadership chastised the comrades of the Proletarian Orientation tendency for their allegations that the only future for the women's liberation movement was within the struggle of the working class, and that a student based feminist movement could only be short-lived. When some comrades wrote in 1971 that by throwing all of our resources into a single-issue multi-class campaign around abortion repeal we would be misleading and derailing the women's movement, I was right behind the party leadership in attacking their 'workerism' and 'sexism'. I was even so naive as to believe the stern promises of the party leadership that repeal of the abortion laws would only be the beginning and that when this victory was won we would lead masses of women in even greater conquests.

It seems almost a farce to say that I was grossly misled. After the 1971 party convention female comrades threw themselves wholeheartedly into building WONAAC, working day and night attempting to cause at least a ripple within the women's movement--searching endlessly for the promised masses of women who were dying to take to the streets in an objectively revolutionary attempt to choose whether or not to bear children. The result was quite the opposite of what had been expected. WONAAC was never able to come near to mobilizing masses of women, and the so-called objectively revolutionary dynamic of the movement found its greatest moment in the chambers of the justices of the Supreme Court, with a little help from 'sister' Bella Abzug. So much for the abortion repeal movement. An important concession had been granted to those who could afford it, but what was left of the women's movement? After only 2 years of false hopes, inflated promises and political misleadership, it was left scattered with no leadership outside of the National Women's Political Caucus and, consequently, no direction outside of the Democratic party.

By its limited and classless intervention into the womens' movement, the SWP played a major role in drowning the 'second wave'. The party failed miserably to attract and recruit the most militant wing of the movement and virtually handed the leadership over to the reformists. Such is the inevitable result of consistent feminism consistently applied.

Roughly coinciding with these developments was yet another example of the party leaderships minimalist approach to the radicalization--this time involving the anti-war movement. By restricting its own independent intervention to the single issue 'out now' slogan and attacking as political opponents those radicalized youth who openly proclaimed their support for a victorious Vietnamese revolution, the party found itself with no other choice than to drop its intervention precisely at the moment when the Vietnamese needed solidarity the most. As Trotsky wrote, "the more the party is petty-bourgeois in its composition, the more it is dependent upon the changes in the official public opinion". When the students began believing that the war was over, what else could the petty-bourgeois leadership of the SWP do but to tail-end that sentiment and withdraw from activity?

This same approach and methodology, historically referred to as opportunism, gradually became the most outstanding feature of the SWP's practice. Quite the opposite development was taking place within the European sections of the Fourth International. Rather than growing further and further removed from the radicalization, the European Trotskyists were becoming increasingly recognized as its' most conscious and devoted leaders--winning over the best militants of the student radicalization and becoming significant political factors in some countries as well as beginning the difficult process of implanting themselves in the working class.

This development within the International coincided with my own developing disagreements with the SWP leadership and led me to declare my support for the International Majority within the International as well as the Internationalist Tendency within the SWP.

Although I recognize that by leaving the SWP I am also leaving the ranks of the Fourth International, I still remain in basic political agreement with the Fourth International majority. Despite its' serious lack of internationalism and political degeneration, the comrades of the IT have loyally devoted themselves to returning the SWP to its' heritage as a revolutionary proletarian party, a task which I feel is no longer possible. My ability and desire to personally remain politically active in the SWP has been deeply affected by the non-internationalist outlook of the SWP leadership and my commitment to the IT was too great to allow this inactivity to reflect upon the IT as a whole.

For these reasons I am resigning from the SWP while remaining a supporter of the Fourth International. I sincerely hope and expect that at some future point I may return to the ranks of the World Party of Socialist Revolution.

LONG LIVE THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL.

cc: USFI  
IMT  
IT  
SWP PC

Comradely,

*Cherie A. Fleau*

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