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April 10, 1978

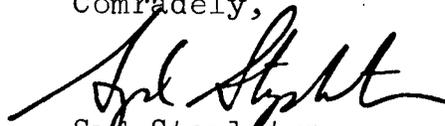
TO ORGANIZERS AND NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is a copy of a letter to Nathan Karp of the Socialist Labor Party. This letter is the last in a two-letter series outlining our views on some questions being considered by the SLP.

The attached letter should not be circulated outside the SWP.

Comradely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Syd Stapleton', written in black ink.

Syd Stapleton
for the Political
Committee

Typed on National Office letterhead.

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April 8, 1978

Nathan Karp
National Secretary
Socialist Labor Party
914 Industrial Avenue
Palo Alto, Calif. 94303

Dear Comrade Karp,

In my letter of January 19, 1978 I outlined some of the Socialist Workers Party's views on the character of a revolutionary Marxist party. I also described what I thought were some similarities in our approach to this question.

I think the SLP and the SWP agree that there will be no overturn of capitalism in the United States without a massive, class conscious mobilization of the working class. This letter will focus on the strategic approach needed to build such a movement and lead it to a successful conclusion.

The program and method of a revolutionary party is obviously critical. We think it is a question that our two parties should discuss. From what we in the SWP have been able to observe of the recent evolution of the SLP, we believe that our differences on program and method may be diminishing. Of course, there are bound to be misunderstandings and preconceptions at this early stage, but further communication and discussion can help us reduce or eliminate this problem.

Perhaps the most effective way to begin this exchange is for me to note what I think are some broad areas of agreement between our parties. I will then expand on the SWP's views from that vantage point.

First, both the SWP and the SLP have always rejected the false notion that socialism can be gradually constructed by piecemeal progressive reforms of the capitalist economy and the capitalist state. This approach is a counter-revolutionary adaptation to the power of the capitalist class, and has nothing in common with revolutionary Marxism. For Marxists, the beginning of wisdom is the statement in the Communist Manifesto "that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions."

However, especially since the open revisions of Marxism in the late 19th century by Eduard Bernstein, many people and

parties have professed allegiance to Marxism while rejecting its anticapitalist and revolutionary content. These range from the Social-Democrats of the Second International to the Stalinists.

But neither the SWP nor the SLP have been purveyors of this reformist ideology. The writings and speeches of Daniel DeLeon ring with angry and perceptive denunciations of "Marxist" evolutionary socialism. And reformism as a strategy has never been a failing of his successors in the SLP.

We believe the SWP's traditions on this question are equally clear. The theoretical and historical roots of our movement go back much further than 1938 (when the SWP was founded) and lie, in large part, in the struggle against reformism. The political continuity of our ideas starts from the class struggle conceptions of Marx and Engels. Much of our theoretical base was forged in the fight against the pre-World War I degeneration of the Second International and the fight against Stalinist class-collaboration -- including Stalinism's "Popular Front" with the liberal bourgeoisie. Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg and Liebknecht all made powerful contributions to the construction of our movement -- which exists to bring about the revolutionary overturn of capitalism, not its reform.

As early as 1898 Rosa Luxemburg launched a public fight against a growing reformist current in the German Social-Democracy. Her Reform and Revolution is an eloquent refutation of the idea that anything but the "hammer blow of revolution" can bring about workers' rule.

Lenin's State and Revolution, one of the theoretical underpinnings of our movement, is devoted to a defense and extension of Marx's and Engels' conclusions after the experience of the Paris Commune of 1871. "But what is forgotten," Lenin says of the reformists, "is this: if the state is the product of the irreconcilable character of class antagonisms, if it is a force standing above society and 'increasingly separated from it,' then it is clear that the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution but also without the destruction of the apparatus of state power..." (Lenin, Collected Works, International Publishers, 1932. page 135, Volume XXI)

The first four congresses of the Communist International reflected the revolutionary impact of Lenin's ideas. The "Thesis on Tactics" adopted by the Third Congress (1921) declared that the "social-democratic minimum program of reform of capitalism," had become a "notoriously counter-revolutionary deception."

The founding document of the Fourth International, adopted in 1938, states, "The strategic task of the Fourth International

lies not in reforming capitalism, but in its overthrow. Its political aim is the conquest of power by the proletariat for the purpose of expropriating the bourgeoisie. (Leon Trotsky, The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution, Pathfinder, 1974. p. 75)

In 1946 the SWP adopted a resolution entitled "Theses on the American Revolution." That resolution affirmed that, "The hopeless contradictions of American capitalism, inextricably tied up with the death agony of world capitalism, are bound to lead to a social crisis of such catastrophic proportions as will place the proletarian revolution on the order of the day." (James P. Cannon, Speeches to the Party, Pathfinder, 1973. p. 335)

The report to our 1975 convention on the resolution "Prospects for Socialism" concludes, "The tasks before us remain essentially the same as in the 1930's. That is to provide the program and perspective to help our class move faster and further on the road to socialist revolution, and, for that, to construct a mass revolutionary party that is capable of leading the way to victory." (Prospects for Socialism in America, Pathfinder, 1976. p. 136)

Of course, a great deal more could be said about the record of Lenin's Bolshevik Party, the early years of the Comintern, the Fourth International and the SWP in the struggle against reformism. All I've attempted to do here is to note the continuity of our revolutionary view of the road to socialism. Our view, in a nutshell, has always been that the workers must be organized and prepared for great class battles, culminating in the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of workers' rule.

Stated broadly, I think SLPers would agree with this concept. Neither the SWP nor the SLP have disputed the point made by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto that the overturn of capitalism can only be accomplished by a mass workers movement -- "the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the immense majority."

Of course, the SWP and the SLP have always formally agreed on the wisdom of Marx and Engels. But obviously, something more is required. Who can count, for example, the number of ultra-left sects that have shrunk into oblivion while issuing fiery denunciations of reformism and declaring their eternal (and exclusive) loyalty to Marxist principles.

The problem is: how to advance the self-consciousness, confidence and independence of the workers movement; how to create a mass revolutionary party; and how to go about accomplishing the revolutionary overturn of capitalism and the establishment of workers' rule. These are the rocks that have sunk parties mightier than ours.

The Weekly People report on your most recent National Executive Committee meeting, and the November 19, 1977 Weekly People article "On Reformism" indicated to us that you are giving serious thought to these questions. They are questions that have confounded Marxists and generated many important debates since 1848: how to relate struggles for immediate demands to the struggle for socialism; how to combat the influence of reformism and other bourgeois ideologies in the workers movement; how to participate in workers struggles so as to advance the class consciousness and eventually the revolutionary consciousness of the workers; etc.

The Socialist Workers Party and the Fourth International have worked out a basic strategic approach to these questions. It was first outlined explicitly in the founding document of the Fourth International, The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International, known as the Transitional Program. Pathfinder Press has published a book (The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution) which includes this document and some important supplementary material. I know you ordered some copies of this book, but I think it might be useful to touch on some of the main points in our outlook, especially as they relate to points being considered by the SLP.

We think that capitalism long ago lost its ability to function as a progressive force, and thus the problem of discrediting capitalism is being solved by the capitalists themselves. They and their system drive humanity into wars and threaten us with nuclear catastrophe. They try to drive down workers' standard of living, roll back democratic rights, and destroy the productive capacity of society. They threaten the environment. For growing numbers of victims of this decline, the question becomes, "Where do we go from here?"

Revolutionary socialists have an answer to that question. But revolutionaries are a small minority of the working class, with, at present, far less influence among workers than agents of the ruling class. Labor bureaucrats, social-democrats and Stalinists try to limit the oppressed to demands and struggles that will not challenge the existence of capitalism -- when these "labor lieutenants" of the rulers are not actually participating in the assault on workers and their organizations.

Because of the power of the capitalist political apparatus and its reformist "fifth column" in the labor movement, revolutionary consciousness is not an automatic outgrowth of the decline of capitalism. That is what we mean when we say that the chief obstacle to the workers taking power in this epoch is the crisis of revolutionary leadership. Workers and other victims of capitalism, naturally enough, first respond on an elementary level to the symptoms of capitalist decay that most directly affect them, from wage cuts to racist attacks.

But we don't think such workers struggles around elementary demands are "reformist." Such partial struggles will sometimes lead to partial gains and increased rights, which can be called

reforms. But in our view, it's more useful to look at the kinds of specific demands that are raised and the methods used to fight for them.

There are three basic kinds of demands workers can raise, short of just calling for socialism. They are: immediate demands (better wages and working conditions, etc.), democratic demands (for the right to strike, free speech, equal rights for women and Blacks, etc.), and transitional demands (on which more will follow in this letter). Under certain circumstances, action around any of these demands can result in reforms, but they can also serve to mobilize workers in confrontations with fundamental interests of the capitalist ruling class. It is the mobilizing potential of each of these types of demands (rather than their ability to force concessions from the rulers) than is of primary interest to us as revolutionaries.

The Transitional Program starts from a recognition of the value of struggles around any of these types of demands in mobilizing and educating the masses. It describes a method of approach aimed at bridging the gap between the workers' immediate and democratic demands and the generalized revolutionary consciousness needed to make a socialist revolution. We don't think this gap can be overcome simply by leafleting the workers on the advantages of socialism -- although, of course, it is important for socialists to try to inspire the workers' movement with a vision of a new society.

We think it is a basic fact of politics that people in motion are more open to new ideas and new forms of action than those who are defeated, atomized and quiescent. We think this explains, for example, the massive growth of the Communist Party during the workers' upsurges of the 1930's, and the deep radicalization in the thinking of many Americans that began with the civil rights and anti-Vietnam-war movements. So a big concern of our approach is to help develop ways of encouraging a class-struggle, mass mobilization response to the attacks launched by the capitalists.

The transitional method revolves around two basic features: One is a system of demands that can lead workers from day-to-day struggles into conflict with the central features of capitalism in its epoch of decline. By participating in the struggles of the oppressed, socialists can learn how to apply and advance such demands to point those struggles toward the necessary socialist goal. Second, the Transitional Program stresses the proletarian method of mass struggle, as the revolutionary means to bring about the mobilization and organization of the masses.

The system of demands put forward in the Transitional Program has its roots in the Russian Revolution. The Bolsheviks recognized that the basic motor force of the Russian revolution was the inability of Russian capitalism to answer the mass demands for "Peace, Land and Bread." As the foremost

champions of these demands, the Bolsheviks became the most trusted spokespeople for the Russian masses. The Bolsheviks were unique among Russian parties claiming to be revolutionary, because they continued to uncompromisingly support these mass demands even when the demands came into conflict with the needs (and survival) of Russian capitalism.

One pamphlet by Lenin, The Threatening Catastrophe and How to Fight It, gives another illuminating illustration of the Bolshevik's use of the transitional method. Written in September, 1917, it lists minimal measures a truly revolutionary and democratic government (as Kerensky's claimed to be) would take to end the famine and chaos in Russia's economic life. These measures, which hardly constituted socialism, were: 1. Unification and nationalization of the banks; 2. Nationalization of the largest monopolies (sugar, coal, metals, etc.); 3. Abolition of commercial secrets; 4. Compulsory unification into associations of industrialists, merchants and employers in general; and 5. Creation of consumers associations. It is interesting to compare these to the transitional measures advocated by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks did not expect the Kerensky government -- because it was a capitalist government -- to carry out these obviously necessary and sensible demands. But raising these demands was an effective way of exposing the false revolutionary stance of the government, and further discrediting it in the eyes of the Russian masses. It helped to win majority support for the Bolsheviks, preparing the way for the October revolution.

The Transitional Program has a similar function. It advances a system of demands that speak to the urgent needs of the workers and the oppressed, and that are in fundamental conflict with the needs and direction of modern capitalism. The aim of these demands is not a step-by-step assumption of state power or a piece-by-piece construction of socialism. The aim is the construction of a movement that fights for the rights and demands of the oppressed, and that exposes the reactionary nature of capitalism, its parties and its governments. At bottom, the transitional method is an educational tool, to organize and prepare the workers for the assumption of power.

As such, the Transitional Program is not a catechism to be learned by rote and repeated as the solution to all tactical and strategic problems -- any more than the demands in Lenin's pamphlet are appropriate in all places and at all times. Experience in the life of the movements of the oppressed is essential, since demands must be tailored to meet specific situations. The Transitional Program describes a method, a method we have used to develop such documents as The Transitional Program for Black Liberation -- in much the same way that the Transitional Program itself was based on the method

used by the Bolsheviks in 1917 and expressed in a preliminary way in the Communist Manifesto.

In my opinion, one aspect of the Transitional Program has just had dramatic confirmation in the coal strike. In the section on trade unions, the Transitional Program says, "The Bolshevik-Leninist stands in the front line trenches of all kinds of struggles, even while they involve only the most modest material interests or democratic rights of the working class. He takes part in mass trade unions for the purpose of strengthening them and raising their spirit of militancy. He fights uncompromisingly against any attempt to subordinate the unions to the bourgeois state and bind the proletariat to 'compulsory arbitration'..."

What does this have to do with socialism? Well, we think the miners' strike was important because they held off an attack by the bosses through a rank-and-file application of the methods of class-struggle. This set an example for all workers confronted by attacks on their unions and their living standards. And in part, the strike was made possible because the ranks had won a simple fight for union democracy, the right to vote on contracts, a few years before. Winning the right to vote enhanced the confidence and expectations of the miners, and improved their power to resist the incompetence or treachery of their own leadership. The right to vote led to the exposure of Carter's Democratic administration as a Taft-Hartley-invoking, strikebreaking, agent of the coal bosses.

Had they not won the earlier fight on this "simple" question, the miners could have been driven back to work under the first "ball and chain" contract Miller bought from the operators. Such a defeat would have had a demoralizing effect on workers throughout the country.

What this has to do with socialism is that we don't think that victories won by workers demoralize and confuse the working class. To the contrary, the miners' victorious fight for the right to vote on contracts advanced militancy and potential for struggle rather than retarding it. With that victory in their pockets, the miners showed, as best they could under the circumstances, the power of workers relying on their own strength. A comparison of the first contract with the third shows how effective that can be, even when saddled with a class-collaborationist leadership and further limited by the labor bureaucracy's opposition to a real solidarity effort.

If one agrees that workers in motion are the engine of socialist revolution, then support to demands that can encourage such motion is an integral part of the struggle for socialism. I thought the Weekly People's calls for solidarity with the miners and its emphasis on the importance of union democracy showed that we have some important common ground.

Farrell Dobbs provides a brief description of our transitional approach to the workers movement in the last chapter of his book, Teamster Bureaucracy:

Proposals for immediate action should center on problems involving the workers urgent material needs and the defense of their democratic rights. It is also important that the fight around those issues be attuned to the existing levels of consciousness in the union membership. Then, as significant forces are set into motion through that approach, several things take place. Rank and file militancy rises. Increasingly sharp clashes with the bosses result, during which the workers begin to shed their illusions and acquire class struggle concepts. Lessons thus learned during industrial conflicts can prepare the union ranks toward action on a political plane. In short, a foundation is laid from which to initiate transformation of the trade unions themselves into instruments capable of developing far-reaching revolutionary perspectives.

As the transitional process from where they are to where they should be continues, the workers attention can be focused on broad questions which go far beyond day-to-day issues on the job. They will learn in that way to generalize their thinking in class terms, and the development of a conscious anticapitalist outlook will follow.(p.293)

Our call for the formation of a labor party is based on the same transitional approach. As the miners' strike showed, many workers' struggles rapidly raise political and governmental questions. Every bourgeois politician opposed the miners' strike, and Carter, who many miners helped elect, invoked Taft-Hartley to try to break the strike. In addition, it is becoming clearer that many problems workers face can only be solved on the governmental level. Problems of medical care, the environment, runaway plants and so forth can not be solved simply by using the strike weapon. So, how can revolutionaries help workers draw the political conclusions from these class-struggle experiences.

Of course, if workers would join a mass revolutionary party, that would settle the problem. But there is no such mass party, and revolutionaries are still a tiny minority of the class. However, there are mass organizations workers have formed to fight for their interests -- the unions. As a way of bridging the gap between the need for a mass revolutionary party and the present consciousness of the workers, we call for the formation of a party based on the organizations the workers have already built. Such a party, a labor party, would fight for the interests of the workers in opposition

to the capitalist parties.

We certainly don't advocate a reformist labor party. We call for a labor party as a vehicle for class-struggle in the field of politics. The establishment of such a party would depend on a fight against the class-collaborationist perspective of the labor bureaucracy. Once established, such a party could be a way for workers to rely on their own strength in political struggle, just as the miners depended on their own strength on the picket lines. Such a party would also provide an important forum for revolutionary socialist ideas.

Other demands advanced in the Transitional Program, such as demands for the abolition of commercial secrets ("Open the Books"), for a "sliding scale" of wages and hours to combat inflation and unemployment, and for workers control of production can help advance class-struggle mobilization of the workers and focus their attention on the anti-proletarian nature of the government. This can help show the workers, in terms of their own needs, the necessity for the only kind of government consistent with their demands -- a workers government.

The two central features of the transitional method -- revolutionary methods of struggle and demands that expose the character of capitalism and the capitalist government -- are crucial in reaching potential allies of the proletariat. Support to the demands of the most oppressed -- women, Blacks and other national minorities -- flows from this perspective. For the workers movement to unify the forces necessary to fight back capitalist attacks and overturn capitalist rule, it must represent the interests of all oppressed sectors of society, including such non-proletarian elements as small farmers. Thus support, for example, to affirmative action programs isn't just a way to fight for equality under capitalism for Blacks and women (a pretty hopeless perspective), but an essential element in building the kind of mass movement needed for proletarian revolution. It isn't a "sacrifice" for white male workers to support affirmative action, since it is suicide for them not to.

Other demands of the workers movement, such as for nationalizations of the banks and cheap credit, can help win the support of victimized layers of the petty-bourgeoisie like working farmers. In fact, such a policy toward oppressed layers of society will have to continue, even after a workers revolution, until the last vestiges of privilege and prejudice are vanquished.

Naturally, the transitional method is very much involved in our view of what attitude revolutionaries should take toward mass movements around immediate demands, such as the civil rights, antiwar and women's movements. We do not believe that

revolutionaries can or should hesitate to support any demand that would improve the status of the oppressed.

The social-democrats, with a "minimum" and "maximum" program, believe that all socialists have to do is support some of these demands and then give speeches about socialism on Sundays. This was the outlook of the "sewer socialists" represented by Hillquit and Berger. But revolutionaries have a more complex task. We start with the ideas and practice of proletarian methods of struggle -- mass mobilization independent of the capitalist parties and politicians.

Work by revolutionaries to guide mass movements toward a class struggle perspective raises many difficult questions. As in most things, there are plenty of bad examples. Some Maoists think the only answer to the problem is to chant, "The only solution is revolution," on the inside or outside of every available mass struggle. But in our view it would be sectarian narrow-mindedness for socialists to simply say that socialism is the only answer, and therefore every struggle should be verbally presented as a struggle for workers power.

Our work in the movement against the Vietnam war provides some illustrations of a practical application of our strategy. One document that might be of interest on that subject is the "Education for Socialists" pamphlet called Revolutionary Strategy in the Fight Against the Vietnam War. It is available from Pathfinder Press.

The Transitional Program sums up our outlook as follows:

The Fourth International does not discard the program of the old 'minimal' demands to the degree which these have preserved at least part of their vital forcefulness. Indefatigably, it defends the democratic rights and social conquests of the workers. But it carries on this day-to-day work within the framework of the correct actual, that is, revolutionary perspective. Insofar as the old, partial, 'minimal' demands of the masses clash with the destructive and degrading tendencies of decadent capitalism -- and this occurs at each step -- the Fourth International advances a system of transitional demands, the essence of which is contained in the fact that ever more openly and decisively will they be directed against the very bases of the old bourgeois regime. The old 'minimal program' is superseded by the transitional program, the task of which lies in systematic mobilization of the masses for proletarian revolution. (The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution, pp. 74,75)

There is no question that this approach involves the SWP in promoting certain specific demands which fall far short of

calling for socialism. Is this compatible with Marxism?

We think so. Marx and Engels made it quite clear that it was an obligation for communists to champion the demands of the oppressed and to be on the front lines of fights for their realization. One example is Engels' ardent support for the eight hour work day. Advocating that reform did not make him a reformist.

There is a lot of written evidence on this topic. I like the quotes you introduced into your address to the 1977 SLP convention -- especially the remark by Engels that, "it is impossible to drill a theory in an abstract dogmatic way into a great nation, even if one has the best of theories developed out of their own conditions of life." (Thirtieth National Convention - Minutes, Reports, Resolutions, etc., published by the Socialist Labor Party. p. 39)

In the Communist Manifesto, while noting that communists represent the future in movements for social change, Marx and Engels said, "The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class..." Discussing this statement in a letter to Turati on Jan. 26, 1894, Engels wrote that communists:

take an active part in every phase of development of the struggle between the two classes without ever losing sight of the fact that these phases are just so many steps leading to the first great goal: the conquest of political power by the proletariat as the means for reorganizing society. Their place is by the side of those fighting to obtain immediate benefits in the interests of the working class. They accept all these political and social benefits, but merely as payments on account. Hence they consider every revolutionary or progressive movement as a step in the direction in which they themselves are travelling. (Marx and Engels, Selected Correspondence, Moscow, 1953. p. 553)

While the news coverage and editorial statements of the Weekly People, to our way of looking at it, have been encouraging signs of possible agreement in this area, I was surprised by one remark in particular in the November 19, 1977 Weekly People article "On Reformism".

In that article the anonymous author says, "...revolutionaries who set forth a platform loaded with immediate demands can always be out-reformed by the ruling class and historically have been." Since this sentence does not refer to reformists, who strive to limit workers' demands to those compatible with capitalism, but to revolutionaries, I think it expresses an erroneous notion.

As part of his revisions of Marxism, Eduard Bernstein had also argued that capitalism had infinite capacity for reform -- and that formed his theoretical basis for abandoning the idea of socialist revolution. For that matter, if capitalism "can always" out-reform revolutionaries, what is the need for socialism at all?

Rosa Luxemburg is worth quoting on this point. Speaking of Bernstein's theory of the infinite capacity of capitalism for reform, she points out in Reform and Revolution:

Either the socialist transformation is, as was admitted up to now, the consequence of the internal contradictions of capitalism, and with the growth of capitalism will develop its internal contradictions, resulting inevitably, at some point, in its collapse, (in that case 'means of adaptation' /reforms/ are ineffective and the theory of collapse is correct); or the 'means of adaptation' will really stop the collapse of the capitalist system and thereby enable capitalism to maintain itself by suppressing its own contradictions. In that case socialism ceases to be a historic necessity. It becomes anything you want to call it, but it is no longer the result of the material development of society. (Rosa Luxemburg Speaks, Pathfinder Press, 1977. p. 41)

Either capitalism can "always" out-reform socialists, in which case socialism becomes a wistful, utopian-idealist hope for a better world, or it has a definitely limited capacity for reform, in which case some "reform" demands can have a revolutionary dynamic. This is a fairly important question.

Marxists, as materialists, not idealists, have never believed that workers will come to socialism simply because it represents a more rational method of social organization. Workers won't risk civil war just because it might be nicer to live in a cooperative society. But the whole materialist basis of Marxism as a revolutionary social science rests on the idea that capitalism arrives at a stage when it becomes destructive, reactionary and an obstacle to social progress. The deeper the crisis, the more violent grow capitalism's attacks on the workers. The worsening internal crises of capitalism pose the question: Socialism or Barbarism -- not Socialism or Capitalist Reform. Capitalism's crises raise political and economic issues for workers that help strip away illusions about the reformability of capitalism. Changing objective conditions bring about changes in the consciousness of the workers. In short, workers become open to revolutionary alternatives because, at a certain stage, capitalism can't make the reforms necessary to meet what workers regard as their basic needs. Hitler's Germany, not Palme's Sweden, is what capitalism holds in store for the workers.

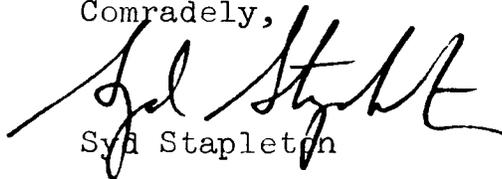
The question of the value of immediate and democratic demands doesn't just come up in periods of full-scale economic collapse, of course. In periods of economic slow-down the capitalists can set out, like they are doing today, to take back improvements the workers won in earlier periods. The attacks on the miners union, Black rights and abortion rights are all examples of this phenomenon. As the miners showed, even a fight to retain old gains can have quite an impact on consciousness and class-struggle militancy.

One could be wary of workers' demands for reforms of capitalism on the theory that "the worse the better." But such an approach would have nothing in common with Marxism, and, besides, it doesn't work. Workers in the New York City municipal unions are not automatically more revolutionary than miners in West Virginia just because the municipal unions are being drastically weakened while the miners have partially beaten back a similar employer offensive. "Educating" workers by denouncing their struggles for immediate demands (or hoping for their defeat) is not a very attractive prospect, and not even remotely revolutionary.

I think there is much evidence that we may share some important areas of agreement on these essential points. The SLP's forthright support to independence for Puerto Rico, the ERA and affirmative action are just a few of the reasons we think there is enough common ground between our parties to obligate us to carry on further discussions.

Obviously, revolutionaries must relate their support of workers' struggles around immediate demands to the socialist goal. In our opinion, the transitional method is a uniquely well-designed way to do that. We are interested in hearing your reaction, and we'd like to discuss it further.

Comradely,



Syd Stapleton