

X:PC

Apr 1, 1960

Dear Mike,

(this being the enclosed letter & articles - not this note)

I would like this read to the Branch if possible,
or at least passed around - needless-to-say,
this was not an easy decision - I will miss
working with many hard working comrades - un-
fortunately I cannot ~~no~~ participate with the current
program and I don't need to explain myself
further.

I know some of my actions will irritate
many members, but it will be in the overall
interests of socialism rather than ^{for a} component
part of the struggle (at this stage the SWP is so)
that I do them.

Please keep me on the ^{important} mailing lists - I
will also pay my back sustainer debt as soon
as I start working - please send me the sum
total due. Also please feel free to call if there
are some strings to tie around the bookstore.

Since I respect you (personally) I could
not come in personally since I am too angry
to treat you in a friendly way (if you were
Maggi I'd ^{gladly} come in to ~~to~~ give my resig -

nation and a piece of my mind.

Well I will come around (forums,
etc.) at a later date to be sure - I
think you can understand why I
cannot just now - Oh, Lisa will
be given the keys to bring in -

In solidarity -

Steve

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

Sept. 4, 1979

SEP 6 1979

X:PC

Dear Comrades,

Please accept my resignation from the Socialist Workers Party, effective immediately.

The experiences of the last several months have unfortunately compelled me to make this decision. Should I reinstate much of what was said during the pre-convention discussion period and at Oberlin itself on the gay question? I frankly do not wish to do that. Let it be said, however, that the SWP leadership had made an initial error in 1973 (the Memorandum) and has only repeatedly attempted to justify it rather than change it to coincide with a real historical-materialist analysis of the relationship between the gay struggle and the overall needs/demands of a revolutionary socialist program for the working class. "The turn" and its theoretical needs have only exacerbated these errors and formulated new and more dangerous ones as well.

Already (as seen in the enclosures), history is proving you wrong again and leaving you on the sidelines as spectators of these developments. This also shows that in reality/practice the position held by the party is in direct conflict and opposition with the gay liberation movement and objectively puts you on the wrong side of the class-line.

This also brings up the question of internal democracy within the SWP. For too long I sat and incorrectly (naively) hoped that the aberrations of democratic centralism before me were "momentary". I can no longer participate as a member under discipline

to an organization that belittles any attempt by fellow comrades both inside and outside of the party as "opponents", etc. and this constant factional approach of the leadership. (I need not bring up the more "apolitical" characterizations which circulate in the hallways of West St. when referring to "opponents" et al.) This has always disturbed me greatly and I can now see the results of such an inward/internal sectarian approach to the real world and its struggles. (Again I need not mention the treatment of any opposition to the majority line of the party over the last six years as I have personally observed).

Perhaps the discussion around Cuba is the most convincing argument for resigning. Here you clearly say to lesbians and gay men that in the "interests" of "constructing socialism", living a 'closeted' and repressed existence is not too bad. Shame on you -- you'll pay the political price for this -- especially when the Cubans themselves will come forward with a self-criticism of their position current and you'll be remembered for your opportunism.

You force open lesbians and gay men to choose between fighting against their oppression and "building the revolutionary party and fight for socialism" -- you counterpose the two and this convention's resolutions, etc. only further confirm it.


I choose to be a "field gay" and will never be a "house faggot" for any organization -- especially for one that says it will liberate us all in the unforeseeable future, but today will not struggle to do so.

This backward and retreating position will have to be made known to other revolutionists (gay and straight) to aid in the discussions going on within the left in general on the gay question.

By using the SWP's errors as lessons to learn from, a correct and serious theoretical analysis and a fighting program will be pushed forward.

Since you have already started an international campaign to enshrine the Memorandum and its successors as the "Marxist" analysis of gay oppression and the program to fight it with (witness the Canadian developments, Philippe Andrea's article in Rouge, etc.), taking this struggle public is imperative. By doing so, a revolutionary position can be developed that links the struggles for gay liberation and socialism. This alone necessitates my resignation and allows me to participate in this process -- otherwise my mind and hands would be tied down under "internal discipline."

As harsh as I may sound, let it be clearly understood that I remain committed to the goals of revolutionary socialism and the program of the Fourth International. (Here too one can hear a snigger and smug chuckle of contempt from certain comrades as they read this). I find no contradiction between resigning from the SWP and this commitment. The revolutionary workers party still has to be built in the U.S. and it will involve the regroupment of many diverse forces as the class struggle broadens and deepens.

In struggle,

Steven R. Forgiione

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cc: Mike Lux, Lower Manhattan
Organizer