

Forty-Fifth
National Convention
Socialist Labor Party

June 1 – 4, 2001

Minutes, Reports, Resolutions, Etc.



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*PROCEEDINGS OF THE
45TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY*

June 1–4, 2001

Holiday Inn
Santa Clara, Calif.

MORNING SESSION, FRIDAY, JUNE 1, 2001

National Secretary Robert Bills called the 45th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party to order at 9:25 a.m. with the following remarks:

Greetings:

One hundred twenty-five years ago a small group of men met in a commodious three- or four-story building in Philadelphia to form a new political party. That building still stands today in a run-down neighborhood of the city, looking a little run down itself. Nonetheless, it still stands, a silent monument to what took place within its walls 125 years ago. Since then it has been put to many uses, and only a handful of people living today knows what happened there during the very month that the country was celebrating the 100th anniversary of its independence from British rule.

Not all the men who gathered in that Philadelphia hall in July 1876 remained loyal to the organization they created or the cause it was meant to espouse. Some who abandoned the new party were trade unionists; others were Socialists. Among the former was Adolf Strasser, ultimately president of the cigarmakers' union and vice president of the American Federation of Labor, who would later tell a committee of the U.S. Senate that trade unions "have no ultimate ends." Among the latter was Frederick Sorge, a friend and correspondent of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

Despite these desertions, Engels said this new party was "called upon to play a very important part in the movement." It would go on to reassert the right to life, liberty and happiness in its platform, to declare that those rights were impossible for the majority without collective ownership and democratic social control of the means of life, and to initiate a new union movement based on the class struggle and with an "ultimate end," the Socialist Republic.

That new party, founded at a Union Congress in Philadelphia

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125 years ago, was the Workingmen's Party of the United States, which, one year later, changed its name to Socialist Labor Party. And just as Engels foresaw, the SLP has played an important part in the history and development of the socialist and labor movements in America.

Today, you have gathered in this hall as its elected representatives to convene its 45th National Convention. The SLP may appear to be a little run down, like that old building that still stands in Philadelphia; but it too still stands, not as a monument to its own past, but as a living body dedicated to the same ultimate end that has inspired thousands of working-class men and women for more than 100 years. The SLP is small, battered and badly in need of new members to flesh out its ranks to carry on the struggle for the Socialist Republic. As I said to one member who felt battle weary several years ago, the SLP may be small, but its principles and program make it a political superpower. It is for you who have gathered here to attend to its affairs and to decide how those principles and that program will be advanced over the next two years.

Accordingly, with these few thoughts about the importance of the work you are about to undertake, I hereby call this 45th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party to order.

Temporary Organization

K. Boettcher was elected temporary Chairperson.

J.P. Catusco was elected temporary Recording Secretary.

C. Camacho was appointed temporary Sergeant at Arms.

Election of Credentials Committee

The Chair recommended that the committee consist of three. There being no objection, it was so ordered. The Chair opened the floor to nominations. C. Camacho, J. Groelke and R. Burns were nominated. Nominations were closed, and the three having accepted nomination, the Chair declared them elected. At 9:30 p.m. the convention recessed for 15 minutes to allow the committee to do its work. Reconvened at 9:55 a.m.

C. Camacho presented the following report:

The Credentials Committee reports that there are 10 delegates present, nine of which presented their credentials, one of which did not bring his credential but for whom there was a duplicate on file. Section Portland's delegate, Comrade Scott Hess, could not attend the convention for personal reasons. Comrade Joe Groelke, alter-

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nate delegate, has attended in his place. Section Cook County, Ill., delegate, Comrade Henry Coretz, is unable to attend due to family obligations. Section Cook County failed to elect an alternate delegate. National member-at-large Darrell H. Knight, an elected delegate, unexpectedly submitted his resignation as a member of the SLP. National members-at-large did not elect an alternate.

The committee recommends the following delegates be seated: Section San Francisco Bay Area (1): Ken Boettcher; Section New York City (1): John-Paul Catusco; Section Cleveland (1): Robert Burns; Section Portland (1): Joe Groelke; Section Philadelphia (1): Jack Blessington; National Members-at-Large (5): Bernard Bortnick, Christian Camacho, Richard Cassin, Carl C. Miller Jr. and Stephen Raper.

Fraternally submitted,
CHRISTIAN CAMACHO, Chair
JOSEPH GROELKE, ROBERT P. BURNS
Credentials Committee

On motion, the report was adopted.

Election of Agenda Committee

The Chair recommended that the committee consist of three. There being no objection, the Chair opened the floor for nominations. C. Miller, J. Blessington and S. Raper were nominated. There being no additional nominations and the three having accepted, the Chair declared them elected.

At 10:00 a.m. the Chair declared a 10-minute recess to allow the committee to do its work. Reconvened at 10:10 a.m.

C. Miller presented the following report:

Friday Morning Session, June 1

1. Permanent Organization
 - a) Election of Chairperson
 - b) Election of Vice Chairperson
 - c) Election of Recording Secretary
—Appt. of Asst. to Recording Secretary
 - d) Appointment of Sergeant at Arms (by Chair)
 - e) Election of Mileage Committee (2)
2. Determination of Attendance Policy
3. Report of Sergeant at Arms
4. Report of the National Secretary (such sections as can be read)

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5. Adjournment to Afternoon Session

Friday Afternoon Session, June 1

1. Roll Call
2. Report of Sergeant at Arms
3. Report of the National Secretary (completion)
4. Introduction of Resolutions
5. Discussion of Sections of National Secretary's Report
6. Adjournment to Saturday Morning Session

Saturday Morning Session, June 2

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Reading of Minutes of Previous Sessions
4. Report of Sergeant at Arms
5. Discussion of National Secretary's Report (if necessary)
6. Unfinished Business
7. New Business (including Resolutions From Delegates)
8. Determination of Committees
9. Referring Matters to Committees
10. Election of Committees
11. Adjournment to Next Session

Order of Business for All Subsequent Sessions

1. Call to Order
2. Election of Chairperson (if necessary)
3. Election of Vice Chairperson (if necessary)
4. Roll Call
5. Report of Sergeant at Arms
6. Reading of Minutes of Previous Day's Sessions (Morning Session only)
7. Unfinished Business
8. Reports of Committees
9. New Business (Last Day—only matters that can be given immediate attention)
10. Last Day—Reading of Minutes
11. Adjournment

Fraternally submitted,
CARL C. MILLER JR., Chair
STEPHEN A. RAPER, JACK BLESSINGTON
Agenda Committee

On motion, the report was adopted.

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Permanent Organization

A motion to elect a permanent Chairperson was passed. On motion, K. Boettcher was elected permanent Chairperson.

On motion, C. Camacho was elected permanent Vice Chairperson.

On motion, J.P. Catusco was elected permanent Recording Secretary.

D. Bills was appointed assistant to the Recording Secretary.

C. Camacho was appointed permanent Sergeant at Arms.

Election of Mileage Committee (2)

On motion, R. Burns and B. Bortnick were elected to constitute the committee.

Determination of Attendance Policy

The National Secretary recommended that this be an open convention. A motion to concur in the recommendation passed.

The Sergeant at Arms reported one visitor present.

Report of the National Secretary

The National Secretary read the following section of his report:

National Headquarters

Several major developments affecting the National Headquarters and its staff have occurred since the NEC Session 14 months ago. The most important of these were the death of Comrade Nathan Karp, Comrade Genevieve Gunderson's recurring health problems, the move (the third since 1994) and most recent, Comrade Ken Boettcher's decision to leave the staff after 17 years of dedicated service to the SLP and its official journal.

Comrade Nathan Karp died on April 22, just 12 days after the NEC had met and adjourned. I informed the NEC in a letter written on April 24, as follows:

Dear Comrades:

It is my sad but unavoidable duty to inform you that Comrade Nathan Karp died on Saturday, April 22. The immediate cause of death was a massive heart attack.

Comrade Karp admitted himself to Kaiser-Permanente hospital in Santa Clara, Calif., on Wednesday, April 12, after he began to experience an acute shortness of breath. While in hospital it was discovered that he was accumulating fluids in his stomach, which may have been

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caused by a bleeding ulcer. However, there were several other complications that undermined his strength. He was not only suffering from heart failure, but from kidney failure as well. The heart attack that his physicians believe was the immediate cause of death occurred while Comrade Karp was undergoing a kidney dialysis treatment.

All of us here are too deeply affected at the moment to give much thought to how this profoundly saddening loss will affect the National Headquarters operation. I will try to gather my thoughts and write again later this week or early next week.

NEC members wishing to send their condolences to Comrade Anne Karp are asked to do so through the National Office.

With inexpressible sadness, I am,

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

The National Office received many letters and cards expressing the sadness of members and Party supporters from across the country. Portions of some of these were printed in the July 2000 issue of *The People*. The members of the NEC also wrote to express their own feelings, of course, as exemplified by this excerpt from one Comrade Bortnick wrote on April 23, 2000:

Dear Comrade Bills,

I was deeply shocked and grieved to hear of the death of Comrade Nathan Karp. In considering the kind of verbal tribute one might pay this giant of a man, suitable words are not easily found. But he was above all a teacher, conveying to all who would listen to his wise counsel, the benefits of his keen intellect and analytical skills. I'm aware that his contributions to the Socialist Labor Party were immeasurable and covered the whole range of Party offices and activities. Those who worked closely with him doubtlessly have a more intimate and comprehensive perspective.

For me, the key role he played as participant in freeing the Party from what can only be cited as a sectarian log-jam, coming to a head at the 1977 National Convention will ever remain engraved in my memory, to cite one instance of his contribution to the workers' movement.

* * * * *

Fraternally yours, in grief,
BERNARD BORTNICK

It was in response to a similar letter from NEC member Bruce Cozzini that I summed up my own feelings during the month that followed Comrade Karp's death. On June 1 I wrote to Comrade Cozzini to say:

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The peculiar thing about my own feelings where Nat Karp is concerned is that I have not yet reached the point where I feel the loss. I am consciously aware of the facts, but the reality of it just hasn't sunk in. I have written it so many times in recent weeks that it almost seems to have lost the ring of sincerity, but I am sincere when I say that I can't get past the idea that Nat will be walking through the office door tomorrow morning and greet me as he passes my door on the way to his desk. This failure of mine may be due to the work and the travel that has taken up my time since Nat died on April 22, even though the traveling was prompted by the wish to attend his funeral in New Jersey. The reality asserts itself here and there, but I think that if I let it rush over me without diversions to deflect the impact I would be rendered useless for weeks. I guess it's a kind of defense mechanism: "The war goes on. No time now to grieve for fallen comrades. There will be time enough for that later." It sounds corny, I know, and if I heard it from anyone else I would probably wrinkle my brow and screw up the corner of my mouth. But I know it's real in me.

* * * * *

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

The reality of it has sunk in now, but I cannot say I feel any better now that I have accepted it. The SLP has lost one of its most valuable assets. *The People* has lost its best informed and most eloquent voice. The headquarters staff has lost its most important counselor and guide. And I have lost one of my most cherished comrades and friends.

I could say much more on this, of course, but I said most of it at the memorial meeting the National Office sponsored last June. Perhaps the National Convention will see fit to take that statement, and others printed in the July 2000 issue of *The People*, and append it to the proceedings as a permanent tribute to one of the finest men who ever passed through the SLP and the world that it seeks to transform.

*

Those of you who have read recent National Convention and NEC Session reports in preparation for this convention know that Comrade Genevieve Gunderson, the Party's bookkeeper, has been battling some severe health problems in recent years with a combative spirit that has been an inspiration to us all. Unfortunately, she no sooner seems to beat back one threat when another comes along to add to her trials. About three months ago, under date of

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March 6, 2001, I found it necessary to inform the NEC that Comrade Gunderson was waging yet another battle with the same tenacity and courage she has shown in the past. What I wrote in that connection was this:

Dear Comrades:

* * * * *

In January, Comrade Gunderson's doctor decided it was desirable to resume her chemotherapy treatments because her cancer had started to grow again. The treatments were to be oral and self-administered at home. Almost immediately upon resuming the treatments, Comrade Gunderson began to experience certain side effects. On January 28, she was admitted to the Kaiser-Permanente hospital in Santa Clara, where she was treated for severe dehydration. Following her release four days later, she was too weak to return to work and stayed home for several weeks. She returned to work on February 26, but clearly her stamina has declined from what it was before this latest bout of illness.

The state of Comrade Gunderson's health is not a new source of concern, of course, and neither are the steps taken to minimize the effect on the headquarters. In practical terms, this means that Comrade Donna Bills has stepped into Comrade Gunderson's shoes in most respects, which obviously has its effect on other "departments." We are skating on very thin ice, indeed.

Comrade Gunderson and I travel to work together every day; but, in truth, she has been forced to surrender most of her former responsibilities to Comrade Donna Bills. What that means in practical terms is that Comrade Bills has now assumed nearly all the duties and responsibilities that would ordinarily fall to a fully staffed National Office—meaning, of course, the National Office proper, the business office, the shipping department and the subscription department, not to mention all the things she does on the editorial side of *The People*.

Most of this has been detailed in past reports, and if there had been more time it may have been possible to expand on the situation here. Suffice to say that without Comrade Donna Bills the National Headquarters would cease to function.

The following letter to NEC member Bortnick, though written almost a year ago, may offer some insight to how things are at National Headquarters. It was mailed under date of June 27, 2000, and reads as follows:

Dear Comrade Bortnick:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of June 21. Thank you.

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I am sorry that I have not acted on your five motions and the drafts of an invitation to the Writers Conference you have submitted. However, I really haven't had much time to think about the conference or anything related to it since Comrade Karp died.

The NEC Session adjourned on April 2. Comrade Donna Bills went to work immediately on the proceedings. You faxed your first draft of an invitation to the Writers Conference on April 18, which also was my "all nighter" for the May issue of *The People*. I did not come to work on April 19, and on April 20 I had to pick up the papers and help Donna pack them for shipment. Somewhere in there we managed a couple of visits to Comrade Karp in the hospital, on one of which we picked up his car and took it back to his apartment. I also read through the proceedings before they were sent to the printer, though I forget what day we turned them over to the printer. Comrade Karp died on April 22. Nonetheless, the proceedings were shipped out on April 25, which, incidentally, called the necessity of a large part of your draft into question. Four general letters and a ballot for the referendum went out the same day. During this period, Donna made some preliminary arrangements for the memorial meeting that was eventually held on June 4. We also took a trip up to Oakland to look at and choose which place to take for the meeting. Your motions, though dated April 27, are receipt dated May 1. By then I was already "stressing" about the June issue, but I managed to write you a letter on May 8. That brought your letter of May 14. The copy deadline for the June issue was May 10. A general letter went out on that day. We shipped the June issue on May 18, and we wrote and mailed a letter inviting readers in the Bay Area to attend the Memorial Meeting. The next day, Donna, Anne Karp and I got on an airplane for New Jersey and Nat's funeral. Donna and I did not return to the office until May 29, which gave us only six days in which to prepare everything for the memorial meeting. By June 5 we had pretty much run out of steam. June 8 brought me Comrade [A]'s latest, which made my day. Nonetheless, by June 12 we managed to send out a fairly substantial packet of correspondence to the NEC. The copy deadline for the July issue was June 14. Donna and I shipped that issue on June 22, which was only five days ago.

The rent situation concerns me, of course, but not half as much as the Party's general financial condition. With cash assets of less than \$165,000, the SLP is in serious financial trouble. Comrade Donna Bills doesn't think this is enough to cover a new lease, regardless of the monthly rent, and still meet the payroll, taxes, hospitalization, printing, mailing and other routine expenses for another year. The deficit through May 31 was \$30,000 plus. It could reach \$70,000 or \$80,000, or even more, by the end of the year. I will try to write more about this before having to turn my attention to the August issue of *The People*.

So, to repeat, I haven't had any time in which to think about the Writers Conference, your letter of May 14, your final draft of an invitation, or much of anything else since Comrade Karp died on April 22. Comrade Donna Bills and I have been very busy since then. I will do my

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best to get to your letter, etc., before having to turn my attention to the August issue.

Please be aware, however, that Comrade Karp's death has created at least two major problems for me—the unfinished archives and a big hole in *The People*—and that Comrade Gunderson's worsening condition has placed many new demands on Comrade Donna Bills.

The building goes on the market on July 1. If it gets snapped up we may have bigger problems to worry us than a simple increase in rent. There's just so much Donna and I can do. We have to be very careful about keeping our priorities in order. Whether struggling over another issue of *The People* for two weeks should occupy a high place among those priorities is something I'm debating in my own mind. There may be nothing to debate by the time work would start on the September issue. Things aren't looking very bright to us at the moment. However, I don't want to make any hasty recommendations or decisions that I might live to regret. I wish the NEC was more attentive.

Other matters noted.

With best wishes,

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

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Last year, the Party was forced into its third headquarters move since 1994, and it is highly probable that a fourth move will have to be made before the current lease expires next September.

About six weeks after the NEC Session last year, the landlord of the building where the headquarters were in Mountain View hand-delivered a letter from which the following passage is taken:

On June 15 all tenants will be on a month to month basis. At that time everyone's rent will increase to \$2.25 per square foot net. If you have looked around the area I think you will agree this is still below current market value. As an example, space at 110 Pioneer Way is currently renting for around \$2.50 per foot Triple Net, and for a 2,700-foot space opening in September they are asking \$3.00 per foot.

Mr. McCauley was right about where rents were heading, and as I found, may even have understated the case. In any event, under date of June 1, 2000, I wrote the NEC as follows:

Dear Comrades:

I enclose two (2) letters from John "Tony" McCauley, the Party's landlord, both dated May 15. The covering letter on letterhead is clearly meant for all three of the remaining tenants, but the second on plain paper is specifically for the SLP.

You will note that the anticipated rent increase is now in effect. This

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month we paid \$2,156.25 instead of \$1,500.00. (Incidentally, the \$1,800.00 figure given in my report to the NEC in Session was an error. The correct figure, until now, was \$1,500.00 a month.)

The split in rent for June is explained by the fact that our lease expired on June 15.

You will also note that the increase that takes full effect in July is more than Mr. McCauley suggested earlier. Instead of the new rate being set at \$2.00 a square foot it has been set at \$2.25 a square foot.

By the foot, by the yard, or just in one lump, however, the increase from \$1,500.00 to \$2,812.50 is equal to 87.5 percent in one swoop. That is double the increase that compelled us to move from Sunnyvale, though the actual dollar amount is still considerably less.

The building has not been sold as yet. I will keep you informed.

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

Partly in response to this, but specifically to the letter I had written to him on June 27, Comrade Bortnick wrote the following under date of June 29:

Dear Comrade Bills,

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of June 27, 2000. Your summary of the events of the past two months has been an exhausting schedule. And it has been both a physical and an emotional drain. Of course I knew that you and Comrade Donna Bills were inundated. However, I appreciate the time you have given to detail your activities for the NEC.

To come to the heart of yours and my concern, and I'm sure the rest of the NEC, the financial crisis is upon us. We need to start thinking about how we are going to husband the funds we have left in bringing the organization to an orderly retreat to a new status, namely the Party without *The People*, at least the Party organ as we know it now.

In my view we need to suspend the publication of *The People* immediately (that is there should not be an August issue) in order to use our limited human and monetary resources to avoid an abrupt and chaotic crisis later on. Perhaps there are funds left to complete the unfinished archives, and to begin thinking about how we will reconstitute the Party and either reconfigure or vacate the existing headquarters in favor of something smaller and more affordable.

This may mean emphasizing or going "online" exclusively or some other mode to reach the members and sections. The continuing maddening pace you and the rest of the staff have been through should not be allowed to go on even if we had the funds to cover 4 or 6 months more of publication.

I agree that we shouldn't "make any hasty recommendations or decisions." At the same time we cannot afford to take resources and funds down to the wire. I know I'm "lecturing to the choir" in saying this. I be-

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lieve we should try to get our income as close to balancing our expenditures as possible and still try to come up with a mode of organization that keeps the sections functioning and morale as high as possible.

Fraternally yours,
BERNARD BORTNICK

For several reasons I did not find it possible to respond to Comrade Bortnick for nearly two months. That reply was written under date of August 22, as follows:

Dear Comrade Bortnick:

Please pardon this belated reply to your letter of June 29, and your followup of June 30.¹

Since I wrote you on June 27 the Party's financial situation has improved slightly because of the "anonymous" \$25,000 contribution to the Nathan Karp Memorial Fund. That amount is not enough to turn the corner on the Party's financial security—not by a long shot—but it may have bought us just enough "wiggle room" to apply the brakes on the drain until an effort can be made to raise a special fund. Even if the income dwindled to nothing we should have enough to operate "normally" for one more year with enough left over to wrap things up in the second year, should it come to that.

You and the other NEC members will have noticed that I have set a \$25,000 goal for the annual Thanksgiving Fund. I usually don't like to set goals of that sort, particularly these days when sections no longer hold regular fundraising socials and the likelihood of more than one or two sections holding Thanksgiving Affairs is extremely remote. Nonetheless, if we are to survive beyond one year something has to be done to shore up the Party's cash reserves.

Furthermore, something has to be done to get us out from under the overwhelming burden of the present rent. We can't stay where we are, and for at least two reasons we can't move out of the area. Comrade Gunderson is too sick and too dependent on her present team of doctors even to consider a move to, say, Sacramento, where space can be had for a good deal less than anything I have been able to find here in "Silicon Valley." Comrade Boettcher is also tied to the area.

Accordingly, I started looking around for new headquarters in this area a few weeks ago. Almost from the git-go I found what seems to be a terrific place in San Jose. It is essentially a free standing, two-story building of 1,950 square feet. It is half office and half warehouse, which would enable us to get rid of the storage lockers and bring everything back under one roof. Better yet, the asking price is "only" \$1.00 a square foot, i.e., \$1,950 a month, not including utilities. That is more than the \$1,530 we were paying at the present location (including the

¹On June 30, Comrade Bortnick sent a brief e-mail in which he said, "...perhaps we should try to get a conference call for all NEC members dealing with the financial problems and the options that face us at this point."

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lockers) until recently, but considerable less than the \$3,094.50 (lockers included) we are paying at present.

One major drawback with the place I am dickering over is that the lease would actually be a sublease, which is something I would avoid like the plague under any other circumstances. The business next door, a fairly large contracting firm, has leased the building I am negotiating over, plus a large “yard” and some other structures to the rear. We have no use for any of that, of course, and Mr. Seifert, our prospective landlord, has no immediate use for the building.

Another sticking point right now is over getting a clear-cut option to renew for a second year. If he balks at that I may let it go and start looking elsewhere. However, it is a virtual certainty that I will not be able to find anything of that size for that price. Comparable space in the area is even more expensive than what we’re paying now. If it doesn’t work out it may be necessary to think about wrapping things up during the first year—but even then it would be necessary to move before we could even start to wind things down.

A third problem is that any move will almost certainly have to be done professionally. That will be costly, no doubt, but I don’t see how we can get around it.

I have no wish to give up and have decided to put the brightest face possible on our situation until the question of moving has been settled. That, combined with the success (or failure) of the \$25,000 Thanksgiving Fund, will clarify things. Let’s let those two things take shape before deciding on anything as drastic as what you suggested in your letter of June 29 or what I suggested at the NEC Session.

As for the Writers Conference, I think we have to hold that in abeyance.

With best wishes,

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

Several days later I was able to inform the NEC that a satisfactory agreement had been reached on the San Jose facilities and that barring some last-minute obstacle the sublease would be signed. That letter was written under date of August 25, as follows:

Dear Comrades:

It is now a virtual certainty that the National Headquarters will be moving from its present location in Mountain View to a new location in San Jose. I expect to sign the new lease today or tomorrow. It will take effect on September 1 and will be good through August 31, 2002. In other words, it will not be a one-year lease with an option to renew for a second year. It is a two-year lease.

I have not decided if Comrades Boettcher, Donna Bills and I will attempt to make the move ourselves or if I will call in some professional

movers. I will be calling in some professionals to give estimates, but I also want to keep the expense down as much as possible. It will be expensive either way, however. Renting a truck isn't cheap.

Furthermore, I am also hoping to execute the whole thing without having to skip an issue of *The People*. We managed to pull that off when moving from Sunnyvale to Mountain View three years ago, but then we at least had Jim Parker to do some of the work. I don't want to risk an injury to any one of the three of us since that could cripple the whole headquarters operation.

Either way we do it, the three of us will have to pack, then unpack and set things up at the new location. We will also have to clean out the two storage lockers at some point, but if we have to pay an extra month or two of rent on them to avoid suspending *The People* it will be worth it.

Of course, there is no way to avoid paying double rent on two headquarters for the month of September. That, combined with the moving expense and the deposit on the new place will result in a whopping deficit for the month. There will also be the usual array of incidental expenses for new stationery, new telephone connections, etc.

Still, I am convinced it is the best thing to do. We can't stay here, not only because of the high rent—\$3,094.50 a month, including the two lockers—but also because of the uncertainty about the building.

The new headquarters comprise about 1,950 square feet of space, compared to the 1,250 square feet we occupy today—or 1,400 square feet when we add in the storage lockers.

The new offices are divided about equally between office and warehouse space. There is a roll-up door for easy access by delivery services. About one-fourth of the office space is on the second floor. (I will occupy all of that.) There are five offices downstairs. All but one of the offices have windows and natural light.

The "base rent" on the new offices will be \$1,950.00 a month during the first year, plus \$150.00 a month to cover utilities, or \$2,100.00 in all. We also have to arrange for our own garbage, but that expense should not be much.

The "base rent" will be \$2,145.00 during the second year, plus utilities and garbage.

In addition, a security deposit of \$2,000 will be due when we sign the lease.

The move will also affect us in other ways. Comrade Donna Bills will have to start driving to work for the first time since the headquarters moved from Brooklyn to the West Coast in 1974, and I will also have to drive. It's a 22-mile round-trip commute. Fortunately, however, it is also a "reverse commute," i.e., most of the morning and evening traffic travels in the opposite direction from the direction we will be taking at those times of day. The plan is for me to pick Comrade Gunderson up in the morning and for Comrade Donna Bills to drive her home in the evening.

The added gas expense and wear-and-tear on our two aging cars will

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also force the two of us to take salary increases sometime soon.

There are many other details, of course, but this is enough for the moment. I will keep you informed.

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

Subsequently, I was able to write the NEC to explain how things were shaping up at the new headquarters. That letter, which was written under date of November 9, was as follows:

Dear Comrades:

This is to inform you that the move from Mountain View to San Jose is virtually complete. What remains to be done is to transfer the contents of the two storage lockers to the new offices. That will be done sometime after the December issue of *The People* has been shipped.

The move went smoothly. The headquarters staff did all the packing, but professional movers were hired to transfer the Party's property from the old location to the new one. The cost of the move is reported in one of the recent monthly financial statements that you have received.

There is one outstanding problem that has made life difficult: the National Office has no direct access to the Internet or to e-mail. It will be a few more weeks before that problem is resolved. In the meantime, home computers are being used for those purposes. Unfortunately, that access is slow and laborious. It has hindered our ability to download and respond to e-mail, and to access the news and information sources needed to write articles for *The People*. Again, however, the problem should be resolved within two or three weeks.

The commute from Mountain View, where Comrade Gunderson lives, and from Sunnyvale, where Comrades Ken Boettcher, Donna Bills and I live, takes about 15 to 20 minutes, depending on traffic. The commute to Mountain View and Sunnyvale takes about the same time.

Comrade Donna Bills arrives at work at about 7:30 a.m. each morning. She is alone until Comrade Gunderson and I arrive together at about 9:30 a.m. Comrade Boettcher does not arrive until about 9:30 a.m., and he generally leaves for his other job by 12:00 noon.

Comrades Donna Bills and Gunderson leave the office together at 3:30–4:00 p.m., depending on the workload. My own hours vary. I stay until at least 7:00 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays because the outbound traffic is horrendous between 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. I continue to stay much later on Mondays and Wednesdays, as I have done for at least the last seven years. My Saturday hours are about the same as those on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Because of the move, two issues of the paper and another recent trip to Las Vegas I have fallen even further behind in correspondence than I was before the move. This is not good, obviously, but I don't know what to do about it except keep plugging away at the pile. Most SLP members appear to be patient and understanding, but the backlog of unan-

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swered questions from e-mail contacts is getting to be a major embarrassment.

Incidentally, I was under the impression that during last May's NEC Session one of its committees discussed the possibility of one or two NEC members taking on responsibility for drafting answers to some of these questions. The names of the members who apparently were willing to volunteer their services were never reported to me, however, and I have not been able to pursue it with the NEC. If any member of the NEC has a similar recollection, I would appreciate having the information.

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

Ultimately a truck was rented and three of us—Comrades Donna Bills, Ken Boettcher and I—cleaned out the two storage lockers in Mountain View and transferred their contents to the new offices.

*

The most recent development to impact the National Headquarters was Comrade Ken Boettcher's recent decision to leave the staff. That development was reported to the NEC under date of April 9, as follows:

Dear Comrades:

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

This is to inform you that Comrade Kenneth Boettcher has decided to leave the headquarters staff. His last day will be Friday, April 20.

In a memorandum dated April 5, Comrade Boettcher cited some personal and financial problems that forced him to make this decision. I know that he was sincere when he said he made his decision "with a very heavy heart," and that he would not have made it if he believed he had a choice.

Comrade Boettcher will remain in the area and keep his full-time job. In addition he has taken a part-time job that he hopes will help him work his way out of the financial difficulties he finds himself in.

This is an amicable separation, unlike so many in the past, and not a wholly unexpected one. Nonetheless it presents us with a formidable problem.

In his memorandum, Comrade Boettcher says he wants to volunteer his services three Sundays a month to do layout for *The People* and attend to some other tasks. I have accepted his offer, but I don't know how realistic it is or how long such an arrangement might last. With two outside employers tugging at him it is easy to see how such an arrangement could break down at any time.

Hiring some professional outsider for the express purpose of doing

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layout for *The People* may not be very practical or realistic, either. The cost could be prohibitive if it meant bringing someone into the office one or two days a month. Comrade Boettcher has suggested it could cost as much as \$70.00 an hour, and that even a person familiar with the various computer programs needed to put *The People* together might need two eight-hour shifts to do the job, at least to start. If that's true it could cost an additional \$1,000.00 a month to continue publication by such an arrangement. Farming out the job may be as expensive, but it is an option I must investigate.

It is conceivable that Comrade Boettcher could eventually train me to do the job, but not now. I have a convention to prepare for, and unless someone on the NEC takes pity on me and volunteers to deliver the convention banquet address I may be saddled with that as well.

I will keep the NEC informed.

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

To this it must be added that Comrade Boettcher is probably putting in as much or more time at the office than he did when he was still a part-time employee. Accordingly, at least for now, Comrade Boettcher's decision has not had a serious impact on what, these days, passes for "normal operations" at National Headquarters.

*

Occasionally the National Office receives a letter from a member who expresses interest in joining the staff. Those occasions have been extremely rare in recent years. However, in February 2000 I received one such inquiry from a national member-at-large in up-state New York, as follows:

Dear Comrade Bills,

I am seriously thinking of moving to the West Coast to get out of the snow belt, and have considered getting more involved with the SLP.

Enclosed you will find a copy of my résumé, with other materials, for your consideration for possible permanent employment with the SLP....

Thank you for your time and interest in this matter.

Sincerely
DANIEL P. ENGLERT
Member-at-Large

Regrettably, I could not answer the comrade's letter right away, and set it aside for later attention. Time passed and, finally, on May 3, 2000, the comrade called the National Office to report a change of address. I answered the phone myself, so it must have

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been in the evening after everyone else had gone. He did not mention his letter, but I did and promised it would get a reply. I also tried to prepare him for what that reply would be, but he had anticipated what I would say. When I wrote the promised letter several weeks later, it was as follows:

Dear Comrade Englert:

When you called the National Office on May 3 to report a change of address, I promised that I would be replying to the letter you wrote on February 1 offering your services for possible employment at the National Office. I may have explained why I could not respond to your letter before your call; but since shortly before—that is, since Comrade Karp's death—the routine here has suffered even more. At any rate, you have my sincere apology for the inordinately long delay.

After a delay of that length, I regret that I cannot offer you any encouraging news. The National Office is certainly in need of help, but the Party's financial predicament at present is such that it is impossible to see how we could take on another staff member. There might be exceptions in specific areas where the vacancies have had a crippling effect, but even those positions, all of which entail special skills, would involve a tremendous risk.

Regrettably, the best I can offer at the moment is that I will keep your letter on file against the time when the Party's financial situation has improved and the possibilities of expanding the staff again become realistic.

With best wishes,

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

*

Last November I received a letter from a friend of the SLP in Florida who raised a question about the National Headquarters that he thought might be on the minds of members and other supporters of the Party as well. What he wrote, in part, was this:

Dear distant friends,

* * * * *

I have a question, dear friends, that has nagged me for the many years I have subscribed to *The People*. The question in mind is about the physical location of the Socialist Labor Party in the very epicenter of capitalist technological production and innovation and the (perhaps) most expensive place to live on our increasingly benighted planet. Why?

I am sure the same thoughts have occurred to other readers and wonder if a small article in our paper might not be in order. I certainly do not mean that my questions imply any criticism—only wondering.

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Again, I could not respond to this inquiry for more than two months, but on January 25 I was finally able to set some time aside and sent our friend the following:

Dear Mr. B.:

Thank you for your letter of November 18, with which you enclosed a \$25.00 contribution for the Thanksgiving Fund.

I apologize for the time it has taken me to reply to the question you raised, but there have been many interferences (personal as well as "business") that have caused me to fall behind. To keep from compounding the number of similar delays I am working my way backwards through the pile on my desk, which may or may not be the right strategy.

You wondered why the SLP keeps its headquarters "in the very epicenter of capitalist technological production and innovation and the (perhaps) most expensive place to live on our increasingly benighted planet....Why?"

Well, to borrow your colorful phrase, the "epicenter" of capitalism is precisely where the headquarters of the SLP belong. What better place? If the answer is the expense involved I would have to say that it is not as much of a factor as it might be if the SLP were larger and its headquarters staff as numerous as it was when we moved to this area from Brooklyn back in 1974.

As things stand, however, the headquarters staff is very small. There are only four of us; but when it comes to the expense only two of us really count. That is because one of the four works only part time for the SLP while holding down a full-time job with one of those Silicon Valley companies that go to make this the "epicenter." Another one of us is essentially a volunteer whose income is derived from Social Security and a pension from a previous job. As for the two who make up the full-time staff, their salaries are modest and could not be lowered even if it were possible to move the offices to some other part of the country. Apart from that, we could not get along without our part-timer or the retired member who make up half of the present staff, but who are tied to the Bay Area for reasons I do not feel at liberty to discuss. We would lose them, but could not replace them except at great expense that would more than wipe out any savings we might realize in other respects.

We have, for the most part, dodged the high-expense bullet. One step in that dance was the decision to move the headquarters from Mountain View to San Jose last fall. The monthly rent here is comparable to what it would be in Sacramento, for example, or to any other large city where we could expect to find printers with newspaper presses and other things needed to keep *The People* and other SLP operations afloat.

There are other practical problems that enter into the picture. For one, there is no one to spare to go out and scout the country with the thoroughness that would be needed before any long-distance move could

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be made. To do it we would have to shut down the headquarters (and *The People*) for several months, at least. The effect would be devastating, as we learned in 1994 when we were compelled to suspend *The People* for five months just to move from one Silicon Valley location to another. We have made our experience on that score and have no intention of pressing our luck again.

If the SLP were to experience a change in fortune in the next few years—a change in which its membership grew and the possibility of increasing the staff, increasing the size and frequency of *The People*, publishing fresh new literature in large quantities, etc.—the compulsion for moving to someplace not too remote from the “civilized world” for financial reasons would be much greater than it is now.

SLP members, of course, are better informed on such matters and have it within their power to override the judgment that has been made in this regard. It is not a neglected question, however, but one that is periodically reviewed by the Party’s NEC and at the National Convention level.

I hope that what I have written here provides you some insight into the situation and why the SLP believes that the prudent thing to do at present is to stay put, at the “epicenter.”

Sincerely yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

I do not know if our friend was right about his question being on the minds of other SLP supporters, or, if it is, that they would find the answer I offered to him satisfactory. However, after “Mr. B.” got my letter he replied with another \$25.00 for the Christmas Box Fund and wrote, in part:

Dear Friend,

Thank you so very much for your most interesting and complete reply to my letter questioning the location of an organization such as ours in the “epicenter” and all that. I am really somewhat amazed that you would give so much time and effort to explain the reasons for being in “The Valley.”

* * * * *

Thank you again for your letter and a large thanks for the excellence of our publication, *The People*!

On motion, this section of the National Secretary’s report was referred to an appropriate committee when elected.

A five-minute recess was declared at 11:05 a.m. Reconvened at 11:11 a.m.

The National Secretary read the following section of his report:

Party Finances

A detailed report on the Party's finances is not possible and may not be necessary, or even desirable. The main points can be summed up with a minimum of numbers and with relative ease.

On January 1, 2001, the SLP had cash reserves of \$153,832.00. As of April 30, those reserves had fallen to \$128,711.00, meaning that expenses had exceeded income by about \$25,120.00. At that rate of depletion—about \$6,280.00 a month—the deficit will reach \$75,360.00 by the end of the year and the Party's cash reserves will be reduced to \$78,470.00. Carry similar monthly deficits over to August 31, 2002, when the lease expires, and the Party's cash reserves could be reduced to a mere \$28,230.00, or less. The implications are clear.

A simple summary of last year's financial activity would look something like this:

Income	
Funds.....	\$ 95,402.00
Sales	14,153.00
Interest Posted on Deposits	9,833.00
Miscellaneous.....	5,422.00
Total	\$124,810.00

Expenses	
Regular expenses.....	\$93,304.00
Payroll	56,562.00
Miscellaneous.....	24,673.00
Total	\$174,539.00

These are not the “official” figures. They come from the monthly statements prepared by the business office and routinely reported to the NEC. The latest monthly statement, for April 2001, is available to the convention.

The official figures are compiled once a year by the certified public accountant, R. Leonard Stickler, who has been auditing the Party's financial books and records since 1974. Mr. Stickler's report for the 2000 calendar year is complete, and it too is available to the convention. His report will also be sent to the membership, as the Party's Constitution provides, soon after this convention adjourns. However, the figures given here for the first four months of the current year are close enough to give the convention a reasonably

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accurate appreciation of what the situation was as of April 30, 2001.

Under date of July 25, 2000, after Mr. Stickler had completed his audit for the 1999 calendar year, the following general letter was sent to the membership:

To the Sections and Members of the SLP

Dear Comrades:

1999 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

I enclose copies of the annual financial statement for the year ending December 31, 1999, for distribution to members of your sections who are in good standing. National members-at-large will find their individual copies of the statement enclosed.

Please note that the \$227,738.00 shown as "cash on hand and in banks" as of December 31, 1999, included \$30,000.00 held in escrow and not immediately available to the SLP to meet routine and other expenses. Accordingly, the cash on deposit and readily available to the Party on December 31, 1999, was closer to \$198,000.00.

As of May 31, 2000, the cash on deposit and readily available had declined by about \$34,000.00 to about \$164,000.00. This was the lowest bank balance since July 1997, when the Party's cash reserves fell to about \$147,000.00.

Monthly deficits for the first five months of the current year averaged about \$6,800.00. If those monthly deficits are not eliminated or dramatically reduced during the next several months until the end of the current year, the deficit for the 2000 calendar year could exceed \$81,500.00 and reduce the Party's cash reserves to less than \$116,500. If that should happen, the SLP will be confronted with some difficult choices.

One member of the NEC has already suggested suspending "*The People* immediately . . . to use our limited human and monetary resources to avoid an abrupt and chaotic crisis later on." Fortunately, however, the NEC member failed to submit his recommendation as a motion for the NEC to act on. Accordingly, no such decision has been made.

The People is not a major factor in the Party's financial predicament. Last year, it cost the Party about \$22,800.00 to print, mail and ship *The People*. However, sales and contributions to funds for its support, i.e., the Press Security, Thanksgiving and Xmas Box Funds, came to nearly \$56,300.00, and accounted for 56 percent of the Party's total income from all sources during the year. Accordingly, suspending *The People* for the sake of the \$22,800.00 it cost to print, ship and mail it obviously wouldn't pay if it cost the Party \$56,300.00 in contributions, which it almost certainly would. A yearlong suspension would simply add another \$33,500.00 to the deficit and compound the Party's financial problems.

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The primary burden of *The People*, as I reported to the NEC Session, is editorial, not financial. Nonetheless, *The People* is not immune from the effects of the financial problem the Party is confronted with.

Rent, utilities, salaries, taxes, hospitalization, insurance, supplies, equipment, maintenance, repairs, Labor News and National Office shipping and postage expenses, etc., would continue, with or without *The People*.

There is only one way to confront and overcome the Party's present financial problems, and that is for the membership and other supporters of the SLP to increase their contributions to the Party's funds. The NEC has authorized the National Office to launch a special fund to bolster the Party's cash reserves. That could not be done immediately, but will probably be done sometime within the next month or two, depending on how the headquarters situation unfolds. In the meantime, of course, the Nathan Karp Memorial Fund, particularly the anonymous contribution of \$25,000 that boosted the total to nearly \$35,700, has helped to ease the situation somewhat. However, we cannot afford to be complacent about doing everything possible to increase the Party's cash reserves before the boost that special contribution gave the Party is used up and we fall back toward a potentially dangerous situation.

Accordingly, I urge every member to do everything within their power to come to the Party's assistance at this critical juncture, and to make it a habit to contribute regularly to Party funds. One way to do this, of course, is to request a Sustainer Fund card and to pledge a minimum amount every month.

For our part, we are looking into new ways to reduce expenses even further than they have been reduced in recent years. Our efforts in that direction were extremely successful, as you know. But the recent increase in rent, from \$1,250 to \$2,812.50 a month threatens to wipe out much of the progress made on that front.

The main thing on the National Office agenda, apart from continuing uninterrupted publication of *The People*, is to find a new and less expensive location for National Headquarters. That may not be easy because the vacancy rate in this area is extremely low at present. We may end up in a warehouse, or in cramped offices much smaller than we occupy today. However, as long as you stick with us and feed the Party's war chest we will continue to publish *The People* and do everything else possible to spread the Party's message. We are determined to do our part, but our ability to do it depends entirely on you.

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

It should be noted that \$25,000.00 of the \$30,000.00 held in escrow when the figures in that letter were compiled had been donated to the Party and absorbed into its regular cash reserves by the time the general letter went out. Indeed, it was the same

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\$25,000.00 that boosted the special Nathan Karp Memorial Fund to \$35,700.00. The donor has asked to remain anonymous, but under date of July 25, 2000, I wrote her the following in appreciation of her gift:

Dear Comrade . . . :

Thank you so very much for your letter of July 5 and for the magnificent gesture you have made with your \$25,000 gift, which you designated for the Nathan Karp Memorial Fund.

I am at a loss for the words that would give anything approaching an adequate expression of the depth of my personal gratitude. I only regret that you have given your gift on the condition of anonymity, since that closes the door to others filling in the gaps that my own poor expression of appreciation can convey.

I wish so much that the occasion for your gift could have been a different one. All of us would much prefer to have Comrade Karp back at his desk, and it is still strange and disconcerting that he is not and will never again be there.

I am sure that Comrade Karp would be deeply gratified if he knew of your splendid gesture dedicated, as it was, to his memory. I know that he would have found the words that I can only grope for.

And so while it may be hopeless to put together an expression of gratitude that would be worthy of him or of your splendid gift in his memory, we can at least rededicate ourselves and strive to emulate his example. Your generous gift will give us a fighting chance at this difficult juncture, the severity of which you are as much or more keenly aware than most SLP members.

Thank you, Comrade. . . , thank you very much.

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

In a similar gesture last summer, a long-time supporter of the SLP and her husband established an annuity fund for the Party's benefit. I do not have their permission to use their names, so, for now, will refer to them in the same anonymous fashion. I acknowledged their gift and expressed appreciation on behalf of the SLP in the following letter mailed under date of August 24:

Dear Ms. . . . :

I received copy of the July 22 . . . letter on August 7. That's quite awhile ago, so I begin with an apology.

I received it just a few days before the September issue of *The People* went to press, which is to say when I was hard pressed to finish things up. Thereafter most of my time was spent scouring "Silicon Valley" in search of some affordable and decent offices for the SLP to move its

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headquarters into. Luckily I have succeeded, or think I have succeeded. Some minor dickering over certain terms of the proposed lease still has to be done before I seal the deal. However, I am confident that these things can be worked out and that the matter will be settled within a few days. The trick then will be to move the offices without having to suspend *The People* as became necessary in 1994.

Now, then, what can I say to express my appreciation, and the appreciation of the SLP as a whole, for the wonderful thing you have done to help ensure the Party's future financial security? A simple thank you seems woefully inadequate, but the language doesn't offer much more. I might underscore it, or embellish it in some way, but it would all come down to the same thing. Fact is there are no adequate words to tell you how much your generosity is appreciated or how much it will ultimately mean for the SLP. Thank you, thank both of you, very much.

Sincerely yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

Another sizable gift, but for a specific purpose, was received last year from Comrade Nathan Goldberg of Los Angeles, which I acknowledged with the following under date of June 12:

Dear Comrade Goldberg:

I am writing to express my deepest appreciation for the generous gift you sent under date of May 21 to assist the National Office in purchasing a new microform reader-printer. That amount of money cannot have been easy to come by or to part with. It is exceedingly generous, and with the similar special contribution received earlier and mentioned in the printed proceedings of the recent NEC Session takes us very close to the \$10,000 goal. Thank you very, very much.

With warmest regards,

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

Other gifts and donations given annually, incrementally or occasionally in support of National Office funds could be mentioned, and would be if I had time to carefully compile a comprehensive list that would not cause me to offend some who might be inadvertently overlooked. However, I will run that risk by mentioning one other—not because he is any more generous towards SLP funds than others—but because of the method he has chosen. He is Comrade Carl Miller of Houston, Texas, who wrote the following paragraph into an activity report submitted last July:

Comrade Villarreal and I received the Party's financial report and

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we read it with much concern. I myself have been regretting the fact that I have not sent donations on a more regular basis. If the Party's bank account is set up for direct deposit I would like to have money taken from my paycheck and sent directly to you. This would be easier for me and probably for you also. I talked this over with the rep from the administrative service [of] the company I work for and he said it would be no problem. All I need is the routing number for the Party's bank account and [to] fill out a form, and the money will be wired directly to you each pay period. Let me know if this would be acceptable to you or if you would prefer that I mail it to you. Either way, I will do my best to contribute more regularly and to the best of my limited means.

Comrade Miller is the only member to contribute in this way, at least on a regular monthly basis. However, as I wrote to Comrade Miller last August:

Direct deposit as a way of contributing to Party funds on a regular basis is an excellent idea that other Party members and supporters might take a shine to. The bank name, routing number and any other information our business office thinks you might need will be appended below as a postscript.

*

Members of the SLP understand how important gifts such as the \$25,000.00 mentioned have been to the Party, for without them the walls would have caved in on us long ago. As I reported to the 43rd National Convention five years ago:

Similarly, the financial statement mailed to the membership last November included a covering letter that called attention to the 1995 deficit of \$136,600, and added:

“ . . . Although the Party has run a deficit every year during the 1990s, last year was the first since 1992 that ended with a net loss. Each of the other three years (1991, 1993 and 1994) ended with surpluses despite the annual deficits recorded. In each of those three years the deficits (as reflected in the annual financial statements) were wiped out by bequests...”

A table of figures was inserted to show how these deficits had been wiped out in the three years mentioned. However, it was followed by a brief statement cautioning that the report, while providing an accurate picture of what the Party's financial condition was on December 31, 1995, had no bearing on the financial situation as of November 5, 1996. As I went on to explain:

“ . . . Indeed, according to an unaudited report recently compiled by the business office, the Party's cash reserves as of October 31, 1996, were less than \$200,000. What this means is that the Party is on the

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verge of a major financial crisis that becomes all the more urgent when it is understood that the current headquarters lease expires on July 31, 1997, i.e., in less than nine months. To avert the crisis that threatens, a concerted effort to replenish the Party's cash reserves must be made before the 1997 National Convention. . . . ”

In the meantime, however, I urge every member of the Party to contribute as generously to Party funds as their personal circumstances will allow, and every section to increase their fundraising efforts on the Party's behalf.

The following passages, including the chart referred to in the preceding ones, are taken from that general letter, which was dated February 10, 1997:

Another larger source of income, of course, are the cash donations members and sympathizers make to SLP funds. Over the last five years, however, such contributions have declined by nearly 43 percent, i.e., from over \$88,700 received in 1992 to just over \$50,600 in 1996. A major factor in this decline undoubtedly has been the decline in the number of regularly scheduled fundraising social affairs held by sections.

A third major source of revenue, but one that by its nature is completely unpredictable, are bequests the Party from time to time receives from the estates of deceased members and sympathizers. This source of income to the Party, unpredictable though it is, has reduced or eliminated deficits that otherwise would have crippled the Party. Several examples were cited in the covering letter to the financial statement for 1995. However, a more graphic illustration of this can be seen by comparing the total amount realized from this source to the totals derived from funds and interest over the past five years (1992–1996), as follows:

Funds	\$330,332.49
Interest	\$103,794.98
Subtotal	\$434,127.47
Bequests	\$440,645.47
Total	\$874,772.94

While these figures on income do not take into account literature and *People* sales, dues payments, the annual mileage assessment, or several other relatively minor sources, they should be sufficient to demonstrate how much bequests and similar arrangements by Party members and friends have benefited the SLP. However, of the nearly \$441,000 derived from this source during the past five years, about \$411,000 was received between 1992 and 1994 and barely \$30,000 was received during the two years of 1995 and 1996. I do not know what accounts for the drop, but what these figures make clear is that without this source of support in the past the SLP would not have survived to face the financial predicament it is in today. It is a debt that can never be repaid except by buckling down to the task of ensuring that all these splendid gifts from many benefactors—gifts ranging in amounts from a few hun-

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dred dollars to several reaching into the tens of thousands—were not given in vain.

The point was underscored the next year in these passages from my report to the NEC Session in May 1998:

In short, the cumulative deficit for the second half of the year came to about \$31,772, with monthly deficits averaging roughly \$5,300. Combined with a deficit of \$49,742 from the preceding period, the deficit for the year came to \$81,514. While these numbers differ slightly from those in the audited financial statement for 1997, the difference is a minuscule one. According to the audited statement, the deficit was \$80,859.

In October 1996, the National Office was informed by a New York attorney that the Isidor Newman Estate had been settled. This estate—which was the outstanding estate alluded to in my report to the 43rd National Convention—had been pending since 1992. However, 10 months more went by before the assets from that estate were finally distributed. Finally, on August 5, 1997—less than one week after finishing the move to Mountain View—I received a check representing the SLP’s share of that estate. That share, as you know, was for \$191,485.12.

The NEC was informed of the settlement before the check was hand-delivered to the National Office by the California attorney who had been representing the Party’s interests in this particular matter since the death of attorney Roger Mulholland. NEC Member Cozzini responded to the news by writing:

“It was good to see that the estate is settled. However, it takes the pressure off only temporarily. If we don’t grow the Party, it too will evaporate.”

NEC Member Mahoney responded in a similar vein by expressing his pleasure that distribution of the Newman Estate was finally at hand, but adding: “These funds, welcome as they are at this time, do not exactly ‘move our fat out of the fire.’”

In a reply to Comrade Mahoney on August 14, I wrote:

“The Newman funds came as a very pleasant surprise and greatly exceeded the most optimistic expectations I had allowed myself to imagine during the months—seemingly interminable months—during which it dragged on unsettled. . . .

* * * * *

“It is true, as you and Comrade Cozzini note, that the Newman funds do not solve the Party’s financial problems, and that those problems cannot be solved without the addition of new membership and a widening of the Party’s circle of friends and supporters. That is the task that has been cut out for the new NEC, of course, and I am trying desper-

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ately to get things here squared away so I can turn my attention to that all-important problem. It does not help that the headquarters staff is so small and overrun by unavoidable routine. However, that is just another slice of the pie cut out for us, and I only hope that we manage not to choke on it.”

Contrary to what Comrade Mahoney said, however, the benefit derived from estate settlements in 1997 *did* pull the SLP’s “fat out of the fire,” at least for the time being. Besides the two SLP sympathizers whose estates I have mentioned, the SLP owes a debt of gratitude to Comrade Chris Radov, who bequeathed \$2,000 to the Party, and to Comrade Casimir Kanczuzewski, whose bequest of \$20,000 brought the total realized from this source of income during the year to \$216,312. Those four bequests turned an \$80,859 deficit into a surplus of \$135,453. Because of the foresight, generosity and devotion of these members and sympathizers, the SLP’s cash reserves, as of March 31, 1998, stood at \$321,072.33. These four estates accounted for nearly two-thirds of the Party’s income in 1997, and without these magnificent final gestures the Party’s cash reserves today would be closer to \$105,000. If every SLP member and sympathizer were to follow the splendid example set by these four dedicated individuals, the Party’s capacity to fight for its future would be immeasurably enhanced.”

Nonetheless, apart from the anonymous gift of \$25,000.00 to the special Nathan Karp Memorial Fund, and the annuity from which the SLP has not yet benefited, nothing comparable to the Newman Estate has surfaced since. Two estates are in probate at present, but the Party’s share in their proceeds is expected to be relatively small.

The National Office is painfully aware that it has not been able to act on the advice of NEC Sessions and National Conventions held since 1998 to prepare an appropriate appeal to mail to Party members and supporters, together with the booklet *Steps You Can Take to Provide for the Financial Security of the Socialist Labor Party*. This convention may adopt a motion or report similar to those adopted by the NEC Sessions and National Conventions mentioned, though no such motion or resolution is necessary to convince the National Office of the financial predicament the Party is in or how imperative the need is to come to grips with it. As a preliminary step in that direction, the National Office deliberately chose the SLP Sustainer Fund, which the NEC established in the 1970s, as the fund for the 45th National Convention Banquet. Everyone who contributes to the convention fund will receive a letter of thanks that will also urge them to become regular contributors to the Sustainer Fund. A sustainer card with one stamp affixed will

be enclosed with that letter. Thereafter, our attention will be turned back to the matter of preparing a suitable appeal to accompany a mailing of the *Steps You Can Take* booklet.

In the meantime, Party members are again urged to increase their donations to help us wipe out these crippling monthly deficits.

For now we have no expectation of overcoming all the Party's financial problems, only of meeting the immediate crisis by eliminating the deficits and gaining some ground toward building up the cash reserves to a point where we can look forward with more optimism than can be easily supported at present.

On motion, this section of the National Secretary's report was referred to an appropriate committee when elected.

The National Secretary read the following section of his report:

Editorial Matters

Twelve monthly issues of *The People* were printed last year. No special issues or issues with extra pages were printed. However, special notice was taken of several anniversaries of significance to the SLP and the socialist movement.

Among others, *The People* took notice of the 110th anniversary of the SLP's reorganization as a Marxist party in 1890 (February), the 129th anniversary of the Paris Commune of 1871 (March), the 100th anniversary of the SLP's decision to drop "immediate demands" from its national platform, the 100th anniversary of the *Daily People* (July), the 100th anniversary of the De Leon-Harriman debate on the union question (July), and the 100th anniversary of the infamous Kautsky Resolution (December).

Passing notice was also taken of the 110th anniversary of *The People* (April), the 111th celebration of International Labor Day (May), and the 148th anniversary of Daniel De Leon's birth in 1852 (December).

In addition, two pages of the July issue were devoted to a special tribute to Comrade Nathan Karp.

During the year, 15 writers submitted 143 manuscripts for publication. One hundred eight articles submitted by 11 writers were published in one form or another, but 35 from seven writers were not.

Of the 108 articles printed, 63 came from the headquarters staff.

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Thirty-eight of those were by Comrades Ken Boettcher (30) and Nathan Karp (8). Fifty-eight of the articles printed came from five members who attended the Writers Conference in 1994. Seven additional articles came from three members and two sympathizers. One article from the field was adapted to the letters column and two were used as Field Reports.

Apart from the staff, the writers and the number of their articles used were:

Bernard Bortnick, (conferee, member-at-large).....	12
Barbara Graymont (conferee, Section New York City)	11
Diane Secor (conferee, Section San Francisco Bay Area).....	7
Bruce Cozzini (conferee, Section San Francisco Bay Area)	6
John-Paul Catusco (Section New York City).....	5
Brian Blanchard (Australia)	1
Jeff Chern (member-at-large)	1
Bill Mahan (sympathizer).....	1
Don Patrick (sympathizer).....	1

Nine of Comrade Boettcher's articles were used as editorials and four were used as page one leads. Three of Comrade Karp's articles also were used as page one leads. The leading article for the August issue was written by Comrade Bruce Cozzini.

Besides two items already mentioned, excerpts from six letters and reports to the National Office were used to produce Field Reports columns in five issues. The additional writers and the occasions their correspondence was drawn upon were Comrades Luis Figueroa of Section Philadelphia (1), Donna Bills of Section San Francisco Bay Area (1) and Comrade Robert Burns of Section Cleveland (1).

Twenty-three letters from readers were printed in six Letters to *The People* columns during the year. Two of those were printed with editorial comments. One was answered separately under the heading, "Abolish the Wages System!" Nineteen additional letters were printed in a special column under the heading, "Other Tributes to Nathan Karp."

Six articles from the Pacific News Service were used during the year. In addition, 12 De Leon editorials were reprinted and the 50 Years Ago column appeared in nine issues (though three of those were from 25 years ago and one was from 100 years ago).

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Twenty other reprints from back issues—many in connection with the anniversaries mentioned—were tracked down, typed up and used during the year, compared to only four in 1999. The increase was due in part to copy shortages at critical moments and in part to insufficient time for writing fresh articles on the historic events commemorated or on other subjects. Two reprints were used as editorials, two were largely rewritten and three required introductions. Apart from these reprints, modified versions of four Question Periods from back issues were printed and the SIU chart was used once.

Comrade Donna Bills should be mentioned for her efforts. Her proofreading and ad designs, her work on the Activities, Directory and Funds columns and on the annual postal report were all essential contributions.

In addition, of course, none of this could have been brought together and printed without Comrade Boettcher's skillful design and layout work at the computer.

Special mention should also be made of Sam Bortnick, whose photographs of Comrade Nathan Karp and a homeless man graced the pages of the July and February issues, respectively, and of Emily Bills for her photograph of the Wall of Martyrs at the Père-Lachaise Cemetery in Paris, France, which was used to illustrate our tribute to the Communards of 1871 in the March issue.

To provide the convention with a complete picture of where matters stand at present, I would add that 57 articles from six writers were printed in the six issues published so far this year. This number does not include two from Sergiy Skubenko of Ukraine, four articles and letters adapted for use as Field Reports and a large quantity of other matter. Sixteen of the 57 articles printed were from Comrade Boettcher, followed by Comrades Bortnick (10), Secor (7), Graymont (6) and Catusco (3). In short, 26 came from the field and 31 from the National Office.

*

No controversies involving *The People* arose last year, and no grievances were submitted for the NEC to resolve. Last June, however, the following e-mail was received from a national member-at-large who was clearly dissatisfied:

Dear Acting Editor Bills,

So sorry about Comrade Karp. What a loss to the Party.

I read on p. 79 of NEC 2000 minutes that there is a serious shortage

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of writers for *The People*. Amazing! I am quite willing and able to write for *The People*. Why don't you ask for my help? I must say, as a licensed psychotherapist with 15 years of clinical practice and several years of working on my own personal issues, I find you to be rude, abrupt, aloof, rigid, authoritarian, dictatorial, and condescending.

Have you even noticed that I have stopped submitting articles? Have you not figured out that it is because I am discouraged by laboring over an article only to have it disappear at the national office? I am a good writer and I am willing to write for *The People* but I am tired of submitting articles which are not used and receive no editorial comment or feedback at all.

Also, not once have I ever received an expression of thanks from you. And you belong to a glorious political party which professes to value human labor. I don't expect all my submissions to be printed but I need to know—a line or two would suffice—what is wrong with an article I write which is not used for *The People*.

Do you treat everyone like this or just me? Your personal lack of warmth could have something to do with the rough shape the Party is in. There was talk in the minutes of a writers conference this year and I could certainly try to attend that.

I would love to write for *The People* again but I need to know my labor is valued. By the way, where are all the articles I have submitted over the past several years which were not used in *The People*? My final thought is that it is simply poor leadership on your part to have a writer such as myself so willing to help out but yet so discouraged. You have a responsibility to nurture and guide your writers-at-large. I would like for the NEC to see this e-mail. How can I arrange that?

Sincerely, etc.

I do not know what provoked this particular outbreak, but I responded with the following on June 12:

Dear Comrade. . . :

This will acknowledge receipt of your e-mail of June 8. Thank you.

Article IX (The Party Press), Section 3, of the Party's Constitution provides as follows:

"Between Conventions, the NEC shall have control of the contents of all Party organs, and shall act on grievances connected with the same."

If you believe you have a legitimate grievance concerning your submissions for publication in *The People*, my suggestion would be that you follow the procedure provided by the constitutional provision cited. Specify what your grievance is and submit it to the National Office. It will then be submitted to the NEC for consideration and any action that the NEC may deem appropriate.

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

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I heard nothing more from him until September 12, but with the move and other demands on my time could not reply until the following was e-mailed on December 8:

Dear Comrade . . . :

Please pardon this belated reply to your e-mail of September 11. The search for new headquarters, the move and other difficulties disrupted normal office routine and made many similar delays unavoidable. Your patience and understanding are deeply appreciated.

Your e-mail consisted of four succinct paragraphs, as follows:

“I submitted two articles to you in July, I think, one on slaughterhouse workers and racism and another on the *Communist Manifesto*.”

“Again, no response.”

“Was there something wrong with the articles? Is it not your job to provide editorial feedback?”

“Please clarify this matter or I will have to either resign from the SLP or complain to the NEC.”

Frankly, I do not know if there was anything wrong with those particular articles. I read them only carefully enough to determine that they contained quotations from sources that you neglected to enclose with your articles. There were footnotes referring to books, magazines and news articles, but no marked photocopies of any of that. Apparently you expected me to locate the books, the magazines and the news articles, and then to locate the passages you quoted.

You say that you received no response to your articles. No response was needed. I have requested your cooperation in submitting and marking your sources in the past. Under date of August 11, 1998, for example, I wrote you a letter in which I said, in part:

“No matter what is decided about this particular article, however, I must remind you of how important it is always to send your sources when submitting articles. Footnotes don’t do me much good, so please make a point of sending me any news clippings you use, or photocopies of them, whenever you submit an article. And when you do, please make sure that they include the full name of the newspaper or magazine they’re from, and the date of the issues in which they were printed.”

“Ditto with quotations from books. A photocopy of the page or pages you are quoting from is what is needed.”

“In addition, portions of articles or book pages should be clearly marked to show what is being quoted or cited. Once in a while, but thankfully not often, someone will send a gob of clippings with nary a clue of where to look to verify a fact or a quotation. When that happens, someone here either has to do the writer’s research job all over, or in self-defense I have to instruct that the article be filed and forgotten.”

“Your cooperation in this will make our lives here a bit easier, and we will be grateful for it.”

The direct answer to your second question is no, it is not my “job to provide editorial feedback.” The headquarters staff is too small and the demands on its time and energies are too great to allow for that. If the

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SLP had a full-time elected Editor it might be different. As it is, however, everything the National Office staff does to keep the Editorial Department and *The People* afloat is done on a voluntary basis. All we have asked in return is a little cooperation in such things as including source materials and saving us the time of having to read through them all to verify the accuracy of quotations, the presentation and interpretation of facts, etc. Everyone else who writes for *The People*, even newcomers...seem to understand this.

I hope this finally clarifies the matter for you. If you do not find it satisfactory, then, of course, you should “complain to the NEC,” which is precisely what I urged you to do some time ago.

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

There is nothing further to report from that quarter. Last November, however, one steady contributor wrote to express concern about his “batting average.” As he put it:

I have noted that my “batting average” has dropped in the past several months. I attribute this to the fact that I am trying to compose the articles I write directly on my computer without the intermediate step of hand writing them. The latter gave pause for more deliberation about what I was writing about. . . .

This contributor had nothing to worry about, but I wrote a response to explain why some of his recent contributions could not be used. That letter, in part, was as follows:

Dear Comrade:

This will acknowledge your e-mail of today. Thank you.

I gave up writing by hand years ago—decades, to tell the truth. My handwriting was and remains completely illegible, even to myself. I always relied on typewriters, until computers came along. When the office got its first computers, I remember Nat Karp telling me how I would learn to love them. He thought I would benefit most from the cut-and-paste feature that allows paragraphs, sentences, even lowly punctuation marks, to be moved around. He was right about my learning to love computers. I was hesitant at first, but they grew on me. Cut-and-paste is only a small part of what I like about them, but that’s another story. Ironically, Nat never quite got the hang of computers; but, for me, I could not survive without one. Cut, paste, write, edit, I do it all on the computer—and since the Internet and World Wide Web came along I hardly ever type out a quotation from scratch. I simply take them directly from their source.

Your “batting average” isn’t so bad. I think you’ve sent in 16 articles this year. Eleven of them have been printed. I didn’t print your article

on Yucca Mountain [because] we just printed an editorial on that subject in June and your article didn't seem to add anything new.

Your article on "academic freedom" did give me a problem, but I don't think it had anything to do with it being written on a computer. It had to do with the main idea or thesis that you presented in your second paragraph.

"Universities, often characterized as lofty sanctuaries of knowledge, research, academic freedom and discovery, are institutions whose true nature is thinly concealed behind the commercial needs of the capitalist system. Indeed, they are themselves businesses marketing a commodity. That commercial product is imparting the knowledge, technical training and the capitalist 'gospel' to prospective workers.

"It is particularly the latter that is troubling. Those courses meant to impart culture, literature, art, music, philosophy and history *often stray from the 'script' of bourgeois ideology. Such was the case when Prof. Robert Nelsen showed and discussed the male nude photographs of the late Robert Maplethorpe at the University of Texas at Dallas during his 'exploration of the arts' course.*" [My emphasis.]

There is bourgeois ideology, no doubt about that. But I do not believe you can sustain the idea that there is a bourgeois ideology on what the content of photographs ought to be.

I dashed off something in an attempt to collect my own thoughts before trying to edit the article, but I could not refine my thinking enough to boil it down into a succinct few sentences in time to get back to your article. Deadlines were pressing. For what it's worth, however, here is what I jotted down in reaction to what you wrote. It's rough, very rough, and quite literally spontaneous, but I think it is clear enough for you to see what I was thinking.

"Capitalism does not care what workers think, provided what they think does not interfere with or threaten the capitalist system.

"It does not care if workers are devout Christians or died-in-the-wool atheists. It couldn't care less if workers look at a nude and see art or pornography.

"As long as workers are content to submit to the system of wage exploitation, capitalism couldn't care less what occupies a worker's mind.

"But within capitalism there are many subordinate interests that do care what workers think. Religious creeds that bank on the pennies that workers drop into the collection plate have a material stake in what goes on in the worker's mind. [This, I think, comes closest to the realm of ideas you were thinking about.]

"The entertainment industry, in which competition is fierce, is unrelenting in its efforts to attract worker's attention and take up their time.

"The advertising business that peddles an infinite number of commodities, many of which would be indistinguishable except for the 'eye appeal' of their packaging, not a few of which are useless, and some of which are downright harmful, all seek to plant previously unthought of wants and desires in working-class minds.

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“This unceasing competitive drive to beguile workers into buying this in preference to that, or that in preference to something else, in swallowing one idea about the origin of the universe over a host of other ideas on the same subject, etc., creates the illusion of intellectual freedom within the bounds of capitalist society; but as often as not it is merely the ‘freedom’ to be prevailed upon and bamboozled by someone or some institution that is out to make a buck by separating workers from a share of their wages.

“Workers are obviously affected by this relentless struggle. . . .” (I broke off here.)

Bourgeois ideology, the capitalist view of the world and the meaning of life, can be summed up in a single word, P-R-O-F-I-T. That may seem a very narrow outlook, which it is, but it also gives rise to a universe of conflicting ideas and values that grow out of a universe of conflicting material interests.

* * * * *

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

When Comrade Douglas Irving, National Secretary of the SLP of Canada, wrote to express his regrets over the death of Comrade Karp, he enclosed a book review from a local newspaper. Though he did not say so specifically, I assumed the enclosure was a silent suggestion that a similar review be printed in *The People*. Accordingly, in my reply on June 1, I referred to the clipping as follows:

Dear Comrade Irving:

Thank you very much for your letter of May 4 and the review of Francis Wheen’s *Karl Marx* from the *Ottawa Citizen*. I only knew of the book because of a review that appeared in the *Socialist Standard*, the monthly magazine of the Socialist Party of Great Britain. That review was interesting enough to pique my interest in the book, and what you enclosed heightens my interest even more. Obviously it is a book that should be taken notice of by *The People*, but there is so much else that must be attended to these days that things that are important in themselves must take a back seat to what is absolutely imperative. The book, I’m afraid, doesn’t fall into the latter category. Perhaps one of the SLP members who write for *The People* will notice the book and submit a review for publication.

* * * * *

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

Every so often the “Editor” will receive a letter that brightens

his day. On April 25, for example, the following was received by e-mail:

Dear Comrade Bills;

Just a short note to say you did a great job in editing and substantially adding to the article on IBM and the Nazis. It greatly enhanced the article and added considerable depth. When you add this much it should be listed as a joint effort. I don't think it is right for me to receive credit when you have done so much to develop the subject. I realize this is probably the case for a lot of articles contributed to *The People*.

Fraternally,
B. BORTNICK

In reply I told Comrade Bortnick I was glad that the changes pleased him, and added:

In theory, at least, the "Editor" gets a share of credit for everything he allows into the paper, and more than a share of the blame if he allows in (or keeps out) what he shouldn't. What he does to avoid anything to be blamed for and to make *The People* a credit to the SLP goes on in the shadows, so to speak. His job is to make everyone "look good," and thereby make *The People* and the Party "look good." His decisions are rarely shared with anyone other than the individual contributors who compare what they submit to what goes to print, or doesn't go to print.

You are right to suppose that more goes into *The People* than meets the readers' eye.

No doubt more could be culled from National Office files to provide the convention with information on how circumstances and conditions have affected *The People* since the NEC Session last year. I believe this is sufficient. However, if the convention finds that more information is needed to assist it in its deliberations, those files are at its disposal.

*

In my report to the NEC Session last year, I said that the editorial situation had gotten so bad that something drastic had to be done to save *The People*. As I explained and recommended:

The . . . stalwarts need to be reinforced. Without any real prospect of augmenting the headquarters staff, the only possible source of "new blood" to expand the pool of writers available to *The People* is the membership as a whole. In my opinion, something similar to the 1994 Writers Conference is needed to draw out that new blood and determine if it

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has what it takes to keep *The People* afloat. Accordingly, the following recommendations are being submitted for the NEC's consideration:

First: That the NEC in Session review the entire list of members in good standing of the Party to determine if there is sufficient material to warrant holding a second SLP Writers Conference this year, preferably over the Labor Day weekend of September 2–3, 2000.

Second: That the NEC in Session draw up and adopt a resolution inviting the members it chooses to attend such a conference.

Third: That the NEC in Session establish a special fund to help defray the expense that holding such a conference would entail.

However, if the NEC decides that no such conference can or should be held, and unless this Session adopts a resolution outlining some other viable plan for continuing publication, I would request that the NEC in Session draw up and adopt a suitable resolution announcing permanent suspension of *The People* with the December 2000 issue, or an earlier issue in the event it becomes necessary to relocate the National Headquarters later this year.

The NEC did none of these things. Instead, it adopted a middle course by electing special committees to invite certain members to such a conference, if it was decided to hold one. The work of the special committees was to be done after the NEC Session adjourned.

The special committees went to work immediately. On April 18 they e-mailed the National Office a list of members to invite and a draft of the letter of invitation. I was informed by the committees that the draft was for me to “annotate or comment on.” I did not believe it was my place to do either where the invitation was concerned, unless it contained some factual error. However, I did feel it necessary to comment on the special committee's remark that the list of members to invite had been decided “in consultation with the National Secretary.” Accordingly, under date of May 8 I replied to the special committees, in part, as follows:

Dear Comrade Bortnick:

* * * * *

I do not think it is accurate to say that the NEC Session's committee reached a decision on who to invite to the conference “in consultation with” me. No decision was reached in my presence. The meeting wasn't held for that purpose, at least that is not what the committee told me. The committee told me it wanted guidance on who to consider, not who to choose.

By the time that meeting was over I had recommended six members who I thought should be invited automatically, without the committee wasting any time going over their qualifications. . . . Not one of these

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names appears on the list of 15 that heads your draft.

I also recommended that the committee consider 11 other members after it had decided on how many would be needed to hold a successful conference and what the Party could afford to spend on airfares, hotel accommodations, meals and possibly lost wages, and I singled three of those 11 members out for special consideration. Two of the three who I suggested for special consideration...appear on your "A list." The third member I thought fell into that category was...excluded.

* * * * *

Incidentally, I would remind you and Comrade Mahoney that attendance at the conference will be by invitation only. The reminder may be unnecessary, but I thought I should mention it since you apparently have chosen to exclude all those I thought should be invited and one I felt deserved special consideration.

* * * * *

With best wishes,

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

The special committees submitted their final list of names and the final draft of a letter of invitation under date May 14, 2000. The final draft was as follows:

Dear Comrade . . . :

At the recent National Executive Committee session held in Santa Clara, Ca., April 1st, and 2nd, 2000 that part of the National Secretary's report on "Editorial Matters" addressed an issue of vital concern to the Party, namely the continued publication of *The People*. At the center of this concern was the diminishing number of correspondents and a decline in articles from field correspondents that must be relied upon to a greater degree than ever if publication is to continue and, indeed, if a measure of the burden that the National Office has heretofore carried is to be raised.

To drive home the urgency of this issue we enclose that portion of the National Secretary's Report on "Editorial Matters" which clearly summarizes this issue. Please give careful consideration to its contents. (see p. 1, 2, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 enclosed)

In reading this portion of the report, you will find that page 18 calls for an expansion of "the pool of writers" and convening a second writers conference similar to the one that was held at the National Headquarters in 1994.

It will also be noted that the National Secretary called upon the NEC to take 3 specific steps to supplement the staff of *The People* correspondents. The NEC responded accordingly: "(1) Your committee in consultation with the National Secretary has reviewed the membership list and concluded that there is "sufficient material to warrant holding

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a second SLP writers conference.” (2) We recommend that the NEC extend invitations to those selected. The NEC regrets that time did not permit it to draw up a resolution in session inviting those members to attend such a conference. NEC member Bortnick will undertake to prepare an appropriate letter of invitation. (3) We recommend that the NEC set up a special fund that will help defray the costs of holding this writers conference.”

You are one among __ (to be determined by the NEC in consultation with the National Secretary) comrades that have been asked to seriously consider attending the proposed writers conference.

Although the date of the proposed conference has not been fixed, Labor Day weekend, September 1st and 2nd, 2000, has been suggested by the National Secretary.

Some of you have made contributions to *The People* in past issues, some of which were printed and others perhaps not. The proposed conference offers an excellent venue to clear up misunderstandings, get to know one another and share common concerns, clarify those questions that may have vexed you, gain a better understanding of the conditions the editorial office of *The People* works under, and offers vital guidelines that cannot be as effectively communicated in writing.

In order to make the appropriate preparations, we have set a deadline date for your response indicating your willingness to attend this conference of (to be set by the National Office). Please send your reply by filling out the enclosed form, and mailing it in the self-addressed envelope enclosed. Your prompt consideration will be greatly appreciated.

Fraternally Yours,
BERNARD BORTNICK

By order of the National Executive
Committee

The letter of invitation was enclosed with the following, also dated May 14, 2000:

Dear Comrade Bills,

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of May 8, 2000. Changes have been made in accordance with the commentary that you offered; hence I resubmit the following:

Please submit the following motions to the National Executive Committee:

1. Motion: to concur in the recommendation of the National Secretary to hold a writers conference.
2. Motion: to hold such a conference on the Labor Day Weekend of September 2 and 3, 2000.
3. Motion: that the place of the conference be at the National Headquarters.
4. Motion: that Comrades Bernard Bortnick and Mike Mahoney be placed in nomination as permanent chairpersons of the special committee overseeing the coordination of the writers conference.

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5. Motion: that the following draft letter be concurred in and mailed to possible attendees of the writers conference (appended below).

Fraternally Submitted:

BERNARD BORTNICK, NEC

None of this—the list of names, the letter of invitation or the five motions—were formally submitted to the NEC. That is, no ballot was mailed and sent out. Although the special committees had moved fast, they were not fast enough. The death of Comrade Nathan Karp, the headquarters situation and a growing concern over the rapid depletion in the Party's cash reserves were among the conditions and circumstances that led to one postponement after another.

In the meantime, we have continued to publish *The People* without interruption, but not without increased difficulties for a diminished headquarters staff and a dwindling core of dedicated SLP writers.

On motion, this section of the National Secretary's report was referred to an appropriate committee when elected.

A five-minute recess was declared at 12:20 p.m. Reconvened at 12:30 p.m.

The National Secretary read the following section of his report:

State of Organization

A net loss of one section and 12 members occurred during the year.

The NEC disbanded Section Akron, Ohio, on December 5. Three transfers out of the section to Section Cleveland were initiated, but could not be completed before the year ended.

The NEC accepted five applications for membership. Seventeen names were removed from the membership list. Three resigned, two were dropped for nonpayment of dues and one was expelled. Eleven members died. In addition, one national member-at-large transferred to Section New York City.

Three sections reported holding 12 regular business meetings last year. They were Sections San Francisco Bay Area, Cook County, Ill., and Wayne County, Mich. Section Portland, Ore., reported holding 11 business meetings, Section Cleveland reported 10, Section Milwaukee six and Section Akron one. Section Philadelphia reported three business meetings held during the year, but

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that information is incomplete. Section New York City failed to report. Accordingly, reports on 67 business meetings being held during the year were received, at which the average attendance was four.

SLP national members-at-large living in 23 states and the Marshall Islands account for 57 percent of the Party's membership.

On motion, this section of the National Secretary's report was referred to an appropriate committee when elected.

The National Secretary read the following section of his report:

General Activities

Sections and members of the Party reported a distribution of 34,382 copies of *The People* last year, compared to a reported distribution of 31,742 copies in 1999. Sections accounted for 32,590 copies and national members-at-large for 1,792 copies. Section San Francisco Bay Area's reported distribution was 22,059 copies, most of them through the efforts of Comrades Mary and Frank Prince.

Sections and members also reported a distribution of 20,749 leaflets during the year, of which 10,372 were reported by sections and 10,377 by members-at-large. The reported distribution of leaflets in 1999 was 31,811.

Twenty-nine public meetings were held during the year. Twenty-one of those were discussion group meetings reported by two sections and the SLP Group of Houston. Section Portland reported holding 12, the SLP Group of Houston reported five and Section San Francisco Bay Area reported four. Eight of the public meetings reported were fundraisers. Three of those were sponsored by Section Cleveland, three by Section Philadelphia and two by San Francisco Bay Area.

Other activities reported during the year included the following:

Section San Francisco Bay Area set up a literature table at West Valley Community College on two occasions and at a "Free Mumia" rally held in San Francisco.

Comrade Louis Fisher of Section Cook County was interviewed on PBS's Chicago affiliate, WBEZ-TV. Comrade Fisher, of course, was the Party's candidate for president in 1972. (His running mate was Comrade Genevieve Gunderson, now the Party's bookkeeper.)

Section Cleveland set up a literature table at the Slavic Village Fair in that city, and as reported in *The People*, distributed leaflets to striking steel mill workers in Mansfield, Ohio, last August.

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Sections New York City and Philadelphia cooperated in distributing leaflets at a Puerto Rico Day parade in Manhattan last year with the assistance of national member-at-large John-Paul Catusco. (Comrade Catusco has since transferred into Section New York City. Before his transfer, however, he distributed SLP leaflets to workers, patrons and passersby at New York City Museum of Modern of Art on a daily basis during the MoMA workers' strike.)

The SLP Group of Houston distributed SLP literature at an Earth Day festival in that Texas city.

At the end of the year, 23 bookstores and newsstands carried *The People* and 11 self-service newsstands were operated by sections and members in three states.

The National Office received 281 contacts last year. One hundred thirty-two of those were by e-mail, excluding 39 e-mails from 49 teachers and students who contacted the National Office during the year. Twenty-three of the 281 contacts took out subscriptions to *The People*. A majority of those new subscriptions (14) resulted from the distribution of leaflets.

On motion, this section of the National Secretary's report was referred to an appropriate committee when elected.

The National Secretary read the following section of his report:

Party Press and Literature

1. The People

The press run for May was 9,700 copies, of which 9,146 were put into circulation and 554 were spoiled or held for National Office uses. The distribution was as follows:

Domestic subscriptions	1,718
Foreign Subscriptions	73
Domestic Bundles	7,279
Foreign Bundles	76
Office Use	554

The May issue circulated to 49 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Marshall Islands. The missing state was North Dakota. The May issue was also mailed to 13 other countries.¹

¹Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Great Britain, India, Italy, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand and Ukraine.

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Included in the circulation for May were 431 libraries and 17 libraries in other countries.

Apart from libraries, about 60 percent of all domestic subscription copies of *The People* are mailed to individual readers who live in the eight states where sections of the Party are organized. California leads with 257, followed by New York (132), Ohio (88), Pennsylvania (81), Michigan (79), Illinois (67), Wisconsin (38) and Oregon (26).

One hundred sixteen bundles of the May issue were mailed or shipped. Thirty-three went to sections and 22 went to national members-at-large. Fifty-three bundles went to nonmembers, two went to libraries, five went to members in Australia and Canada, and five went to nonmembers in other countries. Twenty-four bundles were mailed or shipped to commercial outlets. Bundle sizes averaged 57 copies.

Every section of the Party received at least one bundle of the May issue. Section San Francisco Bay Area led with 10, followed by Sections Cleveland (8), Cook County (6), New York City (3) and Philadelphia (3).

Section San Francisco Bay Area also led in the number of copies shipped in bundles. That number was 2,102, the same as for 1999. Section Milwaukee was next with 500 copies, followed by Sections Cleveland (275), New York City (195), Portland (150), Philadelphia (110), Cook County (28) and Wayne County (15). The 22 bundles sent to national members-at-large accounted for 692 copies.

Michael Preston of Buffalo, N.Y., continued his lead among nonmembers with 2,015 copies, an increase of 15 over the figure reported last year.

Four hundred sixty-seven subscriptions to *The People* were entered last year. Three hundred ninety were new and 77 were from former readers whose earlier subscriptions had expired. Fifty-one of these new and "old/new" subscriptions were for three years, six were for two years, 88 were for one year, 244 were for six months and 78 were for four months. Six hundred nine subscriptions were received in 1999, of which 509 were new and 100 were old/new.

The sources for all new and old/new subscriptions received last year were: gift subscriptions (206), free trial subscriptions (76), National Office contacts (37), sections and members-at-large (31), *The People's* subscription coupon (23), Web site (18), *The People's* list of former subscribers (7), advertisements in back issues of other publications (1) and miscellaneous other sources (68).

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Nine hundred ninety-nine subscriptions came due for renewal last year. Five hundred three were renewed and 496 were removed. Accordingly, the renewal rate for the year was 50 percent, down from 53 percent in 1999.

Receipts from sales last year were \$22,181.00, compared to \$12,952.00 in 1999 and \$17,348.00 in 1998.

No sample copies were mailed last year, no advertisements were placed and no effort was made to follow up on the clearance mailings reported to the NEC a year ago. Contributing factors were a lack of funds, a lack of staff and problems associated with moving and reestablishing National Headquarters.

*

California's "rolling blackouts" have not interfered with the production or circulation of *The People*, but there have been other problems. On October 20, for example, the following letter was sent to the NEC:

Dear Comrades:

This is to inform you that the November issue of *The People* has been delayed. The issue did not go to press on Wednesday, October 18, as scheduled, but will be printed on Wednesday, October 25.

Several problems contributed to the delay. One was that it was necessary for me to go to Las Vegas on October 7 and that I did not return to the office until October 12. Another was a shortage of usable copy submitted from the field and insufficient time for putting the new offices in order while writing enough copy to fill the November issue. A third is that establishing an Internet link (now our primary source of news and information) is taking longer than anticipated.

In haste,

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

There were other occasions when it appeared that an issue might be delayed. The problem usually stemmed from a shortage of copy. One exception was explained in the following letter written to the NEC on November 20:

Dear Comrades:

Something quite unexpected has happened. Pizazz Printing, the company that has been printing *The People* since at least 1984, suddenly went out of business last week. I did not learn of this until yesterday, not directly from a representative of Pizazz, but indirectly from our mailer, San Jose Mailing. San Jose Mailing called us yesterday in

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the belief that we knew of Pizazz's collapse but might want recommendations on other printers to approach. Acting on their recommendation, I have been in touch with another printer. That printer has "penciled us in" for the January issue, which should go to press on its scheduled date, i.e., Wednesday, December 20.

I am hopeful that we can work out a permanent deal with this other printer, Publishers Press. If not, I am informed that there are other options open to us.

Twenty-four hours ago this development had all the earmarks of a potential disaster. Pizazz was a huge operation that printed scores of newspapers, among them the *Metro* (circ. 60,000) and the *Stanford Daily*. Pizazz's collapse has sent them all scurrying. Some of them were forewarned by a week or so, I am told, but not us. In that sense we were a week behind in the scramble to find a new printer, but it now appears that everything should work out.

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

Things did work out with the new printer, Publishers Press, and the December issue was printed on schedule. Although I have not been entirely satisfied with the quality of our new printer's work, most problems have been minor and I am confident they can be ironed out.

*

E-mail subscriptions, which are not included in any of the preceding figures, declined from 201 in April 2000 to 175 for the issue of May 2001. One reason may be that the online service that processes these subscriptions now identifies inactive or discontinued e-mail addresses, which enables us to remove them from the list. A second reason may be that people with the right equipment have the option of helping themselves to the PDF edition of *The People*, which has been a regular feature of the Party's Web site since December 1999.

For those who may not be familiar with them, PDFs, or Portable Document Format files, enable us to upload near-perfect replicas of the printed edition. Indeed, because *The People* is produced almost entirely by electronic means—from raw copy to finished product—it might be said that the printed edition is closer to being a replica of the electronic one than the other way around.

In any event, the PDF edition can be viewed on a computer screen, or downloaded and printed at the convenience of the indi-

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vidual without having to register with any electronic subscription service.

2. Labor News Activities

Labor News sales last year came to \$4,730.00, compared to \$13,944.00 in 1999 and \$5,631.00 in 1998.

Apart from 500 copies of the 2000 NEC Session proceedings and 100 copies of *The SLP and the Unions* as a *Socialist Studies*, no new books or pamphlets were published during the year. Several possibilities for new pamphlets and *Socialist Studies* mentioned in my report to the NEC last year were not printed, primarily because of the financial situation and partly because of the disruption caused by the move. Nonetheless, six standard leaflets were re-printed last year. The titles and quantities printed were as follows:

<i>SLP National Platform</i>	10,000
<i>Socialist Industrial Unionism: The Workers' Power</i>	10,000
<i>What Is Socialism?</i>	10,000
<i>What's Behind the Attack on Public Education?</i>	10,000
<i>What's Wrong With the Labor Unions?</i>	10,000
<i>Who Are the Polluters?</i>	10,000

In addition, short runs of three special leaflets were printed in response to special requests, as follows:

<i>Mumia Abu-Jamal & Capitalist Justice</i>	4,000
<i>The Seattle Police Riot</i>	2,000
<i>The Death of Amadou Diallo</i>	2,000

It may be superfluous to add that when no SLP books or pamphlets are published or reissued the supply of Labor News titles can only decline. A number of standard SLP books and pamphlets have gone out of print in recent years, and supplies of several others are extremely low. However, without the funds needed to publish new titles, or new editions of standard works, the Party's ability to provide potential members with the educational materials they need can only decline.

A Labor News line of electronic books on compact disks probably offers the best possibility for getting around this problem, or at least a part of it. CDs are capable of holding so much material that every book, pamphlet and leaflet ever printed by the SLP would

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easily fit onto just one of them. Recently, for example, a former member of the old SLP of Great Britain made a gift of one such disk to the National Office. The disk is one in a series produced under the general heading of *Essential Classics in Politics*. This particular disk is devoted to works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, and includes PDF versions of the following:

1. *A History of the Communist League*
2. *Anti-Dühring*
3. *Capital* (all three volumes)
4. *The Civil War in France*
5. *Class Struggles in France*
6. *The Communist Manifesto*
7. *The Condition of the Working Class in England*
8. *Critique of the Gotha Program*
9. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*
10. *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*
11. *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*
12. *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man*
13. *The Peasant Question in France and Germany*
14. *Preface to a Critique of Political Economy*
15. *Socialism: From Utopia to Science*
16. *Value, Price and Profit*.

The disk also contains something called *A Student's Edition of Capital* (not to be confused with Edward Aveling's *A Student's Marx*) and several other features, including illustrations for each of the PDF files it contains.

Unfortunately, the National Headquarters staff is much too small to undertake such a project alone. While there is nothing to say that a compact disk must always be filled to the hilt before it can be offered for sale, the preparation of the material needed to make even one reasonable offering, and to do it within the Party's means, would require the help of some competent volunteers.

3. Web Site

In my report to the NEC Session last year, I estimated that the SLP's Web site received 26,416 "hits" in 1999. That estimate was based on concrete information the National Office received for 48 weeks during which 24,362 confirmed hits, or visits to the Web site, could be confirmed. The larger figure was based on the aver-

age of 508 confirmed hits a week over the 48-week period, multiplied by 52.

Last year the National Office again received concrete information confirming the number of hits over a 48-week period. The number was 45,632, almost double the number of confirmed hits for 1999 and an average of 951 hits a week. That number, when multiplied by 52, suggests there were about 49,452 hits last year.

Over the first 14 weeks of the current year for which information is available, the number of hits was 12,551, for an average of 897 a week. However, the number of hits during the first 14 weeks of 2000 was 12,405, or 886 a week. In short, www.slp.org appears to be on a record-breaking pace for 2001. It is too soon to tell, of course, but the National Office continues to do everything it can to expand and improve the contents of the site.

Adding new features and titles is an important inducement to encourage visits and return visits to the site. Among the additions made last year were:

The Burning Question of Trades Unionism (Daniel De Leon)

Early Efforts at Socialist Unity (Nathan Karp)

Free Trade (Karl Marx)

Plain Words to Boston Workingmen, Jew and Gentile (De Leon)

Reform or Revolution (De Leon)

The ST&LA vs. the "Pure and Simple" Trade Union (De Leon-Harriman Debate)

The Constant Revolution (Robert Bills)

Wage-Labor and Capital (Marx)

What Means This Strike? (De Leon)

Another addition made last year was the SLP's Resolution on Puerto Rico.

This year's additions include *Crises in European History* (Gustav Bang), a collection of De Leon editorials under the heading of *Workers, Wages and Wall Street* and the article "The Socialist Program: What It Is and How It Developed."

Two new sections on SLP history and joining the SLP were added this year. The former features the articles "Socialism in the U.S.: From Utopia to Science," by Comrade Barbara Graymont, and "How the SLP Emerged as a Marxist Political Party." The history section also contains the SLP's National Platforms from 1887, 1904, 1908 and 1912, the proceedings of the Sixth (1887) National Convention and two National Convention resolutions from the 1970s, "The Energy Crisis" and "The Middle East Crisis."

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The other new section—Join the SLP—features the article “Why YOU Should Join the SLP,” the Party’s Constitution, its Declaration of Fundamental Principles, Organizational Norms and Procedures, Intervention and Union Work: An SLP Handbook, To the Prospective Member of the Socialist Labor Party and the SLP Membership Application form.

Seventy-four editorials by Daniel De Leon have been posted on the Web site, which includes the 10 contained in *Workers, Wages and Wall Street* and 10 in *De Leon on Labor Parties*.

All told, the SLP Web site now features 10 distinct sections that include about 125 PDF and HTML versions of SLP documents, 18 PDF issues of *The People*, links to several other Web sites, 33 SLP mailing addresses, telephone and fax numbers in three countries, 13 e-mail addresses in the United States and connections to three SLP local Web sites maintained by Sections New York City, Portland, Oregon, and the SLP Group of Houston, Texas.

PDF versions of De Leon’s *As to Politics* and *Two Pages From Roman History* will soon be added to the site, as will an updated version of the SLP pamphlet, *Socialism: Questions Most Frequently Asked and Their Answers*. De Leon’s translation of *Marx’s Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* is also in the works, and several more of De Leon’s own works (such as *Flashlights of the Amsterdam Congress*) are in preparation.

Comrade Boettcher is working on a complete makeover of the site that will make it more attractive, easier to navigate and allow for some additional sections.

4. De Leon Project

Nine hundred ten articles, editorials and other works by Daniel De Leon were typed and electronically stored last year. Seven hundred sixty-seven of those were typed at the National Office and 143 were typed professionally. An additional 361 items have been typed and stored since January 1 of this year.

These additions bring the number of items typed and stored to 8,073. What remains to be typed from the files of the *Daily People* are the months of May through December 1909, except two weeks from October that Comrade Donna Bills typed last year.

On motion, this section of the National Secretary’s report was referred to an appropriate committee when elected.

The National Secretary read the following section of his report:

SLP and the Internet

In my report to the NEC in Session last year, I raised certain questions about the SLP and the Internet. Among other things, I quoted the following from an e-mail I had written in response to one I had received from a national member-at-large:

There are no e-mail guidelines for members-at-large or sections to follow where e-mail contacts, etc., are concerned. I am hoping that experience will suggest what they ought to be, or in what ways they should expand on or differ from the existing guidelines for keeping the National Office informed and for intra-Party communications. My suggestion would be that you review those existing guidelines in your copy of Organizational Norms and Procedures and that you continue to forward to the National Office copies of everything you write or receive pertaining to the SLP. We may simply file those that seem routine or do not appear to warrant special comment—but the N.O. should be kept fully informed. Indeed, if the members who participate in this experiment don't think to keep the N.O. informed we'll never know if special guidelines are needed because the Party will never be able to benefit from the accumulated experiences, problems, etc., that we make or encounter.

I went on to remind the NEC that while some members of the committee had written to express their individual approval of that reply, and of a general letter asking for e-mail addresses for the Party's official Web site, no motion approving of either had been offered. "More important, perhaps, no member of the NEC has raised any question about or voiced any opinion on a number of organizational concerns that must eventually be addressed."

For example: Two of the seven e-mail connections now active and usable are for sections, and all three of those that will be added sometime soon are for sections. However, of the five section e-mail addresses linked or soon to be linked to the SLP Web site two belong to section organizers and none that I know of belongs to a section. The other three belong to members of sections who are not the organizers. Yet, the Party's Constitution provides as follows:

"The Organizer shall conduct the local organization and agitation, subject at all times to the decisions of the membership. The Organizer shall also conduct the correspondence with the NEC." (Article IV, Section 8[a])

Does this pose a problem, and if it does, what can or should be done to deal with it?

There are many other potential problems that could be cited. How-

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ever, the electronic age waits for no one, and if the NEC cannot identify and make adequate provision for all, or even some of the more significant ones during these proceedings, it should either elect a special committee or adopt some other procedure to identify potential problem areas and make recommendations for their remedy.

Therefore, I would recommend that this matter be referred to a committee of the NEC for preliminary consideration at the NEC Session, and that that committee should return with a recommendation for the NEC as a whole to consider and decide.

I continued by suggesting that local Web sites posed another set of questions having “organizational and constitutional implications” that needed answers:

... For example: Should the Party regard local Web sites as local literature in the same sense as local leaflets or platforms? Should the Party regard them as local publications in the same sense as a local newspaper? Or are they something so new and different that the Party’s Constitution and Organizational Norms and Procedures fail to make adequate provision for them?

The NEC in Session responded to these concerns by electing a special Committee on Internet Communications composed of three members, two of whom were members of the NEC. The National Office formally notified the committee of its election and of the responsibilities the NEC had entrusted to it under date of April 24, as follows:

Dear Comrades:

This is to inform you of your election to a special committee of the National Executive Committee to be called Committee on Internet Communications. The committee will continue until the term of the present NEC expires with the 45th National Convention next year, or until the present NEC determines its work is complete and should be dissolved.

According to the minutes of the NEC Session, held April 1–2, 2000, Comrade . . . was the first elected and, accordingly, will act as temporary Chairman until the committee elects a permanent Chairman. The Chairman should promptly report his election and will be responsible for all communications with the National Office. The National Office will promptly forward all communications from the committee to the NEC.

The NEC’s directions to the Committee on Internet Communications are contained in the . . . report on “General Activities” adopted by the NEC. . . .”

The text of the report with the NEC’s instructions was inserted at this point. (It is also printed in the published proceedings of the NEC

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Session.) In closing my letter to the special committee, I added:

The committee should report its progress to the National Office at least once a month. If the committee has any questions about its responsibilities, etc., it should bring them to the attention of the National Office.

The e-mail addresses of all members of the Committee on Internet Communications are listed below.

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

No monthly reports were received from the special committee, and no recommendations from it have been submitted to the NEC or to the National Office for consideration by this convention. Accordingly, none of the questions and potential problems that led the NEC to elect a special Committee on Internet Communications have been resolved; the sections and members are still left without any meaningful guidance from the national organization; and, in the meantime, new questions and problems have cropped up to add to the list.

On January 23, for example, Comrade Carl Miller wrote the following to the National Office:

I have taken the initiative and started an e-mail discussion group using a service called e-groups. What this amounts to is a group that posts e-mails to a special e-mail address and this message is in turn distributed to everyone who subscribes to the list. The list was intended to garner interest in the SLP here in Houston. My thinking was if people were exposed to what we were about and learned about our principles and program they would be more likely to come to our discussion meetings and perhaps join. At this point we have ten subscribers to the list and I believe that at least half of them are here in Houston. I have had some difficulty in getting those who have subscribed to participate, post questions or matters for discussion but I feel that they will come around sooner or later. I would appreciate it if you would subscribe to the list also, to read over what has been posted and provide some guidance....Subscription is free and only takes a few minutes. One of the subscribers is Comrade John-Paul Catusco of Section New York City. He has been very helpful in posting items for discussion. I am not sure of what area of the SLP Constitution this would come under, or whether this was an advisable venture to begin with but I felt it could reap some good benefits. I would like your advice on this. If you find that this is not a good idea please let me know and I will make any changes necessary.”

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I replied to Comrade Miller under date of February 1, in part, as follows:

I was aware of your e-mail discussion group initiative because you brought it to my attention somewhere along the line. Unfortunately, I have not been able to say anything about it to you or to the NEC. The explanation is that I have been dreadfully busy and that my time has been chopped up by some personal concerns on top of the usual mass of correspondence, office routine, editorial matters, etc.

* * * * *

This area of activity is something that should be discussed at the National Convention to work out some basic guidelines. The guidelines in force now are those that apply to regular correspondence and touch on other existing Party rules and regulations as, for instance, that discussion group moderators are supposed to be elected by sections or, where national members-at-large are concerned, approved by the NEC or the National Office. Those rules may or may not be specifically adaptable to the new technology, but the SLP will never work it out unless members having the right combination of organizational sense and technical knowledge get involved in developing reasonable guidelines to prevent chaos. Hopefully eligible members-at-large having an active interest in this sphere of activity—members such as yourself—will make themselves available for nomination and election as delegates to the convention.

Under date of March 6, I wrote the NEC a letter on several matters. The relevant passage from that letter is as follows:

Second: Last July, Comrade Carl Miller of Houston, Texas, initiated an online SLP chat room or discussion group. He has informed those who participate that this activity has no official sanction, which was as correct as it was wise. Recently he informed me that two former SLP members...began to participate. (A third former member...also participates.) Comrade Miller has expressed concern and asked the National Office for guidance. Unfortunately, I have not been able to provide him with any. However, I think it is important that NEC members “look in” on this group and acquaint themselves with the discussions and how they are conducted. . . . However, I would discourage any NEC member from participating until the NEC or the National Convention makes a decision concerning SLP involvement with such things and how they are to be conducted.

No member of the NEC or its special committee has looked in on Comrade Miller’s “chat room” that I know of. No member of the

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NEC or its special committee has written to the National Office to offer any observations, comments or motions for the NEC to consider or to refer to the National Convention.

On motion, this section of the National Secretary's report was referred to an appropriate committee when elected.

The National Secretary read the following section of his report:

Internal Matters

Turner Affair

Acting on instructions by the National Executive Committee, the National Office sent the following letter to Charles Turner of Seattle, Washington, under date of April 21, 2000. The letter was sent by certified mail and read as follows:

Dear Comrade Turner:

This is to inform you of the following motion, which the NEC adopted while in session on Sunday, April 2:

"That Comrade Turner is instructed to inform the NEC whether or not he is the author of the article 'Rule of Capital' that appeared in the *New Unionist's* January issue; such response to be received within two weeks of the date of the letter conveying this instruction."

Accordingly, your reply to this inquiry should be mailed in time to reach the National Office no later than Friday, May 5, 2000.

By instruction of the NEC,

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

The designated time having elapsed, the National Office sent the following letter to the NEC under date of May 5:

Dear Comrades:

This is to inform you that Comrade Charles Turner of Seattle, Washington, did not reply to the letter of April 21 by May 5.

This will also inform you that the return receipt from the certified letter mailed to Comrade Turner on April 21 was received on May 2. The return receipt was postmarked at Seattle on April 25 and was signed by Comrade Turner. In other words, Comrade Turner signed for the letter of April 21 on April 25, or 10 days before the May 5 deadline.

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

Under date of May 13, the National Office received the following

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letter from NEC Member Bruce Cozzini:

Dear Comrade Bills:

In the National Secretary's letter of April 21, Comrade Charles Turner was provided with the NEC's instruction to inform the NEC with regard to authorship of *New Unionist* articles. As noted in your letter of April 5 to the NEC, he signed for the certified mail, yet chose not to reply to the NEC's by the deadline specified in the NEC's ruling.

Accordingly, in accordance with Article V, Section 14, of the Party's Constitution, I move that Charles Turner, having refused to abide by the NEC ruling as stated in the April 21 letter, be expelled from the Socialist Labor Party.

Fraternally,
BRUCE COZZINI

Thereupon, a ballot was prepared and submitted to the NEC for action. All seven NEC members returned their ballots by June 15, when the following was written to the committee:

Dear Comrades:

This is to inform you that all ballots have been received regarding the motion to expel Charles Turner from membership. All seven members voted in favor of the proposition. Accordingly, Charles Turner has been expelled. An appropriate notice will be sent to the sections and members as soon as time permits. Charles Turner is being informed today.

The following comments were offered:

M. Mahoney: "Any member who proves incapable or unwilling to maintain their membership by acting within the rules and regulations of the SLP warrants expulsion."

D. Secor: "Charles Turner was well aware of the fact that his failure to respond could result in his immediate expulsion from the SLP. He obviously doesn't care and he is totally indifferent about the harm he has done to the organization for the last few years."

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

As provided by the Party's Constitution, notice of this action by the NEC was sent to the sections and members of the SLP. That notice was incorporated with the general letter of June 26, 2000, as follows:

EXPULSION NOTICE

This will also serve to inform you that the National Executive Committee, in accordance with the organizational and executive responsibilities imposed upon it by the Party's Constitution, and acting under

the authority vested in it by that Constitution, has expelled Charles W. Turner of Seattle, Wash., from membership in the Socialist Labor Party for his deliberate and willful refusal to comply with explicit and binding instructions of the NEC as conveyed to him under date of April 21, 2000.

On motion, this section of the National Secretary's report was referred to an appropriate committee when elected. A motion was passed to rescind the previous action and consider a new motion. On motion, the report on "Internal Matters" was accepted as read.

The National Secretary read the following section of his report:

NEC and National Officers

The Constitution of the Socialist Labor Party provides that the National Convention shall elect a National Executive Committee composed of seven members for a term of two years. The term of office begins and ends with the National Convention, but the names of each of those the convention elects must be approved by a general vote of the whole membership of the Party.

The National Executive Committee elected by the 44th National Convention is composed of the following seven members: Donna Bills (Section San Francisco Bay Area), Bernard Bortnick (national member-at-Large, Texas), Christian Camacho (national member-at-large, Florida), Bruce Cozzini (Section San Francisco Bay Area), Luis Figueroa (Section Philadelphia), Michael R. Mahoney (Section Milwaukee) and Diane Secor (Section San Francisco Bay Area).

In anticipation of this convention, the National Office canvassed the sections and national members-at large for the names of members eligible, qualified and willing to serve on the NEC during the 2001–2003 term of office if elected by the convention and confirmed by the referendum. The names returned in response to the canvass are:

Kenneth Boettcher (Section San Francisco Bay Area)
Richard S. Cassin (national member-at-large, New Hampshire)
Bruce Cozzini (Section San Francisco Bay Area)
Michael R. Mahoney (Section Milwaukee)
Diane Secor (Section San Francisco Bay Area)
Richard Wilson (national member-at-large, California)

These six names should be referred to a committee of this con-

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vention for consideration. Guidance on how that committee should proceed will be found in the “NEC and National Officers” section of my report to the 44th National Convention.

Besides electing an NEC of seven members, the National Convention is to elect the three national officers for which the Party’s Constitution provides. The offices for which provision is made are National Secretary, Financial Secretary and National Editor. Two of those offices are vacant, and the term of the member who currently occupies the office of National Secretary expires with this convention. As with the NEC, the members this convention elects to fill these offices must be submitted to the referendum for approval.

These matters should also be referred to a committee of the convention. Guidance on how that committee should proceed will also be found in the “NEC and National Officers” section of my report to the 44th National Convention.

On motion, this section of the National Secretary’s report was referred to an appropriate committee when elected.

The National Secretary read the following section of his report:

International

Under date of May 20, the following was e-mailed to Sergiy Skubenko of Kiev, Ukraine:

Dear Comrade Skubenko:

It is customary for the SLP of America to invite its sister organizations in Australia and Canada to submit reports on their activities for the year for presentation to the National Convention.

Because of the extreme pressures under which the small headquarters staff has been forced to work this year, I am just now turning my attention to putting together my own report for the 45th National Convention, which will convene on Friday, June 1.

I recognize that this is very short notice, but if you can spare the time I would like to invite you to send a report on Ukrainian SLP activities for the year. I know the membership of the SLP in America, Australia and Canada would be pleased and encouraged if you could manage it. If not, I will do my best to put something together from the correspondence we have had over the months.

In hopes of hearing from you, I remain,

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

Similar letters were sent to Comrade Brian Blanchard of Australia and Comrade Douglas Irving, National Secretary of the SLP of Canada, a few days before.

Australia

Comrade Blanchard faxed the following response under date of May 28:

Dear Comrade Bills:

I received your letter this afternoon, Monday, May 28, 2001. I am sorry that you could not get through to me by fax, but I am afraid it doesn't work on automatic. I have to be there to put it on manual and press the start button, only then does it take incoming calls. Also on weekends we go out a lot so I can't have been there when you called. Sorry about that. I was given this old fax machine which I hardly ever use, so that is why I haven't had it fixed, apart from the fact that I don't have the money to spare.

You ask me for a report of my activities for last year. I am happy to try and oblige but there are two problems. Firstly, I just haven't got much to report, certainly nothing very positive and, secondly, I have the same problems trying to write a report as I do trying to write an article.

As for the fax number, and as it is so difficult, maybe it is better to leave it off the list in *The People* and the online directory.

Getting back to a report, the only things I have done are trying to write a few articles for *The People* and phoning the national radio station whenever I can to have some input in their programs. This doesn't amount to much activity at all, but as I am on my own here in this very small place it's about all I can do.

One contact I spent a lot of time on, giving him lots of SLP books to read, is Bill Bartlett. He still gets *The People* and was impressed by De Leon but he told me that he joined the IWW and I think he spends time arguing with them, on the Internet about direct action, etc. He takes De Leon's side but always had a hankering for the IWW and anarchy, strange mixture.

Wherever I go I make an effort to talk to people, in a humorous way, using the class struggle and taking a working-class slant. For example, at the supermarket or hardware shop if I have a heavy bag I say, "Gee it's as heavy as a politician's pay packet or it's like the amount of money I make for the boss each week." I always get a laugh of agreement and I try to spend a moment or two running down the system before I go and most people agree with what I say.

On Thursday this week the ABC [Australian Broadcasting Company] national radio crew will be in Launceston to do a talk back on GE [genetically engineered] food. I will go there and I am sure I will get a chance to have a say, during the afternoon and probably also at 6 p.m. when the program goes to air. The meeting starts at 12 noon and fin-

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ishes at 7 p.m. so I should have plenty of time to bring in a socialist angle on the matter.

The ABC is a big state-owned public broadcasting concern being involved in both national and local radio, as well as television, music, the Internet and the arts. The new CEO, one Jonathan Shier, has been in charge for 14 months and is a political puppet of the present Howard government who has been busy sacking hundreds of workers, dumbing down the broadcasts and generally trying to get staff to support the government line.

A few weeks ago Shier was in Launceston with 150 of his managers for a three-day meeting at a posh hotel here. A group called the Friends of the ABC organized to meet and oppose his sackings, etc. Although not a paid-up member of the Friends of the ABC, they made me their spokesman for the period of his visit. As a result, I was on local radio three times in three days, and had my photo on the front page of the local paper one day and on page four the next day. Although I wasn't able to talk about socialism, I was able to make points about free speech and noninterference in the news by either political party. I carried a sign saying "Keep our ABC and fire Shier." He got so upset with this that he refused to see me, even though I was to lead a four-person delegation to speak to him. I had no interest in meeting him; my only aim was to make what propaganda I could out of his visit.

Canada

Comrade Irving also faxed a reply under date of May 28, as follows:

Dear Comrade Bills:

Thank you for your letter of May 19th, 2001, which I have just received this day, May 28th, 2001. I have been out of town since May 17th, and therefore was not aware of your letter. Please accept my apologies for the delay in answering same.

The membership in the Canadian Party is reduced to six members, all reductions have been through death due in large part to age. There are only two members active in distributing literature and *The People*. I myself receive five copies of *The People* and distribute four of those copies to contacts.

I maintain the National Office as our headquarters and look after the financial affairs of the Party. The Party's finances are still in reasonable shape, though donations are few and far between!

The social climate is still not conducive to promoting a true socialist system!!

On behalf of the members of the Socialist Labor Party of Canada, may I wish you a successful 45th National Convention.

Fraternally yours,
DOUG IRVING
National Secretary

Ukraine

Regrettably, Comrade Skubenko did not answer my e-mail, and unfortunately I did not have time to review the files to “put together” anything that would be of value to the convention or of interest to the membership.

Incidentally, however, I am not surprised that Comrade Skubenko did not reply. Apart from the short notice I was able to give him, his work requires frequent trips to distant parts the country, often for a week or two at a time.¹

On motion, this report was accepted as read and filed.

On motion, the convention adjourned until 3 p.m.

AFTERNOON SESSION, FRIDAY, JUNE 1, 2001

The convention was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

On roll call, all present.

The Sergeant at Arms reported two visitors present.

Introduction of Resolutions

B. Bortnick presented the following:

2A: Draft Resolution on the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict

I. Background

The current armed conflict that erupted between Israelis and Palestinians after the collapse of the Peace Conference at the Wye Estate, which was hosted by President Clinton and attended by Prime Minister of Israel, Ehud Barak, and the Palestinian Authority chairman, Yasir Arafat, portends the unraveling of an imperialist structure that despite its ups and downs has survived intact for the better part of a century.

The extraction of oil from the Middle East is, and remains, the primary concern of U.S. and Western imperialism. The various political arrangements that have emerged with governments throughout the Middle East over many decades have been crafted to support that objective. The material and military support Israel

¹See page 60.

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receives from the U.S. is a legacy of the effort to counter past Soviet imperialist objectives, using the single most stable capitalist state in the region. The Gulf War, its aftermath, and the embargo and military actions against Iraq, the instability aggravated by the emergence of Osama bin Laden, the Iranian/Syrian support of Hezzbolah, the maintenance of a fleet in the Persian Gulf, air bases in Turkey and Saudi Arabia all attest to the commitment to maintain and secure the material objectives of world capitalism.

American foreign policy has sought to sort out “The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly” or those governments that will conform to capitalism’s prime material objectives, those who do so reluctantly and with reservations, and those who won’t. With few exceptions, all states in the Middle East are authoritarian regimes or thinly disguised dictatorships resting upon military force.

Whether authoritarian or bourgeois democracies, unrest among the millions of impoverished working-class oppressed has been largely channeled into nationalistic illusions and religious fanaticism. In none of those states has an expression of true working-class objectives emerged.

This is true among the Israeli working class where an incessant barrage of deceptive propaganda promotes irredentist visions of a biblical Israel rooted in the ancient past in order to justify settlement expansion into so-called Judea and Samaria. Indeed, the concept of nationhood and national boundaries did not exist 2000 years ago in the era of city-states. This fact has proved no impediment to continued encroachment on Palestinian lands in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza with the destruction of homes and a refusal to confront the ethnic cleansings of the past, nor recognition of the right of return of Palestinian refugees to Israel or equivalent restitution. Successive Israeli governments, in conformance to a long-established military plan to divide up the West Bank and Gaza into 64 military districts, have chosen to establish “facts on the ground” while waving the olive branch.

Palestinian resistance has alternated between protests and seething anger gradually becoming more intense in the face of Israeli intransigence and cavalier military actions, the much-heralded ploy of “concessions” made by Ehud Barak at Wye notwithstanding. In response Israel has chosen state terrorism, whether instigated by the Likud, Labor or coalitions of the other fractious parties. With few exceptions all are arrayed against a subjugated population, indiscriminately turning its superior in-

struments of war under thin hypocritical pretexts of protecting Israel against violence. In fact, the current bloody incursions and indiscriminate shootings of Palestinian men, women and children undermined the very premise of the state of Israel as “a haven for the Jews,” considering the death of many Israelis through the years, and have already inflicted enormous damage to the tenuous peace process.

Within this seething ferment stepped that ancient relic Ariel Sharon, resurrected from disgrace, posturing as the “conquering hero” who through his provocations officially launched the “intifada” with the acquiescence of Laborite Barak. This former Israeli general, whose career has been marked by periodic excesses dating back to the 1950s, was removed as defense minister after investigations of the Shatila and Sabra refugee massacres by Christian Falangists allied with Israel during the war with Lebanon.

As daily reports of reciprocal attacks and reprisals roll in, concern within the Bush administration has taken the form of warnings to both sides and admonitions that “violence must stop,” a demand that the Israeli government tirelessly drums. As one observer noted, had this been the criterion for peace in Vietnam, that war would still be ongoing. Additionally, presidential invitations to White House conferences and dispatching Secretary of State Colin Powell to test the waters within Arab capitals among “The Good,” underscored U.S. capitalism’s concern. The Bush administration’s ambivalence over inviting Arafat illuminates the problem.

This has placed the U.S. in a difficult situation—they are apprehensive that the entire Middle East may come unglued if Chairman Arafat is not invited, while worrying that his media-cast role as official whipping boy for starting the violence will lead to protests in the U.S. That effect might further inflame Arab nationalism, possibly bringing down or changing policies of the so-called “moderate Arab countries,” and increase support for Saddam Hussein, further driving a wedge in the support that the moderates have thus far reluctantly given.

As *The Other Israel* (newsletter of the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace) noted, “The Bush administration’s declared priority in the region is to reestablish the anti-Saddam coalition. While not having any special liking for Arafat, Bush and his advisers are well-aware that continued Israeli brutality towards the Palestinians could play into the hands of Saddam Hussein by rousing the support of Arab masses and threatening the stability of the

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fragile pro-Western regimes.” (p. 3, March 2001)

In the final analysis, this is the threat that haunts capitalist interests and their political agents. Popular uprisings against oppressive Arab regimes, whether in the guise of religious or nationalist garb, threaten oil profits.

II. Resolutions

Whereas the political subjugation of a population expressing aspirations and a desire to establish their national identity is inimical and an impediment to international working-class unity, the Socialist Labor Party of America condemns the continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza by Israel and the brutal military force used to insure its continued dominion over those areas; and

Whereas the Israeli and Palestinian working classes face mutual oppression under the capitalist system, whether Palestinian or Israeli, the Socialist Labor Party of America calls upon them to establish mutual connections to oppose their common class enemy; and

Whereas the Socialist Labor Party of America’s policy statement of May 1978 remains a valid analysis, we affirm support of that original statement.

Fraternally submitted
BERNARD BORTNICK
Delegate, Nat’l Member-at-Large

On motion, the resolution was referred to an appropriate committee when elected.

J.P. Catusco presented the following resolutions:

2B: Resolution on Overturning the 1920 Anti-IWW Ruling

1) Whereas since 1976 the SLP has not only removed the ruling forbidding its members to join procapitalist trade unions but has also encouraged its members to be as active as possible within those same procapitalist trade unions; and

2) Whereas there is only one economic organization in the United States which has declared itself to be anticapitalist; and

3) Whereas that same organization is democratically structured, industrially organized and worker run in ways in which none of the procapitalist AFL-CIO unions are; and

4) Whereas that same organization is the only one existing in the United States today which comes close in any way to representing the SLP’s concept of Socialist Industrial Unionism; and

5) Whereas the SLP contributed a substantial amount of its physical, financial and intellectual resources towards the founding of that organization in 1905 and its development through 1908.

Be it resolved, That this convention overturn the 1920 ruling which forbids members of the SLP from also being members of the Industrial Workers of the World; or if it is not in the power of this convention to do so that the matter be submitted to a general vote of the membership.

Fraternally submitted,
JOHN-PAUL CATUSCO
Delegate, Section New York City

On motion, the resolution was referred to an appropriate committee when elected.

2C: Resolution for a New Booklet Entitled “Why I Joined the SLP”

1) Whereas the recruitment of new members is of primary importance towards increasing the influence and effect of the SLP; and

2) Whereas the current literature published by the SLP relating to membership recruitment deals with that issue in a well-stated but more business-like and less personal nature; and

3) Whereas the most powerful asset which the SLP possesses are the diverse group of workers who fill its ranks.

Be it resolved, That the SLP shall publish a booklet consisting of a series of short personal essays from the membership entitled “Why I Joined the SLP.”

Fraternally submitted,
JOHN-PAUL CATUSCO
Delegate, Section New York City

On motion, the resolution was referred to an appropriate committee when elected.

2D: Resolution on Language Use in *The People*

1) Whereas the SLP being made up entirely of working people, the majority of whom may have at one or more times in their lives been involuntarily unemployed or destitute; and

2) Whereas the main group of people who we are trying to reach through our agitation are also working people who may have simi-

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lar personal histories of unemployment; and

3) Whereas as far as Marxists should be concerned there is only one proletariat, which although it may be divided ideologically is united both socially and economically as the working class; and

4) Whereas it is not the purpose of the SLP to divide the working class any further on the false lines on which the capitalist class already divides it.

Be it resolved, That the phrase “slum proletariat” and any variation such as “slum proletarian” are to be consigned by the SLP to the lexical dustbin of history, and that such terms are not to appear in *The People* as a current description of any organization made up of our fellow workers with whom the SLP may theoretically disagree with.

Fraternally submitted,
JOHN-PAUL CATUSCO
Delegate, Section New York City

A motion to refer the resolution to an appropriate committee when elected was lost.

C. Miller presented the following:

2E: Resolution for Purchasing Air Time on WBCQ, a Short-wave Broadcast Station Located in Monticello, Maine

1) Whereas the spreading of the program and principles of the SLP to the widest possible audience is of utmost importance; and

2) Whereas there are many who do not have access to the Internet or an outlet for *The People* but may own or have access to a shortwave receiver; and

3) Whereas reaching an international audience who may have never been exposed to the SLP or its program would be of great benefit to the advancement of Marxism-De Leonism around the world.

Be it resolved, That the SLP should purchase air time on WBCQ and produce a radio program of at least a half-hour on a weekly basis in order to spread the principles and program of the SLP to the largest possible audience both via radio and the Internet since WBCQ also broadcasts using that medium. Since WBCQ operates on shortwave frequencies the coverage area extends over large portions of the earth, including all of the U.S., Eastern Canada, the Caribbean, Central and South America and parts of Europe. This

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would, of course, depend on propagation conditions and time of year.

Fraternally submitted
CARL C. MILLER JR.
Delegate, Nat'l Member-at-Large

On motion, the resolution was referred to an appropriate committee when elected.

On motion, the convention adjourned until 6 p.m.

EVENING SESSION, FRIDAY, JUNE 1, 2001

The convention was called to order at 6:08 p.m.

On roll call, all present.

The Sergeant at Arms reported three visitors present.

Discussion of Sections of the National Secretary's Report

Discussion on the section "National Headquarters" began at 6:09 p.m. and ended at 6:25 p.m.

Discussion on the section "Party Finances" began at 6:25 p.m. and ended at 6:40 p.m.

A five-minute recess was declared. Reconvened at 6:45 p.m.

Discussion on the section "Editorial Matters" began at 6:45 p.m. and ended at 7:25 p.m.

Discussion on the section "State of Organization" began at 7:25 p.m. and ended at 7:28 p.m.

Discussion on the section "General Activities" began at 7:28 p.m. and ended at 7:48 p.m.

On motion, the convention recessed for 10 minutes at 7:50 p.m. Reconvened at 8 p.m.

Discussion on the section "Party Press and Literature" began at 8 p.m. and ended at 8:17 p.m. Discussion on the section "The SLP and the Internet" began at 8:17 p.m. and ended at 8:37 p.m.

Discussion on the section "NEC and National Officers" began at 8:37 p.m. and ended at 8:40 p.m.

On motion, the convention adjourned until 9 a.m., Saturday, June 2.

MORNING SESSION, SATURDAY, JUNE 2, 2001

The convention was called to order at 9:05 a.m.

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On roll call, all present.

On motion, the minutes of Friday's sessions were approved as read.

The Sergeant at Arms reported two visitors present.

Determination of Committees

A motion was passed to constitute two committees as follows: Committee on Organization and Committee on Headquarters and Finance. On motion, the convention went into informal consideration. A substitute motion was adopted to constitute three committees as follows: Committee on Organization, Committee on Headquarters and Finance, and Committee on Resolutions.

Referring Matters to Committee

At 9:25 a.m., a motion was passed to recess for five minutes. Re-convened at 9:40 a.m.

On motion, the following sections of the National Secretary's report were referred to the Committee on Organization: "SLP and the Internet," "Party Press and Literature," "General Activities" and "State of Organization."

On motion, the following sections of the National Secretary's report were referred to the Committee on Headquarters and Finance: "Editorial Matters," "NEC and National Officers," "Party Finances" and "National Headquarters."

On motion, all resolutions were referred to the Committee on Resolutions.

Election of Committees

On motion, the Committee on Organization is to consist of four.

A motion was made and seconded that the Committee on Headquarters and Finance consist of four. An amendment that the committee consist of three was adopted. The motion as amended was passed.

On motion, the Committee on Resolutions is to consist of three.

At 9:50 a.m., a motion was passed to recess for five minutes. Re-convened at 9:55 a.m.

Committee on Organization: C. Camacho, C. Miller, J. Blessington and R. Cassin were nominated. On motion, these four were elected to constitute the committee.

Committee on Headquarters and Finance: B. Bortnick, J. Groelke and R. Burns were nominated. There being no further

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nominations, the Chair declared nominations closed. A motion was passed to reopen nominations. A hand count of the previous vote was requested. A subsequent hand count showed one in favor, eight against reopening nominations.

The Chair proceeded to call for a hand vote to elect the Committee on Headquarters and Finance with the following results: J. Groelke–8, B. Bortnick–9, R. Burns–9. The Chair declared J. Groelke, B. Bortnick and R. Burns elected.

Committee on Resolutions: J.P. Catusco, S. Raper and K. Boettcher were nominated. There being no objections, the Chair declared these three to constitute the committee.

At 10:20 a.m., a motion was passed to recess for one hour. Reconvened at 11:30 a.m.

Reports of Committees

Committee on Organization: C. Camacho reported the committee has gotten a sense of the work before it and suggested the convention reconvene later in the day.

Committee on Headquarters and Finance: B. Bortnick reported the committee requires six to seven hours to develop reports and stated it would serve no purpose to reconvene again today.

Committee on Resolutions: K. Boettcher reported the committee requires four to six hours to develop a report and would not benefit from reconvening again today.

At 11:35 a.m., a motion was passed to adjourn until 9 a.m., Sunday, June 3.

MORNING SESSION, SUNDAY, JUNE 3, 2001

The convention was called to order at 9:06 a.m.

On roll call, all present.

The Sergeant at Arms reported three visitors present.

On motion, the minutes of Saturday's session were approved as read.

Reports of Committees

Committee on Organization: C. Camacho reported progress.

Committee on Headquarters and Finance

B. Bortnick presented the following report:

Report on Party Finances

We have read and reread the National Secretary's report, listened and taken note of the commentary made on the convention floor, and further discussed the sobering prospects brought to our attention.

There is little point in reiterating these facts other than to say we concur in the National Secretary's comments.

Among other debilitating factors, the Party's basis is rapidly shifting from a Party of sections to one of members-at-large, which in turn has had direct ramifications on the Party's methods of financial support. Whereas in the past we depended heavily upon section and subdivision fundraisers to offset deficits, we are more and more depending upon individual contributions from isolated members while still encouraging continued section fundraising efforts and, indeed, increasing section members.

The SLP Sustainer Fund, the target of fundraising efforts of this convention, has become an effective focus of fundraising activities. We therefore support the call for members to become regular contributors if they have not already done so. For those who are already contributing, we urge consideration be given to increasing those amounts.

We also concur in the National Secretary's intent to prepare a mailer to members and sympathizers embodying the various methods of obtaining increased financial support to the Party relative to the 45th National Convention Banquet.

Finally we take this occasion to thank members and sympathizers for the generous contributions they have made and again to those who have made exceptional contributions.

Fraternally submitted,
BERNARD BORTNICK, Chair
ROBERT BURNS, JOE GROELKE
Committee on Headquarters and Finance

On motion, the report was adopted.

Committee on Resolutions: K. Boettcher reported progress.

New Business

The National Secretary reported that two resolutions from a national member-at-large were received by the National Office. The Chair read the resolutions as follows:

Resolution 3-A

Issue a membership list by state and country. Only those members and sympathizers that give their permission would be listed.

Fraternally submitted,
JOSEPH J. FRANK
National Member-at-Large

On motion, the resolution was referred to the Committee on Resolutions.

Resolution 3-B

Give seminars in high schools and colleges with their permission. Discuss the world's problems and the SLP solution.

Fraternally submitted,
JOSEPH J. FRANK
National Member-at-Large

On motion, the resolution was referred to the Committee on Resolutions.

The National Secretary reported an e-mail dated June 1 had been received from S. Skubenko of the SLP of Ukraine.

A motion to hear the report was passed.

The National Secretary proceeded to read the following:

Dear Comrade Bills,

Sorry for delay with report which is connected with the fact that our access to Internet still is temporary. We hope that the report is not too late. Of course, SLPU will be proud if you'll add the information about us on your Web site as you wrote to us and inform about our e-mail and mailing addresses. Please feel free to do it in the way you consider as optimal. Below is the attempt of report for 2001.

During 2001 we continue our job to propaganda of Marxism-De Leonism ideas to the workers and students. We distributed five different forms of leaflets:

- Leaflet with the scheme of work of Socialist Industrial Unionism, which was taken from *The People* (75 copies were made in February 2001);
- Leaflet for Kiev enterprise Leninskaya Kuznya with calling to create mass independent De Leonist trade union (45 copies were made in February 2001);
- Leaflet with explanation of our positions concerning fighting of two bourgeois clans in Ukraine (80 copies were made in March 2001);
- Leaflet based on the De Leon's speech "What the Strike Means?"

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basing on materials you sent us on Ukrainian languages (25 copies were made in April 2001);

- May Day leaflet (50 copies were made in April 2001).

We conducted our Marxist-De Leonist propaganda by organizing picketlines with our banners and distributing the leaflets on the following Kiev enterprises: Leninskaya Kuznya, Slavutich, Tochmashpribor, Tyre Plant (Bila Tserkva, Kiev region), Aviant, Electronmach, Chervona Zirka, Rosinka.

We are also working with the students of Shevchenko University, Polytechnic University, Civil Aviation University and Agrarian University.

As a result we organized permanent seminars for researching of heritage of Daniel De Leon for our contacts amongst workers and students, with the help of which we already recruited new members of our Party and have a lot very perspective contacts.

It's necessary to note that we sometimes should repel the provocations of Bogdan Nikolenko's organization—so-called New Union Party of Ukraine (NUPU). For example, when it becomes known that we are organizing the picket line in the checkpoint of Rosinka enterprise, Nikolenko and his abettor came with their provocative banners "For real Marxism-De Leonism" and "Down with bureaucrats from SLPU." It made our job harder, because workers could think that De Leonist movement is splitted, even despite the fact that we had nine comrades against two NUPU members. We should to banish the provocateurs from the checkpoint. But provocations continue, including those in Internet.

We created the filing of *The People*, which is keeping at my flat and each our member or contact may take and read it in any time as well as another materials on Russian, Ukrainian and English languages.

We regularly took part in the actions, which took place as fighting between bourgeois clans with our De Leonist propaganda, where we explained that workers have no side in this struggle and only Marxism-De Leonism is the solution.

At the moment we have 11 members of SLPU and a lot of supporters and contacts amongst workers and students. We organized regular monthly payment to the Party pledge, as it was adopted in the statute. At the moment our pledge includes 24 USD (the low figure is explained by extremely low income of majority SLPU members, especially students and unemployed). This figure, however, is enough for relatively small number of copies of leaflet, but on the permanent base. It's very important that we have access to computer and Internet at my workplace, secretly from the boss. It's the best option we may have at the moment.

Sorry again for late reply. I'm looking forward to hear from you.

Fraternally yours,
SERGIY SKUBENKO
National Secretary

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On motion, the report was referred to the Committee on Organization.

On motion, the convention adjourned until 2 p.m.

AFTERNOON SESSION, SUNDAY, JUNE 3, 2001

The convention was called to order at 2:17 p.m.

On roll call, all present.

The Sergeant at Arms reported four visitors present.

Reports of Committees

Committee on Organization

C. Camacho presented the following reports:

Report on State of Organization

This committee has reviewed that section of the National Secretary's report dealing with "State of Organization." That report indicates a decrease in the membership, a decrease in sections and an increase in the number of members-at-large in comparison with section members.

This committee recognizes and affirms that the section is the preferred unit or subdivision of the Party, that individual members of the Party are obliged to strive to form sections in the firm understanding that the section is the best vehicle from which to conduct the Party's agitation and education.

To this end, and in keeping with Article III, Section 5 of the Constitution, this committee makes the following recommendation:

Wherever possible, members living in a particular locality where no section exists or in a state in which there is a section but where that section is too far, should establish a network of communication for the purpose of initiating and/or coordinating SLP activity with the objective of creating a section. As specified in Article III, Section 5 of the Constitution of the Socialist Labor Party, two or more members living in a locality "shall...constitute themselves a committee to work under the direction of the subdivision—Section or NEC—having jurisdiction over them." The members of that committee should use whatever means of communication is available to them but should vigorously explore the possibility of obtaining and using e-mail, Internet chat, teleconferencing or any combi-

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nation of those mediums to create this networked committee because they are the latest, fastest and most efficient means presently available for collective communications.

By way of additional information provided to this committee it is noted that at least one section underreported the number of business meetings it held. This is unfortunate as it prevents the National Office from submitting a thorough report and this convention from accurately assessing the strengths and weakness of the Party's sections. Therefore, this committee urges the membership to be more diligent in submitting their reports to the National Office on a regular basis.

Fraternally submitted,
CHRIS CAMACHO, Chair
JACK BLESSINGTON, RICHARD CASSIN
CARL C. MILLER JR.

A motion to adopt the report was not concurred in. A motion to rescind the preceding motion was adopted. On motion, the report was referred back to committee.

Report on General Activities

After carefully examining that section of the National Secretary's report dealing with "General Activities," this committee reaffirms that members should continue to give *The People* the widest possible circulation and should take advantage of every opportunity to distribute leaflets and other Party literature. Experience shows that this is the most productive and effective means of bringing the Party's principles and program to those who may not have been exposed to them previously.

The "General Activities" report provides useful information on the Party's agitational efforts.

Sections and members-at-large should make every effort to hold discussion meetings on a regular basis in order to bring together groups of workers who have an interest in the SLP.

It is with great pleasure that this committee notes that part of the National Secretary's report that mentions veteran member Comrade Louis Fisher's public television interview. Comrade Fisher's perseverance is an example of the stuff of which SLP men and women are made. Comrade Fisher is an example to be emulated.

In connection to e-mail contacts and responses received by the

National Office mentioned in the National Secretary's report, and the potential of this medium to disseminate the Party's Marxist-De Leonist program, this committee offers the following recommendations:

1. That members and friends of the SLP who are already subscribed or thinking of subscribing to the electronic version of *The People* wherever possible seek out appropriate Internet forums in which to post or circulate articles and leaflets in either text or HTML formats.

2. That active members and friends of the SLP who dedicate their e-mail communications to SLP activity on the Internet insert a signature file at the bottom of their letters advertising the SLP Web site and include a URL link, facilitating to the reader navigation into our site.

Fraternally submitted,
CHRIS CAMACHO, Chair
JACK BLESSINGTON, RICHARD CASSIN
CARL C. MILLER JR.
Committee on Organization

A motion was made to adopt the report. A substitute motion to refer the report back to the committee was adopted.

Committee on Headquarters and Finance

B. Bortnick presented the following reports:

Report on National Headquarters

The National Secretary's report clearly and systematically iterates the issues confronting our National Headquarters staff.

We are keenly aware of the precarious situation we are confronting in terms of dwindling human resources, and the increased stress placed upon the shoulders of Comrade Donna Bills and the National Secretary.

At the same time we recognize the critical support that continues to be made by headquarters members Comrades Gunderson and Boettcher, the latter who is now on a volunteer basis, and accordingly express our appreciation.

We belatedly concur in the decisions made by the National Secretary in obtaining the latest headquarters premises. Considering the cost of rentals in the Bay Area this was an exceptional find, and along with other cost-cutting measures it was a great relief to

have found it.

In a similar vein, the decision to make the move with help of the three N.O. comrades only deserves our applause, appreciation and thanks.

These should all be recognized as successes in keeping the Party afloat despite all odds. Nonetheless, it is apparent we cannot continue on a precarious path indefinitely.

It has often been said that the SLP is a “volunteer” organization. We concur, and now is the time for those members who are able, to volunteer. In this regard we recommend that consideration be given to enlarging editorial contributions from the field noted in the report on “Editorial Matters.”

We also recommend that those members capable of responding to questions received over the Internet make their names known to the National Office and the NEC with a view to constituting a standing committee to respond to Internet questions. The guidelines for such a committee should be addressed by the NEC.

These two measures could help relieve some of the pressures on the N.O. staff.

In recognition of the enormous contribution made to the socialist movement and the Party by our late Comrade Nathan Karp, we recommend that the tributes to him carried in *The People* of July 2000 be published in the proceedings of this National Convention report.

Fraternally submitted,
BERNARD BORTNICK, Chair
ROBERT BURNS, JOE GROELKE
Committee on Headquarters and Finance

A motion was made to adopt the report. At 2:55 p.m. a motion was passed to recess for five minutes. Reconvened at 3 p.m. On motion, the report was referred back to committee.

Report on Editorial Matters

In studying the report on “Editorial Matters,” we have an updated understanding of the ongoing problems and issues which the Acting Editor, Comrade Robert Bills, has experienced.

These lie primarily in having sufficient copy whose quality and content are suitable for use in *The People*, as well as a problem with contributors following the guidelines that have been sent to prospective writers.

45TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

We are fortunate in having an Acting Editor who is a stickler for maintaining a high standard for *The People*. His goal is a paper that reflects a profound understanding of Marxism-De Leonism and refuses to allow the contents of our journal from sinking to the mundane level that characterizes the contents of a lot of so-called socialist papers. For us it is not just sufficient to publish a Marxist-De Leonist paper but one that educates our class.

This said, and lacking a permanent Editor, it is incumbent that we renew our efforts to obtain sufficient copy from contributors in an effort to relieve the burden on Comrade Robert Bills.

Several ways of doing this have been suggested, including renewing a second Writers Conference in accordance with the NEC draft letter of May 14, 2000. Another approach suggested a conference call to prospective and current contributors. Yet another suggestion proposed a video conference that could be staged at our local Kinko's that provides facilities for that purpose.

Perhaps the most viable approach, and the one we recommend considering our limited money resources, is to convene a Writers Conference for a selected and targeted group of comrades. They could be identified and polled regarding prospective commitments to write on a regular basis, and asked to attend a session at the National Office. Those comrades that are already regular correspondents need not attend and would be sent an appropriate letter conveying appreciation for past efforts and to continue their good work.

Fraternally submitted,
BERNARD BORTNICK, Chair
ROBERT BURNS, JOE GROELKE
Committee on Headquarters and Finance

A motion was made to adopt the report. On motion, the report was referred back to committee.

Committee on Resolutions

K. Boettcher presented the following reports:

Re Resolution 3-A

The Resolutions Committee has reviewed and discussed the resolution and found that the Socialist Labor Party already has such a list. This list is in *The People* as well as on the SLP official Web site and contains the names of those members who have given

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their permission to be listed. The Resolutions Committee does wish to encourage more members of the SLP to sign on to these lists as points of contact.

However, since this list is already in existence this committee does not concur.

Fraternally submitted,
KEN BOETTCHEr, Chair
JOHN-PAUL CATUSCO, STEPHEN RAPER
Committee on Resolutions

On motion, the report was adopted.

Re Resolution 3-B

The Resolutions Committee has reviewed the proposal and determined that this resolution simply reiterates a long-standing Party practice and adopting it would not add anything new. Therefore the committee does not concur.

Fraternally submitted,
KEN BOETTCHEr, Chair
JOHN-PAUL CATUSCO, STEPHEN RAPER
Committee on Resolutions

On motion, the report was adopted.

Re Resolution on Overturning the 1920 Anti-IWW Ruling

This committee has reviewed past SLP convention reports, resolutions, the Handbook on Intervention and Union Work, as well as recent articles and editorials pertaining to the historic relations between the SLP and the IWW. The research has shown that a 1978 resolution entitled “seeking allies,” which includes the IWW as a possible ally for actual revolutionary agitation, was passed and is still in effect. We find that this resolution is in the same spirit as the one which is before us now.

Therefore this committee does not concur in Comrade Catusco’s resolution. However, it recommends that in the spirit of the resolution and in keeping with the spirit of the resolution on “seeking allies” that the matter of seeking allies be referred to the NEC for consideration and/or procedures for building appropriate organizational alliances, specifically the possibility [of] an alliance with the IWW.

Fraternally submitted,

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KEN BOETTCHER, Chair
JOHN-PAUL CATUSCO, STEPHEN RAPER
Committee on Resolutions

A motion to adopt the report. On motion, the report was referred back to committee.

Re Resolution for Purchasing Air Time on WBCQ

Even though Comrade Carl Miller of Houston, Tex., has volunteered his time and services to produce a regular weekly radio program, adopting the resolution creates certain editorial, financial and even organizational issues which go beyond the scope of this committee.

The resolution may have merit if the programs could be produced on a monthly basis, with readings from *The People* as content and with adequate oversight. Therefore this committee does not concur in the resolution but recommends that it be referred to the NEC.

Fraternally submitted,
KEN BOETTCHER, Chair
JOHN-PAUL CATUSCO, STEPHEN RAPER
Committee on Resolutions

On motion, the report was adopted.

**Re Resolution for a New Booklet Entitled
“Why I Joined the SLP”**

This committee has reviewed the proposal and does not concur. The committee believes that the idea has merit but recognizes that such a project should be left to the oversight of the NEC. Therefore the committee moves to refer the resolution to the NEC.

Fraternally submitted,
KEN BOETTCHER, Chair
JOHN-PAUL CATUSCO, STEPHEN RAPER
Committee on Resolutions

On motion, the report was adopted.

A motion to recess for one hour was not concurred in. On motion, the convention adjourned until 9 a.m., Monday, June 4.

MORNING SESSION, MONDAY, JUNE 4, 2001

The convention was called to order at 9:05 a.m.

On roll call, all present.

The Sergeant at Arms reported two visitors present.

On motion, the minutes of Sunday's sessions were approved as read.

Reports of Committees

Committee on Organization: C. Camacho reported progress.

Committee on Headquarters and Finance

B. Bortnick presented the following reports:

Report on National Headquarters

The National Secretary's report clearly and systematically iterates the issues confronting our National Headquarters staff.

We are keenly aware of the precarious situation we are confronting in terms of dwindling human resources, and the increased stress placed upon the shoulders of Comrade Donna Bills and the National Secretary.

At the same time we recognize the critical support that continues to be made by ~~headquarters members~~ Comrades Gunderson and Boettcher, the latter ~~who is~~ now on a volunteer basis and, accordingly, express our appreciation.

We concur in the decisions made by the National Secretary in obtaining the latest headquarters premises. Considering the cost of rentals in the Bay Area, this was an exceptional find and, along with other cost-cutting measures, it was a great relief to have found it.

In a similar vein, the decision to make the move with the help of the three N.O. comrades only deserves our applause, appreciation and thanks.

These should all be recognized as successes in keeping the Party afloat despite all odds. Nonetheless, it is apparent we cannot continue on a precarious path indefinitely.

It has often been said that the SLP is a "volunteer" organization. We concur, and now is the time for those members who are able to volunteer. In this regard it is imperative that consideration be given to enlarging editorial contributions from the field as noted in

the report on “Editorial Matters.”

We recommend that the NEC establish a standing committee of members with access to the Internet that would be willing to respond to questions about the SLP. The identification of appropriate members, guidelines and procedures for establishing such a committee shall be at the discretion of the NEC.

These two measures could help relieve some of the pressures on the N.O. staff.

In recognition of the enormous contribution made to the socialist movement and the Party by our late Comrade Nathan Karp, we recommend that the tributes to him carried in *The People* of July 2000 be published in the proceedings of this National Convention report.

Fraternally submitted,
BERNARD BORTNICK, Chair
ROBERT BURNS, JOE GROELKE
Committee on Headquarters and Finance

A motion to adopt the report was made. An amendment to strike the words “headquarters members” and “who is” in the third paragraph was passed. On motion, the report as amended was adopted.

Report on Editorial Matters

In studying the report on “Editorial Matters,” we have an updated understanding of the ongoing problems and issues which the Acting Editor, Comrade Robert Bills, has experienced.

These lie primarily in having sufficient copy whose quality and content are suitable for use in *The People*, as well as a problem with contributors following the guidelines that have been sent to prospective writers.

We are fortunate that Comrade Robert Bills is a stickler for maintaining a high standard for *The People*. His goal is a paper that reflects a profound understanding of Marxism-De Leonism and refuses to allow the contents of our journal to sink to the mundane level that characterizes a lot of so-called socialist papers. For us it is not just sufficient to publish a Marxist-De Leonist paper but one that educates our class.

This said, and lacking a permanent Editor, it is incumbent that we renew our efforts to obtain sufficient copy from contributors in an effort to relieve the burden on Comrade Bills.

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Several ways of doing this have been suggested, including renewing a second Writers Conference in accordance with the NEC draft letter of May 14, 2000. Another approach suggested a conference call to prospective and current contributors. Yet another suggestion proposed a video conference that could be staged at our local Kinko's that provides facilities for that purpose.

The most viable approach, and the one we recommend considering our limited money resources, is to convene a Writers Conference for a selected and targeted group of comrades. Based upon the work that has already been done by the NEC, a new effort should be initiated by our executive body to identify, poll and obtain commitments by prospective correspondents to attend a Writers Conference at the National Office.

Qualifications for attendance are at the discretion of the NEC but should include a binding commitment to contribute copy to *The People* on a regular basis. Those comrades that are already regular correspondents need not attend and could be sent updated information and an appropriate letter conveying appreciation for past efforts and to continue their good work.

Fraternally submitted,
BERNARD BORTNICK, Chair
ROBERT BURNS, JOE GROELKE
Committee on Headquarters and Finance

A motion to adopt the report was made. An amendment to strike the words "Marxist-De Leonist" in the last sentence of the third paragraph was passed. On motion, the report as amended was adopted.

NEC and National Officers

Your committee recommends the following members as nominees for the National Executive Committee:

1. Kenneth Boettcher
2. Bruce Cozzini
3. Michael R. Mahoney
4. Diane Secor
5. Stephen Raper
6. Chris Camacho
7. Carl Miller

All seven of these members have expressed a willingness to serve in this capacity.

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As for the three national officers, Comrade Robert Bills has indicated his willingness to continue as National Secretary for the next term.

However, there are no prospective candidates that have been brought to our attention willing to serve as Editor of *The People* nor that of Financial Secretary.

Fraternally submitted,
BERNARD BORTNICK, Chair
ROBERT BURNS, JOE GROELKE
Committee on Headquarters and Finance

A motion to adopt the report. was seconded On motion, the report was referred back to committee.

Mileage Committee

B. Bortnick presented the following report:

Your committee reports that the delegates listed below have reported that their mileage in attending the NEC Session is as follows:

<i>Section</i>	<i>Delegates</i>	<i>Amount</i>
S.F. Bay Area	Ken Boettcher	\$ 0
New York City	John-Paul Catusco	42.50
Cleveland	Robert Burns	0
Portland	Joe Groelke	240.00
Philadelphia	Jack Blessington	0
Nat'l Mbrs-at-Large	Bernard Bortnick	0
	Chris Camacho	402.50
	Richard Cassin	246.50
	Carl C. Miller Jr.	280.00
	Stephen Raper	362.50
Robert Bills, Nat'l Sec'y		0

In keeping with this report, your committee recommends that the members be paid the amounts due them, the total being \$1,574.00.

Fraternally submitted,
BERNARD BORTNICK, Chair
ROBERT BURNS
Mileage Committee

On motion, the report was adopted. On motion, the convention extended its thanks to those delegates who were able to travel to

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the convention at no cost to the Party.

Committee on Resolutions

K. Boettcher presented the following report:

**Re Resolution on Overturning the 1920 Anti-IWW ruling
Prohibition Against Dual Membership in the SLP and the
IWW**

This committee has reviewed past SLP convention reports, resolutions, the Handbook on Intervention and Union Work, as well as recent articles and editorials pertaining to the historic relations between the SLP and the IWW. The research has shown that a 1978 resolution entitled “seeking allies,” which includes the IWW as a possible ally for actual revolutionary agitation, was passed and is still in effect. We find that this resolution is in the same spirit as the one which is before us now.

Therefore, the committee recommends that Comrade Catusco’s resolution be referred to the NEC for further investigation in the spirit of the original 1978 resolution, and that the NEC’s recommendations, if any, be reported in the published proceedings of that body.

Fraternally submitted,
KEN BOETTCHER, Chair
JOHN-PAUL CATUSCO, STEPHEN RAPER
Committee on Resolutions

A motion to adopt the report was seconded. An amendment to strike the words “anti-IWW” in the title and insert “Prohibition Against Dual Membership in the SLP and the IWW” was passed. On motion, the report as amended was adopted.

The Chair reminded the convention of its responsibility to draft a National Platform. On motion the matter was referred to the Committee on Headquarters and Finance.

At 9:55 a.m., a motion was passed to recess for one hour.

*

The convention was called to order at 11:10 a.m.

On roll call, all present.

The Sergeant at Arms reported two visitors present.

Reports of Committees

Committee on Organization

C. Camacho presented the following report:

Report on the SLP and the Internet

This committee has studied and discussed that part of the National Secretary's report titled "SLP and the Internet." Regrettably, this committee is unprepared to develop and offer any permanent guidelines for the conduct of Internet activity and communications, and urges the NEC to take up this matter at the earliest possible date.

This committee acknowledges the potential usefulness of the Houston Internet discussion list and other possible future lists as SLP activities. However, in view of their potential to attract disrupters and consume an inordinate amount of time that could be spent on more productive face-to-face local activities, we do not feel that discussion list and chat room activities should be emphasized.

Also, the committee endorses and recognizes the "Socialist Labor Party—Houston, Tex., Committee" Web site, the SLPNYC Web site (Section New York City), and Portland, Ore., section of the Socialist Labor Party Web site as official Web sites of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

We recommend that the NEC consider the following suggested guidelines for sections and members using the Internet to conduct Party activities:

1. That each site dedicated as a discussion forum, such as the Houston Internet discussion list, prepare in consultation with the NEC or National Office and make available on their site a FAQ (frequently asked questions) document defining its purpose, parameters and rules of participation.

2. That copies of login names and passwords used by the sites' administrators to make changes and deletions be placed on file with the N.O. and/or section organizer in the event that it be necessary for the NEC or the organizer to override the administrator's access and control of that site, organizer and/or N.O. to be alerted of any changes in login names and/or passwords.

3. That ownership and control of e-mail groups, discussion lists, chat rooms and Web sites dedicated to SLP propaganda or activity must rest with the section and/or the NEC.

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4. Wherever possible the section and/or NEC shall review the content of SLP Web sites and recommend changes where necessary.

5. A link to the national Web site shall be prominently displayed.

6. All e-mail communications relating to SLP matters shall have a copy directed to the N.O. by placing the N.O. e-mail address in the courtesy copy "cc:" window of the outgoing message. Members are also encouraged to place a link leading to the SLP Web site in the signature portion of their e-mail messages in order to promote the Web site to interested recipients.

Fraternally submitted,
CHRIS CAMACHO, Chair
JACK BLESSINGTON, RICHARD CASSIN
CARL C. MILLER JR.
Committee on Organization

A motion to adopt the report was made. On motion, the report was referred back to committee.

Committee on Headquarters and Finance: B. Bortnick reported progress.

Committee on Resolutions

K. Boettcher presented the following report:

Re Resolution on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

This committee has reviewed the proposed statement on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Party's 1978 statement on the Middle East crisis and recent articles and editorials on the subject and recommends that the convention adopt the following revised version of the statement:

The 45th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party unequivocally condemns the ongoing U.S. imperialist manipulation of events and alliances in the Middle East.

The goal of that manipulation is continued U.S. capitalist-class control over the production and distribution of oil. The crass material interests that lie behind U.S. imperialism's need for that control produced the economic and social conditions that fueled the recent renewal of armed conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. They also make peace a virtual impossibility in the Middle East and increase the risk of global conflagration.

Ensuring the uninterrupted flow of oil from the Middle East is a primary concern of U.S. imperialism, which remains heavily dependent upon imported oil to run domestic industry and power its empire. The political arrangements made in past decades with governments throughout the Middle East, and which are being cultivated by Colin Powell and the Bush administration, all support that objective.

The material and military support Israel receives from the United States government is an attempt to bolster a beachhead for U.S. capital and Western imperialism in the region. This beachhead was established not only to promote capitalist and imperialist economic interests, but also to counter the imperialist objectives of what was then the Soviet Union.

The Gulf War and its aftermath, the embargo and continued military actions against Iraq, the maintenance of a fleet in the Persian Gulf, air bases in Turkey and Saudi Arabia, and the Clinton and Bush administrations' overtures to the ruling classes of nearby African countries all attest to the ongoing commitment of the U.S. ruling class to maintain and secure their material objectives.

American foreign policy sorts out those governments that will conform to capitalism's material objectives, those who do so reluctantly, and those who won't. Military and other economic and strategic aid flows to those who toe the line for U.S. capital, regardless of whether the governments involved are nominally democratic, as in the case of Israel, or autocratic regimes like virtually every other nation in the region.

Unrest among the millions of impoverished working-class oppressed in every country in the Middle East has been largely channeled into nationalistic illusions and religious fanaticism. In none of those states has an expression of true working-class interests emerged.

Among the Israeli working class, an incessant barrage of deceptive propaganda promotes reactionary, irredentist visions of an Israel rooted in the biblical past to "justify" settlement expansion and continued encroachment on Palestinian lands in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza. That propaganda promotes the destruction of Palestinian homes and a refusal to confront past ethnic cleansings by the Israeli state. It refuses to recognize the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes, or to other restitution.

Palestinian resistance and anger have become more intense in

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the face of Israeli intransigence and cavalier use of military force. Israel's response to Palestinian terrorism has been state terrorism, carried out under the governments of the Likud, Labor and coalitions of other parties. With few exceptions, all are arrayed against a subjugated population and have indiscriminately trained Israel's superior instruments of war on Palestinian men, women and children.

Daily reports of this seething ferment, of reciprocal attacks and reprisals, have prompted the Bush administration to issue warnings to both sides and to repeat the admonitions tirelessly drummed by the Israeli government that the "violence must stop." But warnings and admonitions cannot bring a lasting peace.

The Bush administration's packing off of Colin Powell on tour of the region serves notice to the participants that U.S. capitalism is not seeking peace in the region so much as it is allies to enforce its imperialist will. Whether the Bush administration continues this tactic or promotes some new peace initiative, its main goal in the region is a continued "stability" in the region—forced or otherwise—that will allow the oil to flow.

The political subjugation of a population expressing legitimate aspirations to national identity is inimical to international working-class unity. Therefore, the Socialist Labor Party of America condemns the continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza by Israel and the brutal military force used to insure its continued dominion over those areas and to maintain the beachhead desired by U.S. capital.

The Israeli and Palestinian working classes face mutual oppression under the capitalist system. Therefore, the Socialist Labor Party of America calls upon them to establish mutual connections to oppose their common class enemy.

Moreover, the Socialist Labor Party of America's policy statement of May 1978 on the Middle East crisis remains a valid analysis of the situation, and we affirm support of that original statement and its conclusion: There can be no peace in the Middle East until the working classes of the world, first and foremost the U.S. working class, have dealt with their respective ruling classes and established a socialist world of peace, plenty and freedom.

Fraternally submitted,

KEN BOETTCHER, Chair

JOHN-PAUL CATUSCO, STEPHEN RAPER

Committee on Resolutions

A motion to adopt the report was made. On motion, the report was referred back to committee.

New Business

A motion to amend Article V, Section 3 of the Constitution by removing the words “two years” and inserting the words “18 months” was adopted, as follows: “All members of the NEC shall be members who have held continued membership for at least ~~two~~ years 18 months and must be citizens of the United States.”

On motion, the convention adjourned until 4 p.m.

AFTERNOON SESSION, MONDAY, JUNE 4, 2001

The convention was called to order at 4:15 p.m.

On roll call, all present.

The Sergeant at Arms reported three visitors present.

Reports of Committees

Committee on Organization

C. Camacho presented the following reports:

Report on the SLP and the Internet

This committee has studied and discussed that part of the National Secretary’s report titled “SLP and the Internet.” ~~Regrettably, this committee is unprepared to develop and offer any permanent guidelines for the conduct of Internet activity and communications, and urges the NEC to take up this matter at the earliest possible date.~~

This committee acknowledges the potential usefulness of the Houston Internet discussion list and other possible future lists as SLP activities. However, since the Party has not yet accumulated sufficient experience that provides a full understanding of all its implications, and in view of the need to spend as much time as possible on direct face-to-face, person-to-person local activities as the surest way to bring people in contact with the SLP, we do not feel that discussion list and chat room activities should be given pre-eminence over the other customary forms of SLP activity.

Since up to now the initiatives undertaken by members and sections in creating Web sites have been largely directed toward local activities and outreach, it is the opinion of this committee that In-

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ternet Web sites shall be treated as a form of local literature. Therefore, the guidelines for the treatment of local literature ~~and publications~~ as defined by the Organizational Norms and Procedures apply. Internet discussion groups, lists and forums fall under the category of local discussion meetings as defined in the Organizational Norms and Procedures and Guide for Discussion Groups and shall be governed accordingly.

We recommend ~~that the NEC consider the following suggested~~ the following as interim guidelines for sections and members using the Internet to conduct Party activities:

1. That moderators of online discussion groups be subject to the approval of the section or the NEC as stated in Article III, Section E (1) of Organizational Norms and Procedures and the Guide for SLP Discussion Groups.

2. Unless otherwise directed by the NEC, that local Web sites limit their scope to local issues and activities as stated in Article V, Section D of Organizational Norms and Procedures dealing with local ~~publications~~ literature.

3. That copies of login names and passwords used by the sites' administrators to make changes and deletions be placed on file with the N.O. and/or section organizer.

4. That ownership and control of e-mail groups, discussion lists, chat rooms and Web sites dedicated to SLP propaganda or activity should rest with the section and/or the NEC.

5. Wherever possible the section and/or NEC shall review the content of SLP Web sites and recommend changes where necessary.

6. A link to the national Web site shall be prominently displayed.

7. The person creating the content of the Web site should be named by the section, or in the case of members-at-large should be under the direction of the NEC. That person shall be directly responsible to the section or NEC for that content.

8. All e-mail communications relating to SLP matters should have a copy directed to the N.O. by placing the N.O. e-mail address in the courtesy copy "cc:" window of the outgoing message. Members are also encouraged to place a link leading to the SLP Web site in the signature portion of their e-mail messages in order to promote the Web site to interested recipients.

9. Another question that has arisen is the fact that section e-mail addresses listed in the SLP directory in some cases do not be-

long to the section organizer, who may not have Internet service. Organizers who have e-mail should have their e-mail addresses listed in the directory since they are responsible for all communications to and from the section. In the event that the organizer does not have Internet access, one possible solution is that members of the section who have Internet access be named e-mail secretary by the membership. This e-mail secretary would be responsible for conveying all e-mail correspondence dealing with SLP matters to the attention of the organizer for appropriate action.

Fraternally submitted,
CHRIS CAMACHO, Chair
JACK BLESSINGTON, RICHARD CASSIN
CARL C. MILLER JR.
Committee on Organization

A motion to adopt the report was seconded.

A motion to strike the words “and publications” in the second sentence of the third paragraph was adopted.

A motion to strike the word “publication” under item 2 and replace it with the word “literature” was adopted.

A motion to strike the second sentence in the first paragraph of the report was passed.

A motion to replace the words “that the NEC consider the following suggested” in the fourth paragraph with the words “the following as interim” was adopted.

On motion, the report as amended was adopted.

Report on General Activities

After carefully examining that section of the National Secretary’s report dealing with “General Activities,” this committee reaffirms that members should continue to give *The People* the widest possible circulation and should take advantage of every opportunity to distribute leaflets and other Party literature. Experience shows that this is the most productive and effective means of bringing the Party’s principles and program to those who may not have been exposed to them previously.

Sections and members-at-large should make every effort to hold discussion meetings on a regular basis in order to bring together groups of workers who have an interest in the SLP.

It is with great pleasure that this committee notes that part of the National Secretary’s report that mentions veteran member

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Comrade Louis Fisher's public television interview. Comrade Fisher's perseverance is an example of the stuff of which SLP men and women are made. Comrade Fisher is an example to be emulated.

Fraternally submitted,
CHRIS CAMACHO, Chair
JACK BLESSINGTON, RICHARD CASSIN
CARL C. MILLER JR.
Committee on Organization

A motion to adopt the report was seconded. On motion, the report was referred back to committee.

Report on Party Press and Literature

1. *The People*

We cannot stress enough the importance of continuing to distribute *The People* as widely as possible.

Sections and members should strive at all times to find new outlets and methods to make *The People* available to as wide a readership as possible. It is also important to promote subscriptions from regular readers.

2. Labor News Activities

In order to build the classconsciousness of the working class they must be educated and enlightened. Throughout the history of the Party that education and enlightenment has begun with a New York Labor News book or pamphlet. The thought that stocks of pamphlets and books are dwindling and in danger of not being reprinted is disquieting indeed. This must not be allowed to happen. ~~To that end, this committee recommends the establishment of a literature sustainer fund for the purpose of replenishing stocks of books and pamphlets and above all.~~ We must seek out newer more efficient methods of producing this literature, including using state-of-the-art technology such as that suggested by the National Secretary where literature is recorded to data CD-ROMs.

3. Leaflets

Since the entire range of SLP leaflets is posted on the Party's Web site, wherever possible sections and members-at-large are encouraged to download them and print them or have them printed by a local print shop for distribution, thus potentially saving the National Office some expense. Of course, it be desirable for the N.O. to maintain a stock of titles for those situations where sec-

tions or members lack the resources to have their own printed or in the event that a particular leaflet title may be required for a special agitational occasion.

Fraternally submitted,
CHRIS CAMACHO, Chair
JACK BLESSINGTON, RICHARD CASSIN
CARL C. MILLER JR.
Committee on Organization

A motion to adopt the report was seconded.

A motion to strike the fifth sentence of the third paragraph was adopted.

A motion to strike the word “indeed” from the third sentence of the third paragraph was lost.

A motion to strike the fourth sentence of the third paragraph was lost.

On motion, the report was recommitted.

Committee on Headquarters and Finance: B. Bortnick reported progress.

Committee on Resolutions

K. Boettcher presented the following:

Re Resolution on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

This committee has reviewed the proposed statement on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Party’s 1978 statement on the Middle East crisis and recent articles and editorials on the subject and recommends that the convention adopt the following revised version of the statement:

The 45th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party unequivocally condemns the ongoing U.S. imperialist manipulation of events and alliances in the Middle East.

The goal of that manipulation is continued U.S. capitalist-class control over the production and distribution of oil. The crass material interests that lie behind U.S. imperialism’s need for that control produced the economic and social conditions that fueled the recent renewal of armed conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. They also make peace a virtual impossibility in the Middle East and increase the risk of global conflagration.

Ensuring the uninterrupted flow of oil from the Middle East is a primary concern of U.S. imperialism, which remains heavily dependent upon imported oil to run domestic industry and power its

empire. The political arrangements made in past decades with governments throughout the Middle East, and which are being cultivated by Colin Powell and the Bush administration, all support that objective.

The material and military support Israel receives from the United States government is an attempt to bolster a beachhead for U.S. capital and Western imperialism in the region. This beachhead was established not only to promote capitalist and imperialist economic interests, but also to counter the imperialist objectives of what was then the Soviet Union.

The Gulf War and its aftermath, the embargo and continued military actions against Iraq, the maintenance of a fleet in the Persian Gulf, air bases in Turkey and Saudi Arabia, and the Clinton and Bush administrations' overtures to the ruling classes of nearby African countries all attest to the ongoing commitment of the U.S. ruling class to maintain and secure their material objectives.

American foreign policy sorts out those governments that will conform to capitalism's material objectives, those who do so reluctantly and those who won't. Military and other economic and strategic aid flows to those who toe the line for U.S. capital, regardless of whether the governments involved are nominally democratic, as in the case of Israel, or autocratic regimes like virtually every other nation in the region.

Unrest among the millions of impoverished working-class oppressed in every country in the Middle East has been largely channeled into nationalistic illusions and religious fanaticism. In none of those states has an expression of true working-class interests emerged.

Among the Israeli working class an incessant barrage of deceptive propaganda promotes reactionary irredentist visions of an Israel rooted in the biblical past to "justify" settlement expansion and continued encroachment on Palestinian lands in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza. That propaganda promotes the destruction of Palestinian homes and a refusal to confront past ethnic cleansings by the Israeli state. It refuses to recognize the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes, or to other restitution.

Palestinian resistance and anger have become more intense in the face of Israeli intransigence and cavalier use of military force. Israel's response to Palestinian terrorism has been state terrorism, carried out under the governments of the Likud, Labor and coal-

tions of other parties. With few exceptions all are arrayed against a subjugated population and have indiscriminately trained Israel's superior instruments of war on Palestinian men, women and children.

Daily reports of this seething ferment, of reciprocal attacks and reprisals, have prompted the Bush administration to issue warnings to both sides and to repeat the admonitions tirelessly drummed by the Israeli government that the "violence must stop." But warnings and admonitions cannot bring a lasting peace.

The Bush administration's packing off of Colin Powell on tour of the region serves notice to the participants that U.S. capitalism is not seeking peace in the region so much as it is allies to enforce its imperialist will. Whether the Bush administration continues this tactic or promotes some new peace initiative, its main goal in the region is a continued "stability" in the region—forced or otherwise—that will allow the oil to flow.

The political subjugation of a population expressing legitimate aspirations to national identity is inimical to international working-class unity. Therefore, the Socialist Labor Party of America condemns the continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza by Israel and the brutal military force used to insure its continued dominion over those areas and to maintain the beachhead desired by U.S. capital.

The Israeli and Palestinian working classes face mutual oppression under the capitalist system. Therefore, the Socialist Labor Party of America calls upon them to establish mutual connections to oppose their common class enemy.

Ultimately, there can be no peace in the Middle East until the working classes of the world, first and foremost the U.S. working class, have dealt with their respective ruling classes and established a socialist world of peace, plenty and freedom.

Fraternally submitted,

KEN BOETTCHER, Chair

JOHN-PAUL CATUSCO, STEPHEN RAPER

Committee on Resolutions

On motion, the report was adopted.

New Business

The National Secretary requested that some time be reserved at the end of the convention to pay tribute to those comrades who

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have died since the 44th National Convention.

On motion, so ordered.

At 5:00 p.m., a motion was passed to adjourn until 7:15 p.m.

EVENING SESSION, MONDAY, JUNE 4, 2001

The convention was called to order at 7:27 p.m.

On roll call, all present.

The Sergeant at Arms reported three visitors present.

Reports of Committees

Committee on Organization

C. Camacho presented the following reports:

Report on Party Press and Literature

1. The People

We cannot stress enough the importance of continuing to distribute *The People* as widely as possible.

Sections and members should strive at all times to find new outlets and methods to make *The People* available to as wide a readership as possible. It is also important to promote subscriptions from casual readers. While this committee has no concrete recommendation to offer to alleviate the shortage of staff or funds needed to increase circulation and do followups to clearance mailings, etc., it well recognizes the duty of the membership in the field to come to the aid of the Party by volunteering their help whenever called upon to do so.

2. Labor News Activities

As noted by the National Secretary, we have begun to implement newer, more efficient methods of producing SLP literature by using state-of-the-art technology. However, insufficient staff resources have hampered these efforts. Accordingly, this committee recommends that the NEC poll the membership in order to find comrades with the necessary know-how to work on a voluntary basis with the National Office in the preparation of a CD-ROM containing a collection of De Leonist literature.

3. Leaflets

Since the entire range of SLP leaflets is posted on the Party's Web site, wherever possible sections and members-at-large are encouraged to download them and print them or have them printed

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by a local print shop for distribution, thus potentially saving the National Office some expense. The National Office has done an outstanding job in preparing and converting the literature of the Party into various electronic formats.

Fraternally submitted,
CHRIS CAMACHO, Chair
JACK BLESSINGTON, RICHARD CASSIN
CARL C. MILLER JR.
Committee on Organization

On motion, the report was adopted.

Report on SLPU Activities Report

We welcome the report submitted to this convention by Comrade Sergiy Skubenko, National Secretary of the Socialist Labor Party of Ukraine, and we commend the NEC and the National Office for the work it has done to provide our SLPU comrades with SLP literature as well as moral and technical support.

We are highly encouraged and inspired by the perseverance and courage of the comrades in Ukraine, especially as they labor on behalf of the proletariat under hostile and adverse conditions.

Additionally, we salute our comrades in the Socialist Labor Party of Canada and Comrade Brian Blanchard of Australia.

We extend to them all our most heartfelt greetings on behalf of the Socialist Labor Party of America and on behalf of the proletariat of the United States of America.

Fraternally submitted,
CHRIS CAMACHO, Chair
JACK BLESSINGTON, RICHARD CASSIN
CARL C. MILLER JR.
Committee on Organization

A motion to adopt the report was seconded. A motion to strike the words “and technical” in the first paragraph was passed.

On motion, the report as amended was adopted.

State of Organization

This committee regrets to inform the convention that it was unable to complete its work on the report of the National Secretary’s report on the “State of Organization.”

~~We lament that this committee was unprepared to deal with the varying important issues raised by the National Secretary in that~~

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report due partly to insufficient time.

Fraternally submitted,
CHRIS CAMACHO, Chair
JACK BLESSINGTON, RICHARD CASSIN
CARL C. MILLER JR.
Committee on Organization

A motion to adopt the report was seconded. A motion to strike the second paragraph was passed. On motion, the report as amended was adopted.

It was noted that a report on “General Activities,” the last item before the committee, was not yet completed.

Committee on Headquarters and Finance

B. Bortnick presented the following:

Re National Platform

This committee recommends that the convention adopt the following as the Party’s National Platform:

The 45th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party of the United States, assembled in Santa Clara, Calif., on the 4th day of June 2001, reaffirms its previous national platforms and further declares:

Few can deny that the world today is in a constant state of upheaval. That is reflected in the widespread anarchy, turmoil and conflict not only in the developed industrial nations, but also in developing nations throughout the world.

The fact that such conditions prevail generally throughout the world, and have prevailed for a long time, logically suggests the presence of a dominant common social factor. That common social factor, the Socialist Labor Party has repeatedly demonstrated, is the capitalist system that does not and cannot work in the interests of the majority. It is a social system in which society is divided into two classes—a capitalist class and a working class. The capitalist class consists of a tiny minority—the wealthy few who own and control the instruments of production and distribution. The working class consists of the vast majority who own no productive property and must, therefore, seek to work for the class that owns and controls the means of life in order to survive.

The relationship between the two classes forms the basis for an economic tyranny under which the workers as a class are exploited

of the major portion of the social wealth that they produce.

The beneficiaries and defenders of this economic dictatorship never tire of declaring it the “best of all possible systems.” Yet, today, after decades of new deals, fair deals, wars on poverty, civil rights legislation, government regulations, deregulations and a host of other reform efforts, capitalist America presents an obscene social picture. Millions who need and want jobs are still unemployed despite the official claims that unemployment is at historically “low” rates. Millions more are underemployed, working only part-time or temporary jobs though they need and want full-time work. Millions aren’t earning enough to maintain a decent standard of living for themselves and their families despite the fact that they are working.

The malignant evil of racism is on the upsurge; so, too, is contemptible discrimination against ~~people of color~~ minorities generally. The nation’s educational system is a mess and getting worse. The health care system, despite heated debate for years, still fails to meet the needs of tens of millions. The country’s infrastructure continues to crumble. Widespread pollution of our environment continues. Crime and corruption are pervasive at every level of capitalist society. Slums abound and millions of homeless men, women and even children roam our streets. Thanks to rising mass unemployment and falling real wages, poverty continues to grow. The number of people living below the official poverty line has risen from 24.1 million in 1969—years *after* the Johnson administration’s so-called “War on Poverty”—to a 1999 level of 32.3 million.

Even the foregoing fails to give a full picture of the wide-ranging plague of social and economic conflicts that contain the seeds of war, and a host of other economic and social problems.

All of those problems still plague the American working class—but have grown to even more monumental proportions. These long-standing problems and the failure of seemingly unending reform efforts to solve or even alleviate them to any meaningful degree have imposed decades of misery and suffering on millions of workers and their families. Those deplorable conditions continue today after what capitalism’s apologists and soothsayers refer to as the “longest economic boom” in the system’s history—a boom ~~many~~ they claimed brought prosperity and a sense of security to all levels of U.S. society. That capitalist propaganda not only says much about capitalist integrity and honesty, it also reflects a consider-

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able degree of callous indifference for the working-class victims of this ruthless “expansion.”

Moreover, today, as the “dot-com boom” takes a dive and capitalism enters yet another of its recurring economic busts, the U.S. working class stands perilously poised on the brink of yet another nightmare of *increased* joblessness and poverty.

Against this insane capitalist system, the Socialist Labor Party raises its voice in emphatic protest and unqualified condemnation. It declares that if our society is to be rid of the host of economic, political and social ills that for so long have plagued it, the outmoded capitalist system of private ownership of the socially operated means of life and production for the profit of a few must be replaced by a new social order. That new social order must be organized on the sane basis of social ownership and democratic management of all the instruments of social production, all means of distribution and all of the social services. It must be one in which production is carried on to satisfy human needs and wants. In short, it must be genuine socialism.

That is precisely the mission embodied in the Socialist Labor Party’s Socialist Industrial Union program—a program calling for both political and economic organization and action. That program also is based upon the SLP’s recognition and unqualified acceptance of the fact that the revolutionary change to socialism must be the classconscious act of the workers themselves!

Accordingly, the SLP calls upon the workers to rally under its banner for the purpose of advocating this revolutionary change, building classconsciousness among workers and projecting a program of organization that the workers could implement toward this end. That program also calls for the organization of revolutionary socialist unions. These are essential to mobilize the economic power of the workers not only to resist the ever-increasing encroachments of the capitalists more effectively, but ultimately to provide the essential power to enforce the revolutionary demand.

Capable of assuming control and continuing to administer and operate the essential industries and social services, Socialist Industrial Unions can exercise the power and provide the decisive leverage to “swing” the revolution. Moreover, they have the structure that provides the necessary foundation and structural framework for socialist society. It is the workers who will fill out the new ~~social~~ social framework and make the people’s ownership, control and administration of the new social structure a reality.

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Despite the many threats to workers' lives, liberty and happiness today, despite the growing poverty and misery that workers are subjected to, a world of peace, liberty, security, health and abundance for all stands within our grasp. The potential to create such a society exists, but that potential can be realized only if workers act to gain control of their own lives by organizing, politically and industrially, for socialism.

The Socialist Labor Party calls upon all who realize the critical nature of our times, and who may be increasingly aware that a basic change in our society is needed, to place themselves squarely on working-class principles. Join us in this effort to put an end to the existing class conflict and all its malevolent results by placing the land and the instruments of social production in the hands of the people as a collective body in a cooperative socialist society. Help us build a world in which everyone will enjoy the free exercise and full benefit of their individual faculties, multiplied by all the technological and other factors of modern civilization.

Fraternally submitted,
BERNARD BORTNICK, Chair
ROBERT BURNS, JOE GROELKE
Committee on Headquarters and Finance

A motion to adopt the platform was seconded.

An amendment to strike the words "so, too, is contemptible discrimination against people of color generally" in the first sentence of the seventh paragraph was made and seconded .

A substitute amendment to change the words "people of color" to "minorities" in the first sentence of the seventh paragraph was passed.

An amendment was passed to change the word "many" to "they" in the third sentence of the ninth paragraph.

On motion, the platform as amended was adopted.

Re Statement of Fundamental Principles

This committee recommends that the convention adopt the following statement:

The Socialist Labor Party of America, assembled at its 45th National Convention, reasserts the inalienable right of humankind to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

We hold that the purpose of government is to secure to every citizen the enjoyment of this right; but taught by experience we

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hold, furthermore, that such right is illusory to the overwhelming majority of the people—the working class—under the present system of economic inequality that is essentially destructive of *their* life, *their* liberty and *their* happiness.

We hold that humanity cannot exercise their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness without the ownership of the land on and the tools with which to work. Deprived of these, their life, their liberty and their fate fall into the hands of the class that owns those essentials for work and production. This ownership is today held by the minority in society, the capitalist class, exercising through this ownership and control an economic despotism without parallel in history.

The nation's wealthiest 10.2 million households—a group that includes few workers—reportedly own 69 percent of the nation's wealth, while the overwhelmingly working-class balance of 92.3 million households own only 31 percent. But the "wealth" most working-class households "own" is usually merely a home or a car in which a bank or finance company really has the largest interest. Put another way, most workers merely own the proverbial shirt on their back—and little else that helps them much in their struggle for existence.

The ownership of the bulk of the nation's wealth by the few is conclusive evidence that labor is robbed of the major portion of the product which it alone produces. Thus the worker is denied the means of self-employment and, by compulsory idleness in wage slavery, is deprived of even the necessities of life.

We hold that the existing contradiction between the theory of democratic government and the fact of a despotic economic system—the private ownership of the natural and social opportunities—divides the nation into two classes: the nonproducing, but owning, capitalist class, and the producing, but propertyless, working class; throws society into the convulsions of the class struggle and invariably perverts government to the uses and benefit of the capitalist class.

As the natural result of social evolution, the capitalist system now impels its own downfall. Having completed its normal development, this system and its political reflex, the state, are now outworn. No longer able to dispose readily of the huge quantities of surplus commodities in foreign markets, each capitalist nation seeks desperately to crowd out its competitors, with the result that wars and conflicts convulse much of the world. In this mad

struggle for survival, the working classes of all nations are the chief sufferers.

Against such a system the Socialist Labor Party raises the banner of revolt and demands the unconditional surrender of the capitalist class. In this supreme crisis no reform measures will stand, and history teaches that where a social revolution is pending and, for whatever reason, is not accomplished, reaction—dictatorship—is the alternative.

Having outlived its social usefulness, capitalism must give way to a new social order—a social order wherein government shall rest on industry, on the basis of useful occupations, instead of resting on territorial—political—representation. This new social system can only be the Socialist Industrial Union form of government if the needs of the vast majority are to be served, and if progress is to be the law of the future as it has been in the past. Upon the despoiled workers rests the duty of effecting this revolutionary change in a peaceful, civilized manner, using the ballot and all that thereby hangs in order to effect the change.

We, therefore, call upon the wage workers of America to organize under the banner of the Socialist Labor Party into a class-conscious body, aware of its rights and determined to conquer them.

We further call upon the wage workers of America to organize into integral Socialist Industrial Unions to enforce their ballot, and to fulfill the needs and purposes of the Socialist Industrial Union government. Industrial unionism is the Socialist Republic *in the making*; that goal reached, the industrial union is the Socialist Republic in operation.

Finally, we also call upon all intelligent and social-minded citizens to place themselves squarely upon the ground of working-class interests, and join with us in this noble work of human emancipation so that we may put summary end to the existing barbarous class conflict. By placing the land and all the means of production, transportation and distribution into the hands of the useful producers as a collective body, and substituting the Socialist Industrial Cooperative Commonwealth for the present state of planless production, industrial and international wars, and social disorder, a commonwealth can be built in which every worker shall have the free exercise and full benefit of ~~his~~ their faculties, multiplied by all the modern factors of civilization.

Fraternally submitted,
BERNARD BORTNICK, Chair

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ROBERT BURNS, JOE GROELKE
Committee on Headquarters and Finance

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the statement.

A five-minute recess was declared at 8:25 p.m.

An amendment was passed to strike the words “a group that includes few workers” in the first sentence of the fifth paragraph.

An amendment was passed to substitute the word “their” for the word “his” in the last sentence.

On motion, the statement as amended was adopted.

New Business

B. Bortnick placed the following names in nomination for the National Executive Committee: Ken Boettcher, Chris Camacho, Bruce Cozzini, Diane Secor, Stephen Raper. Bernard Bortnick and Carl C. Miller Jr.

The floor was opened for further nominations.

On motion, K. Boettcher, C. Camacho, B. Cozzini, D. Secor, S. Raper, B. Bortnick and C. Miller Jr. were elected by acclamation to constitute the NEC for the 2001–2003 term of office.

B. Bortnick reported that Robert Bills has indicated his willingness to serve in the post of National Secretary, but that there were no names available for the posts of Editor and Financial Secretary.

R. Bills was nominated for National Secretary. There were no further nominations. On motion, R. Bills was elected by acclamation.

In Memoriam

The convention rose to its feet in tribute while the National Secretary read the names of those members who died in the past year since the 44th National Convention.

1. Frank Musolff, national member-at-large, Calif., June 19, 1999
2. Lillian Beck, national member-at-large, Fla., September 1999
3. Russell Walker Sr., Section Milwaukee, August 27, 1999
4. Howard R. Sprunger, national member-at-large, Ind., October 5, 1999
5. Mary Pirincin, national member-at-large, Calif., January 2, 2000
6. Katherine Kapitz, Section Akron, January 12, 2000
7. Fred Busic, Section Akron, March 12, 2000

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8. Nathan Karp, Section San Francisco Bay Area, April 22, 2000
9. John Reynolds, national member-at-large, Calif., July 28, 2000
10. Joseph Gingras, Section San Francisco Bay Area, October 3, 2000
11. James Minal, Section Vancouver, B.C., Canada, October 4, 2000
12. Margaret Rachek, Section Cleveland, October 6, 2000
13. Peter Kapitz, Section Akron, October 26, 2000
14. John Carlson, national member-at-large, November 22, 2000
15. Kenneth Kowalczyk, national member-at-large, N.J., notification received December 21, 2000
16. Chester Louthan, national member-at-large, Ohio, February 5, 2001

C. Camacho reported that the Committee on Organization will not have sufficient time to complete its work. The National Secretary inquired of the Chair if that was the committee's decision. Camacho informed the Chair that he had not consulted the committee.

At 8:55 p.m., a motion to recess for five minutes for the Committee on Organization to confer was adopted. Reconvened at 9 p.m.

The Chair reported that R. Burns has left the convention to catch a plane home.

Camacho reported that the Committee on Organization did not have sufficient time to complete its work.

On motion, the National Office was authorized to edit the minutes of these proceedings.

A motion to accept the minutes of Monday's sessions as read was seconded. The minutes were corrected to reflect that the names of the departed comrades were those who died since the 44th National Convention.

On motion, the minutes as a whole as amended were adopted.

On motion, the convention adjourned *sine die* at 9:11 p.m.

Fraternally submitted,

JOHN-PAUL CATUSCO

Recording Secretary

DONNA BILLS

Assistant to the Recording Secretary

ADDENDUM

The following biographical sketch of Nathan Karp is taken from the souvenir program distributed at the Nathan Karp Memorial Meeting held on Sunday, June 4, in the A.J. Toppers Room of the Oakland Marriott City Center Hotel in Oakland, Calif.

Nathan Karp

April 25, 1915–April 22, 2000

Nathan Karp was born in Brooklyn, New York, on April 25, 1915. His parents, Daniel and Sarah, were young immigrants who worked in the New York needle trades when they met in 1908. When Dan Karp was 19 he heard Daniel De Leon deliver his address on *The Burning Question of Trades Unionism*, and he soon applied for membership in the SLP. Sarah worked at the Triangle Shirtwaist factory in 1911, but she stayed home on that fateful day in March when a deadly fire swept through the building near Washington Square and snuffed out the lives of 146 other young women. Sarah and Dan were married that year. The young family moved to southern New Jersey in the late 1910s, where their three children, Morris, Nathan and Ruth, grew up and went to school.

Nathan Karp was a clothing cutter by trade. He spent some time in a CCC camp during the Great Depression. In 1935 he followed his parents and his beloved brother, Morris, into the SLP. Before long he moved to New York City, where he married Anne Werthamer, his wife and comrade of 63 years. Together they were the loving parents of three children, Diane, Alan and Stanley.

Nathan Karp was a conscientious objector during World War II. By 1943 he was elected to the Subcommittee of the SLP's National Executive Committee, and for many years he was also a member of the SLP's Press Committee. He was the SLP's candidate for United States Senator from New York in 1952, for Governor of New York in 1953 and for Mayor of New York City in 1954. In 1962, he appeared before a Senate subcommittee to defend the "equal time" provision of the Federal Communications Act, and in 1965 he wrote a major statement on the same subject for *TV Guide*. He left his trade in 1963 to join the National Headquarters staff of the SLP as assistant to the National Secretary, and he was the SLP's national campaign manager in 1964 and 1968.

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In 1969, the membership of the SLP elected him National Secretary to fill the unfinished term of his predecessor. He was elected to a full term of four years in 1972 and to a second term in 1976. From 1973 until 1980 he was also *de facto* Editor of the *Weekly People*. He was instrumental in the decision to move the Party's headquarters from Brooklyn to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1974. More important, however, he took the lead in the effort to "revitalize" and rebuild the SLP, starting with the 29th National Convention in 1976. In 1980, he was elected Financial Secretary of the Party, and from 1983 to 1987 he was a member of the NEC. In 1990, he assembled a massive array of SLP memorabilia for the Party's 100th anniversary celebration and supervised a similar exhibit for the centennial of *The People* in 1991.

He was the author of many SLP statements and publications, among them *Who Speaks for Socialism? Brinkmanship in Southeast Asia*, *Unionism: Fraudulent or Genuine? Crises in America: A Revolution Overdue*, *The SLP and the Unions* and *Early Efforts at Socialist Unity*. After retiring as Financial Secretary in 1983, he remained on the headquarters staff and was a regular contributor of articles to *The People*. He also acted as a consultant and adviser to the National Secretary, and he was at work on the Party's archives when he died on April 22, 2000.

TRIBUTES TO NATHAN KARP

By Ken Boettcher

We are here today to honor the life and celebrate the memory of Nat Karp. That is an easy thing for me to do. I am one of the many—perhaps even hundreds or thousands of—workers who benefited and gained inspiration from his razor-sharp classconscious understanding of the world we live in and the passionate intensity of his conviction that it is the destiny of the working class to remake the world in the shape of a socialist society of peace, plenty and freedom. But I was also among a very fortunate few who knew Nat as a friend. That fact gives me more pride than perhaps anything else I could say about myself.

For many years I knew Nat only through the pages of the then *Weekly People*, which I stumbled across as a young hayseed—a student, but nonetheless a real hayseed—during a visit to Portland, Oregon, some 30 years ago. The '60s were so full of questions

that seemed to have no answers. But then I found a newsstand filled with copies of the *Weekly People*. Clearly stated, in logical order, crisp and clear, I saw the answers to many of my questions about the world. From that time onward, the beacon of the SLP's Marxist principles gave purpose to my life.

Nat and the rest of those comrades who worked for the Party and wrote for the *Weekly People* filled my Oregon hayseed heart with inspiration and awe. Nat's perennial dark glasses gave him an almost mystic air. When I finally met him during a visit to National Headquarters in the late '70s, my romanticized vision of the headquarters staff was not moderated much—the visit was too short to get to know them as people. The next time I met him was at the 1979 and 1980 SLP conventions, and his knowledge of parliamentary procedure, his grasp of the events of our time and the respect he commanded on the convention floor merely increased my awe. But his friendliness and mostly gentle encouragement—as well as his patience—toward me made me aware there was a real *human* being under those dark glasses and his sometimes stern stare.

Within a few months after I arrived to work at SLP headquarters almost 18 years ago, Nat, perhaps more than anyone else, made me feel at home—offering encouragement and admonishment, patience and guidance in mostly the right doses at just the right times. I imagine he did this with many folks like myself—often, of course, in the shape of a joke or a funny story—one of the hundreds of tidbits of humor that he stored away for use at the right moment. But he made me feel special, that such a man would treat me in such a way. In the intervening years, he was my mentor, in a sense the kind of father I always wished to have, and despite the difference in our ages, my closest male friend outside good old Oregon. He was not just a comrade, but a true friend—one who helped me through many a tough time and—perhaps more importantly in any friendship—one who accepted help himself at least some of the time his friends offered it.

As old age approached and began to take its toll on Nat, he seemed to epitomize the father that poet Dylan Thomas wished to urge on when he wrote:

“Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”

Nat Karp, whom I learned over the years was perhaps even

more gentle and kind than he *ever* was demanding and incisive, would *never* go gentle into *any* good night with respect to the fight for socialism.

Thomas Paine once wrote that, “I love the man that can smile in trouble, that can gather strength from distress and grow brave by reflection. ’Tis the business of little minds to shrink; but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death.”

Nathan Karp was such a man.

The window near my desk at the present National Office faces the parking spot Nat used for the last two or three years. Morning after morning I looked up, upon hearing a car pull up, to see him—with a quiet dignity—daily face and overcome the difficulties of a body that had survived stroke and heart surgery, ulcers and partial paralysis. Slowly the driver’s side door would open, and out come his arm to grasp it and brace for a slow rise to his feet. A few small steps to the rear door and then out would come his walker. The sight of him coming across the parking lot to the door, down the hall and to his seat day after day made my heart swell with pride and, not infrequently, my eyes lose a tear.

In the words of his beloved Annie—words Nat was fond of quoting: “Old age is not for sissies.” Nat certainly found that to be true, yet he never allowed it to stop him. In the gentle way characteristic of his later years, he did “rage against the dying of the light.” Anyone who by mistake or intention defended the interests of the ruling class learned the rage of this man’s intellect and conscience even in his last months.

I’m not sure if I ever told Nat, but I think he knew I loved him—and that many people did. We will miss him, and so will the movement that motivated his life. Death has robbed us of a real working-class champion. If Nat were here today, I can imagine what he might say. “Balderdash,” I can hear him say. “As Woody Allen once said,” Nat would continue, “There are worse things in life than death. Have you ever spent an evening with an insurance salesman?” And Nat would, of course, be right. The thing to fear is an inadequate life—something Nat Karp never *ever* had to fear.

By Bruce Cozzini

I had the great good fortune to grow up in the Socialist Labor Party and get to know some of the SLP’s finest. Joe Pirincin and

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Jack Quinn often stayed at our home, as did the Party's presidential candidates. They were tireless workers for socialism, coming from the working class and self-educated in the movement. Nat Karp was one of that breed, the cream of the crop. They distinguished themselves by the difficult tasks they took on, and Nat took on the most difficult, that of leading the SLP through one of its most difficult times. I had the good fortune to work at the National Office during that period.

When I moved to California in 1977 to write for the *Weekly People*, the Party was in a state of ferment as new directions were being explored. They were exciting times, and I was eager to be part of them. My mother and father were concerned about the sacrifices involved in uprooting my family to go work for the National Office at such a time, but what made them feel good about it was that Nat was in charge. They admired his integrity and his grasp of and devotion to SLP principles.

It was an exciting time. We had an outstanding and stimulating staff. However, writing full time didn't come easy for me, nor did the constant deadlines and the continual pressure. Throughout this time Nat was always supportive and helpful, discussing at length the principles I was having difficulty with, and offering pointers on writing problems. I learned a tremendous amount from him. The writing pointers I use all the time in my work now, and I can still hear his voice offering them to me.

For a brief while, to give me a break from working on the paper, Nat had me working as his assistant, helping him with correspondence. During that time I was continually amazed at his feelings for the membership. He picked up on subtleties in their letters that I missed. He felt deeply for the members and the difficulties they faced, both in their SLP efforts and as individuals.

I was continually impressed with Nat's brilliance as a Marxist. On the spur of the moment, he could analyze social problems more clearly and coherently than most people can after long study and contemplation. And to top it off, he expressed himself with wit and humor. It seems strange to wax nostalgic about collection talks, but Nat made them not only painless, but truly entertaining. If Nat were speaking today, he would have found some appropriate funny story. I searched for one, but just couldn't find it. We'll miss you Nat.

By Bernard Bortnick

I first met Comrade Nathan Karp at the May–June 1975 National Executive Committee Session in New York. I had been newly elected to the committee, replacing Comrade Elizabeth Schnur. I was seated among those whom I had always considered the towers of the revolutionary socialist movement in America for at least a quarter of a century past. Among them were Comrades G. Cozzini, J. Pirincin, A. Albaugh and G. Taylor, all on the NEC, and, of course, Comrade Nathan Karp. Accordingly, I felt somewhat like a “novice,” a bit intimidated and out of place.

Comrade Nathan Karp held the post of National Secretary and was also burdened with editorial obligations in the publication of the *Weekly People* since the precipitous departure of the former Editor, John Timm, in 1973.

The Party had recently completed the move of the National Headquarters from Brooklyn, New York, to Palo Alto, California, in September 1974, and that effort involved changes at many levels in the operation of the National Headquarters, not the least of which was giving up ownership of the Party press and having the *Weekly People* published commercially.

The issue of the composition of the NEC Subcommittee remained to be clarified. A vacancy in an assistant to the National Secretary and the uncertainty of the composition and tenure of the editorial staff were additional problems lurking in the background.

These and a number of other issues were aired during that session, and only then did I develop an appreciation for the depth and complexity of what the Party faced and, in particular, the multiple key decisions and coordination strategies that bore upon Comrade Karp and the National Office staff. I groped to make a useful contribution to the session. I had voted either in favor of or against a proposition, apparently to the frustration of Comrade Karp. During a recess he approached me and in the kindest terms asked me why I had voted as I had. I explained my thoughts and we discussed the issue for 10 minutes or so, after which I came away considerably enlightened and very impressed with the clarity of his thoughts and by the logic of his comments.

Clarity and logic I came to realize were emblematic of Comrade Karp’s thought processes. It was during that NEC session that I was for the first time repeatedly exposed to Comrade Karp’s keen analytical mind and accuracy of his judgments. He had “instant

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recall” of facts and figures, a quality which reflected his exceptional intelligence. This, coupled with the depth of his knowledge of Marxism and Party history, and the speed and energy with which he passionately expressed himself, gained him the reputation of having a mind like a “steel trap.” His guidance was like that of a helmsman, correcting the course of the SLP vessel as it moved through the treacherous waters of capitalist society.

In considering the kind of verbal tribute one might pay this giant of a man, suitable words are not easily found. But he was to all of us a teacher, conveying the benefit of his wise counsel and his depth of knowledge. His contributions to the Socialist Labor Party were immeasurable and covered a vast range of writings, speeches and involvement in the whole spectrum of Party offices and activities.

The key role Comrade Karp played in freeing the Party from what can best be described as a sectarian logjam, which came to a head at the 1977 National Convention, will ever remain engraved in my memory. This was a struggle against what became known as the “New York Tendency,” a certain confusion of thought that ossified into the notion that all past Party decisions were inviolate and in the best tradition of Marxism-De Leonism. Comrade Karp remorselessly exposed the shallowness and rigidity of this attitude, despite the animosity and acrimony this evoked from some members. His conduct was ruled by Marxian science, the path he had followed all of his life.

He was an individual deeply imbued with the fundamental correctness of the Socialist Labor Party and totally committed to its cause. Even during his illness he continued to render his services to the extent that he could in behalf of the Party. He had a thoughtful and warm personality; he was humorous, witty and engaging—an unforgettable person that I will always feel privileged to have known. I will miss him greatly.

Rachel and I extend our deepest sympathies to Comrade Anne Karp, Stan, Alan and Diane Karp, and to all of his family members.

By Robert Bills

Nathan Karp was a big part of my life for more than 30 years. Some who knew us both say our relationship was like that of father to son, but that is wrong. The relationship of parent to child is too

intimate, too much involved with the passing on of traits and characteristics that no outsider can possibly share.

What Nat Karp and I shared was something different. We were comrades and friends, two things Nat had more than one occasion to say did not always or necessarily go together.

It was Abraham Lincoln who said: "The strongest bond of human sympathy outside the family relation should be one uniting all working people of all nations and tongues, and kindreds."

It was the bond of working together for a common purpose that brought Nat Karp and me together and laid the foundation for our relationship as comrades and friends. The foundation of our relationship was not blood, but a meeting of minds that welcome each other because it seems they share certain interests, certain ideals and a certain way of looking at things. Where the two things, comradeship and friendship, began to touch and overlap is hard to say. But wherever and whenever it began I know that for myself it grew stronger as time went by.

I met Nat Karp for the first time on a sunny San Francisco day in the summer of 1969. He was 54, just two years younger than I am today, and I was 25. He was newly elected as National Secretary of the Socialist Labor Party. I was simply a young Party member of three years' standing. He surely had no expectations beyond those he might have had at making the acquaintance of any member of the Party, but I was surely excited and felt myself flattered to meet him and his wife Annie in that particular way. You see, it was not an "official occasion." It was not some Party-sponsored meeting or social affair; not some performance of duty where the focus of attention shakes hands, smiles and thanks those introduced to him for their good wishes and words of encouragement. It was a personal arrangement that other comrades had made to see some sights at Ghiradelli Square, to spend a pleasant afternoon together and to share a meal.

But there was no reason on that particular day in 1969 for either of us to think that any more would come out of that afternoon than what it contained. He was 29 years my senior. We grew up at different times, some would say in different worlds. We had no shared experiences, either as members of a generation or as members of the SLP. He would return to New York and I would resume my life here on the coast with the addition of a pleasant memory. I had no reason to expect that all that would change one year later when Donna and I traveled from Sacramento to San Francisco

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where I was scheduled to give my first talk as an SLP speaker. I was scared, didn't do very well, and ordinarily it would have been one of those days that anyone would prefer to forget. However, it was also the day I was asked if I would consider moving to New York to become a member of the National Headquarters staff of the SLP. I had no one to consult but Donna, and when she agreed I was on my way—and she soon thereafter.

Those first days and months in New Jersey and New York were difficult ones for Donna and me. Nat and Anne took me in when I arrived and helped me find a place for Donna and I to live when she arrived a month later. They took me to the airport to meet her, and showed us as much kindness and concern as if we had been members of their own family.

New York City is a big place. Its size and its concentration, its press of humanity were wholly outside the experience of a young couple who grew up in much smaller and slower paced California and Nevada towns. It was at once exhilarating and intimidating, and Donna and I were very much fish out of our water.

Looking back, there is no doubt in my mind that Donna and I managed to survive life in the big city in large part because of the kindness that Nat and Anne showed toward us. It was a lopsided way to start a relationship, much less a friendship, but we must have measured up in ways that mattered. Nat had a talent for sizing people up. Within a few months of our having moved to the East he needed to hire someone else for the headquarters staff. I suggested that he consider Donna.

That was the first time I offered my advice about anything to Nat Karp. It turned out to be good advice, as I knew it would.

Nat Karp loved history, particularly American history. His personal library is filled with books about the history of the country and historical figures. Apart from Marx, Engels and De Leon, he admired such men as Samuel Adams, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips and Abraham Lincoln—all of them dedicated revolutionaries and opponents of tyranny.

But his admiration of these men was tempered by the knowledge that they were merely human, creatures of their times and of their circumstances, and subject to all the weaknesses that define humanity as a creature of its environment. He understood human nature very well, and because of that he could admire historical figures with an appreciation and perception tempered by his own

intelligence and insights into the limitations that the social environment create.

It was Daniel De Leon, I believe, who answered critics of Jefferson to the effect that it was enough to secure his immortality for Jefferson to have written a few lines into the Declaration of Independence proclaiming that all men were created equal and that governments ought to derive their powers from the consent of the governed. A thousand generations were needed before that plateau in the social development of the human race could be reached. It was unreasonable to expect more of any one person, no matter how gifted, and it betrayed a lack of appreciation of how difficult truly historical progress is to make.

Nat Karp appreciated this. He understood that men and women could not always measure up to their own aspirations for themselves or for the world in which we live. But he never used that as an excuse not to measure up to his own aspirations. More than that, he never gave up on the potential he saw in others, no matter how often he may have been frustrated or disappointed by them. He wanted the men and women he came in contact with to measure up to their own potential. He could be firm, and he could get angry. But he also had gentle and insightful ways of reaching out to encourage others to improve their skills, and I never knew him to deny anyone help or advice when they needed it. He did not hesitate when he was asked for his help, and if he felt it was necessary to take the initiative it was with all the sympathy and tact that anyone could wish for.

During our 30-year relationship as coworkers at the National Office, there were countless occasions on which I was witness to Nat Karp's boundless energy and dedication under circumstances that unquestionably would have left most other men wringing their hands in despair. But not Nat Karp.

When the former Editor of the *Weekly People* walked off the job in May 1973, Nat stepped in without hesitation to prevent the paper from going under. How he managed it is still something that I marvel at, even though as the only remaining member of the editorial staff I witnessed it at firsthand.

Occasionally I have taken down the 1973 volume of the *Weekly People* just to read through the many articles and editorials that Nat labored over during the months that followed the 1973 NEC Session. To this day I am amazed at the variety and the quality of what he managed to produce in circumstances that would have

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caused anyone else to throw in the towel. But he didn't. He couldn't. It wasn't in his nature. He saw what needed to be done and he did it.

Nat Karp was not only the most intelligent and perceptive man I ever met. He was the most self-disciplined man I ever knew. It was that self-discipline that enabled him to use his intelligence to a purpose.

Nat Karp's natural attributes, and the self-discipline that allowed him to make the most of them, sometimes overwhelmed others whose potential may or may not have been as great, but whose determination to make the best use of their own potential was not as keenly developed.

I know these things because I was a beneficiary of them.

When health considerations forced Nat Karp to step down as National Secretary at the end of his second full term of office in 1980, the pool of possible replacements from which to draw was limited. When the 1980 National Convention voted to confer that honor on me Nat Karp knew that the responsibilities were being placed on inexperienced shoulders. During the months and years that followed, however, he never intruded himself, but seemed to trust to my judgment to decide when and if I felt the need to seek his counsel and support. I did that often, and he helped me in far too many ways even to begin to list. My preparation had been limited to a year or two as one of his assistants, and while I eventually found my way in most things, I doubt that I would have lasted beyond that first shaky term without the knowledge that Nat was there to help me through.

Nat Karp was also a man of great personal courage. There are dozens of examples I might cite to make the point, but none so revealing as his struggle to overcome the physical limitations he was faced with after he suffered a stroke.

He insisted on receiving all the physical therapy that was available, and he devoted himself to recovering his physical independence. He not only accomplished that goal, he returned to work at the National Office and dedicated his time, his mind and his energy to organizing the Party's vast archives for transfer to the Wisconsin State Historical Society. In addition, he continued to write articles for *The People* and never missed an issue until he drove himself to the hospital from which he would never return.

When Donna and I took our last trip to the hospital to visit Nat we were informed that he had died about an hour before we ar-

rived. The doctor who informed us said with a voice marked by unmistakable sincerity that “he was a fighter.” She didn’t know the half of it.

Apart from being the most intelligent, highly disciplined and in many ways the most courageous man I ever met, Nat Karp was also the most principled man I have ever encountered. His principles were synonymous with those of the Socialist Labor Party, to which he had wholeheartedly dedicated himself from the time he joined at the age of 20.

But there was nothing pat or dogmatic about Nat Karp. He was as perceptive, inquisitive, analytical and logical on the day he died as he was that day I met him 31 years ago.

Nat Karp was my friend and comrade, two things, as I said earlier, that do not always or necessarily go together. But in my heart and in my mind I know that, in our case, they did.

Nat Karp was everything a man could hope to be—everything an admirer, a friend and a comrade could ever hope to emulate. His heart was as big as it was courageous. His mind was as powerful as his principles were strong. His comradeship and friendship were as firm as the grip of his hand. If he had been my father I could not have loved him more.

I can think of no more fitting words for parting from that living friendship than a slight paraphrase of those that A.C. Cameron wrote when he lost his friend and comrade, William H. Sylvis, in July 1869, 100 years to the month before Nat Karp entered my life.

“And now that he has gone from our midst; that his active...brain has been stilled forever; that his words of counsel and encouragement will be heard no more, let it be our highest ambition to carry to successful completion the good work so gloriously begun. Let us re-pledge our devotion to the dissemination of those principles to which his life was devoted, and in the attainment of which the welfare of the human race is involved; and though we may not be able to emblazon our names in letters of such shining light, or engrave them high on the scroll of fame as he, yet we shall be emulating his virtues by following his example, by making the precepts which made him so truly great our precepts, leave behind us the fragrance of a well-spent life, and a memory to be honored and revered.

“Then up and be doing, the night has been long,
Our forces are weak, and the tyrants are strong;
But while fortune favors the true and the brave,

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Let's pledge our devotion o'er Nathan Karp's *grave*."

Avi Bortnick, Oakland, Calif.—I was saddened to hear the news about Nathan Karp. I have very fond memories of him, stretching back nearly as far as I can remember. I will miss his astute socialist insights and terrific sense of humor.

Sam Bortnick, Oakland, Calif.—I will always have fond memories of Nate, having known him as a friend of the family since childhood.

Jeff Chern, Frisco, Tex.—As a “writer” I often read Comrade Karp's articles and questioned my own abilities. He wrote with such clarity and economy that it seemed each article went through 25 drafts. And I'm sure they didn't. Though I met him only once, he seemed a man of genuine good humor, but also of uncompromising principles. Should all of us today rededicate ourselves to the kind of commitment he gave, few of us would have enough years left to approach his contributions. The Party will more than miss him, and will never replace him.

Diane Secor, San Jose, Calif.—I cannot find words, so all I can do is speak from the heart. Comrade Nathan Karp dedicated his life to the Socialist Labor Party and humanity. He led a lifetime of self-sacrifice and adherence to principle through thick and thin. He always chose to stand for what is right, never yielding to what is expedient or convenient. His courage and total commitment to the principles of the SLP are a source of strength and inspiration to all who knew him. His life and memory are a priceless treasure which will endure for generations to come.

Chris Camacho, Miami, Fla.—I am deeply saddened to learn of Comrade Karp's passing. Anyone who have ever met the man and heard him speak would agree that he was an exceptional man, a gifted speaker and a genuine Socialist revolutionary. Summed up in him were the virtues and the wisdom that the Party imparts upon its steadfast men and women. The SLP has lost a true working-class hero. I consider myself a fortunate person to have met him and will mourn his passing for a long time. However, I take comfort in the thought that a little bit of what Nathan Karp was

still lives on in my mind and in my heart. May that little bit live forever!

Manuel Luevano, Stockton, Calif.—Although I did not know Mr. Karp personally, I hold deep admiration and respect for this special man for all he did and attempted to do for the workingman. He worked to the very end for our cause and he richly deserves this final tribute. May his soul rest in peace.

Henry Coretz, Skokie, Ill.—The loss of Comrade Karp is irreparable. I mourn his death along with you and our other comrades in the SLP. His life was a gift and a model for the working class to emulate.

John Gale, Phoenix, Ariz.—It is with sadness that I enclose my contribution to the Nat Karp Memorial Fund. As far as I was concerned he was a brilliant, considerate and fair man. A medical condition prevented me from knowing him and his wife Anne better than I did. He was my “boss” for a couple of years at the N.O., and when I was stabbed in Brooklyn after I left the N.O., he and the whole staff were concerned and came to see me at Kings County Hospital. During and after my recovery, he was concerned about my recovery and employment prospects for the future. He was the most knowledgeable man about Lincoln I ever met and he wrote brilliant pamphlets and articles for *The People*. When and if the workers build socialism, I will remember dedicated people to the cause of humanity, including Lincoln, De Leon, Arnold Petersen and Nathan Karp.

Brian Blanchard, Launceston, Australia—I am saddened and shocked to hear of the death of Comrade Karp. I noted that he didn't have an article in the April edition so I thought something must be wrong. What a loss to the Party and the world. I never met him but I have known him for over 40 years. I salute a profound Socialist and a fine human being. He will be sadly missed. The best way to honor him, I think, is to carry on the work with as much effort and dedication as he did.

Douglas Irving, National Secretary, SLP of Canada—I was shocked to read in your letter of the death of Comrade Nathan Karp. I will send a copy of your letter to all Canadian members. I

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am in deep sorrow for the death of not only a great and dedicated Marxist, but also a great human being who I had the privilege to know personally.

Roy K. Nelson, Needham, Mass.—Nathan Karp was our elder statesman and a guiding influence upon our survival through deteriorating political and social conditions and adaptation to new and different circumstances. His death leaves us remaining members and leadership to carry on as our parents did for their forefathers.

Mary And John Brlas, Gulfport, Fla.—We have received letter of April 23 with the sad news that Comrade Karp has passed away. We were so hoping to see him next year at the convention. The news has saddened us and as you so ably said it: "...to give expression to emotions so deeply embedded in my being that they reduce all words to hollow and meaningless echoes." We feel the same way and we couldn't put it better than the way you have so touchingly stated. I believe that most of our members will be speechless and saddened. I met Nathan Karp the first time at our federation convention in 1933—67 years ago. He was such a young and energetic fellow.

Tony Marsella, Whiting, N.J.—I was greatly saddened to hear of the death of Nathan Karp, a man that I had known and worked together with at the Party headquarters. He was one of the best human beings that I met. Also a great social mind and outstanding intellect from whom I learned all that I know today about the corrupt system we live under. I will never forget what he did for me and others to understand life and ourselves. I am deeply sorry over the passing of a fine human being.

Robert K. Hofem, Carlsbad, Calif.—What a great world this would be if the world were populated with Nathan Karps! We are deeply saddened that he has left us.

Dorothy Hardin, McMinnville, Ore.—*The People* arrived yesterday and I was shocked to learn of Nathan Karp's death and so very, very sorry. I have been taking the paper for over 15 years, and when it arrived each time I would always look first for Nathan's articles. Because of his well-reasoned, vigorous writing talents I have always assumed that he was a much younger man—so

learning about his death was a terrible blow, and learning he was almost 85 was at first impossible to grasp. I wish I lived nearer so that I might attend his memorial. We have lost a fine man.

D.H. Knight, Boomer, N.C.—The news of the death of Comrade Karp was disturbing. I admired his devotion and contributions to the Party. His articles in *The People* always interested me. His passing is a great loss to the Party.

Ralph Reider, Schoolcraft, Mich.—Sorry about the death of Nathan Karp. That was a real disaster. He did so much good writing. *The People* should print many of his articles over again. Possibly several of his articles could be edited to make a permanent booklet.

Rob Faivre, Saratoga, N.Y.—Please send three copies of Nathan Karp's *Unionism* pamphlet—and accept the rest of this check as a small donation to his memorial fund. His work continues to be of value to my students and to my work as a college writing teacher and member of a teachers' union that does little more than make deals with management. I keep working at it—and look forward to sharing the pamphlet with our union president.

Joseph and Fred Bellon, Brooklyn, N.Y.—We both are saddened to read in *The People* that Nathan Karp has passed on. We both send our deepest sympathy to all his family and to every SLP man and woman who knew him. We both were inspired by his works and words. We will always remember him in our thoughts, and may he rest in peace.