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SLP Holds 45th National Convention and Banquet 

The 45th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party convened at the Holiday Inn in Santa Clara, Calif., on Friday morning, June 1, and adjourned Monday night, June 4. Although it was the smallest convention on record, it was also one of the most interesting, lively and productive of recent years. National Secretary Robert Bills greeted the delegates and called the convention to order with a brief address noting that 2001 marked the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Workingmen’s Party of the United States in July 1876. The WMP, which changed its name to Socialist Labor Party in 1877, was the immediate organizational predecessor of the modern SLP. The opening session was devoted primarily to organizing the convention, allowing time for the national secretary to present his report and for the delegates to discuss its contents in open debate. Ken Boettcher of Section San Francisco Bay Area was elected as permanent chairman and John-Paul Catuccio of Section New York City was elected as permanent recording secretary. National Secretary’s Report 

In his report, Bills reviewed the party’s accomplishments since the National Executive Committee Session in April 2000, but also identified certain failures and the persistence of several serious problems. Among the achievements cited was the increase in the number and variety of documents and information on the SLP’s official Web site. Bills also reported that the number of “hits,” or visits to the Web site, increased from 26,400 in 1999 to 49,450 in 2000, and that 2001 promised another increase. Among the problems cited by the national secretary the most threatening is the serious state of the party’s finances. Bills reported that despite the generous financial support from party members and supporters, and despite successful efforts to avoid rising costs, the party’s cash reserves declined by 25 percent from 135.1 million in 1998 to 99.5 million in 2000. Three hundred thousand fewer workers held jobs in May than in April, the Department of Labor said on June 1. The DOL also claimed that unemployment and the number of unemployed workers went down! In its monthly press release on “The Employment Situation,” the DOL said that the unemployment rate for May was 4.4 percent, or one-tenth of a percentage point less than the 4.5 percent it reported for April. According to the same release, “Total employment (135.1 million) edged down in May after seasonal adjustment.” It “edged down” 485,000 over the month to 141.3 million... The number of jobless workers was put at 8.2 million—not 300,000 more, but 200,000 less than for April! The seeming contradiction is partly explained by changes in what the DOL calls the “civilian labor force” (CLF), which it said had “dropped by 485,000 over the month to 141.5 million...” Those workers were “dropped” into another category not considered part of the CLF. Since the official unemployment rate is a percentage of the CLF, the 485,000 workers dropped from it were not included among the 6.2 million counted as unemployed in May. Accordingly, while 300,000 fewer workers held jobs in May than in April, the number of workers counted as unemployed fell by 200,000 and the unemployment rate dropped by one-tenth of a percent. The number of jobless workers whom the DOL acknowledges but excludes when calculating its official unemployment rate also grew in May. The DOL identifies them as people “who actively want a job.” Their number grew from 4.4 million in April to 4.5 million in May. When they are combined with the 8.2 million the DOL counted as unemployed the jobless total jumps to 10.7 million. We suspect that even that large number understates the true state of affairs. But don’t ask Bureau of Labor Statistics Commissioner Katharine G. Abraham to unscramble the numbers. When the DOL released its unemployment figures on June 1 she told reporters that unemployed employment in May fell “by just 19,000 following the steep loss of 162,000 jobs (as revised in April).”
General Electric Resisting Order to Dredge the Hudson

By B. G.

One of the most blatant examples of modern capitalism’s ongoing irresponsibility toward the public is General Electric’s ongoing two-fisted and shallow corporate advertising campaign to quell public concern and quirk to clean up the toxins that it has dumped over the years into New York state’s premier waterway, the Hudson River. For decades after World War II, General Electric’s New York state factories and Long Island Power Lines discharged PCBs into the river’s act.

National Secretary’s Opening Remarks to SLP Convention

The 45th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party convened at Santa Clara, Calif., on Friday, June 1. SLP National Secretary Bill Gates told the delegates and called the convention to order with the following remarks.

Greetings:

One hundred twenty-five years ago a small group of men met in a commodity hall 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. None-the-less, 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 today knows what happened there. In 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 principles that were formulated. But who abandoned the new party were those Socialists. Among the former was Adolph Strasser, ultimately president of the Socialists and founder of the American Federation of Labor, who would later tell a committee of the U.S. Senate that trade unions “have no ultimate ends.”

Despite that, a number of men gathered in Philadelphia more than a century ago to form a new political party. It was called upon to play its role in the history and development of the socialist and labor movements in America.

Today, you have gathered in this hall as an elected representative to give the 45th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party. For those of you who have not familiar with the SLP, it has played an important part in the movement designed to divide the public on the total amount it has been spending on media lobbying. Also, the February issue of Fortune magazine called upon GE to “just do it” and clean up the Hudson. GE, meanwhile, has been defending itself in the courts and the public with the necessity of cleaning up the Hudson. Without a comparable media campaign, which it refuses to engage in, the problem is almost intractable.

Do You Belong?

Do you know what the SLP stands for? Do you understand the class struggle and why the SLP calls for an end of capitalism and of its system of wage labor? Do you understand what the SLP does not mean by reforms of capitalism, and why it calls upon workers to organize Socialist Industrial Unions?

If you have been reading The People steadily for a year or more, or if you have read the literature recommended for beginning members in the literature recommended for beginning members, you may qualify for membership in the SLP. And if you qualify to be a member you probably should be a member.

For information on what membership entails, and how to apply for it, write to SLP, P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218. Ask for the SLP Membership Packet.
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:

**Convention Reaffirms Document Outlining SLP’s Basic Principles**

The Socialist Labor Party’s Declaration of Fundamental Principles is a historic document. It is based on the National Platform of the Socialist Labor Party adopted at its Eighth National Convention in October 1889, which some consider to be the “founding convention” of the party. The Declaration is subject to approval by a general vote of the party’s membership. (Continued on page 6)

social and economic problems modern-day capitalism is imposing on all species—humanity included—depend on for life. But there was widespread poverty, racial prejudice and discrimination, and urban slums. Plagues and epidemics struck cities as a result of democratic rights, the material 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 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. These long-standing problems are exacerbated by what capitalism’s apologists and sycophants refer to as the “longest economic boom in the system’s history”—a period of great claims to success 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 considerable degree of callous indifference to the working-class victims of this ruling class’s rapacity.

Moreover, today, as the “dot-com boom” takes a dive and capitalism enters into a new phase of economic bust, the U.S. working class is 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 emphasis protest and unqualified condemnation. The program that is to rid the world of economic, political and social ills that for so long have plagued it, the outmoded capitalist system—话剧 CONGRESSional representatives, the state and local governments; operated means of life and production for the profit of a few must be replaced by a new social structure a reality. It declares that if our society is to be humanized, it must be genuine socialism.

That is precisely the mission embodied in the Socialist Labor Party’s Socialistic Indictment, calling for both political and economic organization and action. That program also is based upon the SLP’s recognition and acceptance of the fact that the revolutionary change to socialism must be the class-conscious act of the working class.

Accordingly, the SLP calls upon the workers to rally under its banner for the purpose of advocating this revolutionary change. The call is being made to organizing workers and projecting a program of organization that the workers could implement toward that end. That program also represents the capitalist’s utopian socialist unions. These are essentially to mobilize the economic power of the working class and to eliminate the creating 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 entire industrial, commercial and financial system, the Socialist Industrial Unions can exercise the power and provide the decisive leverage to “swing” the revolution. Moreover, they promise to provide a reasonable and necessary foundation and structural framework for socialist society. It is the workers who will fill out the new social framework and structure; control, administration and the new social structure a reality.

Despite the many greater workers’ rights, liberty and happiness today, despite the growing poverty and misery that workers are subjected to, a world of poverty, insecurity, uncertainty and insecurity stands for all classes within our grasp. The potential to create such a society exists, but that potential can be realized only if the workers organize and elect their own leaders to organize, politically and industrially, for socialism.

The Socialist Labor Party calls upon all who realize the critical nature of our time, and who may be increasingly aware that a basic change in our society must be brought about if workers are to exercise control over working-class processes. Join us in this effort to put an end to the existing class conflict and all its malevolent results by increasing the numbers of socialist production in the hands of the people as a collective body in a cooperatively owned 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 social and economic benefits of all modern civilization.
The following is based on a speech delivered by Ken Boettcher of the People’s editorial staff at the 45th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party, given at the Convention Banquet on Saturday, June 2, at the Holiday Inn in Santa Clara, Calif.

One day, while researching an article for The People, I ran across a Weekly Worker article that put the social question in what I thought was admirably direct fashion. The headline was over a speech by Joe the National Association of Manufacturers about the SLP program for building the society of Human Beings? The article under it warned workers about the grim economy today—Shall We Die like Rats or Live Like Human Beings? The article went on to describe the grim economy and how workers all the way to the bank are being employed in an era of yet another of capitalism’s recurring depressions, the U.S. Department of Labor conceded that more than 7 million workers now work two or more jobs. Moreover, according to a 1999 report from the Economic Policy Institute, the typical married couple family worked 5,000 hours in 1998, an increase of 182 hours over the previous year.

Remember, only a few decades ago, bourgeois economists and the capitalist media predicted that automation would greatly increase leisure time for the average U.S. worker. The most confident forecasts of the eventual post-industrial leisure society without labor in which the needs of all were met by machines and the majority of the population would be left women and children. How could this be?

Today such predictions stand revealed as the pipe dreams and propaganda of capitalist stateless defenders. Significant improvements in the means and methods of production, forced by competition among capitalists, have resulted in a productive apparatus capable of providing an abundance both goods and services and leisure for all. But the greatest portion of the value of workers’ product has been expropriated by the capitalist class. The primary benefits of the increased productivity have gone to the nation accrued during this period, as they always have, to the capitalists.

The People, the editorial staff at the 45th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party, the original newpaper in the United States to call itself socialist, published on June 2, 1972, the following editorial:

To what extent can one expect the U.S. Department of Labor’s reported 16 percent increase in the number of unemployed workers to change the overall picture of capitalist society? To what extent can one expect that unemployment and poverty are but a partial picture of the present state of the U.S. working class. What of the rest, which is not comprehensible by a rationalization of which are living two or three paychecks away from officially defined poverty?

One of the many cruel and irrational features of the capitalist system is that, despite the mass unemployment the system has forced, the capitalist class is able to ensure that they profit as much as possible from it. They have waged a war against “unemployment compensation” several times, they have been able to conceal the number of people who are unemployed, and they have sometimes even claimed to profit from unemployment compensation because it causes more unemployment.

With millions working or hungry, the time for the capitalist class is almost at hand. The time for the capitalist class is almost at hand. The time for the capitalist class is almost at hand. The time for the capitalist class is almost at hand. The time for the capitalist class is almost at hand.

Calling All Jobs...
Live like Human Beings?

To put it another way: Unless the capitalist future holds the time may well come when it will be reduced to the beggar state of the Roman proletariat. The labor of the Roman proletarii was rendered useless by captives who served as an “executive committee” for the worker-majority with the economic means of life, to travel, to enjoy the fruits of their labor. It lies behind the certainty that modern computer technology, despite the promise it holds for workers, a means to realize the potential for making the world a better place, must be there in sufficient numbers to realize the class division between the workers, but nothing has thwarted the trend a bit. The drive to accumulate the gigantic piles of capital needed to develop, buy and install all this equipment lies behind the bulk of the social and economic phenomena of today. It lies behind the wave of mergers, buyouts and takeovers, behind a growing number of bankruptcies; behind the effort to dismantle the society—of workers can look forward to as long as capitalism survives.

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There is nothing really new about any of this. The pace of change brought on by technological advances may be accelerat- ing, but the social and economic effects are growing more grim with the passage of every year, but they are also part of a continuous process under capitalism. There is NO reason to believe that anything short of the abolition of capitalism will suffice to change the circumstances of the working class. Politicians and reform movements, whether conservative, have tried over and over again in the last 50 years, have passed legislation that purported to benefit the workers, but nothing has thwarted the general trend a bit. There is even less reason why capitalists are scrambling to introduce new technology. The purpose is to improve the efficiency of labor exploitation—to get more out of fewer workers.

The trend bolstered already wide dis- parities in wealth ownership—disparities that reflect the class division between the owning and the working classes. In 1989, the report noted, “the richest one percent of households held half of all outstanding shares, bonds, trusts and business equity, only slight- ly more than 85 percent of directly owned stocks and mutual funds.”

Leisure time has never been a prob- lem for the idle capitalist class, which lives by owning the means of life and expropriating the lion’s share of the value created by workers. Leisure time for workers, however, is dropping fast. As the San Jose Metro described an estimate by economist Juliet Schor in 1992, “the average employed American works the equivalent of one more month each year than he or she did 20 years ago.”

A cacophony of howls and shrieks arise from the capitalist media upon the 1999 release of The Overworked American: The Unprecedented Decline of Leisure. But further studies have shown that while the most conservative estimates workers today have at least 66 fewer leisure hours per year than they did just eight working days per year—than they did 20 years ago.

Workers are paying for decreased leisure time in a variety of ways. They have not given workers much opportunity for the full flowering of their abilities and tal- ents. With decreasing leisure time, many workers are facing a serious energy drain of energy for self-development, for interacting with their spouses, chil- dren and friends, for enjoying life in gen- eral. Life under capitalism becomes more and more a plodding routine that drains the potential for making the world a better place, not only because of the potential for worsening human misery, but because the permanent displacement of human labor on such a scale goes to the root of the capitalist system itself and may well be taking us to the threshold of what Daniel De Leon anticipated and described as “feudal-capitalism” or “plutocratic feu- dalism.” As more and more workers become redundant in and useless to capitalist society, against an industrial system that is not going to be running, the workers face an unenviable choice.

Indeed, as The People has pointed out: “The whole purpose of the socialist movement...is to solve the grave social prob- lems resulting from the march of technology monopolized by a numerically insignifi- cant capitalist class so that the mag- nificence of capitalism will be replaced by the common good. The unification, the technology hold out may benefit all of humanity...”

“What we need there in modern methods of production, whatever their po- tential for making the world a better place, for eliminating arduous toil, hunger and poverty, that potential is wiped out by a single, dominating fact. The one fact that overwhelms and nullifies the promise of all progress is private owner- ship of the means of production and distri- bution.”

“A capitalist future of profound social prob- lems resulting from the march of technology monopolized by a numerically insignifi- cant capitalist class so that the mag- nificence of capitalism will be replaced by the common good. The unification, the technology hold out may benefit all of humanity...”

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Against such a system the Socialists would raise a banner of revolt and demands the unconditional surrender of the capitalist class. In this supreme crisis, the working class will no longer wait, it will not stand idly by and see its home torn down. It will not depend upon the justice of governments. No, it is a question of our very existence and that of our children and their children. We must fight to establish the rule of the working class.

The convention also directed the National Executive Committee to “establish a standing committee on Bracero Statistics” and it adopted a set of resolutions on purchasing radio receivers in bulk, the SLP Club, and members using the Internet.

The convention elected committee members and sympathizers, and it recommended long-term contributions to the SLP. The convention also directed the delegates to devote their time to absorbing their own travel expenses, to stand in silent tribute as he read the names of SLP members who have died since the 44th National Convention, and to provide servers and what was needed to the meeting.

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The National Headquarters staff of the SLP wishes to thank all those who contributed to the 45th National Convention Banquet. The banquet, which is free to all attendees, has made it possible for us to continue The People and to attend to all the other things necessary to operate the SLP’s national offices. Without their support The People would cease and the party’s head- quarters would be shut down.

Total: $18,832.45 (as of June 15) Section San Francisco Bay Area “In memory of Joseph Gingras,” $1,500, includes the following contributions: Dale Birum $600, Steve Littellton $100, $50 each Louis Reynolds, Genevieve Gunderson, Lois Lipon; $25 each Myron Rader, Robert & Donna Bills; $50 each Gail Ann Streer, Anne Sekfeld, Darce Jacobsen, Bill Kelley; $10 each Frank & Mary Prince, Anne Karp, Jim Campbell; Diane Sex $5; $100 each R. Simon Simmons, Anna Davis; Daisy Johnson $400; Joseph H. L. Birger $750; Robert P. Burns $720; $50 each Marty Rador “In honor of the National Officers of the Sixth (1887) National Convention,” Jim Lin & Mary Baha, E.A. Irving, Section Cook County, Ill., $429.34; John Wallbridge “In memory of William Wallbridge, Section Wayne County” $1350; Michael Preston $225, $30 each Jack Radoi, Louis Reynolds, Angela Rinaldi, Donald Mattrousse, Bernd Richard, Robert Bem, Wood, F. Paul Kelly, F. Cruikshank, John G. Buchtinec, Phillip Colligan, Morris Adelman, Earl L. Shimp $13.

Yes! Send me a Bundle of The People

In his report to the 45th National Convention, National Secretary Robert Bills included the following summary of SLP Web site activities in 2000-2001:

- Adding new features and titles is an important independent means to encourage visits and returns to the site. Among the additions made last year were:
  - The Sub-national Section of the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) is available online at www.typing.org.
  - The Southwestern Section of the SLP is available online at www.byson.org.
  - The Northeast Regional Section of the SLP is available online at www.nerksp.org.
- In 2000-2001, the SLP Web site included about 215 PDF and HTML versions of SLP publications, including PDF versions of the 2000, 2001, and 2002 issues of The People. The site also includes a complete newsletter archive, with more than 1,000 issues available online.

The other new section—“Join the SLP!”—is also in...
The 45th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party unequivo- 
cally condemns the ongoing U.S. imperialist manipulation of events and 
alliances in the Middle East.

The goal of that manipulation is con- 
tinued U.S. capitalist-class control over 
the production and distribution of oil. 
The crass material interests that lie 
behind U.S. imperialism are used 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 con-
cern of U.S. imperialism, which remains 
heavily dependent upon imported oil 
and, at the same time, sells power to 
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 
economic, political, and military support 
that objective.

The Bush administrations’ overtures to 
the ruling classes of nearby African 
countries all attest to the ongoing commit-
ment of the Bush rulers to grasp power in 
the Middle East and secure their material objectives.

American foreign policy sorts out 
these arrangements in a manner 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 
the region to secure the line for U.S. capital, regardless of wheth-
er the governments involved are nomi-
nally democratic, as in the case of Israel, 
or autocratic regimes like virtually every 
other nation in the region.

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

Among the Israeli working class 
an inconceivable barrier of deceptive propa-
ganda, which promotes repressive and 
unjustified visions of an Israel rooted in the bibli-
cal past to “justify” settlement expan-
sion. Continued “stability” in the region—forced or 
planned military occupation on Palestinian lands in Jerusalem, the 
West Bank and Gaza. That propaganda 
provides the destruction of Palestinian culture and 
national identity, which has brought 
ethnic cleansing by the Israeli state. It 
refuses to recognize the right of Palest-
ian refugees to return to their homes, or the 
right to self-determination.

Palestinian resistance and anger have 
become more intense in the face of 
Israeli intransigence and cavalier use of 
military force. Israel’s response to Pal-
estinian terrorism has been state terror-
mism, carried out under the governments 
of ultra-nationalist Labor and coali-
tions of other parties. With few exceptions all 
are arrayed against a subjugated popula-
tion and have indiscriminately trained 
Israel’s superior instruments of war 
on Palestinian men, women and children.

Daily reports of this seething fer-
ment, of reciprocal attacks and 
reprisals, have prompted the Bush admin-
istration to issue warnings to both sides 
and to repeat the admonitions tireless-
ly drummed by the Israeli government 
that the “violence must stop.” But warn-
ings 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 
US. imperialism is trespassing on the 
region so much as it is allies to 
entrench its imperialist will. Whether the Bush 
administration continues this tac-
tic or promotes some new foreign 
initiative, its main goal in the region is a con-
tinued “stability” in the region—forced or 
otherwise—that will allow the oil to 
flow. The political subjugation of a popula-
tion expressing legitimate aspirations to 
national identity is inimical to interna-
tionalism and a driving force of the 
Socialist Labor Party of America.

Condemns the continued occupation of 
The West Bank and Gaza by Israel and the 
Israel’s superior instruments of war. The 
its continued domination over those areas 
and to maintain the head of the head desired 
by U.S. capital.

The Palestinian and working-class 
struggles face mutual oppression under 
the capitalist system. Therefore, the Socialist 
Labor Party of America calls upon them 
to recognize that mutual oppression is the 
common 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 
struggled to create a world of peace, 
plenty and freedom.