

Forty-Seventh  
**National Convention**

Socialist Labor Party

July 14–16, 2007

Minutes, Reports, Resolutions, Etc.



Published Online April 2010

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*PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
47TH NATIONAL CONVENTION  
SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY*

July 14–16, 2007

Holiday Inn  
Santa Clara, Calif.

**MORNING SESSION, SATURDAY, JULY 14, 2007**

National Secretary Robert Bills called the 47th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party to order at 9:15 a.m. with the following remarks:

Good morning,

It is my honor and privilege to welcome you to this, the 47th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party, and to wish you all success in your deliberations over the next few days. What you decide here will be of great importance, not only as it affects the immediate interests of the organization you directly represent, but those of the working class in whose interests the SLP has struggled for the past 117 years.

During that time, the SLP has never wavered in its determination to advance the interests of the working class in its struggle to break the bonds of wage slavery and to overcome the destructive and antisocial effects of the capitalist system. This is not to say that the SLP has not made mistakes over the years. Undoubtedly it has. There is, however, one mistake that the SLP has never made, and that is to compromise, sully, or in any way betray, the fundamental principles to which it dedicated itself and which it pursued with untiring determination across the entire span of the 20th century.

The SLP still has a historic mission to fulfill. Its work is not done. It is our purpose here to ensure that it can continue to pursue that mission until the working class heeds the Party's call to organize its political and economic might, to abolish class rule and establish the Socialist Republic.

In that respect, the task that confronts you is large. It may be too large to complete during your deliberations of a few days. Nonetheless, I am supremely confident that you will dedicate yourselves to accomplishing as much as can be reasonably ex-

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pected in so short a time and that the SLP can then get on with the work that must yet be done to accomplish its great mission.

With that thought in mind, I hereby call this 47th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party to order. Please make your nominations for a temporary chairperson.

### **Temporary Organization**

K. Boettcher was nominated. K. Boettcher accepted nomination. There being no further nominations and hearing no objections, K. Boettcher was elected temporary chairperson.

The chair called for nomination of a temporary recording secretary. D. Bills was nominated. D. Bills accepted nomination. There being no further nominations and hearing no objections, D. Bills was elected temporary recording secretary.

The chair appointed F. Prince temporary sergeant at arms.

### **Election of Credentials Committee**

The chair opened the floor to nominations. B. Cozzini, R. Cassin and R. Burns were nominated. Nominations closed. B. Cozzini and R. Burns accepted nomination. Hearing no objections, the chair declared that these two would constitute the committee.

At 9:20 a.m., the chair declared a recess until the committee is ready to report; reconvened at 9:25 a.m.

B. Cozzini presented the following report:

Donna Bills, Ken Boettcher, Bernard Bortnick, Robert Burns, Richard Cassin, Frank Cline, Henry Coretz, Bruce Cozzini, Thad Harris, John Houser and Diane Secor.

The committee reports the above 11 delegates present with either original or duplicate credentials.

Fraternally submitted,  
BRUCE COZZINI  
ROBERT BURNS  
Credentials Committee

On motion, the report was accepted and the delegates seated.

### **Election of Agenda Committee**

The chair opened the floor to nominations. B. Bortnick, T. Harris and H. Coretz were nominated. Nominations closed. These three accepting nomination and hearing no objection, the chair declared that Bortnick, Harris and Coretz to constitute the committee.

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At 10:40 a.m., the chair declared a recess until the committee is ready to report; reconvened at 9:50 a.m.

B. Bortnick presented the following report:

Your committee finds the stated agenda satisfactory and recommends its adoption. The room is open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

### *Saturday Morning Session, July 14*

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)
5. Adjournment to Afternoon Session

### *Saturday Afternoon Session, July 14*

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

### *Saturday Evening Session, July 14*

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Report of Sergeant at Arms
4. Discussion of National Secretary's Report (if necessary)
5. Unfinished Business
6. New Business (including resolutions from delegates)
7. Determination of Committees
8. Referring Matters to Committees
9. Election of Committees
10. Adjournment to Next Session

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### *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 yours,  
BERNARD BORTNICK  
JOHN THADIEU HARRIS III  
HENRY CORETZ  
Agenda Committee

On motion, the report was adopted.

### **Permanent Organization**

- On motion, K. Boettcher was elected permanent chairperson.  
On motion, B. Cozzini was elected permanent vice chairperson.  
On motion, D. Bills was elected permanent recording secretary.  
F. Prince was appointed permanent sergeant at arms.

### **Election of Mileage Committee**

The chair called for nominations. D. Bills was nominated. Nominations closed. There being no objections, the chair declared D. Bills 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 two visitors present.

### **Report of National Secretary**

The National Secretary read the following section of his report:

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### 1. National Headquarters

The National Headquarters staff consists of two people, which it has since September 2001. They are Comrade Donna Bills and the National Secretary (who also acts as Financial Secretary and Editor of *The People*).

Comrade Bills acts as assistant to the National Secretary (and by extension as assistant to the Financial Secretary and Editor), general secretary, filing clerk, bookkeeper, subscription clerk, New York Labor News agent, janitor and, among other things, “publisher” and Editor of the *SLP Newsletter*. Comrade Bills also drops off and picks up the daily postal box mail.

The National Secretary, apart from the duties mentioned, acts as shipping clerk for the New York Labor News and usually hauls off the garbage and recycling.

I could, no doubt, add many details about what a National Secretary does and no doubt Comrade Bills could do the same with regard to her own daily routine. We work independently as a rule, but consult on most important things. One thing we work on together is packing and shipping *The People*.

By working staggered shifts, we manage to keep the National Office open 10 to 12 hours most days. Comrade Bills works from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. Discounting the SLP work I do at home, I generally am in the office from 11:30 a.m. to 10:00 or 11:00 p.m. most Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. most Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. most Fridays, and 9:30 or 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. most Saturdays. On certain occasions, as when we are putting together an issue of *The People* with Comrade Boettcher or I am preparing a report such as this one, we will also work on a Sunday.

The offices themselves, and the expense they involve, have not changed much from the following description, which I gave in my report to the 46th National Convention in 2006:

The National Headquarters have occupied the same building in San Jose, Calif., since September 2000. The premises enclose 1,950 square feet of space, of which about 1,150 square feet are office and 800 square feet warehouse and storage space. The warehouse area stores the archives, the shipping and some office supplies, the literature stock, and serves as the shipping and mailing room.

The expense involved with maintaining the staff inside these headquarters has not changed by much since 2004, either, at least not in terms of dollars and cents, except that the monthly charges

for health insurance by Kaiser-Permanente have increased considerably. What these expense do represent, however, is a larger proportion of annual expenses, which declined last year when compared with 2005, and total receipts, which also declined.

In my report to last year's NEC Session, I quoted from a report adopted by the 46th National Convention, which stated, in part, "a National Headquarters and staff are essential to the performance of the vital functions of the Party," to which I added:

A headquarters, a staff and efforts to increase the Party's influence all being necessary—and the Party's financial condition and prospects being what they are—some hard work and hard thinking are needed to ensure that these resources are kept in place.

Not much has changed in that respect, either. The connection between the National Headquarters and the state of the Party's finances is so closely connected and interdependent that they can be difficult to separate.

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

The National Secretary read the following section of his report:

## **2. Party Finances**

Certified public accountant R. Leonard Stickler has reviewed the financial records kept by the National Office for every year since the Party moved its headquarters from Brooklyn to the West Coast in 1974. Several months ago, however, Mr. Stickler's daughter informed us that her father had been ill and that he may decide to retire. She also is an accountant, however, and agreed to prepare the Party's taxes and to review the National Office's financial records for 2006. Although she completed the taxes so that the National Office could file the necessary reports with the federal and state governments, she has not completed the annual report. Accordingly, the National Office has been delayed in submitting the annual financial report to the membership, as provided by Article VIII, Section 3(a), of the Party's Constitution. The National Office will submit that report to the membership as soon as it becomes available.

However, based on Comrade Donna Bills' recordkeeping, with which Mr. Stickler has rarely found fault, I can provide the convention with the following information:

On January 1, 2006, the National Office had cash reserves of

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\$149,964.20, as against \$213,104.06 on January 1, 2005. Expenses for the year came to \$123,835.70, as compared with \$134,180.81 for 2005. Receipts came to \$52,770.68 in 2006, as against \$70,770.95 in 2005. Contributions to Party funds received came to \$38,972.12 last year, as against \$49,959.35 received the year before. The balance on hand as of December 31, 2006, was \$78,629.18, and the deficit for 2006 came to \$71,065.02, as against \$63,409.86 for 2005. Contributions to Party funds accounted for 74 percent of all receipts for 2006, as compared with 71 percent in 2005.

From January 1 to June 30 of the current year, expenses came to \$56,052.76 and receipts to \$32,433.39, of which \$24,755.05 (approximately 76 percent of all receipts for the current year) came from contributions to Party funds. The deficit for 2007 (as of June 30) came to \$23,619.37.

\*

To put the present situation into perspective, a brief review of the Party's financial history over the past several years may be in order.

On November 30, 2003, the National Office had less than \$55,000.00 in cash reserves, of which just over \$20,200.00 was in escrow. Most of the funds held in escrow represented three months' salary and hospitalization for Comrade Donna Bills and me. The NEC had set that account up in 2002, when it seemed likely that the SLP would have to give up its headquarters and eliminate the two of us from the payroll. In other words, after deducting that "severance package," the SLP had only \$40,000.00 in ready cash.

At that point, a deficit of about \$31,900.00 had built up for the year. It could have been much worse, but the membership and other supporters of the SLP knew what the situation was and responded to our appeals for increased financial support with considerable generosity. Nonetheless, had monthly deficits kept on accumulating at that rate (\$2,900.00 a month), we could only have lasted another 12 or 13 months.

By December 31, 2003, however, the National Office had \$281,375.00 in cash reserves. The reason, of course, is that Comrade Nathan Goldberg's estate was settled and the proceeds distributed with a minimum of delay. Had that settlement been challenged or postponed for a year or two, which is not uncommon with estates involving wills, it may have been too late to be of help to the SLP. Fortunately, however, Comrade Goldberg had planned his



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estate with care and his wish to benefit the SLP was fulfilled within months of his death.

Since then, however, the Party's cash reserves have steadily declined, as those of you who look at the bottom of the monthly financial statements printed in the *SLP Newsletter* know. By December 31, 2004, they had declined to approximately \$213,114.00, to approximately \$149,850.00 at the end of 2005 and to approximately \$78,000 at the end of last year.

\*

Today, the SLP confronts a financial crisis that is even greater than the one that had arisen before the end of 2003. As of June 30, the Party's cash reserves were down to \$55,169.00, or to \$39,869.00 after deducting the "severance package" mentioned. No major estate is in the works and the deficit for the year had climbed to \$23,619.00 by the end of last month. At that rate of depletion, about \$3,937.00 a month, the SLP will be flat broke by the end of April 2008. However, that outcome assumes that the deficits do not increase.

The fundamental question that confronts this convention, and against which all others pale into insignificance, is what to do about this financial crisis? Some knowledge of how the NEC has attempted to grapple with this problem may be of assistance to you. Although more than half of the representatives comprising this convention are members of the NEC, bringing together the pertinent correspondence from recent months may trigger ideas and suggestions from which some viable course of action can be developed and acted on.

On April 22, Comrade Ken Boettcher of the NEC sent the following e-letter to me:

Dear Comrade Bills:

I have been thinking about our financial and human resources and the upcoming National Convention. The time for this may have been some time ago, but it seems to me that the Party at this critical juncture might be better served by canceling the convention and substituting an emergency session of the NEC, with invited advisors from among our organizers and members-at-large, to attempt to structure a retrenchment that might enable us to go on, or at least that would enable us to dissolve in an orderly fashion that preserves something of what the SLP has stood for these long years.

Before I make a motion to such an effect, I would like to know

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what other NEC members and you think of the idea.

Fraternally submitted,  
KEN BOETTCHER  
NEC Member

I could not respond to Comrade Boettcher's email immediately and decided to postpone forwarding it to the other members of the NEC until I could. I delayed, in part, because of the implications of Comrade Boettcher's email, but also because I believed I understood why he had written it just when he did. I forwarded his email to the other NEC members on April 27, together with the following reply:

Ken Boettcher  
NEC Member

Dear Comrade Boettcher:

This will acknowledge receipt of your email of April 22, under heading of "Motion." Thank you.

For the sake of the other NEC members I should start by stating that what prompted your email, at least in part, was two recent conversations at the National Office, one of which included Comrade Donna Bills. The thrust of those conversations was that it might be time to wrap things up by permanently suspending *The People* and closing down the headquarters. The catalysts for those discussions were the mental and physical burden of putting out *The People* under worsening circumstances and the drain on the Party's funds.

As to the latter, only \$53,000 of the \$73,000 now in banks counts as "ready cash." Most of the \$20,000 held in escrow represents the three months' severance package the NEC established for Donna and me several years ago. Between income and expenses, last year's deficit came to \$71,065.02 and averaged \$5,922.09 a month. At that rate, we can expect the Party to go broke in less than nine months.

The lease is up at the end of July, i.e., only weeks after the convention. Renewing it without the cash to cover it—much less the cash needed for salaries, hospitalization, etc., without which the office would simply become a warehouse—would be reckless. It is a real dilemma, however, because closing down is no simple matter. It would take months, partly because of all the records and files that must be gone through before they can be shipped to Wisconsin, and partly because of all the old newspapers, the microfilm, the library, office equipment and supplies, literature and shipping supplies, etc., that we would have to find new homes for or dispose of in other ways. Worse, moving probably is not an option. For one thing, smaller does not necessarily mean cheaper. Much smaller than we have now most likely means

moving from the R&D [research and development] type space we now occupy into office space, which is usually much more expensive by the square foot. You never know until you start looking, of course, but that has been the experience. Second, however, smaller also means paring down the same files, records and other things mentioned above because there would be no room for it all.

As for the former, it is too late to cancel the convention, primarily because of the time-consuming procedures involved. Apart from that, the composition of an “emergency session” with “advisers” would not be much different from the convention. All the NEC members are supposed to attend the convention, and all the organizers who would be likely to accept invitations to attend an “emergency session” as “advisers” are the ones who are coming to the convention. We might hope for a better representation from among the members-at-large but . . . I do not know whom there might be to invite, particularly when you could say that all who might act as “advisers” were “invited” to the convention, with what result the ballot on delegates shows. Every Party member who pays attention knows the situation, but that did nothing to lengthen the ballot. They know that National Conventions and NEC Sessions cannot solve the underlying problems, the ones summed up in the Appendix to the 2003 NEC Session proceedings, and that time for that is running out.

Incidentally, that and the other things mentioned explain why I have not scheduled a National Convention Banquet or launched a major fund drive. As I mentioned to you, it struck me as almost immoral to launch a major fund drive when our prospects for surviving beyond the end of the year seem so dismal and when it seems unlikely that we could raise enough to extend the Party’s life much beyond that. I would have done it by now if the response to the Press Forward Fund had come from a larger number of people than it did. Section Cleveland, and particularly the Comrades Simmons, accounted for so much of what came in, however, that the effort would have been a near flop without them.

We are in the same predicament we were in just before the Goldberg estate came through. We kept going then because we knew what we stood to gain from that estate. Nothing like that is out there, at least nothing of which I am aware—no Goldberg or Gannon estates, and no Julia Jannings to come in from “left field.” Keeping the office open for another two years means raising between \$250,000 and \$300,000 within that time, or between \$10,400 and \$12,500 a month, on average, for each of those two years. I have trouble seeing that happen, partly because contributions today come nowhere near that level and partly because there are too few people to press for that kind of support.

Well, I do not believe there are any “advisers” to help the NEC

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out, but there is plenty to discuss, and the sooner the better.

Fraternally yours,  
ROBERT BILLS  
National Secretary

Several days passed before any member of the NEC responded to this exchange. On April 30, I received the following from NEC member Diane Secor:

Dear Comrade Bills:

Re: Your April 27, 2007 email response to Comrade Ken Boettcher's idea of holding an "emergency session of the NEC, with invited advisors from among our organizers and members at large."

It is certainly true that this is an "emergency" situation. As you said in your April 27 email, NEC members, section organizers, and members-at-large, who volunteered and were elected to serve as delegates, will already be at this National Convention. I know that we have been hanging by a thread for [a] long time. I don't know exactly what the answer is. Before we were able to suspend publication of *The People* and resume publication. Maybe our focus should be on maintaining some type of a structure that would enable us to temporarily suspend publication and resume it at some time in the future. The fact that estates do come in from "left field" shows that there are SLP supporters who believe that the SLP program has enough merit to leave their inheritance to the SLP. I don't remember all of the details on this off hand, but I do remember when Comrade Nat Karp talked about large estates left to the SLP by sympathizers and also by members. This didn't happen at times when the SLP was popular; in fact, we seemed to have received these estates when this enabled us to survive.

I understand your rationale for not holding a National Convention Banquet or a "major fund drive." Maybe we can think of a fundraising drive or an event, which would not consume a large amount of resources. I know that this is easier said than done. I don't have the talent and skills for fund-raising and public speeches, but someone like me can be in a position of support in various ways to those who do have those skills.

Anyway, these are my thoughts for now.

Fraternally,  
DIANE SECOR  
NEC Member

I do not find that I wrote a response to Comrade Secor's email, but I forwarded it to the other members of the NEC on May 2. The next and only other member of the NEC to respond was Com-

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rade Bernard Bortnick, who wrote the following on May 6:

Dear Comrade Bills,

Many years ago, when I was still living in the Bay Area, and when the NEC was drawn from that area, a now deceased Comrade . . . made the suggestion to me that it was time for the SLP to fold up its tent and that he couldn't see how we could continue. I was appalled at the suggestion because we still had relatively strong resources, although I cannot remember what our financial resources were at the time. That was over 20 years ago.

Months ago, I privately suggested to one of the members of the NEC that I didn't see how we could continue not only financially but considering the taxing burden on you and Donna. As I recall I got a somewhat icy response, the same response as I had given . . . [the Bay Area comrade], with that NEC member expressing how demoralizing it would be for you and Donna if we were to close down. I didn't pursue that discussion with the rest of the NEC.

Well, your response to Comrade Boettcher's yet unformulated motion is definitive. We cannot continue and it is time to wrap things up in as expeditious and tidy manner as possible. You just cannot argue with the diminishing financial resources and the time lines. Wrapping things up has got to be a major focus of the convention I believe. Even if a major benefactor would suddenly appear, I would not be in favor of continuing as we have, especially in terms of *The People* with the thought in mind that we should go to an electronic format exclusively and a different publishing schedule.

I'm not going to repeat the numbers and other limitations you cited in paragraphs 3 and 4 of your letter of April 27th, 2007, but they could be reduced to bullet points and the imperative directions logically fall into place.

Fraternally,  
B. BORTNICK  
NEC Member

This I did answer, on May 8, as follows:

Dear Comrade Bortnick:

This will acknowledge receipt of your email of May 6, under heading of "Re: Motion." Thank you.

I only wish [the Bay Area] Comrade . . . were still here to spur us on with that same good-natured pessimism that he also shared with me, starting with the centennial celebration 17 years ago. That alone might be enough to see us through the year 2024, or 2027 if your recollection of it is correct.

Unfortunately, however, he is not here for that, or anything else. Even so, I am not entirely convinced that the end is now or

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that we “just cannot argue with the diminishing financial resources and the time lines.” It may be possible to stretch things out for another 18–20 months, provided we could make all the right pieces fall into all the right places. Here are several possible “scenarios,” some positive, some not so positive:

The balance on hand as of April 30 was \$68,469.00, of which \$15,370.00 represents the “severance package” set aside for Donna and me. Accordingly, the working balance as of May 1 was \$53,099.00.

Expenses for the first four months of 2007 added up to \$35,364.00 and income amounted to \$25,044.00, for a deficit of \$10,320.00. At that rate of depletion (\$2,580.00 a month), the \$53,099.00 in ready cash as of May 1 could see us through the next 20 months, i.e., through December 2008.

Deficits averaging \$2,580.00 a month may seem optimistic, given last year’s deficit of \$71,065.00. At last year’s rate of depletion (\$5,922.00 a month), the \$53,099.00 in ready cash as of May 1 would only see us through the next eight months, i.e., through the end of the current year. (I based my remarks to Comrade Boettcher on this set of figures.)

I probably do not need to add that all income might disappear if the NEC were to announce a decision to close the office and suspend all operations. Deficits would then increase to equal expenses, which have averaged \$8,841.00 a month this year. At that rate of depletion, the \$53,099.00 would disappear at the end of six months, i.e., by the end of October.

(Incidentally, that would not change even by subtracting the cost of printing and circulating the three issues of *The People* scheduled for publication within that period [about \$1,650.00 each, or \$4,950.00 for all three]. The effect would be to reduce the \$8,841.00 monthly deficit by \$825.00 to about \$8,016.00.)

If future expenses were to increase to last year’s levels of \$12,236.00 a month and all income were to disappear, the \$53,099.00 would be gone at the end of four months, i.e., by August 31. The convention will cost less than in 2005 (\$8,246.00) but more than last year’s NEC Session (\$2,755.00)—probably between \$4,700.00—\$4,800.00, which will have to be absorbed if a fund is not raised to offset the expense.

Accordingly, while I agree when you say that any decision should “be a major focus of the convention,” I do not think we need to jump to any irrevocable conclusion before then.

To this point I have only talked about the money. For the rest, I may be tired, but I am not “demoralized,” at least not in the moral sense, and no decision the NEC might make about pulling the plug on the SLP could cause me to lose my convictions. I cannot imagine what would have led anyone to suggest such a thing to you. Sure, I am less optimistic about the SLP’s survival than I have been in the past—I would have to be blind not to be

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somewhat pessimistic about that—but the Party’s survival and my personal Marxist-De Leonist convictions are not the same things. However, I rather think the pessimism of others did more to bring us to this pass than my own. I failed to help them overcome that despite all the upbeat prose in my reports to National Conventions and NEC Sessions. I am very sorry about that.

I would be deeply saddened if the SLP went belly-up, but not crushed by it. I would hope I could still keep on doing its work in one way or another. I might have to get another job until I become eligible for full Social Security in February 2010, and I may have to keep working part time after that to keep body and soul together. That, however, is no reason why I could not continue working on De Leon’s writings, doing something about an SLP history, or doing something substantive about SIUism in a globalized (and far from “deindustrialized”) economy. I could not hope to do all of those things, not at that age (too little time), but at least one of them.

For now, however, my inclination is to fight to extend the Party’s life as long as possible. Last year I promised to become more aggressive as a fund-raiser. My failure to keep that promise to this point may have some of our members puzzled, though others may see that failure as a sign of the times, as the writing on the wall: “Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.” Perhaps it is still possible to scratch out something better, if we buckle down to the task.

Fraternally yours,  
ROBERT BILLS  
National Secretary

In spite of the dire implications of what Comrades Boettcher and Bortnick had written, I heard nothing more on the subject from any other member of the NEC until June 27, when Comrade Secor included the following at the end of an email on another subject:

There are some things that we cannot do as a small organization with financial problems. But there is still a lot that we can do. The SLP Sentinel Fund is an excellent opportunity for us to build up our organization and to get new sympathizers involved, who may have membership potential. There is so much that we can do and new opportunities may come up. As I said in my April 30 email, I remember when Comrade Nat Karp talked about large estates left to the SLP by sympathizers and also by members; this happened when we never expected it. I think that the main point is to stick together as men and women of the SLP and to concentrate on what we do have and what [we] can do, as opposed to what we can’t



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do. . . . SLP men and women of principle need each other to keep “fighting the good fight.”

Passing over the central theme of Comrade Secor’s email, I responded to the preceding paragraph on June 27, as follows:

Dear Comrade Secor:

\* \* \*

The SLP Sentinel Fund will do next to nothing to save the SLP from bankruptcy. The most we can hope from it, assuming it reaches the \$15,000 goal I set for it, is to wipe out most (not all) of the deficit for the first five months of the year. It can do nothing to build up the Party’s cash reserves or to prevent us from going completely broke before the end of the year, if not sooner.

We can do absolutely nothing without money. No estate is in the offing. Even if one turned up tomorrow morning, it often takes months, even years, to settle one of any size and for the proceeds to be distributed. However, none exists, at least none that I know of, and we certainly cannot plan a future—any future—without funds. To run the National Office, even at its low ebb of today, requires, at a minimum, \$125,000 a year. To do any outreach or produce any literature (and do something with it other than stock the shelves and reduce the cash reserves even further) would take substantially more.

Apart from that, the lease expires at the end of next month and we do not have the money to renew it, not even enough to extend it for one year. I hope I can get us onto a month-to-month basis, but only because that would give Donna and me a few months to dispose of everything inside. After that, Party funds will be down to, or close to, the three-months’ severance package set aside for us. Even that does not afford us much comfort, of course, because while we are too young to “retire” we are too old to expect to find anything approximating “good jobs” with “good salaries,” etc., within three months’ time. Donna at least has “marketable” skills. She should be able to find something. I, on the other hand, have no marketable skills and will have to settle for whatever I can get. We will have to find something to keep body and soul together, however, so that whatever “new opportunities may come up” are not likely to involve the two of us. Indeed, we will count ourselves fortunate if we can avoid having to move out of the area.

Comrade Goldberg gave us two or three years to turn things around, but we did not do it. Now, barring a miracle, I fear the jig is about up.

Fraternally yours,  
ROBERT BILLS  
National Secretary



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On June 29 Comrade Bortnick wrote and asked if I didn't "think that the purport of that [what I had written to Comrade Secor] should be put into some sort of preliminary commentary to prime the delegates and members as to what might be expected at the convention?" Not being clear on precisely what Comrade Bortnick had in mind, we exchanged a few emails during the day, toward the end of which Comrade Bortnick wrote the following:

Dear Comrade Bills,

I was referring to your reference to the prospect of our having to close down operations, at least as we have known them—in other words impending bankruptcy. I guess all of this will have to be sorted out at the convention. In retrospect it is too late to try to begin outlining the dire straits we are approaching. Everyone should be aware of that anyhow.

Fraternally,  
B. BORTNICK

This particular exchange ended with the following in reply:

Bernard Bortnick  
NEC Member

Dear Comrade Bortnick:

Every member of the SLP has received the same monthly financial statement that goes to the NEC since we resumed publication of the *SLP Newsletter* in June 2002. Every member who has paid attention to those reports should know how close we came to total collapse before the Goldberg estate came through and how things have gone since then. If those who are coming to the National Convention don't know as much about the current situation as the NEC members do, I don't see what I can tell them to bring them up to speed.

When the financial statement for June goes out it will show a bank balance of about \$55,170.00 and a deficit for the year of about \$23,620.00. From that they should be able to tell that monthly deficits have averaged about \$3,940.00 since January 1 and that only 14 more deductions of that size can be made from the balance before the funds are all gone. What the organizers (Burns and Coretz) and the regular delegates (Cassin, Cline and Houser) might not be able to tell is that \$15,000 of the \$55,170.00 has been set aside as a severance package for Donna and me and that the working balance as of June 30 will be about \$40,170, from which only 10 deductions of \$3,940.00 can be made before the money is all gone.

If we could reduce those monthly bites by \$500–\$600, we might be able to stretch things out for 12 months instead of 10. That then might enable us to extend the lease for another year.

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However, without knowing what the landlord might want from us rent wise, or what increase Kaiser-Permanente might want for 2008, the stretch might be just beyond our reach. If the convention can figure out how to extend our reach to cover the next 12 or 13 months it will have done something worth doing.

Fraternally yours,  
ROBERT BILLS  
National Secretary

The only NEC member to respond to this exchange was Comrade Secor, who wrote as follows on July 1:

Dear Comrade Bills:

I understand what you are saying about the SLP's financial condition. I think what you said to Comrade Bortnick is more realistic than my previous assessments. This is what we should aim for at the convention: "If the convention can figure out how to extend our reach to cover the next 12 or 13 months it will have done something worth doing."

With best wishes, as always,

Fraternally,  
DIANE SECOR  
NEC Member

To avoid any misunderstanding, I responded to Comrade Secor on the following day, in part, as follows:

Diane Secor  
NEC Member

Dear Comrade Secor:

This will acknowledge receipt of your email of July 1 . . . in reference to what I wrote to Comrade Bortnick about the Party's finances.

What I wrote to Comrade Bortnick about reducing the monthly deficits by another \$500-\$600 was based entirely on what has happened during the first six months of the current year. As I mentioned to him, the financial statement for June will show a cumulative deficit of about \$23,620.00 since January 1, which averages out to about \$3,940.00 for each of the first six months of the current year.

What I did not remind him of, however, is that the deficit for last year (\$71,065.00) averaged out to \$5,922.00 a month. In other words, members and other financial supporters of the SLP already have reduced the monthly shortfalls by an average of \$1,982.00 a month, at least for the first half of the year.

Now, then, is it realistic to hope that they might lop another \$500-\$600 off during each of the next six months? Or is it more

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realistic to think that our friends might be about tapped out and that monthly deficits will soon start moving back up toward the higher levels of last year and the two years immediately preceding it?

The problem for the convention is that it will have to make its decisions without knowing the answer to those questions. What makes it worse is that smaller deficits can only postpone the end by a few months. The only way to postpone the end indefinitely is by eliminating the deficits and replacing them with consistent surpluses, no matter how small.

Fraternally yours,  
ROBERT BILLS  
National Secretary

On July 7, Comrade Bortnick wrote the following to suggest that the time had come to suspend *The People* as a cost-saving measure:

Dear Comrade Bills,

I see no recourse for the Party than to suspend publication of *The People* in order to conserve funds and possibly see us through the year. In doing this I see a possible savings of \$1,955 or in that neighborhood accordingly:

*Fricke Press.....	\$632.00
*Bulk Mail.....	\$128.68
*Bulk Postage.....	\$500.00
*Periodical Postage.....	\$468.72
*San Jose Mailing .....	\$226.33
Total.....	\$1,955.72

Regarding the list above, which are correct, wrong, or possible additional savings?

Fraternally,  
B. BORTNICK  
NEC Member

Some of the figures and categories listed by Comrade Bortnick were incorrect. To answer his question about their accuracy, and to make some added observations, I replied with the following later that day:

Bernard Bortnick  
NEC Member

Dear Comrade Bortnick:

This will acknowledge receipt of your email of this morning, July 7, under heading of "June Financial Statement." Thank you.

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I am attaching an itemized “cost analysis” on the July-August issue of *The People*, which Donna put together last week. It shows that the issue cost about \$1,794.00 to print and ship, or just over 16 percent of the \$11,082.00 spent in June. Sixteen percent is nothing to sneeze at, of course, but without some indication of how much income *The People* generates, it is impossible to determine its net effect on Party finances. The net effect is what counts.

At any rate, with the convention only one week away, it is too late for the current NEC to do anything either way. The July-August issue is history and the September-October issue does not go to press until August 15, i.e., one full month after the convention. The convention can decide, or leave it for the new NEC or the National Office to make that decision.

Making it to the end of the year is not a problem, provided the landlord agrees to a month-to-month arrangement after the lease expires this month. We had \$39,869.00 to work with as of June 30. That should be enough to cover rent, utilities, telephone, the Internet, Kaiser, the payroll and payroll taxes through December, with \$6,000.00 to \$7,000.00 to spare, and discounting all probable income.

The real problem is that we cannot keep up with monthly deficits of \$7,100.00 and \$6,200.00 a month, such as those shown for June and May, respectively, and hope to survive much beyond December. To keep up with deficits of that size would mean cutting expenses in half. That might be possible if I fired Donna and moved myself into an office that costs half as much, but apart from all the other ramifications such drastic measures imply, we could not act on them until two or three months after the convention. There is too much to sift through and dispose of in shorter time.

Fraternally yours,  
ROBERT BILLS  
National Secretary

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To repeat: The fundamental question that confronts this convention, and against which all others pale into insignificance, is what to do about this financial crisis? As mentioned, the Party’s cash reserves are now down to \$55,169.00, or to \$39,869.00 after allowing for the “severance package” mentioned. No major estate is in the works, as in 2003, and the deficit for the year had climbed to \$23,619.00 by the end of last month. At that rate of depletion, which has averaged about \$3,937.00 a month, the SLP will be flat broke by the end of April 2008. However, that outcome assumes that the monthly deficits do not increase. Unfortunately, there are

signs that they may do just that. As indicated above, the deficits for May and June reached \$6,200.00 and \$7,100.00. At that rate, the Party can expect to exhaust its remaining cash reserves within the next five to six months.

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

At 10:45 a.m., the chair declared a 10-minute recess; reconvened at 11:05 a.m.

The National Secretary presented the following section of his report:

### **3. State of Organization**

#### *a. Membership Changes*

The National Executive Committee accepted seven applications for membership in 2006. Three national members-at-large died during the year. The NEC dropped 13 others for nonpayment of dues and accepted one resignation.

No section reported accepting an application for membership last year. Section Wayne County reported the loss of two members who died. Section San Francisco reported the death of one member and Section Cook County also reported the death of one member.

Apart from these changes, the National Office removed the names of two “members” of Section New York City. One of the two had submitted his resignation several years ago, but the section never reported acting on it. The other moved out of the country almost immediately after the section had accepted his application. No one connected to the Party has heard from him in years.

The SLP, accordingly, sustained a net loss of 16 members in 2006.

#### *b. Sections and Members-at-Large*

The SLP began and ended the 2006 calendar year with seven sections. Six of the seven were at full strength throughout year, but the organizer of Section Houston reported that all but two of its members had either resigned or failed to respond to efforts at contacting them. The NEC did not move to disband the section immediately because Article IV of the Party’s Constitution allows any section in such circumstances a grace period of 12 months in which to bring itself back up to the required minimum of five members.

Article IV of the Party’s Constitution also prohibits sections from

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meeting and transacting any business with less than three members in attendance. It is not surprising then that Section Houston held no business meetings in 2006. Sections Cook County and New York City also failed to report holding a single business meeting during the year. The other four sections each held 11 business meetings last year. Section San Francisco Bay Area reported an average attendance of six members at its meetings. Section Wayne County reported three; Section Cleveland, four and Section Portland reported an average attendance of three members at its business meetings.

Seventy-seven national members-at-large resided in 29 states as of December 31, 2006.

### *c. International*

It appears that the SLP of Canada failed to recover from the accidental death of its National Secretary, Comrade Doug Irving, two years ago and is defunct. I do not know how many members the Party had in 2004, but only one has attempted to maintain any contact with the SLP of America. However, Severino Majkus of Croatia does keep in touch, as do several former members of what once were the SLPs of Australia and Great Britain, including Brian Blanchard of Australia, Tom McGregor of Scotland and James Plant of England.

Comrade Plant is the most active of these. Although health considerations have prevented him from resuming publication of the newsletter he started for circulation among his European contacts a few years ago, he continues to sell SLP literature and subscriptions for *The People*. In addition, he has developed into a semi-regular contributor of articles for publication in the Party's official journal.

### **Membership Changes (2006)**

Sections	Admitted	Died	Dropped	Resigned	Expelled	Transfers		Net
						in	Out	
SF Bay Area	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	-1
Cook Co.		1						-1

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Wayne Co.		2						-2
N.Y. City			2					-2
Cleveland								
Portland								
Houston								
Nat'l MaLs	7	3	13	1				-10
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>				<b>-16</b>

To date in 2007 (June 7):

Admitted: Nat'l mal—3

Died: Section Cleveland—1

Dropped: Nat'l mal—3

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

The National Secretary presented the following section of his report:

**4. General Activities**

*a. The People and Leaflet Distribution*

Four sections and 13 national members-at-large reported a distribution of 28,065 copies of *The People* last year. The distribution reported by sections was 18,885 copies, or 67 percent of all copies distributed last year. Section San Francisco Bay Area reported a distribution of 9,725 copies. Section Cleveland followed with 6,300 copies. Then came Section Portland, which reported a distribution of 2,820 copies. Last on the list was Section Houston, which reported distributing 40 copies. The distribution reported by national members-at-large accounted for 9,180 copies, or 33 percent of all copies distributed in 2006.

Four sections and 13 national members-at-large also reported a distribution of 11,471 leaflets in 2006. Sections accounted for 53 percent of that number. Section Cleveland reported a distribution of 3,875. The others were Sections San Francisco Bay Area (1,954), Cook County (250) and Portland (22). National members-at-large reported distributing 5,370 leaflets during the year, or 47 percent of all leaflets distributed.

*b. Additional Activities*

Sections and national members-at-large reported holding 39

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SLP discussion meetings open to the public in 2006. Section Cleveland held 20; Section Portland, 11; Section San Francisco Bay Area, 7; and a national member-at-large reported holding one. Section San Francisco Bay Area also distributed and sold SLP literature at five public rallies and Section Cleveland did the same on two occasions during the year.

### 2006 Distribution

<b>Sections</b>	<b>Leaflets</b>	<b><i>The People</i></b>
S.F. Bay Area	1,954	9,725
Cook Co. (partial report)	250	0
Wayne County	0	0
New York City (no report)	0	0
Cleveland	3,875	6,300
Portland	22	2,820
Houston (partial report)	0	40
Subtotal	6,101	18,885
Nat'l MaLs (13 reporting)	5,370	9,180
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,471</b>	<b>28,065</b>

### 2006 Public Meetings

<b>Sections</b>	<b>Classroom Lectures</b>	<b>Discussion Meetings</b>	<b>Public Rallies &amp; Forums (distribution/tabling)</b>	<b>Study Classes</b>
S.F. Bay Area		7	5	
Cook County (partial)				
Wayne County				
N.Y. City (no report)				
Cleveland		20	2	
Portland		11		
Houston (partial)				
Mbrs-at-Large		1		
<b>Totals</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>7</b>	



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### Newsstands (2006)

Locations	Commercial <i>(includes bookstores)</i>		Self-Serve		Sales	Costs	Net
	Jan	Dec	Jan	Dec			
SFBA	4	4	2	1	0	67.20	-67.20
Cook Co.	2	2	0	0	0	9.60	-9.60
Cleveland	3	3	0	0	0	14.40	-14.40
Portland	0	0	2	4	60.00	136.00	-76.00
Nat'l Org.	7	6	0	0	0	32.00	-32.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>60.00</b>	<b>259.20</b>	<b>-199.20</b>

Note: Commercial sites generally keep all sales money.

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

The National Secretary presented the following section of his report:

### 5. Party Press and Literature

#### *a. The People*

*The People* currently circulates to 49 states (the dark spot being West Virginia), the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and 17 other countries on four continents.<sup>1</sup>

The National Office, with writing and technical assistance from several members in the field, published six bimonthly issues of *The People* last year, three of which were of 12 pages. About 53,000 copies came off the press during the year. The average press run for each issue was 8,833 copies, of which about 8,047 went into circulation.

The subscription department entered 162 subscriptions and removed 196 names from the subscription list in 2006, for a net loss of 34. The sources for subscriptions received and entered included National Office contacts (13), *The People's* subscription coupon (13), the Party's website (7), gift subscriptions (23), complimentary subscriptions entered by sections and members-at-large (47), James

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<sup>1</sup> Australia, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Philippines, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

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Plant in England (11) and miscellaneous (48).

The subscription department also mailed renewal notices to 315 readers whose subscriptions were due to expire in 2006. In response, 189 readers renewed their subscriptions and 126 failed to renew. Accordingly, the subscription renewal rate for 2006 was 60 percent, down from the renewal rate of 65 percent recorded for 2005.

*The People* had 16 commercial outlets in January 2006 and 15 at the end of December. Four of those outlets fell within the jurisdiction of Section San Francisco Bay Area, three within that of Section Cleveland and two within the jurisdiction of Section Cook County. The National Office mailed bundles to seven bookstores and newsstands in January and to six in December, which accounts for the loss of one commercial outlet during the year.

The number of self-serve newsstands increased from four to five during the year. Section Portland, which operated two in January, added two more by the end of December. Section San Francisco Bay Area began the year with two and ended the year with one.

All sales of *The People* last year came to \$5,526.53, down from \$6,127.28 in 2005.

\*

As indicated, the National Office received considerable technical and writing assistance from members in the field. The technical assistance needed to make each issue of *The People* ready for the press came primarily from Comrade Ken Boettcher, although it would be fair to add that Comrade Donna Bills has taken on more responsibilities in that department. The writers and their published contributions during the year were as follows:

Donna Bills, 3; Robert Bills, 16; Ken Boettcher, 13; Bernard Bortnick, 11; Bruce Cozzini, 6; Barbara Graymont, 5; Michael James, 8; James Plant, 3; Diane Secor, 3; Michael Wenskunas, 1. Four bimonthly issues, each with eight pages, have gone to press so far this year. Three of the four featured front-page appeals for financial support. The National Office subsequently reformatted the three articles mentioned as fund appeal letters and mailed them to all individual readers.

The current issue (July-August) had a press run of 7,000 copies, distributed as follows:

Domestic Subscribers ..... 1,251

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Canadian Subscribers .....	13
Foreign Subscribers .....	64
Domestic Bundles .....	4,809
Foreign Bundles .....	64
Office Uses .....	799
TOTAL .....	7,000

Included in the subscription figures are 446 libraries, of which one is in Canada and 15 in other countries. Three of the 430 domestic libraries receive bundles.

The National Office shipped 92 bundles of the July-August issue. Thirty-six of those went to Party members, 31 to nonmembers, 18 to commercial outlets, three to the libraries mentioned, three to friends and supporters in other countries, and four to foreign commercial outlets.

Under an arrangement made by former member Ron Ingalsbe and Comrade Michael Preston of Buffalo, New York, the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library receives 1,025 copies of each issue, which are distributed to branch libraries throughout the system. The library received its third shipment with the July-August issue. Section Cleveland received 1,165 copies, followed by Sections San Francisco Bay Area (822), Portland (600), Houston (40), Cook County (10) and New York City (5). Bundle shipments to 20 national members-at-large accounted for 615 copies and bundles shipped to 30 other supporters accounted for 382 copies. The three foreign bundles accounted for an additional 36 copies. Domestic commercial outlets received 145 copies and foreign commercial outlets, 40 copies.

The National Office emailed the contents of the July-August issue to 263 nonpaying electronic subscribers. PDF versions of every issue published since December 1999 also are available through the Party's website, free of charge.

The articles published thus far this year came from Donna Bills (2), Robert Bills (9), Ken Boettcher (12), Bernard Bortnick (5), Bruce Cozzini (3), Michael James (5) and James Plant (2).

I should note that production and shipping costs for *The People* have come down in recent years. The drop did not result from any decline in prices, however, but from the decline in circulation. In 2004, when press runs averaged 10,000 copies, printing and shipping costs for a typical eight-page issue came to \$2,074.86. Printing and shipping 7,000 copies of the current issue cost \$1,793.63.

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### *b. SLP Newsletter*

The National Office published 12 monthly issue of the *SLP Newsletter* in 2006. Although members do not submit much that is specifically intended for publication in the newsletter, Comrade Donna Bills has managed to put it together without fail in every month since publication resumed in June 2002.

Seven monthly issues were published and mailed to the membership that year, 12 issues in each of the following two years, 14 issues in 2005, 12 in 2006 and seven thus far this year.

The newsletter not only enables the National Office to share news, information and correspondence by and about members with the entire membership, it has come to take the place of many of the general letters that once poured out of the National Office. It also has served to inform the membership of important developments affecting the Party's interests, as with the Wenskunas correspondence included as a supplement to the February 2007 issue and the NEC's discussion on "Capitalism, Oil and Socialism" serialized in the issues of January, February and March 2006.

However, the *SLP Newsletter* has served another less tangible but equally important function. It has helped to supply that "human connection" that makes us all feel that we are part of an organization, something that is bigger than ourselves, no matter how scattered and isolated from one another we may feel.

The *SLP Newsletter* can never act as an adequate substitute for sections that hold monthly meetings and social gatherings where that "human connection" is more intimate and direct. Nothing can replace the "SLP culture" that once was readily available to nearly all members of the Party. Until we succeed in building the existing sections back up and adding more, however, the *SLP Newsletter* is about the only vehicle available to fill that void.

Comrade Donna Bills deserves special recognition for what she has tried to do in this regard, and the membership should do everything it can to assist her by writing to and otherwise keeping in contact with the National Office on a regular basis.

### *c. New York Labor News*

The National Office published a revamped version of *Earth Day and May Day* as a 16-page pamphlet last year. The NEC approved text for a new pamphlet on the Iraq war earlier this year, but lack of funds prevented its publication.

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No Labor News books, pamphlets or *Socialist Studies* fell out of stock during the year, but supplies on 15 titles are very low. The list of titles in low supply includes several that should be retired from print, but also several others that would be worth reprinting if the funds were available.

Labor News sales came to \$939.25 in 2006, up slightly from \$886.40 in 2005.

### *d. Leaflets*

The National Office published no new leaflets in 2006.

### *e. Website*

As near as we can tell, the Party's website received 108,050 visits from 100,297 "unique sites" in 2006. An anomaly in the figures received for 2005 makes it difficult to make a comparison. Logically, the number of visits should always be greater than the number of "unique sites" (individual computers), but the figures we received for 2005 were 96,595 visits from 101,793 computers! The numbers for the preceding years, however, make sense: 88,637 visits from 78,606 computers in 2004, 74,571 visits from 68,146 computers in 2003 and 43,829 visits from 28,653 computers in 2002. These numbers are far from impressive. Last month alone, for example, the Marxists Internet Archive received 1,729,443 visits from 794,621 sites. True, the MIA has much more to offer in terms of variety and content, including everything posted to the De Leon Online section of our own SLP website. Nonetheless, there must be ways to improve on these results and enhance our "visibility" on the World Wide Web.

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The National Office continues to add content to the Party's website. I do not know the precise number of documents posted, but I can give you some idea of the progress made since the NEC met last July.

At last year's NEC Session I reported, for example, that Comrade Donna Bills had formatted and uploaded HTML versions of 28 SLP statements and documents. That number has since grown to 71. Comrade Bills has also redesigned that section of the site by categorizing all the leaflet and statement texts posted under different headings for ease of reference. The 13 categories she created (and the number of documents assigned to each) are as follows:

What Socialists Want (3), Civil Liberties (5), Economics (3), En-

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ergy (4), International (4), Environment (2), Politics (4), Racism (6), Terrorism (2), Trade Unions & Labor (9), War & Imperialism (18), Women (3), Miscellaneous (7).

Since the NEC Session, the National Office also has added the texts of 41 SLP books and pamphlets to the 77 posted at the time, thereby bringing the number of such books and pamphlets up to 118.

Similarly, we have continued to make additions to the Daniel De Leon section of the site. Last year, I informed the NEC in Session that “930 separate articles and editorials written for *The People* and *Daily People* between 1891 and 1913” had been posted. We have since increased that number to 1,569 and the number of all De Leon pamphlets, articles and editorials posted to 1,698.

\*

As indicated, everything added to the De Leon Online section of the website is almost immediately “mirrored” on the Marxists Internet Archive (MIA) in a separate Daniel De Leon Internet Archive. I assume that the original offer, by which we could directly manage the archive, still stands, but we have not been able to pursue it. David Walters, one of the cofounders of the MIA, manages it for us. Although he also keeps busy with several other archives, Lenin and Trotsky in particular, and other administrative responsibilities, he has proven to be an attentive, prompt and reliable “coworker” for us.

Last August, for example, he noticed an anomaly on our website and wrote to call it to our attention. I wrote to thank him, and added:

As to our website: We have noticed that different browsers can give slightly different views of our stuff. It looks fine when viewed through Safari, which is all I have, but Donna sometimes notices anomalies when viewing the site through Netscape.

Our website hasn’t undergone a major overhaul since 1997. It is supposed to be redesigned and improved in other ways later this year. Many older documents, made with PageMill 2.0, are still up there, while newer ones are being made with Dreamweaver. That may account for some of what you noticed.

Walters replied, in part, as follows:

1997??? Robert, your site is actually very well done. Sure the underlying HTML may be old, but the looks, the typography, the white space, are all simply PERFECT . . . I really wouldn’t

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change a thing, trust me. . . .

I replied the same day, August 16, with the following:

Thanks for the kudos. I'm a great fan of simplicity, clean and neat. Our member, Ken Boettcher, gets all the credit for the site as it is, and will get most all of it for whatever it becomes. Problem is we have so much stuff—116 years' worth of documents, debates, resolutions, manifestoes, leaflets, statements, convention proceedings, NEC proceedings, newspapers, photographs, cartoons and caricatures, etc., unless we lay claim to the pre-1890 SLP, in which case it comes to 130 years' worth of stuff. That's a lot of stuff, and making compartments to accommodate it all in an easy-to-wade-through format is a challenge.

The exchange continued through one more round on the same day. In response to my reply, Walters wrote:

The biggest issue Ken is going to face (and please forward the kudos . . . ) will be one of 'organization.' I noticed, just on the 1901 [De Leon] directory, the sheer size of it. Down the road, this will present some creative challenges.

We face this all the time on Tim Davenport's EAM [Early American Marxism]. On the MIA mirror of it, for example, I've had to divide each set of index pages for the CP by year; otherwise it takes too long to scroll down. We are also looking at subject indexes and writers' indexes. Just part of having a highly evolved online archive.

These are all "good problems" because it shows how an archive has had to grow, and be able to present that growth to its readers. I'm here for any help you need on this.

This particular exchange ended when I replied with the following:

Dear David,

Thanks, again. Your kudos, not being meant for me, were promptly passed along to he who deserves them.

I think we have a pretty good idea of the problem that confronts us, but no one can anticipate everything. (The best laid plans of mice and men, etc.)

Heading down blind alleys and dead ends when trying to organize things does not concern me as much as does finding our way back and correcting false starts in what prove to be wrong directions with a minimum of delay and frustration. We want to add as much as we can without seeming to create, or really creating, chaos and a jumble. We don't have as many brains to pick as the MIA or some other organizations, but judging by some of

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the cluttered and busy-looking websites I've seen that may be to our advantage. (Too many cooks, etc.)

Well, we shall see what we shall see in due time.

Incidentally, all of De Leon's works posted to the Daniel De Leon Internet Archive are linked to the Party's website, and the archive itself directs the visitors' attention to the SLP.

\*

Although the website received a "face lift" of sorts sometime ago, plans for a complete redesign have not progressed as much as I had hoped. One feature I have been particularly eager to add is the ability to accept credit card donations and purchases electronically. Another problem is that while continuing to add content to the website not much of it, apart from *The People*, can be described as fresh.

As unique and important as the SLP is, the website must do more than demonstrate that the Party has been around long enough to produce a vast array of excellent literature. We do not want our website to become simply a source for historians and political archeologists. Keeping fresh is part of what being political is all about.

Most of the literature posted to the site is solid and shows how SLP writers applied SLP principles and policies to events and circumstances in the past. When it comes to principles we may not have anything new to say, but we must find new and better ways of applying them and demonstrating how they are relevant and applicable to modern conditions. In that sense, the SLP writer of today may be more likely to derive the real educational benefit of what has been posted than most other people who visit the site in search of information. From my experience as "acting editor" of *The People*, I know that some of the newer writers—and some of the older ones, too—would benefit from taking advantage of the SLP education offered by the growing array of past SLP publications available at slp.org.

### *f. De Leon Project*

Last year, I reported that Comrades Mary and Frank Prince had agreed to assist with the proofreading of De Leon's works, starting in September 2004, for a modest fee. Unfortunately, the financial crunch made it necessary to discontinue that arrangement last December. By then the comrades had made their way through every-



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thing from February 1879 through June 1908. I also reported that they were doing an excellent job, and I can add that they continued to do an excellent job until I was forced to call a halt. For now it is hard to see when it might be possible for them to start up again, provided they would be willing, and that is something I deeply regret. (I should add that the Comrades Prince also proofread a number of the books and pamphlets posted to the website before last December.)

As for the work itself, I can report the following progress:

All of De Leon's works from February 1879 through April 1896—1,335 typed and electronically stored articles, editorials, debates, speeches, Uncle Sam and Brother Jonathan and Letter Box columns, etc.—have been proofread at least three times apiece and the corrections entered. (The Comrades Prince did the third reading.)

All of De Leon's works from May 1896 through October 1904—3,178 in number—have been proofread at least twice and the corrections entered. (The Comrades Prince did the second reading.) These will have to be gone over at least one more time.

All of De Leon's works from November 1904 through June 1908—1,356 additional articles and editorials, etc.—have been proofed at least once and the corrections entered. (The Comrades Prince did the reading.) These will have to be gone over at least two more times.

In addition, there are 2,835 articles, etc., published between July 1904 and February 1914 that have been typed and electronically stored, but otherwise have not been touched.

Incidentally, every De Leon editorial is proofread at least twice before being uploaded to the Party's website, and only those from a list of about 3,500 editorials compiled by Henry Kuhn are being posted. That number is less than half of the 8,504 works that have been typed and stored.

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

The National Secretary reported that this concluded his report.

At 11:40 a.m., the chair declared a recess until 1 p.m.

### **AFTERNOON SESSION, SATURDAY, JULY 14, 2007**

The convention was called to order at 1 p.m.

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On roll call, all present.

The sergeant at arms reported two visitors present.

### **Introduction of Resolutions**

The National Secretary presented the following resolution from the National Office:

#### **Proposed Resolution on Immigration**

*(Submitted for consideration by the 47th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party of America, assembled at Santa Clara, Calif., July 14, 2007)*

The Socialist Labor Party of America reasserts that the international class struggle is a fact, that the working and ruling classes of the world have nothing in common, and that every attempt to prevent the working classes of the world from uniting in their own interests requires the unqualified condemnation of all those who profess to speak in the interests of labor, regardless of their assertions and pretenses to the contrary.

For that reason, the SLP reaffirms its commitment to the principle that unrestricted emigration of workers from one country to another is a human right, and that every attempt to limit, control or manipulate the working classes of the world in the free exercise of that right is meant to serve the interests of the ruling classes of the world and also requires the unqualified condemnation of all those who profess to speak in the interests of labor.

Accordingly, the SLP reiterates its demand for the abolition of all laws designed to restrict or manipulate the immigration of workers into the United States, rebukes recent attempts by the Bush administration and by Congress to overhaul rather than repeal those laws, and denounces every attempt to conceal the real motives behind these efforts under the guise of such false pretenses as “national security,” protecting the wages and living standards of American workers against “unfair competition” from immigrant labor, or defending immigrant workers against ruthless exploitation by unscrupulous employers.

Recently, one such attempt at manipulating the nation’s restrictions on free immigration failed in the U.S. Senate. Republican Senator Arlen Specter falsely asserted the purpose of that attempt when he said, “It is indispensable to have a guest worker program to take care of the needs of the economy.”

Many others who supposedly support immigrants also have as-

serted that the U.S. economy would collapse if every undocumented worker were deported from our country because such industries as agriculture, hospitality, health care, manufacturing and construction rely on immigrants, and that they are working the jobs that native born workers do not want. Regardless of the motivation behind such an argument, no capitalist who benefits from the exploitation of immigrant labor would disagree with it. Moreover, the argument is false—no matter who puts it forward—because there are millions of unemployed Americans who would willingly fill those jobs if they were not dirty, dangerous and so poorly paid—conditions fully within the control of those industries to change. However, if the argument were true it would only attest that capitalism cannot survive without the vicious exploitation of labor and the perpetuation of human misery. Such a system condemns itself out of hand and does not deserve to survive.

Still others having different motives and concerns mistakenly scapegoat immigrants as the source of stagnant or falling wages, declining living standards and unemployment, and call for punitive measures against them. In truth, however, unemployment, and whatever pressure immigrant labor places on wages, is a direct result of the competitive capitalist system itself. It is a byproduct of the system of wage labor, which forces workers to compete for their livelihoods on the basis of the conditions laid down by the capitalist system. Accordingly, efforts to scapegoat immigrants only serve to divide workers against one another, place greater hardships on immigrants and their families, and draw attention away from the capitalist source of these problems.

In addition, the SLP recognizes that millions of workers who have immigrated to the United States in hopes of improving their lives have been bitterly disappointed and subjected to the most ruthless exploitation by the American ruling class. Indeed, the recently proposed but defeated “guest worker program” was similar to and in some respects indistinguishable from past efforts by America’s capitalist class to control and import cheap labor to maximize profits, e.g., the infamous Bracero Program that brought in millions of poor, unskilled Mexican workers on a temporary basis from 1942 to 1964.

Moreover, the so-called unions that support the capitalist system of exploitation deserve special condemnation because they have sought to benefit from such conditions by ingratiating themselves with immigrant workers and opportunistically pretending to repre-

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sent their interests.

From the preceding it is clear that capitalism with its private ownership of the economy and exploitation of wage labor is responsible for economic hardship and insecurity for all workers; that it compels workers for economic reasons to leave their home countries and seek employment elsewhere; that immigration laws, whether promoted by so-called liberals or conservatives, only serve to benefit the capitalist class. Accordingly, the critical issue facing America's workers today is the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of socialism. Therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Socialist Labor Party reiterates its unqualified opposition to all efforts to restrict the right to free immigration; and

Resolved, that the Socialist Labor Party condemns the capitalist exploiters of all workers, their labor lieutenants and the "unions" that seek to perpetuate the system of wage slavery; and

Resolved, that the Socialist Labor Party extends a fraternal hand of welcome to all immigrant workers to the United States, and invites them to join in our efforts to abolish capitalism and establish the free and democratic Socialist Industrial Republic of free and emancipated labor in this country, in their respective homelands, and throughout the world.

Fraternally submitted,

ROBERT BILLS

DONNA BILLS

July 14, 2007

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

### **Discussion of National Secretary's Report**

Discussion on the section "National Headquarters" began at 1:10 p.m. The chair declared a 10-minute recess at 1:45 p.m.; reconvened at 1:55 p.m.

A motion was passed to begin discussion on the section "Party Finances."

At 3:10 p.m., the chair declared a 10-minute recess; reconvened at 3:20 p.m.

Discussion then began on the section "State of Organization."

At 4:30 p.m., the chair declared a five-minute recess; reconvened

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at 4:40 p.m. Discussion began on the section “General Activities” and ended at 5 p.m. when discussion on the section “Party Press and Literature” began.

At 5:40 p.m., a motion was passed to end discussion on this section and to adjourn until the evening session. An amendment was adopted to reconvene at 7 p.m. The motion as amended was adopted.

### **EVENING SESSION, SATURDAY, JULY 14, 2007**

The convention was called to order at 7:25 p.m.

On roll call, all present.

The sergeant at arms reported one visitor present.

Discussion of the National Secretary’s report resumed briefly and closed at 7:28 p.m.

#### **Determination of Committees**

A motion was adopted to constitute three committees as follows: Headquarters and Finance, State of Organization, and Party Press and Literature.

#### **Referring Matters to Committee**

On motion, the sections of the National Secretary’s report on “National Headquarters” and “Party Finances” were referred to the Committee on Headquarters and Finance.

On motion, the sections of the National Secretary’s report on “State of Organization” and “General Activities” and the matters of electing national officers and an NEC for the 2007–2009 term were referred to the Committee on State of Organization.

On motion, the sections of the National Secretary’s report on “Party Press and Literature” and the proposed resolution on immigration were referred to the Committee on Party Press and Literature.

#### **Election of Committees**

On motion, the Committee on Headquarters and Finances is to consist of four.

On motion, the Committee on State of Organization is to consist of four and the Committee on Party Press and Literature is to consist of three.

The chair called for nominations to the Committee on Headquar-

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ters and Finance. B. Cozzini, B. Bortnick, R. Burns and D. Bills were nominated. Nominations closed. Cozzini and Bortnick accepted nomination; Burns and Bills declined. Nominations reopened. T. Harris and R. Cassin were nominated and accepted. There being no further nominations and hearing no objections, the chair declared Cozzini, Bortnick Harris and Cassin elected to constitute the committee.

The chair called for nominations to the Committee on State of Organization. K. Boettcher, J. Houser, D. Bills, D. Secor, H. Coretz and R. Burns were nominated. Nominations closed. Houser, Bills, Secor and Coretz accepted nomination; Boettcher and Burns declined. There being no further nominations and hearing no objection, the chair declared Houser, Bills, Secor and Coretz elected to constitute the committee.

A motion was made that the Committee on Party Press and Literature consist of the remaining members: K. Boettcher, R. Burns and F. Cline. All three having accepted nomination and hearing no objections, the chair declared Boettcher, Burns and Cline elected to constitute the committee.

At 7:50 p.m., a motion was passed to recess until 8:20 p.m. to allow the committees to confer and determine when they could be ready to report. The convention reconvened at 9:40 p.m. The chair reported that he had canvassed the chairs of the committees and determined the convention should reconvene at 1 p.m. On motion, the convention adjourned at 9:50 p.m., to reconvene at 1 p.m. on Sunday, July 15.

### **AFTERNOON SESSION, SUNDAY, JULY 15, 2007**

The convention was called to order at 1:10 p.m.

On roll call, all present.

The sergeant at arms reported three visitors present.

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

### **Reports of Committees**

#### *Committee on Party Press and Literature*

R. Burns reported that the committee would be ready to report in an hour after the convention is recessed.

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### *Committee on Headquarters and Finance*

B. Cozzini reported that the committee would be ready to report at 4 p.m.

### *Committee on State of Organization*

J. Houser reported that the committee would be ready to report at 4 p.m.

### **New Business**

The chair reported two communications to the National Convention were received and proceeded to read the following from Jim Plant of England:

“I send my best wishes for the success of the SLP National Convention. I hope that the deliberations and decisions are fruitful and concrete, and that the Party makes good progress in the coming period.”

\*

The chair granted national member-at-large Mary Brlas of Florida the privilege of the floor to read the following communication from Severino Majkus of Croatia:

“By marking today over a century of revolutionary socialism experienced activity, wishing to the Socialist Labor Party of America further strength, more unity and to spread forward its efforts toward promoting the scientific socialism in the United States, which by now is the very ‘burning question’ all over the globe, equally in the Philippines, CAVITA (Noamy Clain—No Logo), as in New York and elsewhere in the present existing murderous international capitalist imperialism!”

\*

At 1:30 p.m., the convention adjourned to reconvene at 4 p.m.

## **SECOND AFTERNOON SESSION, SUNDAY, JULY 15, 2007**

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

On roll call, all present.

The sergeant at arms reported four visitors present.

### **Reports of Committees**

#### *Committee on Party Press and Literature*

R. Burns presented the following report:

**Report on the Party Press and Literature Section  
Of the National Secretary's Report**

After review of the section of the National Secretary's report on Party Press and Literature, discussions with other delegates and the chairs of both the State of Organization and the Headquarters and Finance committees, and interviews with ~~Comrades Robert~~ the National Secretary and [Comrades] Donna Bills, Diane Secor, Bruce Cozzini and Bernard Bortnick, this committee reaffirms the importance of continued bimonthly publication of *The People*.

That importance derives from *The People's* role both as the primary weapon in the Party's present agitational arsenal and as a chief motivational tool in present and future SLP fundraising activities. Publication must therefore continue as long as our funds make it possible.

We realize that only the success of our fundraising efforts can stave off a day when the National Office or the NEC must halt its publication to assure the funds that will buy enough time to bring the Party's operations to an orderly close.

While we muster our best fundraising efforts to overcome the present financial difficulties, the importance of *The People* to the Party's overall interests demands that we garner the best possible effort from all the writers for *The People*.

All the comrades interviewed who are contributors to *The People* have expressed a willingness to redouble their efforts to achieve a better flow of copy and better quality articles. They hope thereby to not only improve the content of *The People*, but to help free up more time for ~~Comrade Robert Bills~~ the National Secretary.

Four Section San Francisco Bay Area comrades who are contributors to *The People* have agreed to better focus their writing efforts by attending topic meetings with ~~Comrade Robert Bills~~ the National Secretary every other month at the National Office before or after the section's meeting. A fifth contributor at the convention has indicated he is also interested in choosing his topics in conjunction with such an effort, via phone or email.

We also reaffirm the usefulness of the *SLP Newsletter* and commend Comrade Donna Bills' continuing efforts to increase its importance as a tool for intraparty communication and membership motivation. We agree with the National Secretary that "the membership should do everything it can to assist her by writing to and otherwise keeping in contact with the National Office on a regular basis."



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We realize that not much can be expected in the immediate future about publication of new pamphlets or other literature. The pamphlet on the war in Iraq mentioned in this section of the National Secretary's report shows we can still produce solid SLP literature, but our inability to publish it for financial reasons makes all the more apparent the effects of our financial woes. In short, our efforts must be focused on continuing and improving *The People*, and the fundraising needed to keep Party operations going.

We note with pleasure that completion of the Party's website redesign is expected within the next two months, but would urge the quickest possible addition of some sort of credit card-enabled transactions on the old site to facilitate, in whatever way they might, the Party's fundraising activities.

We also commend the National Office's ongoing efforts to expand the number of offerings on the site, and reaffirm the deep significance and importance of the De Leon Project—and the online De Leon archive that has benefited from that project—to the Party's present and future; indeed, to the future of the working class itself. We hope that the National Office, even in the present crisis, will find time to continue these efforts.

Fraternally submitted,  
KEN BOETTCHER, Chair  
ROBERT BURNS, FRANK CLINE  
Party Press and Literature Committee

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the report. An amendment was passed that all references to Robert Bills be stricken and replaced with the words "National Secretary." On motion, the report as amended was adopted.

### *Committee on Headquarters and Finance*

B. Cozzini reported progress.

### *Committee on State of Organization*

J. Houser presented the following report:

#### **Report on State of Organization and General Activities**

In reviewing both the National Secretary's report on "State of Organization" and "General Activities" and the discussions that took place on the floor of the convention, and after investigating the matters further in committee, we have arrived at a more com-

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prehensive understanding of the problem.

During the discussion on the floor of the convention, several factors were identified by the delegates as contributing to the Party's decline. One factor is the increasing isolation of members resulting from the declining number of sections, leaving the majority of our membership scattered across the country as national members-at-large. This isolation, in turn, interferes with adequate communication and interaction within the organization and, consequently, fosters alienation that can eventually cause members to lose interest.

Another factor is the intensifying effects of capitalism that create a condition of misinformation and obfuscation regarding economic and social realities among workers, which can be an impediment to agitational activities and educational efforts of the SLP. This appears to have had a discouraging effect on some members, as reflected in decreased Party activities.

It was also recognized that although advancing age among its members is a factor in the Party's decline, it is not a pivotal one.

In deliberating on what might be done to build up the Party, your committee took note of the activities that our sections and members-at-large currently engage in. We commend those efforts and encourage our sections and members to continue. At the same time, it is vital that members in the field increase their efforts so that the SLP's message reaches as many workers as possible. Accordingly, and with the hope and expectation that our field activities will attract those workers who are seeking a fundamental solution to capitalism, your committee recommends that all those who are physically able, order bundles of *The People* for distribution. Venues for distribution have been published in the *SLP Newsletter* and include distribution at libraries, coffee houses, schools, friends, etc.

Despite the pressing need to solve contemporary social issues and the relevance of the SIU program, the Party has consistently been able to attract new members, but we have been unable to hold and develop their potential. This problem of retaining and actively engaging our members within the Party is a serious one that was highlighted in the Appendix to the 2006 NEC Proceedings, but remains unsolved.

In consideration of the urgency of this issue and with a view toward solving it, we see the need for mentoring and personal contact among members. Therefore, we recommend a more vigorous and

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personal approach as follows:

1. A National Contact Committee be established with the purpose of telephoning the membership to draw them in closer to the Party. This committee, if elected, would work under the direct supervision of the National Secretary and the NEC Office.

2. The members-at-large online discussion list be expanded to include all members with Internet access, those members to be actively recruited to sign on. Though the online discussion list has not been the success the Party had hoped it would be when it was established, nonetheless your committee feels it still has the potential to provide a venue for members to exchange ideas, experiences and become more active within the Party. Your committee recommends that the NEC appoint a new discussion list moderator who knows the Party's program and principles and has the personality to succeed in this task.

Fraternally submitted,

JOHN HOUSER, Chair

DONNA BILLS, HENRY CORETZ

DIANE SECOR

Committee on State of the Organization

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the report. An amendment was passed to strike the words "Secretary and the NEC" in the second to last paragraph and replace them with the word "Office." On motion, the report as amended was adopted.

At 4:30 p.m., a motion was passed to adjourn until 6:30 p.m.

### **EVENING SESSION, SUNDAY, JULY 15, 2007**

The convention was called to order at 7:55 p.m.

On roll call, all present.

The sergeant at arms reported two visitors present.

#### **Reports of Committees**

*Committee on Headquarters and Finance*

B. Cozzini presented the following report:

#### **National Headquarters**

The National Headquarters report clearly delineates the many tasks and many roles performed by our dedicated Comrades Robert and Donna Bills. The committee thanks them for their efforts

throughout the years and for the discussion and additional data they provided in preparation of this report.

In reviewing the information provided, it is clear that the N.O. staff have run a very lean operation. The only place in which it has been suggested that money could be saved is by possibly finding a smaller and less costly office space. While this could be suitable in the future, it would present major operational difficulties in the present. Large amounts of materials now at the N.O., including library materials, and archives would need to be placed in storage, at considerable expense, or sent to various historical facilities, at considerable expenditure of time. The cost of such a move could run as high as \$5,000 and would probably necessitate canceling a publication of *The People*.

### Finances

The National Secretary's report clearly summarized the Party's critical financial position at this historical juncture. Extensive discussions on the convention floor offered some guidance but no definitive solutions. This committee has taken into account those discussions, studied and reviewed the reports on "National Headquarters" and "Party Finances." Together, they present the need for urgent and focused actions to avert a drastic reorganization of the activities of the Party.

In confirmation of the declining balances cited in the **Finance Report** and past successive **Monthly Financial Statements** that all have received, we concluded that we must virtually double the Party's income in order to sustain our current operations. Indeed, we have reached the bottom of the cost-cutting barrel, and there is now only one option to maintain continuing operations: increase income.

Accordingly, over the past 12 months starting with July 2006 and ending in June of 2007, the Party's monthly deficits averaged **\$4,500 while** our monthly income averaged **\$5,400**. Hence, to defray expenses we need an average monthly income of **\$9,900**.

Despite the generosity of members on many occasions in the past and the bequests that have come through in the nick of time, a more concerted and structured effort to solve our recurring financial problems seems imperative. We believe that SLP members and sympathizers can harness their commitment to working-class emancipation to the financial means to accomplish the goal. And to be sure, that goal is to remain a viable organization for the propa-

gation of socialism.

- \* We recommend every member and sympathizer increase their money contributions on a sustained basis. Indeed there is a fund that has been set up for that purpose called the Sustainer Fund for which booklets and stamps are issued to record contributions.
- \* Members who are currently contributors to the Sustainer Fund are urged to increase their donations.
- \* By way of illustrating impacts, if every one of the 240 contributors to recent funds increased their donations by \$10 per week we could overcome our deficits.
- \* Setting up a direct deposit account with one's local bank is a good way of insuring steady contributions. In this case a regular amount of money is earmarked for an SLP fund.

### Contingency Planning

As the National Secretary's report on "Party Finances" indicates, the very existence of the SLP as an organization is in jeopardy. Currently, we can only estimate how long funds will last to allow full operation of the N.O. and publication of *The People*. Over the next few months it will become evident if costs have been cut enough and sufficient funds raised to continue operation. As page two of the report notes, at the current rate of depletion of funds, "about \$3,937 a month, the SLP will be flat broke by the end of April 2008." But that does not mean that we can simply continue operations until then. With limited personnel we must allow about three months providing a graceful shutdown of the office, to dispose of historically and politically significant materials that are part of the legacy of the SLP. It is clear closing down entails a lot of thought and work.

Thus, as things stand, we can likely turn out two issues of *The People* before we must decide whether we must cease publication and possibly close the National Office. We must make the most of these issues to demonstrate the value of the SLP's organ in putting forth the message of scientific socialism so that the membership will provide the support that will assure that they are not the last.

Fraternally submitted,

BRUCE COZZINI, Chair

BERNARD BORTNICK, THAD HARRIS

RICHARD CASSIN

Committee on Headquarters and Finance

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

*Committee on Party Press and Literature*

R. Burns presented the following report:

**Report on the Proposed Resolution on Immigration  
Submitted by the National Office**

We have reviewed the proposed Resolution on Immigration and find it to be an outstanding and straightforward enunciation of the Marxist-De Leonist position on immigration.

We unqualifiedly recommend its adoption and distribution on the most widespread basis the National Office sees possible.

Fraternally submitted,  
KEN BOETTCHER, Chair  
ROBERT BURNS, FRANK CLINE  
Party Press and Literature Committee

On motion, the report was adopted.

*Mileage Committee*

D. Bills presented the following report:

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

*Delegates*

Donna Bills .....	0
Ken Boettcher .....	0
Bernard Bortnick .....	0
Robert Burns .....	0
Richard Cassin .....	\$445.60
Frank Cline .....	\$394.10
Henry Coretz .....	0
Bruce Cozzini .....	0
Thad Harris .....	\$472.60
John Houser .....	not available at this time
Diane Secor .....	0
Nat'l Sec'y Robert Bills .....	0

In keeping with this report, your committee recommends that

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the delegates be paid the amounts due them, the total being \$1,312.20, and that the National Office be authorized to reimburse J. Houser the amount of his airfare when he submits his receipt.

Fraternally submitted,

DONNA BILLS

Mileage Committee

On motion, the report was adopted.

The chair canvassed the Committees on State of Organization and Headquarters and Finance to determine when they will be ready to report.

At 8:50 p.m., the convention adjourned to reconvene Monday, July 16, at 12 noon.

### **AFTERNOON SESSION, MONDAY, JULY 16, 2007**

The convention was called to order at 12:06 p.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 Party Press and Literature*

K. Boettcher reported the committee needs another hour.

##### *Committee on State of Organization*

J. Houser reported the committee needs another hour.

##### *Committee on Headquarters and Finance*

B. Cozzini reported the committee needs another hour.

At 12:12 p.m., the convention recessed to reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

The convention was called to order at 1:40 p.m.

On roll call, all present.

The sergeant at arms reported two visitors present.

#### **Reports of Committees**

##### *Committee on State of Organization*

J. Houser presented the following reports:

#### **Constitutional Amendment**

Your committee was given the responsibility of nominating

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seven members to serve on the National Executive Committee for the 2007–2009 term. In our deliberations, we took note of the fact that two vacancies currently exist on the NEC, so that the present committee has been functioning with five members instead of the constitutionally mandated seven. We have given every effort to come up with seven members who have indicated their willingness to serve on the 2007–2009 NEC term and who we believe have the experience to best serve the Party’s interests on the executive committee. Unfortunately, we can only place in nomination five names. Given the current vacancies on the NEC and our failed attempt to rectify it, we believe it is time to amend the Constitution to reflect the Party’s changed circumstances. Therefore, your committee recommends that Article V, Section 1 be amended to read:

“A National Executive Committee composed of five members shall conduct the agitational, educational, organizational and executive work of the Party.”

Fraternally submitted,  
JOHN HOUSER, Chair  
DONNA BILLS, HENRY CORETZ  
DIANE SECOR  
Committee on State of the Organization

On motion, the report was adopted.

### **National Contact Committee**

Your committee wishes to inform the NEC that J. Houser and F. Prince have indicated their willingness to serve on the contact committee and recommends that their names be taken into consideration by the NEC when electing the committee.

Fraternally submitted,  
JOHN HOUSER, Chair  
DONNA BILLS, HENRY CORETZ  
DIANE SECOR  
Committee on State of the Organization

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the report. An amendment made and seconded to substitute the words “National Office” for the words “NEC” and to substitute the word “selecting” for the word “electing” was defeated. On motion, the report was referred back to committee.



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### *Committee on Headquarters and Finance*

B. Cozzini presented the following report:

### **Report on the National Headquarters and Party Finances Sections of the National Secretary's Report**

#### **National Headquarters**

The National Secretary's report on "National Headquarters" clearly outlines the many tasks and roles performed by our dedicated National Secretary and Comrade Donna Bills. We thank and commend them for their efforts throughout the years and for the additional discussion and data they provided in the preparation of this report.

In reviewing the information provided, it is clear that the National Office staff have run a very lean operation. We have reached the bottom of the cost-cutting barrel. There is only one way we can continue National Headquarters operations: we **MUST** increase income.

#### **Finances**

We have reviewed the National Secretary's report on "Party Finances" and interviewed delegates. Together with interviews of the National Office staff this information conveys the need for urgent and focused actions to avert a drastic curtailment of Party activities.

The National Secretary suggested on the convention floor that if we could reduce the average monthly deficits by half, we might extend the Party's operations for a year.

It is clear that our short-term target **MUST** be at least that: we must cut the deficits in half with an aggressive fundraising effort. That might gain us precious months for the National Secretary and the NEC to evaluate the results of the effort, and make plans to put in place a more long-term, ongoing mechanism. If it becomes clear that this deficit reduction target cannot be met, the NEC must instruct the National Secretary to close down Party headquarters.

The convention has already adopted the recommendation of the State of Organization Committee, which establishes a National Contact Committee to work under the supervision of the National Office with the primary purpose of contacting individual members and sympathizers to urge this increase in contributions.

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It is obvious that the SLP cannot survive as a viable organization without taking in at least as much money as it spends. The SLP has managed to defy the obvious in this regard by virtue of the generous financial support of its members and sympathizers, coupled with bequests and other gifts from some of those same members and friends as their final gesture of devotion to the principles and goals that won and kept their dedication and loyalty to the SLP to the end of their lives. For the moment, however, we who are still living must manage this difficult equation on our own and with our own resources. We must rise to this occasion with all of our might and determination or all that we have worked for will come to naught. Accordingly:

Every member of the SLP is called upon to sign on to the SLP Sustainer Fund and to assess themselves the equivalent of \$10 per month.

Every member of the SLP is called upon to assess themselves the equivalent of one week's wages, to be remitted to the N.O. by October 15, 2007.

If, as the National Office monitors the situation, it becomes obvious that our urgent fundraising appeal has not successfully cut the deficit, the National Secretary must inform the NEC by mid-October so that a shutdown order could be in place by month's end. This would leave funds enough for a graceful shutdown of the office, to dispose of all the materials at the National Office that are part of the legacy of the SLP.

Only two more issues of *The People* will be published before we must decide whether we must cease publication and possibly close the National Office. They must be good ones, if they are not to be the last. Let us hope that possibility seems as unconscionable to all our members and sympathizers as it does to us here in convention.

Fraternally submitted,

BRUCE COZZINI, Chair

BERNARD BORTNICK, THAD HARRIS

RICHARD CASSIN

Committee on Headquarters and Finance

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the report. An amendment made and seconded to delete the word "with" and insert the words "and recommends" and delete the words "and sympathizers" in the sixth paragraph was defeated. On motion, the report was adopted.

## 47TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

### *Committee on Party Press and Literature*

F. Cline presented the following:

### **Declaration of Fundamental Principles Socialist Labor Party**

The Socialist Labor Party of America, assembled at its 47th National Convention, reasserts the inalienable right of all human beings to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

We hold that the purpose of government must be to secure to every citizen the enjoyment of this right. Taught by experience we hold, furthermore, that this right is an illusion for the overwhelming majority of people—the working class—under the present system of economic despotism 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 ownership of the land on and the tools of production with which to work. Deprived of these, the lives, liberty and fate of the workers is in the hands of the class that owns those essentials for work and production.

Ownership of the means of life is today held by a tiny minority in society, the capitalist class, exercising through this ownership and control an economic tyranny without parallel in history.

While that class owns the overwhelming majority of all wealth in our society, the overwhelming majority, the working class, owns a relatively insignificant fraction—usually no more than 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 that labor alone produces. Thus the worker is denied the means of self-employment and, by compulsory idleness and poverty in wage slavery, is often 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

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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 outdated. No longer able to dispose readily of 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 victims.

Against such a system the Socialist Labor Party raises the banner of revolt and demands the unconditional surrender of the capitalist class. In this 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, or political, representation.

This new social system must be the Socialist Industrial Union form of government if the needs of the vast majority are to be served, and if social progress is to be the law of the future as it has been in the past. Upon the workers rests the duty of effecting this revolutionary change in as peaceful, civilized manner as possible, using the ballot and industrial organization to effect the change.

We, therefore, call upon the wageworkers of America to organize under the banner of the Socialist Labor Party into a classconscious body, aware of its rights and determined to conquer them.

We further call upon the wageworkers 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 thinking 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 most onerous threat to human existence, the barbarous class conflict.

The land and all the means of production, transportation, communication and distribution must be placed in the hands of the

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useful producers as a collective body. Substituting the Socialist Industrial Republic of Labor 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 their faculties, multiplied by all the benefits of modern civilization under a democratically controlled economy that is collectively owned by all.

Fraternally submitted,  
KEN BOETTCHER, Chair  
ROBERT BURNS, FRANK CLINE  
Party Press and Literature Committee

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the report [statement]. On motion, the report [statement] was referred back to committee.

### *Mileage Committee*

D. Bills presented the following report:

The committee reports that J. Houser has submitted his mileage expense to attend this convention, which amounts to \$417.50, and has been reimbursed.

Fraternally submitted,  
DONNA BILLS  
Mileage Committee

On motion, the report was adopted.

At 2:50 p.m., the convention adjourned until 4 p.m.

## **SECOND AFTERNOON SESSION, MONDAY, JULY 16, 2007**

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

On roll call, all present.

The sergeant at arms reported two visitors present.

### **Reports of Committees**

#### *Committee on State of Organization*

J. Houser presented the following report:

#### **National Contact Committee**

The 47th National Convention directs the NEC to elect a Na-

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tional Contact Committee under the supervision of the National Office for the primary purpose of raising money and such other purposes as the NEC deems appropriate. The National Convention further recommends that the NEC take into consideration the names of J. Houser and F. Prince when constituting the committee. Finally, the National Convention directs that the contact committee report the results of its efforts to the NEC by mid-October.

Fraternally submitted,

JOHN HOUSER, Chair

DONNA BILLS, HENRY CORETZ,

DIANE SECOR

Committee on State of the Organization

On motion, the report was adopted.

### *Committee on Party Press and Literature*

K. Boettcher presented the following report:

#### **SLP Declaration of Fundamental Principles**

We reviewed the Party's Declaration of Fundamental Principles with an eye to updating language, editing for clarity and removing outdated figures.

We recommend adoption of the declaration as amended below:

Declaration of Fundamental Principles

Socialist Labor Party of America

The Socialist Labor Party of America, assembled at its 47th National Convention, reasserts the inalienable right of all human beings to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

We hold that the purpose of government must be to secure to every citizen the enjoyment of this right. Taught by experience we hold, furthermore, that this right is an illusion for the overwhelming majority of people—the working class—under the present system of economic despotism 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 ownership of the land on and the tools of production with which to work. Deprived of these, the lives, liberty and fate of the workers is in the hands of the class that owns those essentials for work and production.

Ownership of the means of life is today held by a tiny minority in society, the capitalist class, exercising through this ownership

and control an economic tyranny without parallel in history.

While that class owns the overwhelming majority of all wealth in our society, the overwhelming majority, the working class, owns a relatively insignificant fraction—usually no more than 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 that labor alone produces. Thus the worker is denied the means of self-employment and, by compulsory idleness and poverty in wage slavery, is often 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 outdated. No longer able to dispose readily of 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 victims.

Against such a system the Socialist Labor Party raises the banner of revolt revolution and demands the unconditional surrender of the capitalist class. In this crisis no reform measures will stand are irrelevant, 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, or political, representation.

This new social system must be the Socialist Industrial Union form of government if the needs of the vast majority are to be

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served, and if social progress is to be the law of the future as it has been in the past. Upon the workers rests the duty of effecting this revolutionary change in as peaceful, civilized manner as possible, using the ballot and industrial organization to effect the change.

We, therefore, call upon the wageworkers of America to organize under the banner of the Socialist Labor Party into a classconscious body, aware of its rights and determined to conquer secure them.

We further call upon the wageworkers 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 thinking 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 most onerous threat to human existence, the barbarous class conflict.

The land and all the means of production, transportation, communication and distribution must be placed in the hands of the useful producers as a collective body. Substituting the Socialist Industrial Republic of Labor 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 their faculties, multiplied by all the benefits of modern civilization under a democratically controlled economy that is collectively owned by all.

Fraternally submitted,  
KEN BOETTCHER, Chair  
ROBERT BURNS, FRANK CLINE  
Party Press and Literature Committee

At 4:15 p.m., the chair declared a 15-minute recess to allow the delegates time to consider the report; reconvened at 4:25 p.m.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the report. An amendment was passed to replace the word "revolt" with the word "revolution" in the ninth paragraph and in the next sentence to strike the word "no" and replace the words "will stead" with the words "are irrelevant." An amendment was adopted to substitute the word "secure" for the word "conquer" in the 12th paragraph. On motion, the report as amended was adopted.



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### **New Business**

#### *Election of National Executive Committee*

J. Houser placed the following names in nomination for the NEC: Ken Boettcher, Bernard Bortnick, Bruce Cozzini, James McHugh and Diane Secor.

The chair called for further nominations. There were none.

On motion, Ken Boettcher, Bernard Bortnick, Bruce Cozzini, James McHugh and Diane Secor were elected by acclamation to constitute the NEC for the 2007–2009 term of office.

#### *Election of National Secretary*

J. Houser reported that Robert Bills has indicated his willingness to serve as National Secretary and that there are no names available to fill the posts of Editor and Financial Secretary.

J. Houser proceeded to nominate R. Bills for National Secretary.

Robert Bills was elected by acclamation to fill the post of National Secretary for the 2007–2009 term of office.

The chair called upon the National Secretary to address the convention.

The National Secretary briefly addressed the convention to thank the delegates for their confidence in him, for their dedication and hard work as convention delegates, and to express his confidence in the SLP's capacity to overcome its current problems and in its ultimate success.

On motion, the convention offered its thanks to F. Prince for serving as sergeant at arms.

On motion, the convention offered its thanks to those delegates who were able to absorb their costs in coming to the convention.

The chair called for the reading of the minutes of Monday's session. On motion, the minutes were amended to strike the word "report" on page 62. On motion, the minutes of Monday's sessions were adopted as amended.

On motion, the National Office was authorized to edit the minutes of the proceedings.

The National Secretary requested the privilege of the podium to present a list of those members who died since last reported. The chair granted the privilege. Before reading the names, the National Secretary requested that the delegates rise in tribute to the Party's departed comrades. The National Secretary proceeded to read the

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following list of names:

### **In Memoriam**

*(Since reported to 45th [2001] National Convention)*

1. Irma Quinn, national member-at-large, Calif., 2000
2. Daniel Jackson, national member-at-large, Ohio, July 23, 2000
3. Helen Walker, national member-at-large, Wis., December 31, 2000
4. Genevieve Gunderson, Section San Francisco Bay Area, September 25, 2001
5. John Dolhancey, Section Philadelphia, November 18, 2001
6. Louis Fisher, Section Cook County, November 28, 2001
7. Sixten Anderson, national member-at-large, Wash., February 1, 2002
8. Charlotte Benson, national member-at-large, Colo., March 6, 2002
9. Elizabeth Stanich, national member-at-large, Calif., April 13, 2002
10. Louis Lipcon, Section San Francisco Bay Area, June 10, 2002
11. Frank J. Szeg Jr., national member-at-large, Pa., August 1, 2002
12. Rudolph Gustafson, national member-at-large, Minn., September 16, 2002
13. Arla A. Albaugh, national member-at-large, Fla., January 15, 2003
14. Stanley Prorok, Section Cook County, January 21, 2003
15. Carl Danelius, national member-at-large, Minn., March 2003
16. Joseph C. Toth, Section Wayne County, March 15, 2003
17. Nathan Goldberg, national member-at-large, Calif., April 10, 2003
18. Joseph B. McCabe, national member-at-large, Mass., June 21, 2003
19. Walter E. Beale, national member-at-large, Texas, July 2003
20. Dale Birum, Section San Francisco Bay Area, August 2003
21. Jessie Campbell, national member-at-large, Wash., October 4, 2003
22. Conrad Gutermuth, Section Cleveland, November 27, 2003
23. James C. Horvath, national member-at-large, Ariz., December 25, 2003

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24. Margaret Johansen, Section Portland, July 18, 2004
25. Glenn Schelin, national member-at-large, Minn., July 19, 2004
26. Jennie L. Seekford, Section San Francisco Bay Area July 20, 2004
27. Frank Bell, national member-at-large, Colo., August 2004
28. Daniel D. Deneff, national member-at-large, Calif., September 13, 2004
29. Earl Shimp, national member-at-large, N.J., November 6, 2004
30. David Vollmer, Section Cook County, June 25, 2005
31. John “Doug” Irving SLP of Canada, July 19, 2005
32. John Sarkisian, Section Wayne County, February 15, 2006
33. Archibald Sim, Section Wayne County, February 25, 2006
34. Myron Radov, San Francisco Bay Area, July 4, 2006
35. Mildred Killman, national member-at-large, Wash., September 16, 2006
36. Anne Karp, Section Cook County, October 1, 2006
37. Jack Blessington, national member-at-large, Pa., November 11, 2006
38. Edward Jasiewicz, national member-at-large, Pa., December 12, 2006
39. Marie Simmons, Section Cleveland, February 28, 2007

J. Houser announced to the convention that to end on an upbeat note he will write a \$100 check to get the Party started on PayPal. The delegates responded with applause.

On motion, the convention adjourned sine die at 4:56 p.m.

Fraternally submitted,

DONNA BILLS

Recording Secretary