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SLP Holds 45th National Convention and Banquet

The 45th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party convened at the Holiday Inn in Santa Clara Calif., on Friday morning, June 1, and adjourned Monday night, June 4. Although it was the smallest convention on record, it was also one of the most interesting, lively and productive of recent years.

National Secretary Robert Bills greeted the delegates and called the convention to order with a brief address noting that 2001 marked the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Workingmen's Party of the United States in July 1876. The WMP, which changed its name to Socialist Labor Party in 1877, was the immediate organizational predecessor of the modern SLP.

The opening session was devoted primarily to organizing the convention, allowing time for the national secretary to present his report and for the delegates to discuss its contents in open debate. Ken Boettcher of Section San Francisco Bay Area was elected as permanent chairman and John-Paul Catusco of Section New York City was elected as permanent recording secretary.

National Secretary's Report

In his report, Bills reviewed the party's accomplishments since the National Executive Committee Session in April 2000, but also identified certain failures and the persistence of several serious problems.

Among the achievements cited was the increase in the number and variety of documents and information on the SLP's official Web site. Bills also reported that the number of "hits," or visits to the Web site, increased from 26,400 in 1999 to 49,450 in 2000, and that 2001 promised another increase.

Among the problems cited by the national secretary the most threatening is the serious state of the party's finances. Bills reported that despite the generous financial support from party members and supporters, and despite successful efforts to avoid rising costs, the party's cash reserves declined by 25 percent last year and were now at their lowest point in decades. Accordingly, a major effort is needed to stop the drain on the party's cash reserves, and he called upon party members "to help us wipe out these crippling monthly deficits."

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Bush Plays Politics With Global Warming

Those who know the basics about the Kyoto Protocol know that it would do next to nothing to reverse the trend toward capitalist-made global warming. Even if the standards it sets were universally accepted and rigidly enforced it would only reduce the emission of greenhouse gases to 1990 levels. Nature's alarm went off long before that. The Kyoto Protocol isn't worth the paper it's written on.

So why did President Bush make a spectacle of himself by saying that the United States would not accept it when signing on would seem to be the politically savvy thing to do, and why did European politicians and capitalists get into such a huff about Bush's nay saying?

No one worth listening to still argues that global warming is a myth. Bush, who claimed to be a skeptic, closed and locked that door behind himself when his own scientific panel confirmed that global warming, caused by "human activity," is a fact. That, obviously, is why he had to say he now takes global warming "seriously." Nonetheless, Bush stuck by his objections to the Kyoto Protocol because the only effect its useless standards would have is to hurt the "economy."

By that, of course, the president meant it would hurt profits because the emissions control standards (if honored), methods (if applied) and devices (if installed) would cost money to no effect.

President Bush has yet to be accused of being an intellectual giant. What Bush sees brighter stars in the global political firmament see at least as well. Bush's European counterparts know as well as he does that the Kyoto Protocol would not stop global warming. Yet they appeared to be insistent on it, and gave poor Georgie a bad time in Göteborg, Sweden, last month. By the time he returned to Washington, however, Bush was saying that at least some of Europe's political leaders were coming around to his point of view. Is President Bush that much of a diplomat? Does any-



"SOLAR POWER MIGHT BE A PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE IF WE HAD MORE CLEAR DAYS." Carol Simpson

one really believe that this master of the oral gaffe persuaded the chancellors, prime ministers and presidents of Europe to see things his way?

The answer is neither a yes nor a no. It is a bit of both.

The Kyoto Protocol was not slapped together by scientists, but by politicians and bureaucrats. It is a political document more than a guide on making meaningful reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. It is meant to create the impression that something is being done about a problem when, in truth, nothing can be done while private interest and the profit motive are the governing principles of society. Bush may not be the brightest—no Bill Clinton, for example—but even he understands: "It's the economy, stupid!"

Once that is understood it is easy to see that the Kyoto Protocol—regardless of its language and provisions—is a political document rather than a serious attempt at stopping global warming. It is easy to see the source of the difference between the posture of the Bush administration and that of other industrialized capitalist nations.

Backing the protocol was good politics in Europe, where chills still run down ruling-class spines when visions

of Paris Communes, Spartakusbund uprisings and Russian Revolutions enter their minds. European capitalism is more sensitive to the need to throw sops at the working class than its American counterpart, whose contempt for the working class runs much deeper. Why bother with sops, especially potentially expensive ones, when you don't believe the working class will budge from its lethargy—not even when their survival is at stake?

The Bush mentality is: Profits first, then the deluge.

The European mentality is: After us the deluge, but to get there we must keep the working class at bay.

Capitalist society is incapable of solving the problems it creates. Even its efforts to disguise its failures behind smokescreens of empty rhetoric and worse-than-useless reforms is breaking down.

Capitalism is a threat to us all. Today it is more apparent than ever that to end this threat to our existence capitalism must be replaced with the economic democracy of socialism. Only then can we have the rational control of industry and social planning that will protect the Earth and humanity rather than the profit interests of the tiny class of parasites that presently rule our world.

'The Employment Situation'

Three hundred thousand fewer workers held jobs in May than in April, the Department of Labor said on June 1. Yet the DOL also claimed that unemployment and the number of unemployed workers went down!

In its monthly press release on "The Employment Situation," the DOL said that the unemployment rate for May was 4.4 percent, or one-tenth of a percent less than the 4.5 percent it reported for April. According to the same release, however, "Total employment (135.1 million) edged down in May after seasonal adjustment." It "edged down" from the 135.4 million figure for April.

In May, the DOL said: "The number of unemployed persons rose by more than 300,000 in April to 6.4 million..." In its report for May, however, the number of unemployed workers was

put at 6.2 million—not 300,000 more, but 200,000 less than for April!

The seeming contradiction is partly explained by changes in what the DOL calls the "civilian labor force" (CLF), which it said had "dropped by 485,000 over the month to 141.3 million..." These workers were "dropped" into another category not considered part of the CLF. Since the official unemployment rate is a percentage of the CLF, the 485,000 workers dropped from it were not included among the 6.2 million counted as unemployed in May. Accordingly, while 300,000 fewer workers held jobs in May than in April, the number of workers counted as unemployed fell by 200,000 and the unemployment rate dropped by one-tenth of a percent.

The number of jobless workers

whom the DOL acknowledges but excludes when calculating its official unemployment rate also grew in May. The DOL identifies them as people "who currently want a job." Their number grew from 4.4 million in April to 4.5 million in May. When they are combined with the 6.2 million the DOL counted as unemployed the jobless total jumps to 10.7 million.

We suspect that even that large number understates the true state of affairs. But don't ask Bureau of Labor Statistics Commissioner Katharine G. Abraham to unscramble the numbers. When the DOL released its unemployment figures on June 1 she told reporters that nonfarm employment in May fell "by just 19,000 following the steep loss of 182,000 jobs (as revised) in April."

General Electric Resisting Order to Dredge the Hudson

By B.G.

One of the most blatant examples of modern capitalism's ongoing irresponsibility toward the public at large and toward the environment is General Electric's ongoing two-fisted and vehement battle against being required to clean up the toxins that it had dumped over the years into New York state's premier waterway, the Hudson River.

For decades after World War II, General Electric's New York state factories at Fort Edward and Hudson Falls, north of Albany, either leaked or dumped

polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) into the river where they were absorbed by the river's flora and fauna, making swimming hazardous and the river's fish and shellfish inedible.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has required that the Hudson River's sediment be dredged to remove the pollution, and that the \$460 million task be done at GE's expense.

It is a proposal that GE vigorously rejects. In its defense, GE spokespersons state that at the time its plants at Ford Edward and Hudson Falls were discharging PCBs into the river the act

was perfectly legal.

EPA admits that most of the 1.3 million pounds of the cancer-causing PCBs are now gone from the river, absorbed by the wildlife and by humans, or washed into the ocean. What the agency wants is a dredging to remove about 100,000 pounds of PCBs from the 40-mile stretch of the worst polluted areas of the river north of Albany.

GE has chosen to enter into combat with the federal government over this issue and has, thus far, spent an estimated \$60 million or more on a persistent and vigorous TV and print propagan-

da campaign in the Albany area alone. The TV ads present GE spokesmen as ruffled nature types, usually standing before a scenic backdrop and expounding on how much GE understands and loves the environment, while those Big Brother types in Washington, D.C., are arrogant ignoramuses who know little and care nothing for local people.

As part of its defense, GE claims that the remaining PCBs in the river are now so deeply imbedded in the sediment of the river that they are no danger, but dredging will scatter them and repollute the river. It is a clever argument designed to divide the public on the issue, and it has begun to be effective in that aim. EPA's regulations require local opinion to be taken into account before any environmental remedial action is undertaken in any particular area.

GE's brand of aggressive capitalism has won plaudits in the investment community, where profits and more profits form the guiding philosophy of life. But even here there are a few cracks beginning to show in GE's armor. A number of GE shareholders have continued to back a resolution to force GE to report on the total amount it has been spending on media lobbying. Also, the February issue of *Fortune* magazine called upon GE to "just do it" and clean up the Hudson.

The EPA, meanwhile, has been depending upon solid science to impress the public with the necessity of cleaning up the Hudson. Without a comparable media campaign, which it refuses to engage in, it is problematical whether it will be equal to GE's brainwashing onslaught on the public. Stay tuned!

National Secretary's Opening Remarks to SLP Convention

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

*

Greetings:

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

Not all the men who gathered in that Philadelphia hall in July 1876 remained loyal to the organization they created or the cause it was meant to espouse. Some who abandoned the new party were

trade unionists; others were Socialists. Among the former was Adolph Strasser, ultimately president of the cigarmakers' union and vice president of the American Federation of Labor, who would later tell a committee of the U.S. Senate that trade unions "have no ultimate ends." Among the latter was Frederick Sorge, a friend and correspondent of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

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

That new party, founded at a Union Congress in Philadelphia 125 years ago, was the Workingmen's Party of the United States, which, one year later, changed its name to Socialist Labor Party. And just as Engels foresaw, the SLP has played an important part in the

history and development of the socialist and labor movements in America.

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

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

N.Y. Student Labor Day Protest

By John-Paul Catusco

On Wednesday, April 4, I was able to attend the Student Labor Day of Action held at Washington Square Park in New York City. The United Auto Workers, UNITE Local 169, the Community Labor Coalition and a few other union-affiliated groups sponsored the rally. Organizers had hoped to draw together a crowd of 500 workers and students, but only about 200 people attended.

At the head of the rally a flat-bed truck acted as a podium from which local politicians, student leaders and union officials threw to the crowd their fiery yet blatantly reformist chants. The air filled with phrases such as "Do you want a living wage?" which the crowd answered with a tragic "Yes!"

A brighter moment occurred when a Mexican-American worker and a rank-and-file member of UNITE Local 169 began a wave of spontaneous classconsciousness by raising his hand and the Spanish-tinged call for "Revolution!" which the crowd picked up for an electrifying minute or so before the organizers regained its attention with their calls for more dollars and less sense.

At the end of the rally an unexpected march began and, with the guidance of some New York City police, we made our way up 5th and then 6th avenues

chanting union slogans and drawing shouts of solidarity from a group of maintenance workers on a break outside an office building.

The march ended across the street from a local greengrocer's on 13th Street and 6th Avenue where we engaged in a two-hour-long protest against one in a chain of stores where, according to a Community Labor Coalition flyer, the workers receive less than the minimum wage, work 12-14 hours a day with no overtime pay, receive no health care benefits, have no sick days and have no vacation days. Many of the same workers are organized in UNITE Local 169.

During the rally, march and protest I found it quite easy to distribute the 35 copies of *The People* that I had brought with me. The April headline calling for the removal of President Bush evoked a great response. I only wish that I had been able to carry 100 copies with me.

In these days of nearly unbridled trade union retreat, the union rank and file continues to make valiant stands against the encroachments of capital on labor. Constantly held in check by business union bureaucrats, vanguardists and all breeds of reformists who deny the workers their classconsciousness, their revolutionary education and the proper industrial organizations through which to

express and develop both, it is no mystery why the trade unions continue to decline in membership. What is a mystery is why a strong Socialist Industrial Union has not made itself felt as an alternative. To that end Section New York City of the Socialist Labor Party of America urges workers everywhere to join the fighting SLP and to help bring its ideas and pro-

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Do You Belong?

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

If you have been reading *The People* steadily for a year or more, if you have read the literature recommended for beginning Socialists, and if you agree with the SLP's call for the political and economic unity of the working class, you may qualify for membership in the SLP. And if you qualify to be a member you probably should be a member.

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

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SLP Members to Vote On National Platform

One of the responsibilities that National Conventions of the Socialist Labor Party have under the party's Constitution is that of "framing the National Platform." The party's 45th National Convention held last month in Santa Clara, Calif., adopted the following to fulfill that obligation. As with all other "resolutions and statements setting forth party policy, position or analysis of political and/or theoretical questions" adopted by National Conventions of the SLP, the National Platform is subject to approval by a general vote of the whole membership of the party.

The 45th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party of the United States, assembled in Santa Clara, Calif., on the 4th day of June 2001, reaffirms its previous national platforms and further declares:

Few can deny that the world today is in a constant state of upheaval. That is reflected in the widespread anarchy, turmoil and conflict, not only in the developed industrial nations but also in developing nations throughout the world.

The fact that such conditions prevail generally throughout the world, and have prevailed for a long time, logically suggests the presence of a dominant common social factor. That common social factor, the Socialist Labor Party has repeatedly demonstrated, is the capitalist system that does not and cannot work in the interests of the majority. It is a social system in which society is divided into two classes—a capitalist class and a working class. The capitalist class consists of a tiny minority—the wealthy few who own and control the instruments of production and distribution. The working class consists of the vast majority who own no productive property and must, therefore, seek to work for the class that owns and controls the means of life in order to survive.

The relationship between the two classes forms the basis for an economic tyranny under which the workers as a class are exploited of the major portion of the social wealth that they produce.

The beneficiaries and defenders of this economic dictatorship never tire of declaring it the "best of all possible systems." Yet, today, after decades of new deals, fair deals, wars on poverty, civil rights legislation, government regulations, deregulations and a host of other reform efforts, capitalist America presents an obscene social picture. Millions

who need and want jobs are still unemployed despite the official claims that unemployment is at historically "low" rates. Millions more are underemployed, working only part-time or temporary jobs though they need and want full-time work. Millions aren't earning enough to maintain a decent standard of living for themselves and their families despite the fact that they are working.

The malignant evil of racism is on the upsurge; so, too, is contemptible discrimination against minorities generally. The nation's educational system is a mess and getting worse. The health care system, despite heated debate for years, still fails to meet the needs of tens of millions. The country's infrastructure continues to crumble. Widespread pollution of our environment continues. Crime and corruption are pervasive at every level of capitalist society. Slums abound and millions of homeless men, women and even children roam our streets. Thanks to rising mass unemployment and falling real wages, poverty continues to grow. The number of people living below the official poverty line has risen from 24.1 million in 1969—years after the Johnson administration's so-called "War on Poverty" to a 1999 level of 32.3 million.

Even the foregoing fails to give a full picture of the wide-ranging plague of

social and economic problems modern-day capitalism is imposing on society.

Over 110 years ago, when the Socialist Labor Party was organized, there were no jet planes, no computers, no nuclear power plants, no satellites and space stations, and no nuclear weapons. Nor was there great concern regarding pollution of the land, air and water on which all species—humanity included—depend on for life. But there was widespread poverty, racial prejudice and discrimination, spreading urban chaos, brazen violations of democratic rights, the material and economic conflicts that contain the seeds of war, and a host of other economic and social problems.

All of those problems still plague the American working class—but have grown to even more monumental proportions. These long-standing problems and the failure of seemingly unending reform efforts to solve or even alleviate them to any meaningful degree have imposed decades of misery and suffering on millions of workers and their families. Those deplorable conditions continue today after what capitalism's apologists and soothsayers refer to as the "longest economic boom" in the system's history—a boom they claimed brought prosperity and a sense of security to all levels of U.S. society. That capitalist propaganda

not only says much about capitalist integrity and honesty, it also reflects a considerable degree of callous indifference for the working-class victims of this ruthless "expansion."

Moreover, today, as the "dot-com boom" takes a dive and capitalism enters yet another of its recurring economic busts, the U.S. working class stands perilously poised on the brink of yet another nightmare of increased joblessness and poverty.

Against this insane capitalist system, the Socialist Labor Party raises its voice in emphatic protest and unqualified condemnation. It declares that if our society is to be rid of the host of economic, political and social ills that for so long have plagued it, the outmoded capitalist system of private ownership of the socially operated means of life and production for the profit of a few must be replaced by a new social order. That new social order must be organized on the sane basis of social ownership and democratic management of all the instruments of social production, all means of distribution and all of the social services. It must be one in which production is carried on to satisfy human needs and wants. In short, it must be genuine socialism.

That is precisely the mission embodied in the Socialist Labor Party's Socialist Industrial Union program—a program calling for both political and economic organization and action. That program also is based upon the SLP's recognition and unqualified acceptance of the fact that the revolutionary change to socialism must be the classconscious act of the workers themselves!

Accordingly, the SLP calls upon the workers to rally under its banner for the purpose of advocating this revolutionary change, building classconsciousness among workers and projecting a program of organization that the workers could implement toward this end. That program also calls for the organization of revolutionary socialist unions. These are essential to mobilize the economic power of the workers not only to resist the ever increasing encroachments of the capitalists more effectively, but ultimately to provide the essential power to enforce the revolutionary demand.

Capable of assuming control and continuing to administer and operate the essential industries and social services, Socialist Industrial Unions can exercise the power and provide the decisive leverage to "swing" the revolution. Moreover, they have the structure that provides the necessary foundation and structural framework for socialist society. It is the workers who will fill out the new social framework and make the people's ownership, control and administration of the new social structure a reality.

Despite the many threats to workers' lives, liberty and happiness today, despite the growing poverty and misery that workers are subjected to, a world of peace, liberty, security, health and abundance for all stands within our grasp. The potential to create such a society exists, but that potential can be realized only if workers act to gain control of their own lives by organizing, politically and industrially, for socialism.

The Socialist Labor Party calls upon all who realize the critical nature of our times, and who may be increasingly aware that a basic change in our society is needed, to place themselves squarely on working-class principles. Join us in this effort to put an end to the existing class conflict and all its malevolent results by placing the land and the instruments of social production in the hands of the people as a collective body in a cooperative socialist society. Help us build a world in which everyone will enjoy the free exercise and full benefit of their individual faculties, multiplied by all the technological and other factors of modern civilization.

Convention Reaffirms Document Outlining SLP's Basic Principles

The Socialist Labor Party's Declaration of Fundamental Principles is a historic document. It is based on the National Platform adopted by the party's Eighth National Convention in October 1889, which some consider to be the "founding convention" of the modern SLP. Obviously patterned after the Declaration of Independence, the 1889 platform was readopted by the Ninth National Convention in 1893 and the quadrennial conventions of 1896, 1900, 1904 and 1908. It was expanded and adopted as the party's Declaration of Fundamental Principles by the 20th National Convention in 1940, and for many years served as a Preamble to the party's Constitution. The 45th National Convention held last month adopted some minor changes to the 1940 document and then reaffirmed it as the party's Declaration of Fundamental Principles. As with the party's National Platform and certain other acts of the convention, the Declaration is subject to approval by a general vote of the party's membership.

The Socialist Labor Party of America, assembled at its 45th National Convention, reasserts the inalienable right of humankind to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

We hold that the purpose of government is to secure to every citizen the enjoyment of this right; but taught by experience we hold, furthermore, that such right is illusory to the overwhelming majority of the people—the working class—under the present system of economic inequality that is essentially destructive of their life, their liberty and their happiness.

We hold that humanity cannot exercise their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness without the ownership of the land on and the tools with which to work. Deprived of these, their life, their liberty and their fate fall into the hands of the class that owns those essentials for work and production. This ownership is today held by the minority in society, the capitalist class, exercising through this ownership and control an

economic despotism without parallel in history.

The nation's wealthiest 10.2 million households reportedly own 69 percent of the nation's wealth, while the overwhelmingly working-class balance of 92.3 million households own only 31 percent. But the "wealth" most working-class households "own" is usually merely a home or a car in which a bank or finance company really has the largest interest. Put another way, most workers merely own the proverbial shirt on their back—and little else that helps them much in their struggle for existence.

The ownership of the bulk of the nation's wealth by the few is conclusive evidence that labor is robbed of the major portion of the product which it alone produces. Thus the worker is denied the means of self-employment and, by compulsory idleness in wage slavery, is deprived of even the necessities of life.

We hold that the existing contradiction between the theory of democratic government and the fact of a despotic economic system—the private ownership of the natural and social opportunities—divides the nation into two classes: the nonproducing, but owning, capitalist class, and the producing, but propertyless, working class; throws society into the convulsions of the class struggle and invariably perverts government to the uses and benefit of the capitalist class.

As the natural result of social evolution, the capitalist system now impels its own downfall. Having completed its normal development, this system and its political reflex, the state, are now outworn. No longer able to dispose readily of the huge quantities of surplus commodities in foreign markets, each capitalist nation seeks desperately to crowd out its competitors, with the result that wars and conflicts convulse much of the world. In this mad struggle for survival, the working classes of all nations are the chief sufferers.

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CONVENTION BANQUET ADDRESS:**'Shall We Die Like Rats, or**

The following is based on an address delivered by Ken Boettcher of The People's editorial staff at the 45th National Convention Banquet of the Socialist Labor Party on Saturday, June 2, at the Holiday Inn in Santa Clara, Calif.

*

One day, while researching an article for *The People*, I ran across a *Weekly People* headline of 30 or more years ago that put the social question in what I thought was admirably direct fashion. The headline was over a speech by Joe Pirincin, a national organizer for the Socialist Labor Party well known back then for his directness and clarity in stating the case against capitalism and for socialism.

The headline said something like "Shall We Die Like Rats or Live Like Human Beings?" The article under it warned workers about the grim economic future they faced under capitalism; but it also pointed to the choice workers could make to build a happier, secure future in a socialist society.

Tonight it is my intent to make the case that there is *little if any hyperbole* in putting the social question exactly that way to the American working class today—"Shall We Die like Rats or Live like Human Beings?" Moreover, I will show that, despite the intervening years, the SLP program for building the society of peace, freedom and plenty workers deserve is still relevant today.

That workers face such a social question is self-evident. Any way you look at it—whether at unemployment, growing poverty, increasing workplace stress, working-class housing shortages, transportation nightmares, the problems of raising and educating children while both parents work—it is apparent that things just keep getting worse for U.S. workers as a class. Capitalist development of the economy has for decades had us increasingly scurrying around like rats for survival.

This is not what American workers in Joe Pirincin's day were led to expect from automation, computerization and the "high technology" of the time. The public relations servants of capitalism promised that technological improvements would one day take hours out of the workweek even as they raised workers' standard of living. Forty-five years ago, for example, the National Association of Manufacturers' pamphlet, *Calling All Jobs*, made this prediction: "Let the worker face what is to come with hope..., not with fear... Automation is a magical key to creation, not a blunt instrument of destruction, and the worker's talent and skill will continue to merit reward in the fair-land of the world to come."

With a blind eye to increasing unemployment, declining real wages and increasing hours of work, the soothsayers churned out reams of propaganda on the blessings of automation. The promise of those supposed blessings were used for decades to coax workers and the pro-capitalist unions into meekly accepting job losses, hazardous work-rule changes and all manner of work speedups in exchange for pie in the sky. Like caged rats on a running wheel that gets them *nowhere*, the U.S. working class has huffed and puffed to build the very machines that replaced them as the capitalist class rode workers all the way to the bank.

Today, as the U.S. stands on the brink of yet another of capitalism's recurring economic busts, and yet another nightmare of increased joblessness and poverty, American workers should give the most serious consideration to their present circumstances, to the prescience of the Socialist Labor Party's warnings about where the capitalist economy was headed, and make a conscious choice to work for the better future they deserve by building a movement for socialism.

Thirty-seven years ago, in an official

statement adopted by its 1964 National Convention, the SLP predicted the direst consequences should American workers fail to grasp the massive job-killing consequences of automation. It called upon workers to "consider how the impending spread of job-killing automation may affect you, your family and your class," and the "kind of world it threatens to create."

It pointed out that, "Capitalism has always had what Karl Marx called an 'industrial reserve army' to fill its labor needs in periods of capital expansion," and "that even in the best of times it is 'normal' for 4 percent of the workers to be unemployed...."



Sam Bortnick for *The People*

The People staff writer Ken Boettcher delivered the banquet address.

Historically, it added, "technological unemployment, the displacement of workers by machines, has been going on in a greater or lesser degree ever since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century," but that two things about the technological revolution of the 20th century set it apart from its predecessor.

The first was "the speed and magnitude of impending labor displacement, and the fact that automation will hit workers in all industries, and in offices and laboratories as well as factories and mines."

The second was that, "Very few of the worker-victims of job-killing automation will ever find 'steady' employment again."

In short, the SLP claimed that 20th century technology would "create something new—a massive army of permanently unemployed and unemployable workers."

True to the party's warning, and many others like it over the years, unemployment—even according to the government's vastly understated statistics—grew steeply from an average of 4.8 percent in the 1960s to 6.8 percent in the 1970s, jumping to 7.2 percent in the 1980s. The 1990s, thanks in no small measure to the now-bursting bubble of investment in the rapidly disappearing dot-coms, produced an average rate of something like 5.8 percent.

But that figure may be more of an illusion than even the figures of previous years. Can there be an "average rate" for a decade when the government redefined how unemployment is measured in fully half of the decade's 10 years? The Bureau of Labor Statistics itself warns that the data for five of those years is "not strictly comparable with data for prior years."

In fact, the government's employment data these days is not strictly comparable with reality either. As the lead article in

the most recent issue of *The People* observed, the official unemployment rate of 4.5 percent in April included 6.4 million workers, but excluded an additional 4.4 million workers who "don't count when it comes to counting the unemployed."

They didn't count even though the Department of Labor conceded that more than a million of them had "looked for work during the last year and as being 'available to work now,'" that "346,000... were 'discouraged' because they were the victims of different 'types of discrimination' by potential employers," and that, "Most of the remaining 778,000... were ruled off the unemployment rolls 'for such reasons as child-care and transportation problems....'"

As for the remaining 2.3 million jobless workers who are not counted among the unemployed, they have simply thrown in the towel.

By bringing these numbers together, *The People* concluded that the number of unemployed in April was closer to 10.8 million than to 6.4 million, and that the unemployment rate was closer to 8.8 percent than the 4.5 percent claimed by the Labor Dept.

Unemployment is not the only problem U.S. workers as a class have had to bear. U.S. manufacturing workers suffered a decline in the purchasing power of their average weekly wages of almost 28 percent from 1968 to 1986. In 1992, real average weekly wages were still 20 percent less than in 1972, and though they have inched up over the past decade, there is room for debate as to whether they have caught up to the real wages of U.S. workers a decade ago. This is the thanks U.S. workers got for a massive increase in their productivity of over 73 percent between 1960 and 1990—and continued productivity increases through the 1990s.

As a result of rising mass unemployment and falling real wages, poverty has of course grown. The number of people who live below the official poverty line rose from the 1969 level of 24.1 million to a 1999 level of 32.3 million.

But again, government statistics minimize the problem. The measure used to determine official poverty levels for different family groupings hasn't been fundamentally changed since it was based on a food budget in the 1950s. Even the government's own National Academy of Sciences has recommended a new measure that takes into account the higher relative costs of housing and day care today—an adjustment that would add more than 5 million people to the official number.

Many nongovernmental organizations that deal directly with the poor on a daily basis contend that the federal poverty lines are set too low. Some set U.S. poverty totals at rates of 150 percent or more of the federal definitions. A 1999 Census Bureau study lends weight to such views. In 1995, according to the study, 49 million Americans—more than one of every five Americans at the time—lived in "households that struggle[d] to meet basic needs, such as paying the mortgage or rent, covering utility bills, seeing a doctor or getting enough to eat." *More than a third of these 49 million were children under 18 years old.*

In fact, a report released in 1999 by the Better Homes Fund, entitled "Homeless Children: America's New Outcasts," used figures from national homeless organizations, the U.S. Department of Education and the Census Bureau to show that "there are more homeless children now than at any time since the Great Depression." "Every night," as an article in the *Los Angeles Times* characterized the report's findings, "more than a million children in America face the dark with no place to call home." According to the report, the fastest growing group of home-

less—now about 40 percent of the total U.S. homeless population—is composed of women and their children.

Unemployment and poverty are but a partial picture of the present state of the U.S. working class. What of the rest, who are still employed—and a good portion of which are living two or three paychecks away from officially defined poverty?

One of the many cruel and irrational features of the capitalist system is that, despite the mass unemployment the system creates, capitalists in many industries find it profitable to squeeze more hours out of their current workforce before hiring additional workers.

While millions go hungry or homeless for lack of work, and millions more struggle to survive on temporary or part-time work, millions of other workers are being worked into an early grave as they strive to support themselves and their families. For the latter millions the 40-hour workweek is a myth.

More than 25 percent of California workers reported putting in above 40 hours of work per week in 1997, according to an economist cited in a 1999 *Los Angeles Times* article. A report by the Employment Policy Foundation cited in the article put the national figure at 19.5 percent of U.S. workers in 1999. The average overtime among all workers was 11 hours per week. Many workers put in this time without extra pay, because they are salaried or otherwise exempt from the federal Fair Labor Standards Act, which ostensibly requires time-and-a-half pay for work beyond eight hours a day or 40 hours a week, for those industries covered by the act.

More than 7 million workers now work two or more jobs. Moreover, according to a 1999 report from the Economic Policy Institute, the two wage earners in the "typical" married couple family worked 3,600 hours in 1998, an increase of 182 hours since 1989.

Remember, only a few decades ago, bourgeois economists and the capitalist media were predicting that automation would greatly increase leisure time for the average U.S. worker. The most confident predicted a "crisis" of leisure, a society without labor in which the needs of all were met by machines and the majority of the population would be left wondering what to do with themselves.

Today such predictions stand revealed as the pipe dreams and propaganda of capitalism's shameless defenders. Constant improvements in the means and methods of production, forced by competition and the profit motive, have indeed resulted in a productive apparatus capable of providing an abundance both goods and services and leisure for all. But the greatest portion of the value of workers' product has been expropriated by the capitalist class. The primary benefits of the increasingly vast productive capacity of the nation accrued during this period, as they always have, to the capitalists.

Data reported by economist Edward N. Wolff for the Jerome Levy Economics Institute in April of last year show that for the period from 1983 to 1998, as the report put it, "Income inequality increased sharply...The richest one percent [of families] received 53 percent of the total gain in marketable wealth over the period from 1983 to 1998. The next 19 percent received another 39 percent, so that the top quintile together accounted for 91 percent of the total growth in wealth, while the bottom 80 percent accounted for 9 percent."

Continuing, the report noted that, "The pattern of results are quite similar for financial wealth. The average financial wealth of the richest one percent grew by 62 percent and that of the next richest 4 percent by 23 percent, and that of the next richest 5 percent by 37 per-

Live Like Human Beings?'

cent....Of the total growth in financial wealth between 1983 and 1998, 56 percent accrued to the top one percent and 89 percent to the top quintile, while the bottom 80 percent collectively accounted for only 11 percent."

In short, said Wolff, the report's author, "These results indicate rather dramatically that the growth in the economy during the period from 1983 to 1998 was concentrated in a surprisingly small part of the population—the top 20 percent and particularly the top one percent."

The trend bolstered already wide disparities in wealth ownership—disparities that reflect the class division between the owning and the working classes. "In 1998," the report noted, "the richest one percent of households held half of all outstanding stock, financial securities, and trust equity, two-thirds of business equity, and 36 percent of investment real estate. The top 10 percent of families as a group accounted for about 90 percent of stock shares, bonds, trusts and business equity, and about three-quarters of nonhome real estate. Moreover...the richest 10 percent of households accounted for 79 percent of the total value of these stocks, only slightly less than its 85 percent of directly owned stocks and mutual funds."

Leisure time has never been a problem for the idle capitalist class, which lives by owning the means of life and expropriating the lion's share of the value created by workers.

Leisure time for workers, however, is dropping fast. As the San Jose *Metro* described an estimate by economist Juliet Schor in 1992, "the average employed American works the equivalent of one more month each year than he or she did 20 years ago."

A cacophony of howls and shrieks arose from the capitalist media upon the 1992 publication of Schor's book, *The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure*. But further studies have corroborated that by even the most conservative estimates workers today have at least 66 fewer leisure hours per year—a little over eight working days per year—than they did 20 years ago.

Workers are paying for decreased leisure time in a variety of ways. Capitalism has never given workers much opportunity for the full flowering of their abilities and talents. With decreasing leisure time, many workers find themselves increasingly drained of energy for self-development, for interacting with their spouses, children and friends, for enjoying life in general. Life under capitalism becomes more and more a plodding routine that drains them of their enthusiasm for living. The trend understandably contributes to rising health-care costs, divorce rates and suicide rates.

Schor also noted the toll it takes on children. "The family system," she said, "is under tremendous stress, because parents don't have enough time to take care of their children. Children are suffering increasingly from a variety of problems: emotional problems, obesity, teen suicide, poor performance in school...the growth of parental work time and the decline of contact time between parent and children has been very central in the growing problem of children." That is putting it mildly. Across America, millions of households have no parents in them when children come home from school. As even conservative author Sylvia Hewlett noted on a McNeil-Lehrer *NewsHour*, "There are—just to give you one figure—7 million seven-year-olds in self-care after school in 1998."

There is nothing really new about any of this. The pace of change brought on by technological advances may be accelerating and its social and economic effects growing more grim with the passage of every year, but they are also part of a continual process under capitalism.

There is NO reason to believe that any-

thing short of the abolition of capitalism will suffice to change the circumstances of the working class. Politicians and reform movements of all stripes, from liberal to conservative, have tried over and over again in the last 50 years, have passed law after law ostensibly intended to help the workers, but nothing has thwarted the general trend a bit.

There IS no doubt about why capitalists are scrambling to introduce new technology. The purpose is to improve the efficiency of labor exploitation—to get more out of fewer workers.

The drive to accumulate the gigantic piles of capital needed to develop, buy and install all this equipment lies behind the bulk of the social, economic and political phenomena of today. It lies behind the wave of mergers, buyouts and takeovers; behind a growing number of bankruptcies; behind the effort to dismantle the so-



Sam Bortnick for *The People*

SLP members and sympathizers at the convention banquet.

called welfare state, tightens their education budget and channel capital back into capitalist hands by reducing the capitalist tax burden; behind the speedups, forced overtime and layoffs, which seem contradictory, but which in fact are logical and consistent with capitalist goals. It lies behind the certainty that modern computer technology, despite the promise it holds to lighten toil and abolish poverty, will do the very opposite as long as technology remains in private hands serving private purposes.

But it doesn't have to be that way. The SLP's revolutionary program of Socialist Industrial Unionism provides a way out for workers, a means to realize the potential that technology has to liberate humanity from the realm of necessity. Its relevance to the problem workers face cannot even be doubted.

Indeed, as *The People* has pointed out: "The whole purpose of the socialist movement...is to solve the grave social problems resulting from the march of technology monopolized by a numerically insignificant capitalist class so that the magnificent possibilities modern advances in technology hold out may benefit all of humanity...."

"Whatever good there is in modern methods of production, whatever their potential for making the world a better place, for eliminating arduous toil, hunger and poverty, that potential is wiped out by a single, dominating fact. The one fact that overwhelms and nullifies the promise of all progress is private ownership of the means of production and distribution.

* * * * *

"A capitalist future of profound social dislocation and human misery is an absolute certainty because of the economic laws on which capitalism is based — laws which compel every capitalist concern to strive for the greatest possible profit at the lowest possible cost. That can only mean one thing. It can only mean that permanent joblessness is the only future that millions—perhaps the major-

ity—of workers can look forward to as long as capitalism survives.

"To put it another way: Unless the working class becomes conscious of what a capitalist future holds the time may well come when it will be reduced to the beggar state of the proletariat of ancient Rome. The labor of the Roman proletariat was rendered useless by captive slaves; that of today's proletariat is being displaced by computerized machines."

The working class today faces not merely another in the ongoing string of capitalist economic crises in which markets are glutted with commodities that cannot be sold at a profit and masses of workers are laid off, then called back to work. There will be no turnaround to open new jobs or new opportunities for many. Most of those displaced will never find jobs of equal or better pay. What workers face today is a new stage in cap-

will the capitalist class keep "useless" workers around when machines perform the bulk of production?

While the program of Socialist Industrial Unionism contemplates making the fullest use of the traditional revolutionary and political rights of the American people to effect the change from capitalism to socialism in a civilized manner by submitting the question to a democratic decision at the polls, it at the same time arms the worker-majority with the economic power to defeat any attempt by capitalist reaction to subvert the American Constitution and impose a despotic political regime.

The Socialist Industrial Union itself supplies the indispensable basis of the socialist government that will supplant the obsolete political state that now serves as an "executive committee" for the capitalist class. A bona fide socialist government must be capable of coordinating and administering the complex economic activities of this country, and, consequently, must be composed of persons having the requisite training and experience.

Where are they to be found? In the ranks of those who actually operate the industries and social services. The various units and subdivisions of the Socialist Industrial Union become the natural constituencies from which workers may democratically elect their industrial administrators and supervisors—and through which they can compel responsibility in those to whom they entrust directive authority.

The SIU program calls upon the working class of the nation—those who have jobs and those who do not—to unite politically and economically for the twofold purpose of abolishing capitalism and its system of labor exploitation, and of establishing socialism. Socialism will put an end to the exploitation of wage labor and all it implies. All the means of life—the means of producing and distributing the goods and services needed to feed, house and clothe the nation—will be converted from private into social property to provide for the physical and intellectual needs of all.

The working class is a sleeping giant. At some stage in the mass displacement of workers by modern technology the fear that already touches millions of workers will mature into the realization that they must act in their own defense. The realization will grow that there is no solution to the problem within the capitalist system. Instinctively, workers know their worth and their power, but their understanding is limited by blinders. When those blinders are finally ripped away—we, the members and supporters of the Socialist Labor Party, must be there in sufficient numbers to provide the information workers need to build a new society that will serve their own interests and end class rule forever.

We must be there because we are armed with the most important piece of socioeconomic knowledge available: the Socialist Industrial Union program. That's why it's so important that every reader of *The People* redouble their efforts to learn the SIU program, that every supporter seriously consider joining the party instead of staying on the sidelines in the most important battle of this century, and that every member renews their energy.

Together, we can forge ahead to build up the circulation of *The People* and the membership of the party, to make the SLP message known to every worker in the country.

We must shout in every corner of the land Joe Pirincin's question to workers: *Shall we die like rats or live like human beings?*

italist development from which there will be no recovery, with millions of workers useless to a capitalist class that controls access to the means of life.

As *The People* noted on another occasion: "The implications are earth shaking, not only because of the potential for worsening human misery, but because the permanent displacement of human labor on such a scale goes to the root of the capitalist system itself and may well be taking us to the threshold of what Daniel De Leon anticipated and described as 'feudo-capitalism' or 'plutocratic feudalism.'"

As more and more workers become redundant in and useless to capitalist industry, the opportunities for the working class to take, hold and democratically operate the industries and services for the benefit of all will diminish. At present, however, the working class still runs the production lines, still delivers the services, still makes the economy run. As long as that holds true, the SLP's Socialist Industrial Union program remains not only relevant, but the only route open to prevent society from falling into a new Dark Age, a high-tech version of industrial feudalism.

The SIU program is in still in complete harmony with the political, economic and social development of this nation. Its object forces the virtue of keeping even step with social and industrial development. Its object is the integral industrial organization of the useful workers just as they are organized to carry on the production and distribution of socially necessary goods and services.

In other words, the industries and services themselves provide the mold of the Socialist Industrial Union. The more industry is concentrated and streamlined, the more perfect becomes the mold and, therefore, the more perfect will be the industrial union formed by that mold. Let a decade or more pass in which the majority of workers have become useless to capitalism, however, and there will be little from which to provide a mold—how long

...Fundamental Principles

(Continued from page 3)

Against such a system the Socialist Labor Party raises the banner of revolt and demands the unconditional surrender of the capitalist class. In this supreme crisis no reform measures will stand, and history teaches that where a social revolution is pending and, for whatever reason, is not accomplished, reaction—dictatorship—is the alternative.

Having outlived its social usefulness, capitalism must give way to a new social order—a social order wherein government shall rest on industry, on the basis of useful occupations, instead of resting on territorial—political—representation. This new social system can only be the Socialist Industrial Union form of government if the needs of the vast majority are to be served, and if

progress is to be the law of the future as it has been in the past. Upon the despoiled workers rests the duty of effecting this revolutionary change in a peaceful, civilized manner, using the ballot and all that thereby hangs in order to effect the change.

We, therefore, call upon the wage workers of America to organize under the banner of the Socialist Labor Party into a class-conscious body, aware of its rights and determined to conquer them.

We further call upon the wage workers of America to organize into integral Socialist Industrial Unions to enforce their ballot, and to fulfill the needs and purposes of the Socialist Industrial Union government. Industrial unionism is the Socialist Republic *in the making*; that goal reached, the industrial union is the Socialist

Republic in operation.

Finally, we also call upon all intelligent and social-minded citizens to place themselves squarely upon the ground of working-class interests, and join with us in this noble work of human emancipation so that we may put summary end to the existing barbarous class conflict. By placing the land and all the means of production, transportation and distribution into the hands of the useful producers as a collective body, and substituting the Socialist Industrial Cooperative Commonwealth for the present state of planless production, industrial and international wars, and social disorder, a commonwealth can be built in which every worker shall have the free exercise and full benefit of their faculties, multiplied by all the modern factors of civilization.

...45th National Convention

(Continued from page 1)

The convention elected committees on Organization, Headquarters and Finances, and Resolutions, to which the sections of the national secretary's report and several resolutions from delegates and other SLP members were referred for action. Thereafter, most of the delegates' time was devoted to their committee assignments and to submitting their reports for the convention as a whole to consider.

Acts of the Convention

At subsequent sessions the convention thanked members and sympathizers for their generous contributions to the party (including those delegates who were able to absorb their own travel expenses), endorsed the call for all party members to become regular contributors to the SLP Sustainer Fund and urged those already contributing to the fund to consider increasing their voluntary monthly donations.

The convention directed the National Executive Committee to "establish a standing committee of members with access to the Internet...to respond to questions about the SLP," thereby assisting the National Office, and it directed the NEC to convene an SLP writers conference to provide the National Office more assistance in producing *The People*.

Among its other decisions, the convention ruled that Internet discussion list and chat room activities by SLP members should not take priority over traditional SLP activities, that local SLP Web sites should be treated as a form of local literature, that "Internet discussion groups, lists and forums fall under the category of local discussion meetings as defined in the Organizational Norms and Procedures and Guide for Discussion Groups," and it adopted a set of "interim guidelines for sections and members using the Internet to conduct party activities."

The convention also directed "that the NEC poll the membership...to find comrades with the necessary know-how to work on a voluntary basis with the National Office in the preparation of a CD-ROM containing a collection of De Leonist literature," and it referred resolutions on purchasing radio time for the SLP publishing a

booklet on "Why I Joined the SLP," and the party's prohibition against dual membership in the SLP and the IWW to the NEC for review.

Several acts of the conventions are subject to approval by the membership, among them an amendment to the party's Constitution reducing the eligibility requirement for membership on the NEC from two years to 18 months, a resolution on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a National Platform and a Declaration of Fundamental Principles.

Other decisions subject to the referendum are the election of seven members to the NEC for the 2001-2003 term of office and of a national secretary. The seven members elected to the NEC by the convention are Kenneth Boettcher, Bernard Bortnick, Christian Camacho, Bruce Cozzini, Carl C. Miller Jr., Stephen Raper and Diane Secor. Robert Bills was elected as national secretary.

National Convention Banquet

The 45th National Convention Banquet was held the evening of Saturday, June 2, also at the Holiday Inn in Santa Clara. Fifty SLP members and supporters attended. Due to a breakdown in communications, the hotel neglected to provide servers and what was supposed to be a banquet turned into a buffet. As it turned out, however, what had the earmarks of a minor disaster turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Everyone, from the youngest to the oldest—including 93-year-old SLP member Louis Lipcon—cheerfully took their place in line. Only the national secretary seemed embarrassed by the snafu. Everyone else took it in stride and simply turned the buffet line into an added opportunity to mingle, talk and swap jokes. Many were overheard to say they were glad it turned out that way. Another surprise on which many were heard to comment was the quality of the meal, which was excellent.

Following the meal, Bruce Cozzini of Section San Francisco Bay Area took over as master of ceremonies and introduced Ken Boettcher as the speaker of the evening. Boettcher delivered a carefully crafted talk on the state of the economy and the impact modern technology has had on the working class. How well his talk was received may be judged by the results of the

collection that followed. When Cozzini had finished announcing contributions received through the mail and taking additional donations from the floor he was able to announce a total in excess of \$18,000.

The 45th National Convention and "Banquet" of the Socialist Labor Party were great successes. The only serious flaw with them was that more of the party's members and supporters from around the country could not attend.

IN MEMORIAM

At a point in the proceedings of the 45th National Convention, SLP National Secretary Robert Bills called upon the delegates and visitors to stand in silent tribute as he read the names of SLP members who have died since the 44th National Convention in April 1999, as follows:

- 1. Frank Musolff, national member-at-large, Calif., June 19, 1999
- 2. Lillian Beck, national member-at-large, Fla., Sept. 1999
- 3. Russell Walker Sr., Section Milwaukee, Aug. 27, 1999
- 4. Howard R. Sprunger, national member-at-large, Ind., Oct. 5, 1999
- 5. Mary Pirincin, national member-at-large, Calif., Jan. 2, 2000
- 6. Katherine Kapitz, Section Akron, Jan. 12, 2000
- 7. Fred Busic, Section Akron, March 12, 2000
- 8. Nathan Karp, Section San Francisco Bay Area, April 22, 2000
- 9. John Reynolds, national member-at-large, Calif., July 28, 2000
- 10. Joseph Gingras, Section San Francisco Bay Area, Oct. 3, 2000
- 11. James Minal, Section Vancouver, B.C., Canada, Oct. 4, 2000
- 12. Margaret Rachek, Section Cleveland, Oct. 6, 2000
- 13. Peter Kapitz, Section Akron, Oct. 26, 2000
- 14. John Carlson, national member-at-large, Iowa, Nov. 22, 2000
- 15. Kenneth Kowalczyk, national member-at-large, N.J., notification received Dec. 21, 2000
- 16. Chester Louthan, national member-at-large, Ohio, Feb. 5, 2001.

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activities

Activities notices must be received by the Friday preceding the third Wednesday of the month.

OREGON

Portland
Discussion Meetings—Section Portland holds discussion meetings every second Saturday of the month. Meetings are usually held at the Central Library, but the exact time varies. For more information please call Sid at 503-226-2881 or visit our Web site at <http://slp.pdx.home.mindspring.com>. The general public is invited.

CALIFORNIA

Oakland
Discussion Meeting—Section San Francisco Bay Area will be holding discussion meetings soon—watch this column for details.

OHIO

Independence
Discussion Meetings—Section Cleveland will hold discussion meetings on Sunday, July 1, and on Sunday, July 29, at the Days Inn, 5555 Brecksville Rd., just south of Rt. 17 and Granger Rd., Independence. Meetings begin at 1:30 p.m. Refreshments served. For more information please call 440-237-7933.

TEXAS

Houston
Discussion Meetings—The SLP group in Houston holds discussion meetings the last Saturday of the month at the Houston Public Library, Franklin Branch, 6440 W. Bellfort, southwest Houston. The time of the meetings varies. Those interested please call 713-721-9296, e-mail houstonslp@lycos.com or visit the group's Web site at <http://houstonslp.tripod.com>.

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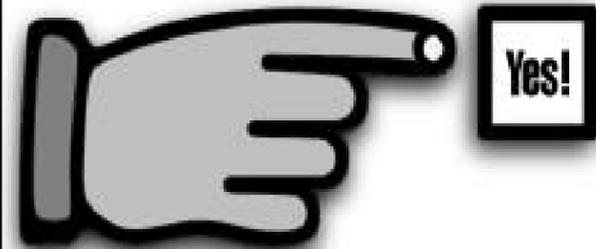
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SLP Sustainer Fund

The National Headquarters staff of the SLP wishes to thank all those who contributed to the 45th National Convention Banquet Fund. Their generosity is what has made it possible for us to continue The People and to attend to all the other things necessary to operate the SLP's national offices. Without their support The People would cease and the party's headquarters would soon shut down.

Total: \$18,832.45 (as of June 15)

Section San Francisco Bay Area "In memory of Joseph Gingras," (\$1,500), includes the following contributions: Dale Birum \$500; Steve Littleton \$100; \$50 each Lois Reynolds, Genevieve Gunderson, Louis Lipcon; \$25 each Myron Radov, Robert & Donna Bills; \$20 each Gretchen Storer, Jennie Seekford, Denise Jacobsen, Bill Kelley; \$10 each Frank & Mary Prince, Anne Karp, Jill Campbell; Diane Secor \$5.

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\$25 each Emily H. Bershad, Robert Varone, Anonymous, Joseph J. Frank, Mr. & Mrs. Harry Louik, Darlene Murnin, Matt Casick, Harley G. Selkregg, Paul L. Wolf, Lila Holmdahl, Sidney Blanchard, Blake Bearden, Madeline Miller, Rudolph P. Sulenta, David J. Tierney, Jim Lehner, Barbara Graymont, Francis L. Playford, Manuel Luevano, Karl M. Zwicker, Leon Nasteff, Sophia Carevich, William E. Tucker, Tillie Wizek, Lloyd A. Wright, John G. Wood, F. Paul Kelly, F. Cruikshank, Dave Stickler, Genevieve Gunder-

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on the Web

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

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

The Burning Question of Trades Unionism (Daniel De Leon); *Early Efforts at Socialist Unity* (Nathan Karp); *Free Trade* (Karl Marx); *Plain Words to Boston Workingmen, Jew and Gentile* (De Leon); *Reform or Revolution* (De Leon); *The ST&LA vs. the "Pure and Simple" Trade Union* (De Leon-Harriman Debate); *The Constant Revolution* (Robert Bills); *Wage-Labor and*

Capital (Marx) and *What Means This Strike?* (De Leon).

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

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

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

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

Seventy-four editorials by Daniel De Leon have been posted on the Web site, which includes the 10

contained in *Workers, Wages and Wall Street* and 10 in *De Leon on "Labor Parties."*

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

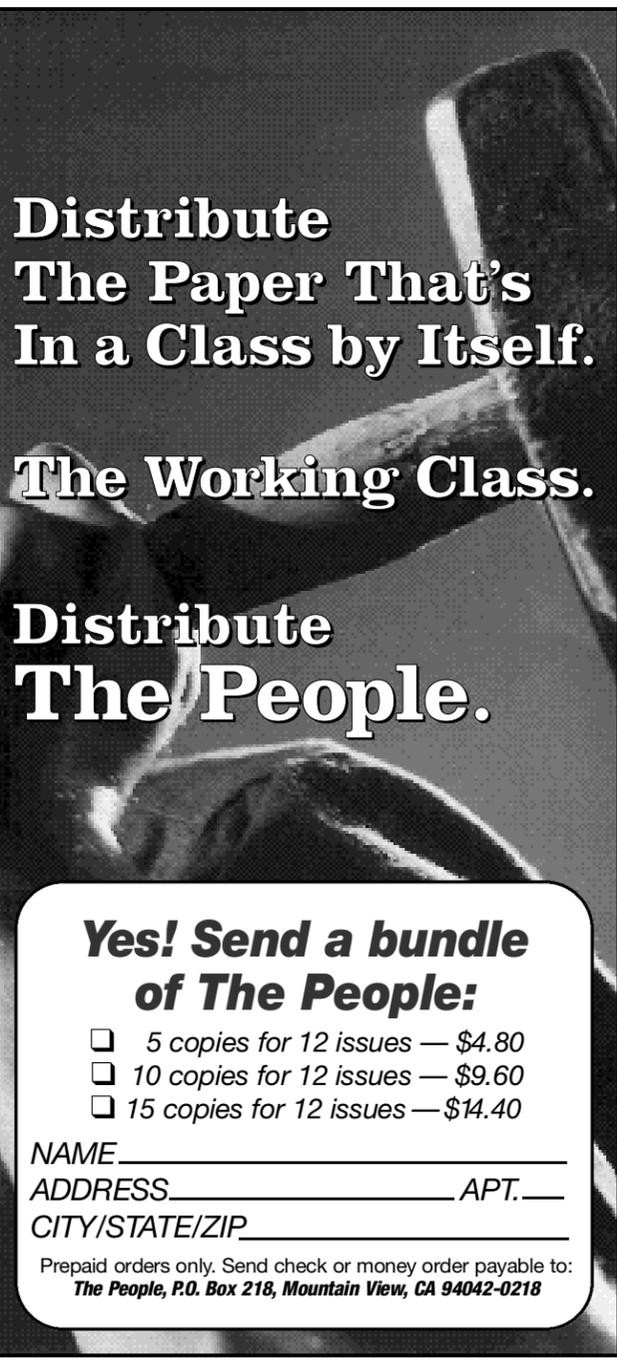
PDF versions of De Leon's *As to Politics* and *Two Pages From Roman History* will soon be added to the site, as will an updated version of the SLP pamphlet *Socialism: Questions Most Frequently Asked and Their Answers*. De Leon's translation of Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* is also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

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

To New York State Residents

Free SLP pamphlet offer with one-year subscription to *The People*.

See Section New York City's Web site for further information:
http://hometown.aol.com/hunterslp/index.html



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...Protest

(Continued from page 2)

gram to the working class. We need you in this fight, so if you live in New York City contact us:

By e-mail: NYCSLP@aol.com;
By phone: 516-829-5325

The day will come when the working class is asked the same old question, "Do you want a living wage?" and they will respond with a vigor and a purpose, "No! We want to abolish the wages system!" That will be a great day for the working class and we can all help to speed it along.

SLP Adopts Statement on Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The following is the text of a resolution adopted by the 45th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party. As with all major policy decisions of SLP National Conventions, the resolution is subject to approval by a general vote of the whole membership of the party. Members of the SLP are urged to read this document—as well as the National Platform and Declaration of Principles also printed in this issue—with care in preparation for the referendum.

*

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

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

Ensuring the uninterrupted flow of oil from the Middle East is a primary con-



The convention's Committee on Organization deliberates a matter referred to it. From left, Richard Cassin, Chris Camacho, Jack Blessington and Carl Miller Jr.

D. Bills for The People

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

The material and military support Israel receives from the United States government is an attempt to bolster a

beachhead for U.S. capital and Western imperialism in the region. This beachhead was established not only to promote capitalist and imperialist economic interests, but also to counter the imperialist objectives of what was then the Soviet Union.

The Gulf War and its aftermath, the embargo and continued military actions against Iraq, the maintenance of a fleet in the Persian Gulf, air bases in Turkey and Saudi Arabia, and the Clinton and

Bush administrations' overtures to the ruling classes of nearby African countries all attest to the ongoing commitment of the U.S. ruling class to maintain and secure their material objectives.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ukrainian Socialists Report On Struggles and Progress

The Socialist Labor Party of Ukraine was formed at a national conference at Kiev on Dec. 7, 2000. The conference adopted a Constitution and a Declaration of Fundamental Principles patterned after those of the SLP of America. It also elected Sergiy Skubenko of Kiev as national secretary and a National Executive Committee composed of three members. In January 2001 the SLP of America formally recognized the SLPU as a fraternal organization.

The following report on SLPU activities was e-mailed for presentation to the 45th National Convention last month. In response, the convention adopted a resolution that read, in part, as follows:

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

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

The following is the text of the SLPU's report:

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

- Leaflet with the scheme of work of Socialist Industrial Unionism, which was taken from *The People* (75 copies were made in February 2001);

- Leaflet for Kiev enterprise Leninskaya Kuznya with calling to create mass independent De Leonist trade union (45 copies were made in February 2001);

- Leaflet with explanation of our positions concerning fighting of two bourgeois clans in Ukraine (80 copies were

made in March 2001);

- Leaflet based on the De Leon's speech "What the Strike Means?" [*What Means This Strike?*] based on materials you sent us in the Ukrainian language (25 copies were made in April 2001);

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

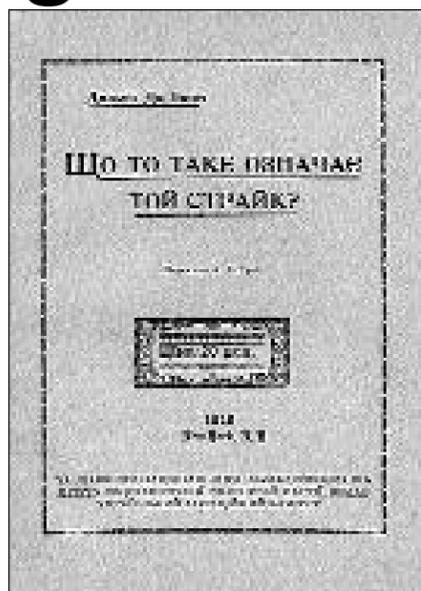
We conducted our Marxist-De Leonist propaganda by organizing picket lines with our banners and distributing the leaflets at the following Kiev enterprises: Leninskaya Kuznya, Slavutich, Tochmashpribor, Tyre Plant (Bila Tserkva, Kiev region), Aviant, Electronmach, Chervona Zirka, Rosinka.

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

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

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

We created the filing of *The People*, which is keeping at my flat and each



Cover of the Ukrainian translation of De Leon's *What Means This Strike?*

our member or contact may take and read it in any time as well as another materials on Russian, Ukrainian and English languages.

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

At the moment we have 11 members of SLPU and a lot of supporters and contacts amongst workers and students. We organized regular monthly payment to the party pledge, as it was adopted in the statute. At the moment our pledge includes 24 USD (the low figure is explained by extremely low income of majority SLPU members, especially students and unemployed). This figure, however, is enough for relatively small number of copies of leaflets.

Fraternally yours,
SERGIY SKUBENKO
National Secretary