

Forty-Sixth
National Convention
Socialist Labor Party

July 9 – 11, 2005

Minutes, Reports, Resolutions, Etc.

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*PROCEEDINGS OF THE
46TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY*

July 9–11, 2005

Holiday Inn
Santa Clara, Calif.

MORNING SESSION, SATURDAY, JULY 9, 2005

National Secretary Robert Bills called the 46th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party to order at 9:15 a.m. with the following opening remarks:

Greetings, and Good Morning—

Two years ago, there was reason to believe that this day might never come. The SLP was confronting a major financial crisis that seemed too formidable to be overcome. However, due in large measure to that generosity of spirit that ever guides the hearts of those who are dedicated to a great cause, we are here this morning to carry on with the great purpose to which the SLP is dedicated.

I recently received a letter from a long-time supporter of the SLP—a letter with which he enclosed a sizable contribution to the New Publications Fund, but in which he also expressed the belief that the SLP had failed.

The identity of this good, if somewhat disheartened, friend of the SLP does not matter. His letter was as brief as his contribution was generous, but it gave me opportunity to respond, as follows:

“I do not believe it is correct to say that ‘the SLP has failed,’ any more than I believe it would be correct to say it has succeeded. It has done neither, although it has failed and succeeded in certain important respects. It has not failed because it has succeeded in surviving the repeated onslaughts of many formidable forces that have wiped out entire movements and even nations. Long before I began to read the *Weekly People* in 1960, even before you began to read it 11 years before I was born, the opponents and enemies of the SLP and its Marxist-De Leonist principles had nailed shut the lid on the Party’s coffin. It was said that the SLP was De Leon and De Leon alone when the Socialist Party came along and built up its sand castle of a million votes. Only Eugene Debs had the insight and presence of mind to caution his SP compatriots that the SLP was not to be counted out. Debs was wrong about many things,

but he was right about the tenacity, vitality and viability of the SLP.

“Look at all the storms the SLP has weathered well enough to allow you to send such a generous gift as the one you just have, and for someone like me, elected by a body of dedicated men and women, to be here to acknowledge its receipt and to express gratitude and appreciation, not for myself alone, but for that body of devoted men and women who don’t know how to quit. I could not even start with a comprehensive list of the obstacles, big and small, the SLP has ‘outfoxed,’ so to speak.

“There was the sad experience with the IWW. There was the initially exhilarating but ultimately crushing disappointment of the Russian Revolution, followed by the attacks our domestic Stalinists made on a small but vigilant and disciplined SLP. There were the incomprehensible tragedies of two world wars and numerous regional conflicts across an entire century. There were the trauma and suffering brought on by the Great Depression, not to mention numerous lesser crises of capitalism. All these things, and many more besides, the SLP has survived.

“It is true, as you wrote, that very few have benefited from advances in technology, just as true now as it was when John Stuart Mill made a similar observation so long ago that Karl Marx could quote it in *Capital*. It is true that the impact of modern technology has brought and will continue to bring sweeping changes to the world. Those advances are so fundamental, so sweeping in their effect, that we can, without pausing to quantify the scope of the problem, say they have been revolutionary. However, they are not so revolutionary that they have swept away the foundations of capitalist society, or the Marxist evaluation of how that society operates against the interests of a vast and growing class of dispossessed. Capitalism has survived the stages that Marx and Engels enumerated long ago, the stages of handicrafts, manufacturing and heavy industry. Now it is entering a new era, a stage that has brought new words into our vocabulary—words such as ‘deindustrialization,’ ‘globalization,’ ‘information economy,’ etc.—but none of which have altered *fundamentally* the basic social relations that distinguish capitalism from former systems of class rule, exploitation and oppression.

“ ‘How can we rectify this sad state of affairs?’ Well, I do not claim to know the full answer to that, but I do know that the answer is not to give up on what we know to be right. New conditions demand new thinking, but new thinking based on sound principles. It is as Marx said in his *Eighteenth Brumaire*:

“ ‘ . . . proletarian revolutions . . . criticize themselves constantly, interrupt themselves continually in their own course, come back to the apparently accomplished in order to begin it afresh, deride with unmerciful thoroughness the inadequacies, weaknesses and paltrinesses of their

first attempts, seem to throw down their adversary only in order that he may draw new strength from the earth and rise again, more gigantic, before them, and recoil again and again from the indefinite prodigiousness of their own aims, until a situation has been created which makes all turning back impossible, and the conditions themselves cry out:

“ ‘Hic Rhodus, hic salta!

“ ‘Here is the rose, here dance!’

“The SLP has not failed. It is struggling somewhere between its Bunker Hill and its Yorktown. I do not know if it has hunkered down at its version of Valley Forge or is crossing the perilous ice flows of some Delaware on its way to some new ‘Battle of Trenton.’ What I do know, however, is that the SLP is still here, still fighting, and still has plenty of fight in it. Failure is guaranteed only to those who buckle under the pressures of adversity. Success is never guaranteed, but success always lies within the realm of possibility, and sometimes closer to hand than we dare to think.

“Do not give up on the SLP!”

Our friend responded to this by sending a second contribution for the New Publications Fund to match the generous contribution he had sent with his first letter, and with a brighter attitude, thanked me for my thoughts.

This morning we have gathered here to take up the work that has inspired thousands of working-class men and women for generations. Your deliberations over the next few days will have its effect on those who have stood by the SLP because they are convinced of its worth. It is a large responsibility, but it is a challenge that can be met with success by hard work and devotion to duty. I wish you great success in your deliberations, and I hereby call this 46th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party to order.

Temporary Organization

On motion, B. Cozzini was elected temporary chairperson.

On motion, D. Bills was elected temporary recording secretary.

F. Prince was appointed temporary sergeant at arms.

Election of Credentials Committee

The chair opened the floor to nominations. R. Burns, K. Boettcher and C. Johnson were nominated. Nominations were closed. All three accepted. A motion was adopted that these three constitute the Credentials Committee.

At 9:30 a.m. the chair declared a recess to allow the committee to do

its work; reconvened at 10 a.m.

R. Burns presented the following report:

The Credentials Committee reports that there are 14 delegates present who brought their credentials or for whom there are duplicate credentials. NEC member Carl Miller could not attend for personal reasons.

The committee recommends the following delegates be seated:

Donna Bills, Section San Francisco Bay Area; Ken Boettcher, NEC member; Donald Borowsky, Section Cleveland; Bernard Bortnick, NEC member; Robert Burns, ~~Section Cleveland~~ NEC member; Frank Cline, member-at-large; Bruce Cozzini, NEC member; J. Thad Harris, member-at-large; Karl Heck, member-at-large; John Houser, member-at-large; Charles Johnson, member-at-large; Diane Secor, NEC member; Mike Wenskunas, member-at-large; Henry Coretz, Section Cook County.

Fraternally submitted,

ROBERT BURNS, Chair

KEN BOETTCHER, CHARLES JOHNSON

Credentials Committee

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the report. An amendment was passed to reflect that R. Burns is present as an NEC member. On motion, the report was referred back to committee.

At 10:10 a.m. the chair declared a recess; reconvened at 10:15 a.m.

R. Burns presented the following report:

The Credentials Committee reports that there are 14 delegates present who brought their credentials or for whom there are duplicate credentials.

The committee recommends the following delegates be seated:

Section organizers or their alternates: Section San Francisco Bay Area—Donna Bills, Section Cook County—Henry Coretz, Section Wayne County—none, Section New York City—none, Section Cleveland—none, Section Portland—none, Section Houston—none; NEC members: Ken Boettcher (Calif.), Bernard Bortnick (Texas), Robert Burns (Ohio), Bruce Cozzini (Calif.), and Diane Secor (Calif.); Elected Delegates: ~~Members-at-Large~~ Donald Borowsky (Ohio), Frank Cline (Mo.), Thad Harris (Va.), Karl Heck (Minn.), John Houser (~~Ariz.~~ N.M.), Charles Johnson (Ohio), Michael Wenskunas (Ill.).

The committee also recommends that NEC member Carl Miller's request to be excused be granted.

Fraternally submitted,

ROBERT BURNS, Chair

KEN BOETTCHER, CHARLES JOHNSON

Credentials Committee

An amendment was passed to reflect that J. Houser is from New Mexico. An amendment was passed to strike the words “members-at-large” after the words “elected delegates.”

A request was made that NEC member C. Miller’s letter be read. R. Burns proceeded to read the letter:

July 4, 2005

Socialist Labor Party
46th National Convention
Santa Clara, CA

Dear Comrades,

It is with the greatest regret that I must report to you that I will not be able to attend the Party’s National Convention. The reasons for my absence are both personal and financial and I have made the National Office fully aware of this situation.

I always look forward to the Party’s conventions as it is a chance to both observe and be an active participant in the democratic process which, among many other things, differentiates the SLP from other political parties. But, it is not just for these reasons that I had held out hopes of attending. It was because it was my duty as a Party member and NEC member to be present and fulfill my role in these proceedings.

It is with this in mind that I respectfully request that the members and delegates permit my absence to be excused.

With best regards and hopes for a productive convention I am

Fraternally yours,
CARL C. MILLER JR.

On motion, the report as amended was adopted.

Election of Agenda Committee

On motion, the committee to consist of three members. The floor was opened to nominations. F. Cline, B. Cozzini, K. Boettcher and K. Heck were nominated. B. Cozzini declined. On motion, the remaining three were elected to constitute the Agenda Committee.

At 10:28 a.m. the chair declared a recess to allow the committee to do its work; reconvened at 10:37 a.m.

F. Cline reported that the committee recommended adopting the following proposed agenda, as written:

Saturday Morning Session, July 9

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 9

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

Sunday Morning Session, July 10

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

Order of Business for All Subsequent Sessions

1. Call to Order
2. Election of Chairperson (if necessary)
3. Election of Vice Chairperson (if necessary)
4. Roll Call
5. Report of Sergeant at Arms
6. Reading of Minutes of Previous Day's Sessions (Morning Session Only)
7. Unfinished Business

8. Reports of Committees
9. New Business (Last Day—only matters that can be given immediate attention)
10. Last Day—Reading of Minutes
11. Adjournment

Fraternally submitted,
FRANK CLINE, Chair
KEN BOETTCHEK, KARL HECK
Agenda Committee

On motion, the report was adopted.

Permanent Organization

On motion, B. Cozzini was elected permanent chairperson.

On motion, D. Borowsky was elected permanent vice chairperson.

On motion, D. Bills was elected permanent recording secretary.

The chair announced that an assistant to the recording secretary is not necessary at this point but that one can be appointed later.

F. Prince was appointed permanent sergeant at arms.

Election of Mileage Committee

The chair opened the floor to nominations. M. Wenskunas and D. Bills were nominated. Both accepted. On motion, these two were elected to constitute the committee.

Determination of Attendance Policy

On motion, this convention was declared to be an open convention.

The sergeant at arms reported two visitors present.

Report of National Secretary

The National Secretary read the following section of his report:

National Headquarters

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.

These facilities cost the Party \$1,973.40 a month in rent and \$179.00

for utilities. The total expense for rent and utilities last year was \$25,288.80, which, following an eight percent reduction in rent, was less than the \$27,373.40 spent in 2003. Rent and utilities combined accounted for about 18 percent of all headquarters expenses in 2004, but consumed just over 32 percent of income, excluding bequests.

To maintain and operate these headquarters, the Party has a staff of two members, Comrade Donna Bills and the National Secretary. Last year's net payroll expense was \$34,932.63, but payroll taxes of \$11,788.96, hospitalization costs of \$7,783.00 and the \$1,694.41 needed to cover the California state workers' compensation tax brought the total expense to \$56,199.00. These expenses accounted for 38 percent of all headquarters expenses in 2004, but consumed 96.5 percent of income, excluding bequests.

Accordingly, it cost the Party \$81,487.80 to staff and keep its headquarters open in 2004, which accounted for 55.6 percent of all expenses during the year and consumed an amount equal to 149 percent of the Party's income for the year, excluding bequests.

*

When the NEC met two years ago, I reported on circumstances that led me to believe it might soon become necessary to move the headquarters to some new location. Those conditions still exist, but they did not lead to the result I had anticipated. In the meantime, however, something else has come along that does make it necessary to move the headquarters, and soon. As reported in the May issue of the *SLP Newsletter*:

Early last month, the Party's landlord, Brian Seifert, informed me that the owner of the building that he (Mr. Seifert) occupies next to ours has put that property up for sale and that he may have to move into the one currently occupied by the SLP. Mr. Seifert leases both buildings from different owners and the SLP subleases from him.

On April 30, before the newsletter went to the membership, I informed the NEC that Mr. Seifert came by the National Office on April 26 to explain the situation. Based on that explanation and ensuing discussion, I informed the NEC "that there is a 90 percent chance that National Headquarters will be forced to move within the next 60–90 days." I also reminded the NEC that the "understanding always was that the SLP would move if Mr. Seifert ever needed the building we are in," and added:

...Mr. Seifert could not be certain, but... it may be necessary for us to move within the next two or three months. In short, Donna and I could be facing a situation in which we will have to simultaneously—

1. Locate new offices, then pack up and move the present offices;

2. Publish the July-August issue of *The People*;
3. Prepare the report for the upcoming National Convention;
4. Publicize and make all practical arrangements for the National Convention and Banquet;
5. Prepare a speech for the National Convention banquet. . . .

When NEC member Bernard Bortnick replied on May 1, he expressed concern about “the tasks that lie ahead.” Comrade Bortnick also expressed the thought that “something has got to give,” and added:

The first option that comes to mind is suspension of *The People* until things once again settle down. . . .

Needless to say, a move imposes terrible hardships on you and Donna and now you don’t have the able assistance of Comrade Boettcher readily at hand.

I replied to Comrade Bortnick on the following day, in part, as follows:

I’m not ready to push the panic button just yet. Suspending *The People* again is not a prospect that I relish. . . .

The real problem is not knowing when, or even if, we will have to move. If a real estate investor proves to be the buyer, Brian might be able to strike a deal that will allow him to stay. If a local business in search of a new location for itself proves to be the buyer, moving on short notice almost certainly will be the result. I based the “90 percent” estimate entirely on Brian’s assessment—and that of his own real estate broker—of the local real estate market. Investors are scarce, while businesses looking for cheaper quarters apparently are the prime movers in the current market.

Brian will keep me informed every step of the way, as he learns what’s going on. He also has his broker on the lookout for us. If Brian gets short notice we will have to divide the time allotted, we to move out, he to move in, while the third fellow may be breathing down both of our necks.

Incidentally, I always knew that something like this might come along. It is *the problem* with subleases. Everything went well for the last four or five years, but now it looks as if it may have finally caught up with us—and how!

As stated above, having to move the headquarters is something I have been anticipating for some time, but the circumstances under which we now have to move differ somewhat from what I had expected. Some of you may recall that nearly a year had already passed before I reported to the 2003 NEC Session that Mr. Seifert had “confessed to me that his . . . business was down by half” and that “he was thinking about giving up that part of the property on which the headquarters building stands.” At the time, I added that “from the lack of activity on his part of

the property” it seemed “reasonable to conclude it is suffering still.” To all appearances, nothing much has changed since. Accordingly, although it slipped my mind as I wrote to Comrade Bortnick, when Mr. Seifert informed me that “his” building was up for sale it did not surprise me much when he also mentioned that he was in no position to buy it. On that same occasion, Mr. Seifert suggested that even if the buyer proves to be an investor it might mean an increase in rent for him that he could not afford to pay.

Mr. Seifert’s predicament concerns the SLP to the extent that it would reduce the pressure on us to move on such short notice if he bought the building he occupies or rented it from a new owner. Fortunately, that building had not been sold and it was not necessary to look for new offices before the National Convention convened. However, the search will have to begin soon after the convention adjourns. A realtor posted a “For Sale” sign next door on May 6 and a “Sold” sign may take its place at any time. When it does, we will have a month or possibly two in which to relocate, but probably no more than that.

I do not know what the move will cost. As I reminded the NEC two years ago, however, “the move from Mountain View to San Jose...cost the Party over \$7,200.00. I would be surprised if we could make a similar move today for anything less. A move costing that much would be equivalent to a 30 percent increase of \$650.00 a month in rent for one year.”

A move can be complicated, besides expensive. I hope we can do it with a minimum of disruption and without having to suspend *The People* again. If there is any advantage to publishing *The People* every other month, rather than once or twice a month, it is that postponing publication for a week or two would not jeopardize our mailing permit with the U.S. Postal Service.

However, the September-October issue of *The People* goes to press on August 17. If the “Sold” sign goes up early in the five-week period before press day, it may be necessary to do more than postpone publication for a week or two; it may be necessary to skip over the September-October issue entirely.

We can do nothing about that, of course, and could do nothing in advance of the convention to avoid the possibility of a postponement for the reasons listed above in my letter to the NEC.

*

Two other developments that have affected the headquarters operation since the 2003 NEC Session should be mentioned, though I am certain that every member of the Party already is aware of them.

First: When the NEC met two years ago, I informed it that Comrade

Ken Boettcher had applied for a job in Modesto, a town about 80 miles east of San Jose. He was disappointed not to get the job at that time, but several months later the same company reversed itself and decided to hire him. On February 17, 2004, I informed the NEC, as follows:

Dear Comrades:

This is to inform you that Comrade Ken Boettcher has accepted and started a new job in Modesto, Calif. Modesto is in the central valley, about 1-1/2 driving hours away. Comrade Boettcher moved to Modesto last week.

Comrade Donna Bills and I are very happy for Comrade Boettcher. He will be earning a decent enough salary so that he will only have to work one job. He will continue putting out *The People*, but some adjustments in our schedule will be needed.

As mentioned, Comrade Boettcher has moved and is settling into his new home in Modesto. He drove over to put out *The People* on Sunday and Monday (a holiday), but in future it will have to be done on Sundays. . . .

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

Strictly speaking, Comrade Boettcher has not been a member of the headquarters staff for more than four years. However, as stated in my report to the 2003 NEC Session:

... Although he left the payroll entirely in April 2001, he still does as much or more to help us than some former full-time employees I could mention ever did. Without him we could not put out *The People* without a major increase in costs, and our aging computers might have become land-fill by now without his expertise and generosity. Without him we could not keep up the website, even though Donna does most of the uploading these days, and I hate to think how many issues of *The People* would be overloaded with filler if he did not contribute as many articles as he does.

* * * * *

Nonetheless, our computers and certain other equipment are growing old, and eventually it will become necessary to replace them. . . . When that time comes, as it inevitably must, it will involve an expense we can ill afford in our present condition, but that will be unavoidable if we hope to keep the headquarters in working order. Without modern, large, fast and somewhat expensive computers no two people could possibly attend to the number and variety of tasks that Donna and I attend to today.

Second: Since then, of course, the Goldberg and Gutermuth estate settlements have enabled us to replace much of that outmoded and aging equipment. The NEC authorized those purchases in January 2004, and after spending about \$20,000, the National Office now is equipped with a

new photocopier, a new folder and four splendid new computers that should last us for many years. We still need other new equipment, but we need more than that.

*

While Comrade Bortnick almost certainly was correct about something having “to give,” the complete truth is that something “gave” a long time ago. Unfortunately, however, the Party has not found a way to come to grips with it. Nonetheless, the Party, this convention, must take a hard look at the present headquarters operation and decide if it is still a viable one, or if some adjustment, some new idea of what the headquarters are and what is expected from its “staff,” is needed.

The Party’s Constitution provides for three national officers that correspond to the three main departments that compose the headquarters. The offices of Financial Secretary and Editor of *The People* have been vacant since 1993, however, and their departments—the business and editorial offices—have been without any staff, separate from the National Office staff, for several years.

That date, 1993, makes it clear this is not a recent or sudden development, but a condition that has evolved, or devolved, over a decade or more. In the headquarters section of my report to the 42nd National Convention in 1995, for example, I explained how the editorial department already had “gone from what was, at best, a woefully inadequate ‘editorial staff’ to virtually no editorial staff at all.” After identifying certain details and developments from the preceding two years, I added: “The National Office has virtually been absorbed by the editorial department and cannot function properly....”

Today, and 10 years later, two people staff the *entire* headquarters building. The National Office has not simply absorbed the Editorial Department, it has been completely absorbed, or almost completely absorbed by, the Business *and* Editorial Offices. As stated in my report to the NEC Session two years ago:

I do not believe it strains the imagination to appreciate the problem. While the sheer volume of work that goes on at National Headquarters has...declined, as the...sections, members and...level of activity in the field have declined, the variety of tasks that we must attend to...has not diminished, at least not appreciably.

With only two people to cover essentially the same ground that five, or seven or eight people covered only a few years ago...it should be clear to all that we are tempting fate and flirting with a potential disaster. We are spread so thinly that we must neglect some things that are important to the Party’s interests to attend to other things that we cannot ignore. The Party pays a price whenever a contact who has questions about the Party gets no

answer, or when less time goes to edit, research or write an article for *The People* than the subject deserves to attend to some less productive but unavoidable chore. Furthermore, in the circumstances, it is not always possible to follow through on decisions meant to provide some relief. . . .

In short, what once were *headquarters*, with three separate departments supervised—at least in theory—by three national officers, and all under the overall supervision of the National Secretary, no longer exist, certainly not in the old way. What remains is a small staff, fortunately in good health and good spirits, and a national *office* that, although better equipped than before with computers and other such things, is overwhelmed by a multiplicity of tasks.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the report. An amendment was passed to refer this section to an appropriate committee when elected. The motion as amended was passed.

The National Secretary read the following section of his report:

Party Finances

Certified public accountant R. Leonard Stickler audited the Party's financial books and records for the 2003 and 2004 calendar years, and the National Office sent his reports to the membership as supplements to the *SLP Newsletter*. In addition, the membership received, and continues to receive, monthly reports on the Party's financial transactions in each monthly issue of the newsletter. The books and records that Mr. Stickler worked from, and the monthly reports sent to the membership, are kept and compiled by Comrade Donna Bills.

Expenses outstripped income by \$39,061.92 in 2003 and by \$88,622.06 in 2004. Monthly deficits averaged \$5,320.17 over the 24-month period and resulted in a cumulative deficit of \$127,683.98. The cumulative deficit may be explained, in part, by the \$19,570.00 spent to replace old computers and other equipment, but a 43 percent decline in contributions in 2004 as compared to 2003—a decline amounting to \$30,094.00—had more to do with it. Several factors probably account for the decline in contributions; one undoubtedly being that the National Office did not mount a significant fund-raising drive last year. Another may have been a sense of discouragement following the decision to cancel the National Convention in 2003 and the financial problems that made that decision necessary. Another may have been a false sense of security after the Party received the proceeds from the estates of Comrades Nathan Goldberg and Conrad Gutermuth.

Whatever the explanation, we—all of us—must be on our guard

against a recurrence.

*

The Goldberg funds came through just in time, not only to wipe out the deficit for 2003, but to prevent a nearly complete depletion of the Party's cash reserves. As I informed the NEC on December 9, 2003:

Dear Comrades:

This is to inform you that the SLP has received \$233,793.33 from the Goldberg estate. I expect a small residual of \$3,000 or \$4,000 later.

Yesterday, Donna and I opened a new "money market" account for \$93,000 at one bank and a nine-month CD account for \$65,000 at another bank. We also deposited \$55,000 in the preexisting savings account, which increased the balance to \$97,940.74. We left \$20,793.33 in the checking account, which now has a balance of \$31,798.65.

The Party's cash reserves, which were \$53,946.06 as of November 30, now total \$287,739.39.

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

Although the residual was less than anticipated, Comrade Guter-muth's estate more than made up for it when, on July 19, 2004, the National Office received proceeds of \$19,039.01.

The Goldberg estate turned a bank balance of \$54,774.00 and a defi-cit of \$31,870.00 on November 30, 2003, into a balance of \$281,375.00 on December 31 and a year-ending surplus of \$194,731.00. The Guter-muth estate, although insufficient to overcome the shortfall in contribu-tions and eliminate the deficit for 2004, nearly equaled the \$19,570.00 ultimately spent to reequip the National Office. The value of the comput-ers and other equipment that his generosity helped the National Office to buy is beyond measure.

However, the Party's cash reserves have declined by \$81,850.00 since December 31, 2003, to \$199,526.00 as of May 31. Although con-tributions to Party funds have increased from a monthly average of \$3,306.00 last year to an average of \$4,299.00 during the first five months of this year, they still lag behind the monthly levels of \$5,814.00 in 2003. This year's deficit (\$13,588.00 to date) may be manageable, but if contributions do not increase by the amounts needed to offset ex-penses, or substantially so, the deficit for 2005 could reach \$33,000.00 and bring the reserves down to \$166,500.00.

When the Goldberg and Guter-muth estates are combined with the \$1,000 received from Comrade Frank Bell's estate this year, other sources of income and, of course, expenses, the following summary

brings the Party's present financial condition into clear focus:

Income	2,003	2004	2005 (Jan-May)
Funds	69,764.78	39,670.78	21,494.71
Sales	5,958.39	10,292.07	3,458.15
Interest	1,507.78	3,213.24	1,081.87
Bequests ¹	233,793.33	20,350.76	1,000.00
Miscellaneous	4,985.15	5,031.11	3,250.11
Totals	316,009.43	78,557.96	30,284.84

Expenses	2,003	2004	2005 (Jan-May)
Payroll (net)	34,379.90	34,932.63	13,857.69
Payroll Taxes	11,396.40	11,788.96	3,784.84
Hospitalization	6,688.83	7,783.00	2,890.00
Rent and Utilities	27,373.20	25,828.80	10,762.00
<i>The People</i> ²	12,706.92	13,327.99	4,446.39
Computers, etc. ³	95.00	19,569.35	0.00
Miscellaneous	28,637.77	33,598.53	8,281.23
Totals	121,278.02	146,829.26	44,022.15

*

Last year, members of the NEC expressed concern that National Office salaries were too low and that a National Office decision to shift an increase in hospitalization costs away from the Party and onto the staff was the wrong decision to make. The discussion led to three motions from NEC members, one of which the committee adopted. During that discussion, Comrade Boettcher wrote to ask:

Do you [the National Secretary] think a salary increase for one or both of you, or perhaps something more like beginning some sort of retirement account would be of greater assistance to you and Donna as you begin to think of facing your "golden years"? Or should we just concentrate on keeping you both employed?

I responded to Comrade Boettcher by saying I did not know how to answer his first two questions. "Every so often," I added, "someone on

¹ Includes Goldberg, Gutermuth and Bell estates.

² Includes printing, periodicals postage, mailing services and UPS shipping charges.

³ Includes four new computers, related equipment and software, photocopier and folding machine.

the NEC raises the question about our salaries, as was done recently, and every time that has happened I have responded by saying that I would ask for an increase when it became necessary. This time, however, I responded to one such query...by supplying the NEC with specific information... which show[s] that Donna and I together earn \$9,023.91 more than one average worker earns, according to the Social Security Administration. As individuals, however, Donna earns \$12,504 less...than the average worker, and I earn \$11,724 less....

“I supplied the NEC with specific information...because the question keeps coming up and because I thought that the NEC...might be thinking about taking the decision out of our hands.”

To this I added the following:

The Party is a money-losing operation. Looking for ways in which it can lose money faster probably is not what a National Secretary should do. The NEC certainly has the authority to deal with the question any way it wants, either by leaving things as they are or by taking matters into its own hands.

The answer to the third question would be yes, if I knew what “concentrate” meant. Building up the Party would eventually mean building up its cash reserves; but it also means dipping into those reserves to reach the desired end.

That is where the discussion broke off until last January 14, when NEC member Robert Burns faxed a motion that the National Secretary and “Donna Bills be given a raise in salary....” Before sending that motion to the NEC for action, however, I thought it necessary to ask Comrade Burns for some clarification, and that is where the question—if it is a question—still stands.

*

In the meantime, on December 23, 2004, the National Office sent the following to the NEC:

Dear Comrades:

This is to keep you informed of changes in the Party’s health coverage for Comrades Robert Bills and myself.

In November, we received Kaiser Permanente’s 2005 renewal rates, which indicated a \$49.00 per month increase (from the 2004 monthly charge of \$655 to \$704), or an additional \$588 per year. This rate was for the \$20 copayment plan we had.

After discussing the matter, we decided to switch to the \$30 copayment plan. This plan costs the Party \$578 per month, a savings of \$126 a month or \$1,512 for the year. While the doctor’s visit is only an additional \$10 per month, the drug benefit is a little more expensive (we pay full price for the first \$250). Should one of us become hospitalized, the out-of-pocket fees

are double... Nevertheless, given our overall good health and the infrequency with which we visit the doctor, we felt we could make the adjustment.

Incidentally, I'm listed as the primary beneficiary on Kaiser's records and, as such, the health coverage costs fall into a lower age bracket. If Comrade Robert Bills was the primary beneficiary, the \$30 copayment plan would cost the Party \$824 per month. The \$20 copayment plan would be \$1,003 per month.

Fraternally yours,
DONNA BILLS
For the National Secretary

A few days later, NEC member Bruce Cozzini wrote and said, "I strongly disagree with your choice to take the lesser coverage... If you do not feel you can make that decision, then I move that you do so." I replied by saying that "Donna and I will be taking a closer look at the alternate plans when things settle down a bit. We're just swamped, Donna in particular," I added. "...But the insurance thing is important, too, so we'll try to turn our attention back to it as soon as we can."

Writing on January 4, Comrade Bortnick commented on this question, as follows:

I concur in your maintaining the health care coverage you now have and I am glad Comrade Cozzini brought the issue up. So often we leave judgment to matters of this sort entirely in your hands without commentary, a practice that is not good.

I responded to Comrade Bortnick on January 8, in part, as follows:

... While Donna and I appreciate the concern expressed by Comrades Cozzini, Boettcher and yourself, there is not much we can do about it at the moment. Donna is over her ears in year-end Business Office work, ranging from the annual subscription audit to taxes and other concerns that have demanded virtually her entire attention for some time... At any rate, it must all be done so that Leonard Stickler can... do the annual audit, and prepare the year-end financial report.

The "closer look at... alternate plans" promised to Comrade Cozzini never occurred, however, because "things [never did] settle down a bit." Accordingly, his motion never went to the NEC for a vote. We did not think we could "make that decision" because of our concern with financial matters generally. Accordingly, the hospitalization plan described in the letter of December 23 is what we have.

It may be, as stated by Comrade Bortnick, that the NEC often leaves judgments "of this sort entirely in your [National Office] hands without

commentary,” and that the “practice...is not good.” However, I am sure he would agree that the National Office rarely acts on its own judgment on any important matter that could affect the Party’s interests without keeping the NEC fully informed, even on those rare occasions when circumstances make it necessary for the National Office to act on its own initiative to protect those interests.

*

Last June, I received a letter from Comrades Mary and John Brlas. John was about to celebrate his 97th birthday and Mary turned 92 last November. Don’t let their ages fool you, however, because these are physically and intellectually active members of the SLP. A few years ago, they traveled to India and over bumpy roads to see the Taj Mahal, and later made the trip to Mary’s childhood home in what was Yugoslavia. Somewhere in between, John rebuilt part of their home with his own hands. None of that interferes with their active interest in Party affairs, however, and it is clear from the letter that I received from them under date of June 9, 2004, that they had read the published proceedings of the 2003 NEC Session from cover to cover.

Although Mary did the writing, the letter is from both. She said they had read the proceedings “with great concern and interest,” especially “the comments and advice [on] how to remedy our financial dire circumstances.” She seemed to find some parallel between the Party’s financial difficulties and the fate of the SLP Language Federations. She knew that the federations would inevitably die out, but seemed to say that their disappearance had been unnecessarily premature.

...In all candor, let me just say MANAGEMENT WAS AT FAULT! We have moved too many times, losing tremendously in financial funds. The rent was too high, and above all, why do we have to have [the] *SLP Newsletter*? It contains such good articles, which should be seen in *The People*! Why in the world we need that wasteful paper just for members?...Hope I have not offended any one, because...I...have no such intentions.

I was not offended, far from it. Indeed, I wish that every member of the SLP paid as close attention to Party affairs as do these and other veterans. Nonetheless, I believed that they, and perhaps some other members, were under a misapprehension. Accordingly, I did my homework, and finally was able to reply under date of August 25, 2004. Following the customary amenities, I wrote:

The financial problems you mentioned in your letter have always been present to some extent...Some years have been better than others, of course, and for now, thankfully, the Party’s money problems are not as se-

vere as they were when it became necessary to suspend *The People* in 2002.

I cannot be sure from the way your paragraphs seem to run together if you were being critical of the “management” of the federations or of the Party’s current administration. My knowledge of federation history is insufficient to offer an opinion on how they were managed. . . .

What you seemed to be suggesting, however, is that the Party’s current administration has not managed the Party’s funds as well as former administrations. I do not know how you came to that conclusion, but you cite no facts to support your contention. The fact is that the National Office is as frugal today as it has ever been, if not more so.

To prove this on a year-to-year basis would take more research, involve more details and take more time than I can possibly spare. To illustrate, however, I have picked out two years—1953 and 1979—for comparison to 2003.

Before I start with this, I would remind you that the dollar was worth much more in 1953 and in 1979 than in 2003. What could be bought for 15¢ in 1953 cost \$1.00 in 2003, and what cost \$1.00 in 1953 cost \$6.62 a year ago. That is what inflation has done to the dollar over the last 50 years.

According to the audited financial report for 1953, the National Office had expenses of \$97,000 for the year. To buy what could be bought for \$97,000 in 1953, today’s National Office would have to spend almost \$643,000, or \$522,000 more than the \$121,000 it did spend. Last year’s expense of \$121,000 had a purchasing power equal to what \$18,100 could buy in 1953.

Similarly, the audited financial report for 1979 shows an expense of \$115,000 for the year. To buy what the National Office could buy for \$115,000 in 1979, today’s National Office would have to spend almost \$310,000, or \$189,000 more than the \$121,000 it did spend. Last year’s expense of \$121,000 had a purchasing power equal to what \$44,900 could buy in 1979.

National Office expenses in 2003 were a mere 18.7 percent of what they were 50 years ago when looked at in this way, and only 38.7 percent of what they were 25 years ago. They were 81.3 percent *less* in 2003 than in 1953 and 61.3 percent *less* than in 1979. In a word, National Office expenses today are a fraction of what they were 50 or 25 years ago when measured in terms of purchasing power.

You also seem to think that the National Office has “moved too much” since it came to California 30 years ago and that the moves were unnecessary. Any move is “too much” because of the disruption it causes. However, I do not know of any move the Party ever made—and there have been at least 12 of them over the years—that was not made necessary by circumstances beyond the Party’s control. As for the frequency of moves, there is hardly any difference between New York and California.

The Party moved its headquarters nine times during its 87 years in New York City and three times since moving to California in 1974. The earliest New York address I know of was on First Avenue, in 1887. From there, the

Party moved to East 4th Street, then to Beekman Street, New Reade Street, City Hall Place, Rose Street, Cliff Street, Nassau Street (in Brooklyn) and to California. That works out to one move every 9.7 years.

During its 30 years in California, the Party has moved three times, from Palo Alto to Sunnyvale, to Mountain View and to San Jose. That works out to one move every 10 years.

If the Party “moves too much” it has been doing it right along. Two of the three moves after the move from Brooklyn to Palo Alto were necessary to save the Party from bankruptcy. The moves from Sunnyvale to Mountain View and from Mountain View to San Jose have saved the Party tens of thousands of dollars in rent over and above the moving costs involved. Indeed, without those moves the National Office would have closed its doors once and for all years ago. The reasons for each of the moves made since 1974 are explained in National Convention and NEC reports and need not be reviewed here.

I do not understand your aversion for the *SLP Newsletter*. The articles it carries are rarely suitable for *The People*, but I hope they hold some interest for the membership. It costs next to nothing to produce—much less, certainly, than the general letters (most of which were repetitious from year to year) that used to pour out of the National Office. Apart from the labor, the quantity of paper and toner they require, the only expense involved is the postage needed to mail them.

These are the facts, comrades, and after receiving them, Comrade Brlas telephoned the National Office to graciously concede their error and to express their appreciation for the information I had given them.

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

At 11:35 a.m. the convention recessed for five minutes; reconvened at 11:45 a.m.

The National Secretary read the following section of his report:

Editorial Matters

The People began its 115th year of publication with the May-June 2005 issue but, unfortunately, still as a bimonthly. A resumption of monthly publication any time soon seems unlikely, in part because of the impending move but also because of the general conditions under which it has struggled since 1993.

Since then, *The People* has managed without a regular editor and with a dwindling in-house staff. Today it has no writing staff at all. Everything that goes into *The People*, apart from the printing and the mailing, is the product of volunteer labor. That includes not only the articles,

it also includes what, for want of a better word, I will call the “mechanics.” Although the headquarters still has two members on the payroll, properly speaking they “belong” to the National Office and not to the Editorial Department. Without the additional volunteer labor and determination of several members from outside of the office, *The People* would be impossible. Indeed, it would have disappeared permanently with the first suspension in 1994, and certainly could not have resumed after the second suspension in 2002.

The People has absorbed some very hard blows over the last 11 years or so. Apart from the moral and financial support it has received from the membership and a core of dedicated readers, not one issue would have rolled off the press after the issue of May 15, 1994, without the determination and self-discipline of those whose articles have appeared in every issue published since then.

Since publication resumed a second time, with the January-February 2003 issue, changes have continued to occur in the way we go about producing the paper. Before Comrade Boettcher moved out of the Bay Area, for example, we usually managed to wrap things up the night before it went to press. That meant long hours, sometimes into the wee hours of press day mornings. Since his move, he travels over to put the paper together on the weekend before press day. In other words, we try to finish each issue two days sooner than before his move. Lately, however, editing and last-minute writing have forced another adjustment. Comrade Boettcher still makes the 170-mile round trip. However, missed deadlines and other problems have made it difficult to finish on the Sunday before the Wednesday morning pickup by the printer, even though Comrade Donna Bills has been coming into the office on those Sundays to proofread finished pages. Now Comrade Boettcher finishes up at home, on his personal computer, and transmits the results of his efforts to the National Office electronically over the Internet.

This is how things have been done for the last two or three issues. It has worked, after a fashion, so far, but not without some additional problems. Apart from the added wear and tear on Comrade Boettcher, some “copy flow” problems have occurred with the electronic files that have left the ends of several articles lopped off in two recent issues. This occurred in the letters column in the May-June issue, and with three articles in the July-August issue. It should not have happened. The files that came from Comrade Boettcher and went to the printer were perfectly okay. To avoid a recurrence, however, future issues will go to the printer in the Adobe Portable Document Format, or as PDF files, like those used to post each issue to the Party’s website.

How long this new modus operandi for putting out *The People* can

last is an open question. For now, I do not see how to avoid having Comrade Boettcher make the trip, but some adjustments that will allow him to finish the job at the National Office and not from home are needed. That may mean getting an earlier start on each issue, at the expense of other work; pushing up deadlines; placing an eight-page limit on every issue; or some combination of these and other modifications that have not occurred to us.

Comrade Donna Bills, in addition to proofing pages on the prepress Sundays mentioned, performs many other indispensable tasks. She continues to choose and, as necessary, design pamphlet ads, and she selects cartoons and other graphics to illustrate each issue.

Beyond that, however, she sees to it that the printer and the mailing house get the information and files they need to print the paper and deposit it with the post office for mailing. She reads every manuscript submitted for publication before it comes to my desk, primarily to verify the facts, figures and quotations cited by the contributing writers. She maintains the subscription list, prepares and sends the updated list to the mailing house, prepares and sends out subscription renewal notices and processes the returns.

Comrade Bills also prepares the labels and envelopes needed for the UPS shipments and for sending the subscription copies that go by first class mail or by air mail to readers in other countries. She receives the papers when the printer delivers them to the office on Thursday morning, counts them out for packing to ship and mail, and to set aside for binding and other purposes. She enters all the necessary information into the UPS shipping book, and on her way home she stops at the post office to send the subscription copies and small bundles that go by first class mail or air mail to the foreign readers.

None of this has anything to do with her regular job in the National Office, of course, or her other volunteer job in the Business Office. Nonetheless, she does all these things and still finds time to attend to National and Business Office routine, not to mention putting together and mailing the *SLP Newsletter* to all members of the Party every month.

The other volunteers who make it possible to publish *The People* are the members who submit articles from the field. Several of those members have been at it since the SLP Writers' Conference in September 1994. The members who attended that conference and who continue to write for the paper today, or who contribute to its publication in other ways, are Comrades Bernard Bortnick, Donna Bills, Bruce Cozzini, Barbara Graymont, Diane Secor, Ken Boettcher and me. These seven members still represent a majority of the 12 who attended the conference. Two others from the original group—Comrades Genevieve Gunderson

and Nathan Karp—have since died, but no one who knew them would doubt for a moment that they would still be at it if they were alive. A 10th participant in the conference is still a loyal and active member of the SLP, though he does not write for *The People*. Only two from the original group subsequently abandoned the Party. However, those two desertions dwindle into insignificance when measured against the record of achievement accumulated by those who have stuck by their principles and their commitments through 11 difficult years.

In 2003, for example, *The People* carried 64 original articles, 41 of which came from those original conferees and other members outside the National Office. The members and the numbers of their articles published were as follows: Bernard Bortnick, 8; Bruce Cozzini, 2; Barbara Graymont, 7; Carl Miller, 3; Diane Secor, 1; Jill Campbell, 1; Ken Boettcher, 10; Paul D. Lawrence, 8. Three of Comrade Boettcher's articles were printed as editorials and one as a lead. The National Office contributed 24 additional articles, which included one by Comrade Donna Bills. Letters from 18 readers were printed in three issues. No articles from news services were used and reprints were limited to six De Leon editorials and the 50 Years Ago column, which was printed three times.

Last year, members from outside the office contributed 48 articles that were printed, as follows: Bernard Bortnick, 2; Bruce Cozzini, 8; Barbara Graymont, 5; Diane Secor, 2; Jim Plant of Great Britain, 1; Ken Boettcher, 12, of which two were used as editorials; Michael James, 5; Paul Lawrence, 13, one of which was used as an editorial. In addition, the NEC's statement on torture at the Abu Ghraib prison appeared in the July-August issue, letters from 20 readers appeared in four issues and the "editor" contributed 16 articles. No news service articles were used. Four reprints to mark the anniversaries of historic events were printed, the 50 Years Ago column was printed twice, five De Leon editorials and De Leon's part in a debate on what distinguishes the SLP from all other political parties also were printed. The SIU chart was used once.

This year, *The People* has carried 36 articles contributed by writers in the field, including six from Comrade Bortnick, three from Comrade Cozzini, five from Comrade Graymont, two from Comrade Secor, seven from Comrade Boettcher (three of which were used as editorials and three as page one leads), five from Comrade James and six from Comrade Lawrence. Comrade Donna Bills also contributed one article and the "editor" wrote 14. Twenty letters from readers were printed in four issues. Nine reprints also have been used this year, which is a higher number than usual, but most were to mark the 100th anniversaries of the 1905 Russian Revolution and the founding of the original IWW.

Unfortunately, a few anniversaries were overlooked or ignored because of other pressures. The most important of these was the 100th anniversary of Daniel De Leon's *The Burning Question of Trades Unionism* in 2004. That particular omission was not by oversight. I had been planning something for several years. However, I made several "discoveries" about that address when researching for background in the *Daily People* that I could not pull together in time. This is not the place to go into that background, but I intend to pursue the subject for future publication. One thing I will say, however, is this: despite what you may have read in that pamphlet or heard me say just now, 2004 may already have been one year too late for the 100th anniversary of that address, though not for the published version of it.

While I feel certain that the "editor" has caused some of *The People's* contributors to scratch their heads or worse over some of his editing decisions during the last two years, I am glad to say that no controversies arose and no editorial grievances were submitted for the NEC to resolve. That does not mean that it was easy going or smooth sailing on the literary or editorial end of things, any more than on the "mechanical" or production side. In August 2003, for example, a special committee that the NEC Session had instructed to finish with a report by a certain date sent its final draft to the National Office for a vote by the whole NEC. Two NEC members submitted motions to adopt the report. In answer to one of those motions, submitted by Comrade Boettcher, I wrote:

Dear Comrade Boettcher:

This will acknowledge your email of August 17, consisting of a motion that the NEC adopt the Special Committee's report. I have since received a similar motion from Comrade Bortnick. As I said to him, I will send out a ballot after *The People* goes to press, probably on Friday, unless I can squeeze it in before. You know what the situation is—the lack of usable copy and my usual fits of grumbling, mumbling, hand-wringing and hair-pulling over incomplete sentences, misinterpreted and misapplied facts, far-fetched and distorted theses, broken commitments, etc.—and that I would rather have my few remaining teeth yanked without anesthesia than spend another week trying to piece another issue together. It's lonely here, in more ways than one, and I don't often remember to say thank you for your patience when I bend your ear. I do appreciate it, however, so I will get your motion out as soon as I can.

Fraternally,
ROBT. BILLS
Nat'l Sec'y

A month later, on September 29, Comrade Secor wrote to assure me that she had not forgotten an impending editorial deadline. I wrote back

to thank her for the reassurance, and added:

It doesn't look good for this issue as things stand now. Comrade Boettcher says he will be in this weekend, and that should help. I'm sure that some of the others will come through, too. The real problems arise when all the copy bunches up on Donna and me toward the end of the production period. It makes it virtually impossible to concentrate on doing the necessary reading, note taking, etc., to put together a couple of decent articles of my own. That's why I moved the deadline back a week when we resumed publishing. It still gave everyone in the field ample time—almost two full months—to put something together, to reread it, to double-check their facts and to run their copy through their computer grammar checks, etc. Even so, everyone seems to wait until the last minute, which makes it very difficult for Donna and me. I thought certain that everyone would get their articles in early this time because the lease is up day after tomorrow. That might not mean anything, or it may make my life very complicated over the next few weeks. Well, we shall see.

There have been two or three occasions when things didn't come together and it was necessary to postpone publishing an issue of *The People* by a week. One of those occasions was in October 2003, which made it necessary to write the following letter to the NEC.

Dear Comrades:

This is to inform you that Comrade Boettcher and I have concluded that it is necessary to again postpone publication of *The People* for one week. We consulted and reached this conclusion last night as Comrade Boettcher pushed out his second article and I was still struggling with some received from the field. The shortfall is substantial—about half the copy we need to fill the issue.

Unfortunately, we did not receive as much from the field for the issue as I had anticipated, and much of what I did receive seems to have been hastily written and not carefully reread by the writers before passing it on for publication. Both halves of this problem—the lack of volume and what appear to be carelessly and hastily pieced-together articles—is not new, but I had hoped that the longer period between bimonthly issues would reduce the problem. It hasn't.

The pattern for several years now has been that Comrade Boettcher takes on the editorials (besides a substantial share of the body copy) while I write the lead and the front-page column after editing what he has written and what other contributors have submitted. That almost invariably has left me still writing on the Mondays and Tuesdays when Comrade Boettcher must concentrate on piecing the paper together for the Wednesday pickup by the printer. It's a killing pattern that I do not know how to alter and still hope to have a leading article and editorials that deal with reasonably current developments.

Something has to change, but I'm not sure what or how to go about implementing it. Comrade Boettcher and I talked briefly last night about possibly having at least one meeting between issues with Comrades Cozzini and Secor where the four of us could discuss possible topics and set up a routine in which there would be more support and communication, at least among ourselves. As NEC members they will see this and, perhaps, can offer some feedback on the suggestion. The whole NEC needs to become involved to some extent before the problem reaches the point where we start missing issues or worse.

At any rate, the November-December issue will not go to press on October 15, as scheduled. Hopefully the printer and mailer can adjust to accommodate us as they have several times in the past.

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

In response to this, one NEC member wrote that he had “nothing to offer in the way of suggestions,” and added: “I regret that my contributions have not been very useful over the past year and may be causing more trouble than not writing at all, considering the editorial changes that have been made. Maybe I should cut my contributions to one per issue and concentrate on getting one right.”

It seemed to me that perhaps this comrade placed too much of an accent on the negative and not enough on the positive, and I tried to make that clear in my reply, as follows:

Dear Comrade. . . .

Thank you very much for your email of October 19 regarding *The People*. . . .

I am hopeful that some of the problems I have had with *The People* can be ironed out by meeting once or twice between issues with the three local NEC and Press Committee members, Comrades Secor, Boettcher and Cozzini. All three say they are willing, but a schedule that all three can keep without fail has to be worked out.

I don't remember offhand how many articles you wrote this year or how many from the total were used, but I'm certain it was the overwhelming majority of what you sent in. What was used and what wasn't, well, that is a judgment call that someone else in my position may have called differently. I have been wondering, though, if you found the book I sent you useful or not.⁴ There are things in it that may not pertain to *The People*, but all the basic rules to follow are there.

I sent the same book to Comrades [A and B]. Comrade [A] said he found it helpful, but that didn't prevent him from disappearing from the

⁴ *How to Write Articles for Magazines and Newspapers*, by Dawn B. Sovà.

editorial radar screen. I don't know what Comrade [B] thought of it.

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
Acting Editor

Another area of concern alluded to in one of the letters just presented is our inability to plan the contents of each issue in advance, either by discussing and setting directions and goals for writers who suggest topics on their own, or in consultation on what topics should be covered and to what extent and in how much detail. As indicated, it was decided that the three NEC members who lived in the Bay Area would meet at the National Office to plan each issue in advance, and a fourth member, Comrade Paul Lawrence, also expressed an interest in attending such meetings. The first meeting I would count a success. One of the decisions made on that occasion was to hold future planning meetings at the National Office immediately following Section San Francisco Bay Area's monthly business meeting, but that arrangement never jelled and the meetings ended almost before they began. Although I have not given up on the idea, Comrade Boettcher's move out of the Bay Area may make it even more difficult to settle on a schedule that can be kept.

Yet another problem is that the "editor" is not really an editor. If an editor could be likened to a surgeon, who wields the scalpel with precision, then our present "editor" would have to be likened to a butcher wielding a cleaver. His solution to knotty problems is often the one that Alexander the Great applied to unravel the Gordian knot. When Comrade Cozzini wrote and offered to help with the editing, I replied:

Help with editing depends on what there is to edit and what problems it presents. Some things are easier than others are, of course, and some I simply find impossible to deal with. I hate to give up on anything I receive without a "fight," and I often get into trouble by spending too much time trying to salvage something I am incapable of saving. That eats into my own research and writing time, and that results in me producing stuff that is just as problematical as some I have struggled with.

One problem with "outsourcing" editing is that everyone waits until the last minute to send their articles in, even though they frequently rely on sources that are weeks and even months old. Everyone has two months in which to write something, and that is the way it has been for an entire year. When everyone waits until the last possible minute it creates a terrible bottleneck. Simple, straightforward articles of 1, 1-1/2, 2 or 2-1/2 pages that came in at intervals over the entire two-month interval between issues would make editing much easier.

Although most of the letters reproduced here were written more than

a year ago, the problems they touch on are still fresh. In January, for example, Comrade Lawrence wrote to say he would probably miss the deadline for the March-April issue because of illness. In response, I wrote:

Dear Comrade Lawrence:

* * * * *

The parade of people who did not meet the first deadline is much longer than the parade (rather say trickle) of people who did, so you need not feel special on that account. I have received only two articles for the issue, and only one of those is from a member. . . .

* * * * *

Well, it looks like another three weeks of pure pleasure (!) for me.

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
Acting Editor

Just last month I wrote to a member who rarely misses a deadline, but whose articles almost as rarely make it into *The People*. In this particular instance, I wrote:

Dear Comrade. . .

I got as far as what you will see when you open the attached PDF when trying to edit your article. . . . There I came up against a problem. It's the same problem I come up against with many of your articles, and it goes a long way to explain why so few of them get printed.

The problem is that you are not writing them. You are quoting your sources to excess, possibly beyond the "fair use" standards that separate the acceptable from the unacceptable in journalistic practice. I do not understand why. You are a perfectly capable person. There is no reason why you cannot write one to one and one-half pages on a subject like this. It would be so helpful to me and so beneficial to the Party and *The People*. I don't know if you can rework this particular article in time for the upcoming issue, but I wish you would give it a try.

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
Acting Editor

P.S. Did you ever get the book on writing articles I recommended to you, and if you did, did you read the section on quoting?

This member, whose persistence and self-discipline when it comes to meeting deadlines and being meticulous with manuscripts and source materials sets a high standard, cheerfully replied with the following:

Dear Comrade Bills:

Thank you for your email dated today, June 1. I had another article that I was going to type and email to you, but instead I will try to redo the... article and get it emailed to you tonight.

I checked the chapter on quotes from *How to Write Articles* and I think that I understand what you are saying, that the article that I wrote leaned too much on quotes, as opposed to my own writing. I will reread these chapters on the use of quotes, and give it another try.

Fraternally, etc.

The member rewrote the article and it was printed in the July-August issue.

Problems attach themselves to any worthwhile undertaking. The important thing is not to be overwhelmed by them, to do what can be done to minimize or overcome them, and to do your best at it. The members who make *The People* possible have proven that even seemingly insurmountable problems can be overcome when the effort is made.

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

The National Secretary read the following section of his report:

Party Press and Literature

The People

Six bimonthly issues of *The People* were published in 2003, six in 2004 and four thus far this year, the most recent of these being the issue for July-August 2005.

The total press run in 2003 was 62,000 copies, of which 55,729 went into circulation and 6,271 were held for such uses as binding, micro-filming, filling requests for back issues or filling late orders. Press runs averaged 10,333 copies and the paid circulation averaged 9,288 copies for each of the six issues printed.

Last year, 60,000 copies were printed and 49,412 went into circulation. Press runs averaged 10,000 copies, of which 1,765 were held for office uses.

This year, thus far, 38,500 copies have been printed and 31,958 went into circulation. Press runs have averaged 9,625 copies for each issue and the paid circulation for each issue has averaged 7,990 copies. The distribution for the July-August 2005 issue was as follows:

Domestic Subscriptions	1,327
Foreign Subscriptions	82
Domestic Bundles	6,909
Foreign Bundles	115
Office Use	1,567
<hr/>	
Press Run (total)	10,000

Included with these figures are 474 libraries, of which three are in Canada and 15 in other countries. Three of the 456 domestic libraries receive bundles.

One hundred two bundles of the July-August issue were shipped. Sixteen of those bundles went to section members, 18 went to national members-at-large and 20 went to commercial outlets, either directly or indirectly for placement by members and other Party supporters.

One such Party supporter is Michael Preston of Buffalo, New York, who received 2,000 copies of the July-August issue for distribution. Section San Francisco Bay Area received 1,597 copies, followed by Sections Cleveland (1,085), Portland (650), Houston (50), Cook County (20), Wayne County (15) and New York City (10). Bundle shipments to national members-at-large accounted for 850 copies of the July-August issue. Thirty-seven other supporters received a total of 507 copies. Additional bundles went to six SLP members and supporters and to four commercial outlets in other countries.

Section Portland keeps four self-serve newsstands on downtown streets, Section San Francisco Bay Area has three scattered around the Bay Area, and Comrade Luis Figueroa keeps one in operation in Philadelphia.

Since publication resumed with the January-February 2003 issue, 753 new and “old-new” readers have been added to the subscription list and 1,199 names have been removed. A decision to rid the list of people who failed to respond to renewal notices but were carried under the old “extension” policy explains part of that loss. However, *The People* is still available free of charge on the Internet. Two hundred ninety-seven email subscribers received the articles printed in the July-August issue. That list of readers has grown to its present size from 147 in May 2002, 190 in May 2003 and 246 last September. In addition, downloadable PDF replications of every issue published since December 1999 have been posted to the Party’s website, which makes it difficult to determine how many regular or casual readers *The People* has.

New York Labor News

Apart from 200 copies of the 2003 NEC Session proceedings, no books, pamphlets or Socialist Studies were printed in 2003 or 2004. Last year, the National Office printed and shipped 19,900 copies of the leaflet *The Iraq Mess: Don't Blame Bush, Blame Capitalism* to members and other supporters of the SLP, and shipments of all leaflets totaled 23,437. No leaflets are stocked at present, however, and I have no immediate plans for printing any. I hope to correct this situation soon, but not until after the move.

The National Office has removed seven pamphlet titles from the New York Labor News catalogue since the 2003 NEC Session as supplies have run out. The titles removed are: *Capitalism Means War; Democracy: Past, Present and Future; Karl Marx and Marxian Science; Socialism Answers Anti-Semitism; The Supreme Court; Unionism: Fraudulent or Genuine?* and *Why Is Capitalism Running Out of Gas?*

A dozen more SLP books, pamphlets and Socialist Studies are in low supply and likely to go out of print soon. The titles in low supply are: *After the Revolution, Who Rules?; Ancient Society; The Bourgeois Revolution; Capitalism: Breeder of Race Prejudice; Capitalism Is Doomed; Class Struggles in France, 1848–1850; Daniel De Leon: Social Architect; Daniel De Leon: Social Scientist; Daniel De Leon: The Uncompromising; Karl Marx and Marxian Science* (hard cover edition); *Earth Day and May Day* and *The SLP and the Unions*.

Many of these books and pamphlets are very old and I would not consider reprinting any of them unless reviewed and found suitable for republication by the NEC or some other responsible SLP body appointed for the purpose. The subject matter of several remains pertinent, however, and that may entitle them to a place on a list of priorities for possible republication. However, the Party's need for new literature on a wide range of subjects is pressing. Unless something is done to come to grips with this problem soon the once formidable array of SLP literature on a host of subjects will be reduced to *The People* and an occasional statement posted to the website. This deplorable and worsening state of affairs is the only standard by which to measure the true value of past reports and resolutions for attacking this problem. "Whereas this" and "therefore that" will not suffice. It is time to get down to business or else the SLP may soon go out of business, and what then? What then, comrades, what then?

Website

My report to the NEC Session two years ago did not include a sec-

tion on the Party's website. No major alterations have been made to the Party's website since the 45th National Convention in 2001, however, although Comrade Boettcher did something somewhere along the line to sharpen the image and enhance the clarity of the "home page" display.

I did not have time to compile a complete list of all the additions made to the website since 2001. That may be just as well, however, because there have been hundreds of them.

In my report to the last convention, for example, I stated that "74 editorials by Daniel De Leon have been posted... which includes the 10 contained in *Workers, Wages and Wall Street* and 10 in *De Leon on "Labor Parties."* As of June 2, the number of De Leon's articles, debates, editorials and speeches posted had grown to 690.

Among the larger documents uploaded since the last National Convention are De Leon's *As to Politics* and *Two Pages From Roman History*, and his translations of Frederick Engels' *Development of Socialism From Utopia to Science* and Karl Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

Apart from works by Marx, Engels and De Leon, some of the pamphlet and Socialist Studies titles that can be found on the website today are: *Capitalism, Socialism and the "End of History"*; *The Changing Composition of the Working Class*; *Constitution of the United States*; *Craft Unionism versus Industrial Unionism*; *Crises in European History*; *Democracy: Past, Present and Future*; *Earth Day and May Day: Two Views of the Future*; *The Freeman's Vote*; *The History Behind the Holocaust*; *Is Cuba Socialist?*; *Karl Marx on "High Tech"*; *On Goals and Methods*; *The Nature of Soviet Society*; *The Political Uses of the Debate on NAFTA*; *The SLP and the Unions*; *The SLP and the USSR*; *Socialism's Answer To Global Capitalism*; *Stand Up and Be Counted!* and *Woman and the Socialist Movement*.

The complete proceedings of the Workingmen's Party convention of 1876 have also been posted, as have the complete proceedings of the SLP's first (1877), sixth (1887) and ninth (1896) National Conventions. Several resolutions from later conventions and all of the Party's National Platforms from 1877 to the present can be viewed, read and downloaded from the Party's website.

More documents of current and historic interest could be listed here, but these should be sufficient to show that the Party's website continues to grow and expand.

*

Some uncertainty exists on the number of people who visit the SLP's website every year and how many documents they open. We are trying to clarify this with Institute for Global Communications, our host. The in-

formation we have suggests that the website received 74,805 visits in 2003 and 86,634 in 2004. We have contacted IGC for clarification but have not received a response. We are pursuing the matter.

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

The National Secretary read the following section of his report:

State of Organization

The Socialist Labor Party accepted 32 applications for membership between January 1, 2003, and December 31, 2004. The National Executive Committee acted on 29 of those applications, Section Cleveland acted on two and Section San Francisco Bay Area on one.

During the same period, however, 45 names were removed from the membership rolls. Twenty-one of those were dropped for nonpayment of dues and four resigned. Twenty of those dropped for nonpayment of dues were national members-at-large, as were three of the four who resigned.

Apart from these, 20 members died. Fourteen of those who died were national members-at-large. Two belonged to Section San Francisco Bay Area, and the others were members of Sections Cook County (1), Wayne County (1), Cleveland (1) and Portland (1).

Accordingly, a net loss of 13 occurred during the two-year period.

*

No new sections were organized in 2003–2004 and, regrettably, it was necessary to disband Section Philadelphia in April 2003 and transfer its remaining members to the jurisdiction of the NEC. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time that the SLP has not had a section in Philadelphia since before the Party reorganized itself in 1890.

Sometime back, I expressed the opinion that the SLP could not afford the loss of any section, but particularly in any of the country's major metropolitan areas. Within the span of the past 25 years, however, the SLP has lost sections in 11 of the country's 25 largest metropolitan areas and is struggling to keep and build up the seven sections it still has in those same areas. The smallest of those most populous metropolitan areas, with 1.9 million people, surrounds Portland, Ore., and the largest, with 18.3 million people, spreads out from New York City. SLP sections exist in both of the cities at the center of these most densely populated areas of the country, but neither of them could send its organizer or an alternate to this convention.

Another indication of how difficult things have become for some of the remaining sections may be illustrated by an email, the second of two,

I received last January from a man who lives in or near New York City. “Dear Mr. Bills,” he wrote. “Thanks for responding to my email. I have spoken to the N.Y. rep. and he has sent me an application for membership, which I have received and will complete and mail in the next day or so. I look forward to being a member of the Socialist Labor Party and of doing whatever I can to help it in its cause. Sincerely and again thank you.”

Did he mail his application to the section? Did the section act on it? Frankly, comrades, I do not know. However, that was 10 months after I had received the following letter from the section’s organizer, which he wrote under date of March 20, 2004:

Dear Comrade Bills:

This is an attempt to describe the present condition of Section New York. A major problem is our inability to meet. There are a number of reasons for this, chiefly health problems, age and personal reasons.

We are making a major effort to meet on a somewhat regular basis. If we fail, it would seem that dissolving the section must be considered.

Fraternally yours,

ALBERT MITCH
Section Organizer

I could not respond to Comrade Mitch immediately—not until April 27, when I wrote:

Dear Comrade Mitch:

Please pardon this belated reply to your letter of March 20. The list of interferences that prevented an earlier response is long. The short list includes a vacation in March, which probably should not be factored in; new computers, including a new operating system that drives me nuts; and the May-June issue of *The People*, which finally went into the mail last Thursday.

I wish I could say that the situation you describe is unique, or at least unusual, and that disbanding the section would only hurt and be a cause of deep concern, rather than an unbearably terrible blow to the SLP. Unfortunately, however, the situation you describe is neither unusual nor unique: almost every section is in a similar predicament. The exceptions—and I say this advisedly—are Sections Cleveland and San Francisco Bay Area, both of which also are saddled with problems that would have been considered next to intolerable 10 or 15 years ago.

Comparisons of that sort are useless, of course, and I mention them only because I have been racking my brains trying to think of things that might be said or done to convince people who know and agree with the SLP to step forward and become members. There are no SLP evangelists to set loose on the world, and even if I qualified in that department, which I do

not, it is hard to see how I could get away from the office to confront the people who care about the SLP with their responsibility to give it a lift.

You understand, I am sure, that I am just “talking” off the top of my head and have nothing of a concrete or practical nature to suggest at this moment. At the same time, however, it is impossible to simply sit by and let the situation slide without some effort being made to salvage it.

As a first step, I wonder if you (or any other member of the section) are familiar enough with the list of current subscribers in and around the city to identify any who should be members and might be approachable. I am not quite sure what I might be able to do with that information if I had it; but if I did have it, it might suggest a starting point or put that possibility to rest and challenge me to think of something else. I am following your lead by sending a copy of this to all members of the section for their own ideas and suggestions and, of course, to the NEC.

Incidentally, even if the section cannot meet, the National Office might be able to relieve some of the burden of routine by mailing the *SLP Newsletter* directly to the members, etc., if that would help—at least in a minor way—to postpone any drastic decision being made for awhile. Please let me know if there are such ways that Donna and I can assist you until we can sort through and act on more substantial ideas.

With warmest regards,

Fraternally yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

No section member responded and I do not remember what, if anything, most members of the NEC had to say about this correspondence. On May 12, 2004, however, NEC member Diane Secor wrote to suggest that any “possible ‘mini-tour’ of New York City and Philadelphia... would...depend on how many...subscribers in those areas would be...candidates for membership. I haven’t seen the subscription list for those metropolitan areas, and I don’t know anything about those who have subscribed for a long time,” she added. “But this is something to think about if there is some potential there.”

I responded to Comrade Secor on the following day, in part, as follows:

No decision about a “mini-tour” is possible until the National Office gathers up-to-date information about the readership in the New York and Philadelphia areas.

The National Office just received subscription renewal notices for *The People* from the printer. They will probably go into the mail sometime next week. We have not mailed renewal notices for a very long time, not since before the suspension. Therefore, the number going out next week will be

much larger than the number will be after the routine of sending them regularly is reestablished.

The notices are going out as bulk mail, of course. Accordingly, it will be awhile before we know what the return is. That means that it also will be awhile before a new list of paid-up current subscribers will become available to examine for potential recruits to the SLP.

Comrade Mitch did not respond to my letter of April 27, but I do not wonder at that. In the meantime, however, the National Office mails the *SLP Newsletter* directly to the individual members to ensure that some contact continues between them and the organization. Clearly, however, that is not enough. The question is: What can be done to salvage the situation in New York City and, for that matter, in Chicago and Detroit? What can be done to help our struggling comrades in Portland, Cleveland, Houston and the San Francisco Bay Area?

*

Section San Francisco Bay Area held 12 monthly business meetings in 2003, as did Section Portland. Sections Wayne County and Cleveland each reported holding 11 business meetings during the year and Section Houston five. No reports were received from Sections Cook County or New York City.

Last year, four sections reported holding 12 monthly business meetings. They were Sections San Francisco Bay Area, Wayne County, Cleveland and Portland. No reports were received from Sections Cook County, New York City or Houston.

Sections and 13 national members-at-large reported a distribution of 14,609 leaflets and 19,175 copies of *The People* in 2003, as follows:

Section	Leaflets	<i>The People</i>
S.F. Bay Area	5,351	10,963
Wayne County	650	
Cleveland	3,033	4,544
Portland	922	13
Houston	20	60
Members-at-Large	4,633	3,595

Last year's distribution totals, as reported by five sections and eight members-at-large, broke down as follows:

Section	Leaflets	<i>The People</i>
S.F. Bay Area	2,624	15,077
Cook County	500	
Wayne County	532	
Cleveland	4,780	4,700
Portland		1,800
Members-at-Large	4,192	1,896

No lectures or study classes were reported in 2003, but Section San Francisco Bay Area held four discussion meetings and Section Portland held 12. In addition, Section Cleveland held 19 fund-raising socials. Last year, a total of 61 discussion meetings were held by three sections, as follows: San Francisco Bay Area (30), Cleveland (19) and Portland (12). Section San Francisco Bay Area also reported one public school lecture. No fund-raising social affairs or study class sessions were reported to the National Office in 2004.

Section San Francisco Bay Area was represented at 10 antiwar rallies in 2003, Section Cleveland at one and Section Houston at two. Last year, Section San Francisco Bay Area was represented at five antiwar rallies, Section Cook County at one, Section Cleveland at four and Section Houston at two. Sections Cleveland and Houston also reported their participation in antiwar rally planning meetings held by local coalitions in 2004. One member-at-large reported distributing leaflets at an antiwar rally in Los Angeles in March 2004, and Comrade Robert Burns distributed literature at a Corpus Christi, Texas, antiwar rally.

Section San Francisco Bay Area accepted invitations to set up literature tables at three school and college-connected “political fairs” in 2003 and four in 2004, and Section Houston reported addressing the Politically Active Students Association at a local campus last year. Section Cleveland returned to the Hessler Street and Slavic Village Fairs with its literature booth in 2003 and 2004, and Section Houston reported setting up an SLP literature table at the local Trading Fair Market on one occasion in 2003.

Membership Changes (2003–2004)

Sections	Admit	Died	Drop	Resign	Expel	Transfers		Net
						In	Out	
S.F Bay Area	1	2					1	-2
Cook Co.		1				1		0
Wayne Co.		1						-1
New York City								0
Cleveland	2	1						+1
Portland		1	1					-2
Phila.							4	-4
Houston				1		1		0
Nat'l mal	29	14	20	3		4	1	-5
Totals	32	20	21	4	0	6	6	-13

Note: Section Philadelphia disbanded April 8, 2003

To date in 2005 (June 30):

- Admitted: Nat'l mal-6; Sect. Houston-1; Sect. Cleveland-1
- Died: Section Cook County-1
- Dropped: Nat'l mal-1
- Resigned: Nat'l mal-1
- Transferred from Nat'l mal to Section Houston-1

2003

Sections	Fund-raisers	Class-room Lectures	Study Classes	Discu-sion Groups
S.F. Bay Area	0	0	0	4
Cook County (no report)				
Wayne County	0	0	0	0
New York City (no report)				
Cleveland	19	0	0	0
Portland	0	0	0	11
Houston	0	0	0	0
Mbrs-at-Large	0	0	0	0
Totals	19	0	0	15

Additional Activities (generally with literature tables and/or literature distribution):

Sect. San Francisco Bay Area: January—San Francisco antiwar rally; February—Palo Alto antiwar rally; San Jose antiwar rally; San Francisco antiwar rally; March—De Anza College antiwar rally; Palo Alto antiwar rally; San Francisco antiwar rally (2); April—Oakland antiwar rally; Junior State of America political fair; September—San Francisco antiwar rally; October—San Francisco antiwar rally; Foothill College political fair; November—Junior State of America political fair

Cleveland: February—Corpus Christi, Texas, antiwar rally; March—Cleveland antiwar rally; May—Hessler Street Fair; August—Slavic Village Street Fair

Houston: January—Houston antiwar rally; Trading Fair Market (info table); February—Houston antiwar rally

2004

Sections	Fund-raisers	Class-room Lectures	Study Classes	Discussion Groups
S.F. Bay Area	0	1	0	30
Cook County (no report)				
Wayne County	0	0	0	0
New York City (no report)				
Cleveland	0	0	0	19
Portland	0	0	0	12
Houston (no report)				
Mbrs-at-Large	0	0	0	0
Totals	0	1	0	61

Additional Activities (generally with literature tables and/or literature distribution):

Los Angeles: March—Nat'l mal Jeff Andrews dist. lit. at antiwar rally

San Francisco Bay Area: March—San Francisco antiwar rally; Santa Clara anti-Bush demonstration; April—San Francisco antiwar rally; Junior State of America political fair; June—San Francisco antiwar rally; October—Napa Valley College political fair; Foothill College political fair; November—De Anza College antiwar rally; Junior State of America political fair

Cook County: March—Chicago antiwar rally

Cleveland: January—Case Western Reserve University antiwar conference; March—Cleveland antiwar rallies (3); May—Hessler Street Fair; June—Cleveland antiwar rally; July—Cleveland antiwar rally; August—Slavic Village Street Fair

Portland: May—Portland antiwar rally

Houston: March—Houston antiwar rally; April—Addressed Politically Active Students Association (PASA) (2); June—Attendance at meeting to discuss formation of antiwar coalition (**Section Cleveland** has also been active in local antiwar coalition)

Newsstands (2004)

Location	Commer- cial		Self-Serve		Sales	Costs	Net
	Jan	Dec	Jan	Dec			
SFBA	4	4	3	3	0	72.00	- 72.00
Cook Co.	3	3	0	0	0	12.48	- 12.48
Wayne Co.	1	1	0	0	*	14.40	- 1 4.40
Cleveland	4	4	0	0	0	14.40	- 14.40
Portland	0	0	4	4	35.00	170.86	-135.86
Phila.	0	0	1	1	40.00	28.80	- 11.20
Nat'l Org.	9	8	0	0	0	62.40	- 62.40
Totals	21	20	8	8	75.00	375.34	-223.86

Note: Commercial sites generally keep all sales money.

*Not collected.

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

The National Secretary read the following section of his report:

National Executive Committee

One of the most important duties of National Conventions of the Socialist Labor Party is electing a National Executive Committee of seven members to manage the Party's affairs for the next two years. A review of some of the current NEC's accomplishments and some of the goals it set for itself may help the convention in deciding which seven members to elect for the 2005–2007 term of office.

Since its election by the 45th National Convention, the NEC has acted on 168 matters, excluding those taken up at the 2003 NEC Session. From the list of 168 decisions rendered since the National Convention, I would single out the following as significant enough for mention here.

In July 2002, the NEC adopted a motion “that funds to cover three months' salary and hospitalization for the headquarters staff be placed in escrow to [be] paid if the need arises,” “to suspend publication of *The People* until further notice” and “to give the National Secretary full discretion in negotiating and signing an extension on the current headquarters lease.”

In August 2002, the NEC voted to accept an “invitation to participate in the Marxists Internet Archive, provided that the National Secretary will be the ‘Director’ of the Daniel De Leon Internet Archive.” The NEC also voted “to reduce the restriction on access to SLP records on deposit with the State Historical Society of Wisconsin from 55...to 25 years.” However, the NEC excluded “any records...that, in the judgment of the National Secretary, would compromise the Party's interests, the privacy of living Party members, or the privacy or interests of the survivors, heirs or assigns of deceased Party members.” In addition, the NEC voted to amend Article VII of the Party's Constitution to restore its former authority to submit a proposition to the referendum under that provision. (The amendment was approved by referendum.)

In September 2002, the NEC voted to accept Comrade Christian Camacho's resignation from the NEC and it directed that the National Office “canvass the membership for prospective nominees to fill the vacancy...before the NEC proceeds with nominations.” In October, the NEC elected a special committee “to review and report on...John-Paul Catusco's ‘Letter to the Editor’ of July 7, 2002.” In November, the NEC nominated Comrade Robert Burns of Section Cleveland to fill the vacancy on the NEC and, in December, it accepted Stephen A. Raper's

resignation from the committee. (The membership elected Comrade Burns to fill the first vacancy in January 2003, but the NEC did not nominate a candidate to fill the second vacancy.)

In February 2003, the NEC increased the single copy price of *The People* to \$1.00. In March, it rejected a motion that “the NEC endorse the ANSWER coalition on behalf of the SLP.” In May, the committee voted to meet in July and it called upon the membership of the Party to suspend Article VII, Section 1(a) of the Constitution to postpone the 46th National Convention. (That decision also was approved by the General Vote.)

In August 2003, the NEC approved a National Office decision to remove all mention of the “SLP of Ukraine” from the Party’s website. In September, it endorsed the editorial statement “Ukrainian Deception Exposed” (*The People*, September-October 2003) and ordered the statement posted to the SLP’s website. The NEC also adopted the report of its special committee on the Catusco letter.

In January 2004, the NEC authorized the National Office to buy “new computers, a photocopier and a reader-printer” for the National Headquarters. It also “extended the term of the National Secretary for one year, as provided by Article VI, Section 2(b) of the Party’s Constitution, the extension to be retroactive from September 4, 2003, and to expire on September 4, 2004.”

In February 2004, the NEC approved “The Iraq Mess: Don’t Blame Bush; Blame Capitalism” as an official SLP statement; in February it chose July 15, 2005, as the convening date for the 46th National Convention, and in June it adopted a statement on “Torture: An Imperative of Capitalist Domination.” The NEC also instructed the National Office to publish that statement in the July-August 2004 issue of *The People*, which was done. (The NEC did not instruct the National Office to submit the statement for a General Vote, however, presumably because it did not deem it necessary.)

In September 2004, the NEC adopted a motion that “approved the National Office’s weekly gas expense used in the Party’s vehicle,” and “elected Robert Bills as National Secretary pro tem.” The NEC also nominated the National Secretary pro tem “to permanently fill the post of National Secretary” and it amended Article VII of the Constitution a second time. (A General Vote by the whole Party approved both decisions and, incidentally, nullified the NEC’s earlier decision to convene the 46th National Convention on July 15, 2005.) In December 2004, the NEC adopted a motion declaring that “membership in the War Resisters’ League is incompatible with membership in the SLP.”

Last January, the NEC endorsed the National Secretary’s letter of

December 14, 2004, regarding the SLP and the War Resisters' League, and in March it endorsed the National Secretary's letter of March 16 regarding the AARP. (Both letters were printed in the *SLP Newsletter*.)

In May, the NEC approved a proposal that "each NEC member prepare a resolution consisting of no more than three double-spaced, type-written pages by June 15, 2005," and it adopted a rule "that no motion may be passed or defeated by the NEC unless by a majority of the committee as a whole." Last month, the NEC ruled "that any email address used for contact between *The People* or the SLP and the public may not incorporate the name of anyone normally associated with other 'Marxist' tendencies."

*

The NEC also rendered several important decisions at the NEC Session in July 2003 that either required further action by the NEC and others or have yet to be fully resolved.

It approved Section Houston's plans to field a candidate for City Council. The section required NEC approval because it was below strength. The NEC later invested some time and effort to assist the section in hammering out a suitable platform for the campaign, and was prepared to pay the filing fee needed to qualify the section's candidate for the ballot. Work on the platform did not finish until after Labor Day, however, and for some reason the section failed to register its candidate in time to qualify for the ballot. Accordingly, and regrettably, the effort came to nothing, apart from some hard lessons from which the newest, least experienced, but in some ways most active of all the sections, should benefit.

The NEC also established a Press Committee "to respond quickly to the need for timely statements applying the Party's program to analyze trends and events in our world, and to review Party literature and the content of *The People* with an eye to producing better quality articles and educational materials." The Press Committee worked on the draft platform submitted by Section Houston and the statement on torture at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, mentioned earlier. The National Office also asked the Press Committee to review the old questions and answers pamphlet with a view to having an up-to-date version posted to the website. However, the committee did not report any substantial progress on that project before the convention, and I am not aware of any other review of Party literature or *The People* the committee may have undertaken on its own initiative.

In addition, the NEC established an online discussion list, "to be moderated by an NEC member in conjunction with the rest of the committee and the National Office, to facilitate the integration of new mem-

bers-at-large into the Party in accordance with its organizational principles and traditions,” and the committee selected Comrade Carl Miller as moderator of this Members-at-Large Internet Discussion List. Although Comrade Miller did not submit a report in time for the NEC to consider before the convention, he did submit one to the National Office, which is available for convention purposes. From Comrade Miller’s report, I think it safe to say that the list has not met with all the expectations that the NEC and the National Office had for it. Participation has been languid, at best, but the problem the list was meant to engage and help the Party overcome still exists and must be grappled with in some way by this convention or the next NEC.

The NEC noted that the 45th National Convention had “directed that the NEC ‘convene a Writers’ Conference for a selected and targeted group of comrades,’ ” then called upon the National Office to arrange for such a conference, provided “the financial situation allows,” but with no further instructions for guidance. It did not specify what purpose such a conference might serve, for example, or what criteria the National Office should follow before issuing invitations for the “selected and targeted group of comrades” it had in mind. The Writers’ Conference held in 1994 had a very direct and simple purpose. Now that I look at it again, those were precisely the words I used when, on September 20, 1994, I wrote to inform the NEC that that conference had been held.

The purposes of the conference were simple and direct. They were to determine if the members invited were willing to commit themselves to supplying a steady and reliable flow of copy for publication. Those who attended were informed that unless they, or at least a certain number of them, were prepared to make such a commitment there was virtually no hope of resuming publication with any genuine expectation of success.

In other words, the only criteria the National Office exercised when inviting members to that conference was the belief that they could write and that their knowledge of SLP principles and policies was sufficient for them to make a genuine contribution. The task the headquarters staff had set for itself was to convince those who attended to make the commitment to supply a sufficiency of SLP articles so that publication of what was then a suspended periodical might resume with a reasonable “expectation of success.” True, the NEC had to suspend *The People* a second time, in 2002, for about the same length of time as in 1994, but not for want of members committed to writing usable copy. In 1994, we needed commitments more than we needed money. In 2002, we needed money more than we needed commitments. The two situations were dissimilar. There were parallels, to be sure, but without some better guid-

ance to follow, it was my judgment that the expense could not be justified.

The NEC also indicated its support for a further “exploration of the ‘print on demand’ option as a possible cost-effective alternative to conventional printing, which would relieve the need for...Labor News storage space.” Unfortunately, however, the National Office has not found time to look further into this, though I am not as optimistic about what “the ‘print on demand’ option” may hold for us as I was two years ago.

In addition, the NEC “resolved that the NEC initiate a discussion before the next convention on the possibility that, if we cannot fill the vacancy [on the NEC] soon, we may have arrived at the time when it is necessary to consider restructuring our executive organization through a constitutional amendment to better fit our present circumstances.” Regrettably, however, no such discussion ever took place.

The NEC also accepted what it called my “thesis concerning ‘Lethargic and Indifferent Leadership,’ ” which the NEC said “bore the primary responsibility for putting the Party in the position of lacking appropriate, up-to-date and incisive Marxist-De Leonist propaganda,” without which “the success of our agitational efforts and even the financial condition of the Party have suffered.” Although the NEC resolved to “recommit ourselves to study of both socialist theory and today’s material conditions” and to work “quickly to bring up-to-date, keep up-to-date and expand the breadth of the SLP’s propaganda and facilitate the fuller development of its Socialist Industrial Union program,” the discussion itself broke off and never resumed. I lamented that fact somewhat indirectly on June 23, in a letter I wrote to Comrade Bortnick:

What I was looking for in the resolutions [the NEC planned to submit for the convention] were pieces of propaganda suitable for mass distribution as leaflets, rather than documents that venture into abstract questions that have yet to be explored and discussed by the Party for purposes of formulating theoretical positions. The latter fall within the realm of what I called “the problems of Marxism-De Leonism” in my letter of May 23, 2003, i.e., my first letter in the discussion on “SLP Problems and Solutions.” I do not think we are ready for that...That is part of what I thought the Press Committee would explore. For now, however, we have to start from where we are with what we know about the basics and apply them as best we can.

*

The NEC set itself many admirable goals when it met in July 2003, and it has accumulated an impressive record of achievement over the four years since its election by the 45th National Convention in 2001—twice as long, I might add, as its members expected to serve.

There is much to commend it for, though I know that the committee hoped to accomplish even more than it did. If the new NEC elected by this convention works as hard and does as much as the outgoing NEC, I am confident that many of the problems yet to be overcome and solutions yet to be applied will be behind us when the next convention is convened, and will provide that convention with an even longer list of SLP accomplishment from which all SLP men and women will derive feelings of great satisfaction and considerable pride.

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

The National Secretary read the following section of his report:

Constitutional Amendments

ARTICLE V, SECTION 8 (G): I recommend that the National Convention delete this provision in its entirety, as follows:

~~(g) To be represented at the National Convention by the National Secretary, who shall have a voice in all its proceedings, but no vote, and shall bear no other credentials.~~

Comment: This ancient provision of the Constitution has been in place since 1896. Indeed, it is only an amended version of a provision that dates back to at least 1890, when the Constitution provided for an NEC “represented in the National Convention by one of its members, who shall have no vote, but a mere advisory voice in the proceedings, and shall bear no other credentials.”

Back then the NEC was composed of members who lived in the New York metropolitan area. The committee met every two weeks, but there was no National Secretary. “National Secretary” was merely a title bestowed on the NEC member the committee happened to choose to conduct its correspondence. The office of National Secretary as we know it was created in 1896, and the constitutional provision of 1890 was amended to conform to the change.

The NEC continued to meet every two weeks to conduct business and confer with the National Secretary until 1904, when the composition of the committee was changed. Thereafter, the NEC was composed of members elected from states having state committees, and later from regions composed of several states. Today, of course, the National Convention elects members to the NEC without regard to where those members happen to live.

The frequency of NEC meetings also changed after 1904, from once

every two weeks to twice a year, and eventually to once a year. However, the 1890 provision, amended to conform to the changed circumstances of 1896, did not change. It remains today, unchanged and just what it was 109 years ago: a provision based on the theory that the NEC and the National Secretary will meet and confer 24 times in any given year.

Since 1976, National Secretaries are required to submit their own written reports to National Conventions, and since the advent of email the National Secretary can confer with most NEC members on a daily basis, if necessary, even though the NEC meets only once in two years.

Last year, the Party made ample provision for whatever lingering merit this provision may have retained after 1904 by amending Article VII to bring the members of the outgoing NEC into the National Convention, with voice and vote in all of its proceedings. The NEC no longer requires representation by the National Secretary.

This old provision, which has had no practicable application and has served no practical purpose for more than a century, has survived many changes in the executive setup of the Party since 1896, but without any further change to itself. By removing it from the Constitution now, the National Convention would relieve the NEC and the National Secretary of a duty impossible for them to fulfill since the year of the World's Fair and Louisiana Purchase Centennial Exposition at St. Louis and of the NEC's move out of New York.

ARTICLE IX, SECTION 8: I recommend that the National Convention amend this provision by inserting the words "whether in print or online," and that the words "group publishing such paper" be replaced by the word "publishers," the provision as amended then to read as follows:

SECTION 8. The election of editors of other publications recognized as Party organs, **whether in print or online**, shall be subject to the approval of the NEC. The NEC shall demand from the publishers the immediate removal of an editor who in its judgment has proven to be incompetent or disloyal, and in case of noncompliance with this demand, the NEC shall at once take charge of such publication and appoint an editor, pending election of a new editor by the ~~group publishing such paper~~ **publishers**.

Comment: Online publication is a fact for which the Party's Constitution should make provision consistent with the existing provision covering conventional newspapers and magazines.

ARTICLE IX, SECTION 9: I recommend that the National Convention amend this provision by inserting the words "or magazine, whether in print or online," between the words "political paper" and "without the sanction of the NEC," and by replacing the words "such paper" where they appear with the words "such publication," the provision as amended

to read as follows:

SECTION 9. No member, committee, or Section of the Party shall publish a political paper **or magazine, whether in print or online**, without the sanction of the NEC, and then only on condition that all the property of ~~such paper~~ **such publication** be vested in the NEC free from any financial or legal liability, the editor of ~~such paper~~ **such publication** to be subject to the provisions of the preceding section.

Comment: Same as for Section 8 of Article IX.

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

At 1:05 p.m. a motion was passed to adjourn for one hour.

AFTERNOON SESSION, SATURDAY, JULY 9

The convention was called to order at 1:25 p.m.

On roll call, all present except D. Secor who arrived shortly.

The sergeant at arms reported no visitors present.

Introduction of Resolutions

B. Bortnick presented the following resolution:

Resolution on Globalization and the Working Class

The recent rejection of referenda on the European Constitution by French and Dutch workers reflected the fears that have become pervasive about globalization. In reality the constitution was designed to place EU capitalism in a globally competitive position. German workers sharing the same apprehension as French and Dutch workers are expected to oppose the reelection of the ruling bourgeois socialists, while British legislators have prudently ditched an impending referendum of their own on the constitution.

Vaclav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, cryptically noted, *“The French referendum, and its result, clearly demonstrated the deep division that exists between the European elite and the citizens of Europe.”* (2)

The American working class shares that “deep division.” They know that capitalist “outsourcing” is anathema; empty shops and factories, diminishing skeletal workforces enduring ever-increasing demands for higher productivity are workers’ dismal future. They know that vanishing health care, increased hours, falling wages bring them closer to poverty.

They know that immigrant labor spuriously welcomed by the U.S. government in the name of the “American Dream” are measures to increase profits and depress the price of wages of all workers.

Socialists recognize that globalization is an old story. It was Marx and Engels, the founders of scientific socialism that not only revealed the nature of capitalism as it was, but also foretold its future. Writing in 1848 they noted: “*The bourgeoisie by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians’ intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.*” (3)

Though an old story, there are new ramifications such as widespread environmental degradation with massive species extinctions, global warming, new unheard of epidemics, AIDS, pandemics all produced in the wake of battering “down all Chinese walls.” (Ibid.)

Technology. Now the “*immensely facilitated means of communications*” are not the steam boats, railroad connections and the trans-Atlantic cable of Marx and Engels times, but widespread automation and robotics in manufacturing, jetliners, email, electronic transmission of documents, images, motion pictures, drawings, and everything from x-rays to engineering information with the primary goal of “outsourcing” wage slavery in technical, engineering and clerical skills. Capitalists have aggressively pursued the establishment of advanced manufacturing facilities internationally, all of which target the lower wages and sometimes-virtual slavery that exists in much of what used to be referred to as undeveloped countries.

Increasing Competition. While the majority of the world’s population still remains tenuously rooted in rapidly disappearing agricultural societies, East Asia is a different story. China and India, the most populous nations, once viewed by capitalists as prospective recipients for dumping Western manufactured goods, have burst into the manufacturing fray with explosive zeal. Thanks to the infusion of enormous capital investments from Western corporations the “dumpees” have now become the “dumpers.” In parts of East Asia “the number of industrial workers alone increased from about 285 million in 1980 to 400 million by 1994...with women constituting 42% of all wage-laborers.” (5) Last year, according to one exuberant spokesman, Africa reputedly had the

highest return on capital investment of any area in the world and also the most impoverished population. More than ever before and ever more intensely, competition is in terms of cheaper commodities and cheaper wages.

In 1900, Daniel De Leon wrote: *“The whole matter may be summed up in the one statement that in order to capture the world’s markets, the wage workers of the United States must come down to a level with the most poorly paid men [and women] in the world. We must compete with the working class of England, Germany and other European countries. Above all, we must enter into a struggle with the natives of the newly-opened districts, and we find that we have not only gained men whom we can supply with goods but we have also acquired nations with whom we must struggle for a living.”* (6)

Vanishing Reforms. While each state spearheads capitals’ incursions internationally by diplomatic, economic and military means, domestically it remains poised as the vigilant instrument of working-class oppression for the purpose of enhancing capital accumulation. Within each industrialized country capitalist politicians, judiciary and bureaucratic functionaries, are targeting what had been regarded as those “safety net” benefits and reform sops designed to make wage slavery palatable. In the United States it has been Social Security, Workmen’s Compensation, unemployment insurance, food stamps, school lunches, and health benefits, etc.

Similarly, in Europe measures are under way to emasculate the “welfare state” benefits. In the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the entire raft of working-class sops, once a part of bureaucratic despotism, has been jettisoned giving rise to a vast impoverished population.

Immigration. Meanwhile, the mayhem, poverty, destruction and meddling wrought by the imperialists have impelled unprecedented movements of populations precisely to those countries that have promoted the collapse of their societies. Fleeing immigrants beguiled by hosiannas of freedom, democracy and jobs find themselves ensnared in a network of slums, starvation wages, insecurity and oppression, while they help create those abundant surplus pools of labor which capitalists gleefully employ to their profitable advantage.

Globalization and Imperialism. The word is a euphemism for imperialist forays into other nations and countries. As an example, the recent intervention of NATO into the conflicts in the former Republics of Yugoslavia was promoted as humanitarian gestures. No similar efforts were made in Chechnya, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, East Timor or the Sudan. The reason for the former was “liberation” of a very cheap but highly skilled source of labor for the purposes of transnational capital invest-

ment. The latter countries not offering that prospect were ignored and hundreds of thousands were killed, maimed and starved. (7)

Economic Roots. Globalization is symptomatic of a mushrooming structural defect of the capitalist system, the tendency for the rate of profit to fall. Capitalists are impelled by competition and greed, to ever pursue the accumulation of profit. Unpaid wages are the exclusive source of profits, and made by waging an endless war against the working class to depress the price of labor power while increasing working hours. Capitalists are also impelled to constantly invest in labor-saving equipment whose costs spiral upward in inverse proportion to labor power. Labor-saving technology, while increasing productivity, diminishes the source of profits. Reducing the costs of labor power involves not only constantly increasing working hours but also scouring the earth for sources of cheap labor to be found in countries that have a lower standard of poverty. The “search for new areas for investment and capital expansion is one of the prime avenues capitalism pursues in an attempt to overcome a falling rate of profit.” (8)

Clearly the processes of the capitalist system are what have given rise to globalization. Just as clearly is the surging tide of poverty confronting the vast majority of workers. Workers must unite under the banner of the Socialist Labor Party program to rid the nation of this deadly anachronism and establish a real basis for globalization which can only be the international brotherhood of all working classes.

With Marx, we concur that “When a great social revolution shall have mastered the results of the bourgeois epoch, the markets of the world and modern powers of production, and subjected them to the common control of the most advanced peoples, then only will human progress cease to resemble that hideous, pagan idol who would not drink the nectar but from the skulls of the slain.” (9)

Fraternally Submitted,
BERNARD BORTNICK
NEC member
6/11/05

(1) invesorwords.com

(2) *NYT*, 5-31-05, para 28, “French Leader Fires Premier in Response to E.U. Rejection,” by Elaine Sciolino

(3) p. 18, para 2, *Communist Manifesto*, NYLN, 1968

(4) *Marx On Globalization*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, p. 96, para

(5) p.12, para 2, “Globalization on Trial: Crisis and Class Struggle in East Asia,” by David McNally, *Monthly Review*, Sept., 1998, V. 50 #4

(6) “The Assumed Advantages of Expansion,” *Daily People*, Sept. 15, 1900

(7) See “Globalization, Internationalism, and the Class Politics of Cynical Reason,” by Teresa L. Ebert, p. 395, *Nature, Society, and Thought*, V. 12, No. 4 (1989) [published 2001] pp. 389-410

(8) *Why is Capitalism Running Out of Gas?* p. 13, NYLN, 1977

(9) *Marx on Globalization*, p. 96

A motion was made and seconded to refer the resolution to an appropriate committee when elected.

The National Secretary reported on the history and disposition of the document under consideration: The document is one of four drafted by NEC members and submitted to the NEC for “discussion” under a motion adopted on May 26; that no such discussion had occurred, however, and that the NEC took no further action on the documents. The National Secretary also reported that the other three documents were available if the convention wished to consider them.

The motion to refer the resolution to an appropriate committee was passed by a show of hands six in favor, five against.

The convention adopted a motion instructing the National Secretary to make the three other NEC documents available to the convention.

Discussion of the National Secretary’s Report

Discussion on the section “National Headquarters” began at 3:05 p.m. and ended at 3:55 p.m.

Discussion on the section “Party Finances” began at 3:55 p.m.

At 4:30 p.m. the chair granted the sergeant at arms’ request to be excused. The chair also granted B. Bortnick’s request to be excused for a few minutes.

Discussion on “Party Finances” closed at 4:40 p.m.

Discussion on the section “Editorial Matters” began at 4:40 p.m.

At 4:55 p.m. a motion was passed to adjourn until 9 a.m., Sunday, July 10.

MORNING SESSION, SUNDAY, JULY 10

The convention was called to order at 9:20 a.m.

On roll call, all present.

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

Discussion of the National Secretary's Report

On motion, consideration of the balance of the National Secretary's report to conclude no later than 11 a.m.

At 9:31 a.m. discussion resumed on the section "Editorial Matters." Discussion ended at 10:02 a.m.

At 10:02 a.m. discussion began on the section "Party Press and Literature" and ended at 10:22 a.m.

The chair then declared a 10-minute recess; reconvened at 10:35 a.m.

Discussion began on the section "State of Organization" and ended at 10:50 a.m.

At 10:50 a.m. discussion began on the section "National Executive Committee."

At 11 a.m. the chair noted the designated time to end discussion on the National Secretary's report had arrived. A motion was passed to continue discussion until 11:30 a.m.

At 11:20 a.m. discussion on the section "National Executive Committee" ended and discussion opened on the section "Constitutional Amendments."

Discussion on the National Secretary's report concluded at 11:30 a.m.

The National Secretary read the following communications:

May 31, 2005

Dear Comrade Bills:

I realize that you are busy to the extreme with the upcoming 2005 SLP National Convention, so I won't use too much of your time! Please find enclosed a bank draft for the sum of \$500.00 as a contribution towards the financial success of the convention. This will be credited to the Socialist Labor Party of Canada. On behalf of our few members, I wish you and all American comrades the very best success for your 46th National Convention.

Fraternally yours,
DOUG IRVING
National Secretary

June 27, 2005

.... To all at the National Office, our fond love, and we wish you that this convention turns [out] to be most successful.

JOHN & MARY [BRLAS]
[members-at-large, Florida]

July 7, 2005

Dear Robert,

I hope that the deliberations of the forthcoming National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party of America are successful and fruitful, and I would like to send my greetings to the delegates and all members and friends of the SLP.

As you know, some concrete progress in spreading the SLP message and the ideas and work of Daniel De Leon have been made over here in Great Britain over the last three years and more. In that period many hundred SLP books and pamphlets have been sold and a number of new subscriptions to *The People* obtained, and some useful and encouraging contacts have resulted.

There have been disappointments, and over the last few months activity has slowed down somewhat owing to problems with my health. Nonetheless, I am hopeful that the seeds sown so far will in time result in positive and tangible results.

As I write news is coming in of terrorist attacks in London. News that reinforces the urgent need to do away with the capitalist system and the poverty, misery, hatred and destruction that it engenders.

With fraternal best wishes

JIM PLANT

[Sawbridgeworth, England]

Unfinished Business

The National Secretary reported that the NEC had found it necessary to suspend national member-at-large R. Wilson, Phelan, Calif., and that the suspension is before the National Convention in accordance with the Party's Constitution. The National Secretary further reported that in the meantime Wilson has submitted his resignation from membership, that the National Secretary had written to Wilson for an explanation but that insufficient time had passed for Wilson to respond.

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

New Business

The National Secretary reported receipt of a membership application from L. Toth, Avon, N.Y., a former member.

The National Secretary also reported that three members-at-large are in arrears and should be dropped from membership.

A motion made and seconded to defer these matters to the new NEC

was not concurred in by a show of hands, six in favor, seven against.

On motion, these matters were referred to an appropriate committee when elected.

The National Secretary reported that the three documents drafted by NEC members for “discussion” were now available in sufficient quantities for distribution to the convention. A motion was passed requesting that the chair present the documents to the convention.

The chair read the following proposed resolution drafted by NEC member C. Miller:

Advancing Technology Means Fewer Jobs Under Capitalism

Computers, cell phones, the Internet; these are just a few of the technological marvels created over the last few decades that have caused a tremendous change in the way we live our lives. Now we can talk to our families, friends, coworkers from anywhere at anytime just by picking up a cell phone or connecting to the Internet. No doubt this new technology has brought many benefits into the lives of millions. The changes brought on by this new technology have not been restricted to consumer items. Industry, in its ever-increasing need to cut costs and swell the bottom line, has seen its share of advances also. The effects of these advances are considered much less beneficial to those who only survive by selling the only thing they truly own, their labor power.

It is the nature of the capitalist system, and capitalist production in particular, to seek out any and all methods of reducing the costs involved in producing commodities. The introduction of new machinery into production reduces the amount of human labor needed to produce these commodities and therefore lowers the cost of production. This has the desired effect of increasing the profit per item produced. However, to the worker it has the undesired effect of landing him or her on the street without a job. But, this is of no concern to the enterprising capitalist. As Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels put it in the *Communist Manifesto*, “Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones.” Even though those words were written over a hundred years ago, they still hold true to this day.

Labor-displacing technology in our everyday lives is becoming more evident with each passing day. Grocery stores are implementing self-service checkout lanes where shoppers scan and bag their own groceries, ATM machines are replacing bank tellers, and automated kiosks are replacing ticket agents at airports. The reasons behind this are more than just for the convenience of customers. According to a *New York Times*

article printed in 2003, (1) “Eager to save money on labor costs, businesses are stepping up the pace of automation. Nearly 13,000 self-checkout systems will have been installed in American retail stores like Kroger and Home Depot by the end of this year, more than double the number in 2001, according to the market research firm IDC. Delta Air Lines spent millions of dollars this year to line 81 airports with chest-high automated kiosks: 22 million of its passengers—40 percent of the total—checked in by touch-screen this year, up from 350,000 in 2001.” The benefits for the firms that use these machines are plain, a machine doesn’t require a wage, it never calls in sick and it doesn’t need health insurance or a pension. A machine would certainly never organize with its mechanical brethren for better working conditions.

So, where does this leave the workers who are replaced by these technological wonders? According to an article on the CorporateWatch website, (2) “To begin with it is indisputable that automation has eliminated vast numbers of jobs across all sectors of the economy in all industrial nations, maybe 35 million of them in the last decade. The example of the United States, still the leading economic power in the world, is revealing. From 1988 to 1994 the number of jobs lost was estimated to be 6.5 million, far higher than in any other postwar period, and fully 85 percent of them are thought to be permanently lost to machines and overseas transfers. Automation is held to be responsible for the loss of half a million manufacturing jobs every year in this period and close to 3 million in the decade before—the completely automated factory is only a few quarters away—but it has also begun to make deep cuts into service jobs and seems likely to make its biggest future impact there.”

What is worse, no one seems to have an answer as to what to do with workers that have been and will be displaced by this new technology. It was thought at one time that even though workers would lose their present jobs they could be retrained to service and support the technologies that replaced them, but so far these jobs have not materialized. In fact, many of the high-tech firms, such as IBM and Xerox, have been cutting their workforce left and right. (2) Most workers who are displaced are ending up in low-paying or part-time jobs that are for the most part insecure and have no benefits.

Why is it that these great advances in technology, which could be made to benefit everyone, is instead ruining lives and creating a massive problem that seems to have no remedy? The answer is simple, since this technology is created and put to use under the present social system it is done so to increase profits instead of increasing the leisure and well-being of humanity. Those that implement this technology have only one view in mind, to cut costs and swell the bottom line. They could care less

what effect it has on society so long as the profits are rolling in.

In a socialist society, advances in technology would be used to reduce the burden on those that do the work. They would never be used as a reason to kick people out on the street with no means to support themselves. In socialist society mechanization and technological advances will simply mean less arduous toil and a shorter workday, and the benefits will accrue to all of society, not just a wealthy few.

It is obvious where current trends are leading us. Workers must unite to protect their interests and to get rid of the system that continually drags them further down the road of slavery and servitude. We must begin a socialist reconstruction of society.

The Socialist Labor Party calls upon the working class to take the first steps toward this goal by organizing their strength both on the economic field, by building one great industrial union to include all workers whether employed or unemployed, young and old, blue collar or white collar with the goal of one day taking and holding the industries and services for the benefit of society, and on the political field by creating a political party of the working class, guided by working-class principles and with the goal of dismantling the political state in favor of the industrial union government of the organized workers. The clock is ticking, the time to start is now, before it's too late.

Footnotes:

(1) "More Consumers Reach Out to Touch the Screen," *New York Times*, Amy Harmon, November 17, 2003, www.temple.edu/ispr/examples/ex03_11_17.html

(2) "The Ordeal of Labor, the Impact of Technology on Employment," Kirkpatrick Sale, February 10, 1997, www.corpwatch.org

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

At 12 noon the chair declared at 10-minute recess; reconvened at 12:15 p.m.

The chair read the following proposed resolution drafted by NEC member D. Secor:

Resolution on FTAA:

FTAA Is "Capitalist vs. Capitalist," Not "Capitalist vs. Worker"

The FTAA [Free Trade Area of the Americas] is a proposal to break down tariffs and other obstacles to interstate trade through the entire Western hemisphere. Cuba is now the only place in North and South America which would be excluded from any FTAA mandates. The aim

of the FTAA is to enforce a fundamental uniformity in laws and regulations governing trade in the Americas. This covers a comprehensive set of issues, such as tariffs, patents and copyrights, national and local taxes, state subsidies, and “privatization” of state-owned utilities. Also, the FTAA provisions would generally block nations, regions and local communities from imposing environmental, safety and labor standards, which could obstruct “free trade” within the Americas. [1]

It is certainly true that this FTAA would mean that “multinational” firms will have the opportunity to secure cheaper labor. But the FTAA is basically a pact regulating how capitalists conduct business with each other. Thus the purpose of the FTAA is to settle conflicts among capitalist competitors and groups within ruling classes. Reformers, who seek only change within the parameter of capitalist rule, try to divert workers into these battles over “fair trade” vs. “free trade” in the Americas. An individual capitalist or a segment of the capitalist class will decide if the FTAA is “fair” based on how this increases their odds of winning or losing in the global race for markets, raw materials and cheap labor. Some capitalists will win and some will lose with the FTAA. As more countries, such as China and India, industrialize, there are more competitors in this cutthroat global race. Ironically, this “FTAA free trade” pact will serve to limit the “inroads” of outsiders, i.e., European and Asian capitalists, in the Western hemisphere. This is somewhat similar to the Monroe Doctrine of the 19th century, which declared that Latin America was the exclusive economic domain of the United States.

Reformers also appeal to workers to resist the FTAA based on nationalism. This diverts workers into organizations and movements based on “national interest,” as opposed to organization based on their class interests. In general, the larger U.S.-dominated “multinational” firms, with the most advanced tools of production, will benefit from the FTAA. The smaller less technically advanced companies, which operate within a smaller geographic sphere, will tend to lose with the FTAA. Thus these smaller capitalists usually find that nationalism bolsters their competitive edge. Reactionary pundits even take advantage of post-9-11 fears of terrorism, with visions of the FTAA permitting “jihadists” to invade the United States. Reformers have called the FTAA an “attack on American workers.” [2] American workers are exhorted to resist the FTAA, in order to “save American jobs” from foreign workers who “take American jobs” as cheap labor. This keeps workers divided along nationalist and ethnic or racial lines.

Anti-FTAA reformers claim that this loss of “national sovereignty” is a threat to workers because the FTAA would override national, regional, and local laws, including environmental, public health, labor laws

and laws which protect “democratic rights.” [3] But the state does not enact these laws for the benefit of workers. The state acts as the “executive committee” of the ruling class in each country. Likewise, “regional alliances” are another diversionary trap for workers. Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and other Latin American national leaders have created regional trade pacts, such as Mersosur and the Andean Community to Counter the FTAA. [4] As the capitalist classes develop in these countries, they will pressure their own states to resist the FTAA, which favors their powerful “multinational” U.S.-dominated competitors.

As the capitalists throughout the Western hemisphere bicker over “fair trade” vs. the “FTAA free trade,” workers only hope is to avoid these pitfalls and to unite in defense of their class interests. In a socialist society, the workers themselves would own the tools of production and carry out production for use by society, as opposed to production for the private profit of a small ruling class. This is the only way that workers will cease to be at the mercy of those who now control their livelihood.

Notes:

[1] examples can be found here:

http://www.alca-ftaa.org/alca_e.asp

<http://www.epica.org/Programs/alternatives/reasonsftaa.htm>

<http://www.cawn.org/newsletter/update/freetradearea.htm>

[2] For instance, see “Job destruction newsletter.”

<http://www.zazona.com/shameH1B/JDNewsArchive/2003/2003-12-18%20FTAA%20%20The%20next%20Attack%20on%20American%20Workers.txt>

[3] <http://www.cawn.org/newsletter/update/freetradearea.htm>

[4] <http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/downloads/ftaa.htm>

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

The chair read the following proposed resolution drafted by NEC member B. Cozzini:

Global Warming Resolution

In industrializing the world, the capitalist system has also created global environmental destruction, the most far-reaching example of which is global warming. Despite clear evidence of dramatic effects happening today and the devastating effects global warming will have in the future, the United States, the leading source of greenhouse gases, refuses to take timely action to deal with the problem because the U.S. fears it will adversely affect capitalist profits and economic growth.

The term global warming describes the manmade increase in world

wide average temperatures caused by the generation of so-called greenhouse gases, primarily carbon dioxide, which trap the infrared radiation of the sun in much the same way that the glass of a greenhouse does. They are primarily generated by the burning of fossil fuels, coal, gas and oil, that are the principal source of energy used to generate electric power, fuel transportation and provide heat. Global warming has already led to dramatic changes in the physical environment and ecosystems around the globe. 2004 was the fourth hottest year on record, extending a trend that has registered the 10 warmest years since 1990. It included four category 4–5 hurricanes in the Caribbean, which caused an estimated \$43 billion in damages. Numerous typhoons in Japan and the Philippines caused extensive damage and loss of life. Droughts in a variety of places around the globe extended a decade-long trend.

Glaciers have been melting at an alarming rate, threatening water supplies in countries that rely on snow packs and glacial melt. Most dramatic have been the shrinking of glaciers in the Arctic and Antarctic. Well-studied glaciers in Alaska have been shown to be shrinking at an increasing rate in recent years, and dramatic changes are taking place in fragile arctic ecosystems.

Scientific studies reported this year have clearly demonstrated that changes in ocean temperatures over the past 40 years correspond closely to increases in greenhouse gases as predicted by computer models. Researchers from a number of institutions showed effects on ocean ecosystems, and suggested that future changes could accelerate warming if marine organisms that absorb carbon dioxide are adversely affected. In addition, the melting of arctic glaciers has been adding large amounts of fresh water to the North Atlantic, potentially disrupting the flow of warm water from the tropics to the north. Scientists worry that slowing or shutting down this “conveyor belt” could lead to drastic changes in the world’s climate.

In February of this year 140 nations, accounting for 55% of greenhouse gas production as of 1990, approved the Kyoto Protocol to control greenhouse gases. Parties to the agreement include Russia, Japan and the nations of the EU, which were particularly motivated following warming-induced floods of the last decade. Of these 35 have agreed to reduce their greenhouse gas production by 2012 by 5 to 8 percent below levels measured in 1990.

But this is only a symbolic advance. China and India, the two nations with the most rapidly developing economies, and in the top four in greenhouse gas production, have not only not agreed to any reduction, they have increased their output markedly since 1990 as they push for economic growth and profits. And the Kyoto Protocol, signed eight years

after its inception in 1997, will expire in 2012, leaving no formal framework in place.

The principal industrialized nation holding out against Kyoto is the U.S., which produces about one-fifth of the world's greenhouse gases. And the U.S. is increasing its production; as of 2002, the British Royal Society calculated that U.S. production of greenhouse gases was about 13 percent above that of 1990. Its unilateral disregard of international efforts to control global warming is reminiscent of its approach to the war in Iraq.

Clearly the Bush administration, with its ties to the petroleum and electric power capitalists and its needs to bolster a faltering economy, is unwilling to act to control global warming. It prefers to pretend that there is no such thing and that an indefinite period of time is needed to study the matter. When that doesn't work, it resorts to using political hacks to edit scientific reports. The Bush administration has ignored or blocked efforts to develop renewable energy sources.

But there is no time to delay if global warming is not to have disastrous effects. Scientists estimate that in order to reverse the existing buildup of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the world will need to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 40 to 70 percent by the end of this century. Such changes will require restructuring of the world's energy and transportation systems from fossil fuels toward renewable energy sources and will force a new look at nuclear energy, regardless of its hazards.

But such changes require massive investment and represent a threat to existing capitalist industries, their growth and profits. Capitalism requires profit and economic growth to survive. And profit must be made NOW. The future has no meaning in a profit-driven society.

Environmental reforms are not the answer. While they have seemed to make a difference in the recent past, the Bush administration has been so effective at rolling back environmental regulation and increasing fossil fuel consumption, that capitalist pundits have recently declared the environmental movement to be dead. If the future is not to be plagued with the floods, droughts and other catastrophes predicted related to global warming-related catastrophes, the political and economic system of capitalism must end.

The Socialist Labor Party urges workers everywhere to organize to abolish capitalism and institute socialist production for use. We can employ the renewable resources we now have available and develop new ones only if society's focus is on the common good rather than capitalist profit.

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

On motion, the matter of drafting a new National Platform was referred to an appropriate committee when elected.

At 12:35 p.m. a motion was passed to recess and reconvene at 1:35 p.m.

AFTERNOON SESSION, SUNDAY, JULY 10

The convention was called to order at 1:50 p.m.

On roll call, all present.

The sergeant at arms reported only members present.

Determination of Committees

A motion was made and seconded that four committees be constituted as follows:

Committee on Party Finances and Headquarters (3 members)

Committee on Party Press & Literature and Editorial Matters (4)

Committee on State of Organization Matters, Constitutional Amendments and NEC (4)

Committee on Resolutions and Platform (3)

An amendment was passed to rename the third committee Committee on State of Organization. The motion as amended was passed.

Referring Matters to Committee

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

On motion, the “Party Press and Literature” and “Editorial Matters” sections of the National Secretary’s report were referred to the Committee on Party Press & Literature and Editorial Matters.

On motion, the “State of Organization,” “Constitutional Amendments” and “National Executive Committee” sections of the National Secretary’s report, the membership application, the matter of three delinquent at-large members, and the R. Wilson matter were referred to the Committee on State of Organization.

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

On motion, nomination of the next NEC was referred to the Committee on State of Organization.

On motion, nomination of national officers was referred to Committee on State of Organization.

Election of Committees

The chair declared a 10-minute recess at 2:15 p.m.; reconvened at 2:25 p.m.

The following nominations were made:

Committee on Party Finances and Headquarters: F. Cline, H. Coretz and T. Harris;

Committee on Party Press & Literature and Editorial Matters: K. Boettcher, M. Wenskunas, C. Johnson and D. Borowsky;

Committee on State of Organization: B. Cozzini, D. Secor, R. Burns, J. Houser; and

Committee on Resolutions and Platform: B. Bortnick, D. Bills and K. Heck.

The National Secretary requested the chair to determine from the maker of the motion if the members named in the motion had all agreed to accept nomination and to serve on the designated committees if elected.

All having accepted nomination, the committees were elected by acclamation.

At 3 p.m. a motion was passed to adjourn until 6 p.m.

EVENING SESSION, SUNDAY, JULY 10

The convention was called to order at 6:12 p.m.

On roll call, all present except J. Houser who arrived shortly.

The chair proceeded to canvass the committees' chairs to determine when their committees would be ready to report.

Committee on Party Finances and Headquarters: T. Harris reported the committee needs three hours.

Committee on Party Press & Literature and Editorial Matters: K. Boettcher reported a partial report would be ready in three hours and another in the morning.

Committee on State of Organization: B. Cozzini reported the committee would be ready to report at noon tomorrow.

Committee on Resolutions and Platform: B. Bortnick reported a partial report would be ready at 10 a.m. tomorrow.

At 6:25 p.m. the convention adjourned until 10 a.m., Monday, July 11.

MORNING SESSION, MONDAY, JULY 11

The convention was called to order at 10:20 a.m.

On roll call, all present.

The sergeant at arms reported no visitors present.

On motion, the rules were suspended to dispense with the reading of the minutes from the proceedings of the preceding day.

Reports of Committees

Committee on Party Finances and Headquarters

T. Harris presented the following report:

National Headquarters

The National Secretary's report clearly sets forth the issues confronting the National Headquarters and its staff.

Upon consideration of the National Secretary's report and also upon consulting privately with the National Secretary and his assistants, Comrade Donna Bills and Comrade Ken Boettcher, the committee makes the observations and recommendations as follows: The staff at the National Headquarters consists at this time of two full-time compensated employees, namely the National Secretary and assistant, Comrade Donna Bills. Additionally Comrade Ken Boettcher, although not full time and not compensated, provides invaluable assistance to the National Secretary and Comrade Donna Bills in enabling them to carry out their various responsibilities.

This committee expresses its gratitude to the National Secretary, Comrade Donna Bills and Comrade Ken Boettcher for the fine work that they have done and continue to do to keep the National Headquarters performing at the high level of excellence that it maintained in the last years.

The committee recognizes the many important functions that the National Headquarters and its staff serve.

The committee realizes that the National Headquarters and its staff are first to be contacted by those who seek information concerning the Party, its platform and its policies. The committee recognizes that it is the National Headquarters and its staff who have published and continue to publish *The People*, which is and has been the written word of the Party since its inception over one hundred years ago. We realize the importance of the National Headquarters and its staff in broadcasting the message of the SLP on the Internet and in making available written pamphlets, books and other literature to the public concerning the Party and socialism. Finally, we acknowledge the importance of the National Headquarters and its staff in coordinating meetings and events between the members of the SLP and in organizing and educating the working class towards the goal of socialism and the overthrow of the capitalist ruling class.

The National Headquarters and its staff are essential to the continued existence of the Party and the performance of its functions; to this end we express our desire that the National Headquarters and its staff be continued and maintained at all costs.

We recommend that the National Headquarters and its staff be permitted and empowered to do anything and everything reasonably necessary to maintain its headquarters and to perform its duties.

Fraternally submitted,

THAD HARRIS, Chair

HENRY CORETZ, FRANK CLINE

Committee on Party Finances and Headquarters

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

T. Harris presented the following report:

Party Finances

The National Secretary's report on "Party Finances" was carefully studied by the committee.

The committee expresses on behalf of the Party convention its heartfelt gratitude to those persons who have donated and continue to donate money to the Party funds. These donations have taken various forms. Some donations have been in response to a specific need expressed by the Party. Other donations have been in the form of pledges where those who give money periodically submit contributions to the Party over a period of time. Finally, it appears that one of the main sources of funding for the Party consists of bequests ~~in the Last Will and Testaments of Party members or sympathizers.~~

The committee believes that fund-raising drives, encouraging contributions to the SLP Sustainer Fund, and encouraging members of the SLP and its sympathizers to provide for the financial security of the SLP ~~in their Last Will and Testament~~ is certainly needed. However, the committee realizes that a large portion of SLP members and sympathizers are already giving the maximum that they can afford. We submit that only by increasing the number of SLP members and sympathizers can the Party expect a real solution to its financial difficulties and that only by the personal outreach of each and every member to those interested in the Party and its program can this goal be achieved.

Fraternally submitted,

THAD HARRIS, Chair

HENRY CORETZ, FRANK CLINE

Committee on Party Finances and Headquarters

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the report. An amendment was passed to strike “in the Last Will and Testaments of Party Members or sympathizers” in the last sentence of the second paragraph. An amendment was passed to insert the word “financial” and strike the words “in their Last Will and Testament” in the first sentence of the third paragraph. An amendment was passed to substitute the word “convention” for “Party,” insert “heartfelt” before “gratitude,” delete “persons,” delete “money,” delete “the” and insert “funds” after “Party,” all in the first sentence in the second paragraph. On motion, the report as amended was adopted.

Committee on Party Press & Literature and Editorial Matters

K. Boettcher presented the following report:

Report on Party Press and Literature

After review of the section of the National Secretary’s report on “Party Press and Literature” and interviews with other delegates and the National Secretary, this committee reaffirms the recommendation of previous conventions that all members should be encouraged to take out a bundle subscription and strive to find as many library and other outlets as possible for *The People*.

We also reaffirm that continued bimonthly publication of *The People* should be one of the Party’s highest priorities with the goal in mind of eventual resumption of monthly publication as Party finances and human resources allow.

We recommend that the convention instruct the incoming NEC to make the updating and publication of first, the questions and answers pamphlet, and second, the home study course, two of its utmost priorities. Comrade Bruce Cozzini has offered to provide the NEC with an initial assessment of the task involved in revamping the home study course and preparing it for publication. If the incoming NEC takes Comrade Cozzini up on the offer, we would like to encourage the adoption of a plan to undertake the task as soon as possible.

Other New York Labor News publishing and reprinting efforts should be continued as feasible, and the NYLN presence on the Web should be expanded as our human and financial resources allow. We do not believe the NYLN component of Party activity can be allowed to languish. One of the methods we see as most fruitful in bringing new titles to the NYLN catalogue is the method that was used for the pamphlet *Capitalism and Unemployment*, where articles published in *The People* over a period of time were later tied together in pamphlet form, and we

hope the incoming NEC will revisit this process in its future publishing efforts.

In view of the fact that each new regular subscription to *The People* costs the Party more than it brings in, we recommend that any new effort to garner new subscriptions for *The People* concentrate on free email subscriptions, at least until the Party's financial condition brightens considerably. We believe that research into ways and means of promoting these free email subs should be conducted as our human and financial resources allow.

Again, as our financial and human resources allow, we recommend that a redesign of the website should be undertaken, with emphasis given to expanding the online presence of *The People*.

As part of this redesign, we also recommend that the incoming NEC, the National Office or a volunteer investigate the arrangements necessary for a PayPal account that can be interfaced with our website to handle Internet payments for contributions, NYLN orders and regular subscriptions to *The People*. Further, we recommend that the possibility of utilizing a PDF search engine on our redesigned site be researched.

Lastly, we commend and reaffirm the National Office's ongoing effort to post more of De Leon's works and other SLP material on the website, and recommend that it continue as our resources allow.

Fraternally submitted,

KEN BOETTCHER, Chair

DON BOROWSKY, CHARLES JOHNSON

MICHAEL WENSKUNAS

Committee on Party Press & Literature and Editorial Matters

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the report. An amendment was made and seconded to strike the fifth paragraph. On motion, the report was referred back to committee.

Committee on State of Organization—B. Cozzini reported progress.

At 11:30 a.m. a five-minute recess was declared; reconvened at 11:40 a.m.

Committee on Resolutions and Platform

B. Bortnick presented the following:

Resolution on

Advancing Technology Means Fewer Jobs Under Capitalism

Computers, cell phones, the Internet, these are just a few of the technological marvels created over the last few decades that have caused a tremendous change in the way we live our lives. Now we can communi-

cate to our families, friends and coworkers from anywhere at anytime just by picking up a cell phone or connecting to the Internet. No doubt these and other new technologies have eased the lives of many working people. In truth, however, under capitalism these technological advances are of no real social benefit to those who survive by selling the only thing they truly own, their labor power.

It is the nature of the capitalist system, and capitalist production in particular, to seek out any and all methods of reducing the costs involved in producing commodities. The introduction of new machinery into production reduces the amount of labor power needed to produce these commodities and therefore lowers the cost of production. This has the desired effect of increasing profits. However, to workers it has the dismal effect of landing them on the street jobless. But this is of no concern to the enterprising capitalist. As Karl Marx and Frederick Engels put it in the *Communist Manifesto*, “Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, ever-lasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones.” Written over a hundred years ago, these words still hold true today.

Labor-displacing technology in our everyday lives is becoming more evident with each passing day. Self-service grocery checkout lanes are replacing clerks, ATM machines are replacing bank tellers and automated airline kiosks are replacing ticket agents. The driving force behind these technological advances is the elimination of wage labor. According to a November 17, 2003, *New York Times* article, “Eager to save money on labor costs, businesses are stepping up the pace of automation. Nearly 13,000 self-checkout systems will have been installed in American retail stores like Kroger and Home Depot by the end of this year, more than double the number in 2001, according to the market research firm IDC. Delta Air Lines spent millions of dollars this year to line 81 airports with chest-high automated kiosks: 22 million of its passengers—40 percent of the total—checked in by touch-screen this year, up from 350,000 in 2001.” The benefits for the firms that use these machines are plain—a machine doesn’t require a wage, it never calls in sick and it doesn’t need health insurance or a pension. A machine would certainly never organize with its mechanical brethren for better working conditions.

Where does this leave workers who are replaced by these technological wonders? According to an article on the CorporateWatch website, “To begin with it is indisputable that automation has eliminated vast numbers of jobs across all sectors of the economy in all industrial nations, maybe 35 million of them in the last decade. The example of the United States, still the leading economic power in the world, is revealing. From 1988 to 1994 the number of jobs lost was estimated to be 6.5 mil-

lion, far higher than in any other postwar period, and fully 85 percent of them are thought to be permanently lost to machines and overseas transfers. Automation is held to be responsible for the loss of half a million manufacturing jobs every year in this period and close to 3 million in the decade before—the completely automated factory is only a few quarters away—but it has also begun to make deep cuts into service jobs and seems likely to make its biggest future impact there.”

What is worse, no one seems to have an answer as to what to do with workers that have been and will be displaced by this new technology. It was propagated that these displaced workers could be retrained to service and support the very technologies that replaced them! But these jobs have not materialized. Instead, many high-tech firms have continued laying off workers. Many workers displaced by technology end up in low-paying or part-time jobs or with no jobs at all.

Why is it that these great advances in technology, which could be made to benefit the working class, is instead ruining lives and creating a massive problem that seems to have no remedy? The answer is simple. This technology is utilized under capitalism to increase profits. Today, the capitalist class that owns and controls this technology has only one view in mind: to cut costs and swell the bottom line. They could care less what detrimental effect the profit motive has on society so long as profits are rolling in.

It is obvious that current trends are leading the working class further into poverty and destitution. Workers, however, can avert this by recognizing that they constitute a class with mutual interests of survival and well-being and whose interests are in conflict with those of the capitalist class. Accordingly, they must unite to abolish the social relationships that bind them to a life of misery and economic servitude.

They must unite to establish a socialist society where the means of social production are collectively owned and operated for the social good, thus allowing advances in technology to be used to reduce the burden on those that do the work. They would never be used as a reason to kick people out on the street with no means to support themselves. In a socialist society, mechanization and technological advances will simply mean less arduous toil and a shorter workday—and the benefits will accrue to all of society, not just a wealthy few.

The Socialist Labor Party calls upon the working class to take the first steps toward this goal by organizing their strength economically and politically. On the economic field workers must build new economic organizations to include all workers, employed or unemployed, young and old, blue collar or white collar, with the goal of collectively taking, holding and operating the industries and services for the benefit of all.

On the political field, workers must organize to challenge the capitalist form of government and to institute a new form of government based on social ownership and economic democracy.

Fraternally submitted,
BERNARD BORTNICK, Chair
DONNA BILLS, KARL HECK
Committee on Resolutions and Platform

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

B. Bortnick presented the following:

Resolution on Global Warming

In industrializing the world, the capitalist system carries in its wake environmental degradation and destruction. The most far-reaching example of this is global warming. Despite clear evidence of dramatic effects happening today and the devastating effects global warming will have in the future, the United States, the leading source of greenhouse gases, refuses to take timely action to deal with the problem because such action will adversely affect capitalist profits and economic growth.

The term global warming describes the artificial increase in worldwide average temperatures caused by the generation of so-called greenhouse gases, primarily carbon dioxide, which trap the infrared radiation of the sun in much the same way that the glass of a greenhouse does. They are primarily generated by the burning of fossil fuels—coal, gas and oil—that are the principal source of energy used to generate electric power, fuel transportation and provide heat. Global warming has already led to dramatic changes in the physical environment and ecosystems around the globe. 2004 was the fourth hottest year on record, extending a trend that has registered the 10 warmest years since 1990. It included four category 4-5 hurricanes in the Caribbean, which caused an estimated \$43 billion in damages. Numerous typhoons in Japan and the Philippines caused extensive damage and loss of life. Droughts in a variety of places around the globe extended a decade-long trend.

Glaciers have been melting at an alarming rate, threatening water supplies in countries that rely on snow packs and glacial melt. Most dramatic have been the shrinking of glaciers in the Arctic and Antarctic. Well-studied glaciers in Alaska have been shown to be shrinking at an increasing rate in recent years, and dramatic changes are taking place in fragile arctic ecosystems.

Scientific studies reported this year have clearly demonstrated that changes in ocean temperatures over the past 40 years correspond closely

to increases in greenhouse gases as predicted by computer models. Researchers from a number of institutions showed effects on ocean ecosystems, and suggested that future changes could accelerate warming if marine organisms that absorb carbon dioxide are adversely affected. In addition, the melting of arctic glaciers has been adding large amounts of fresh water to the North Atlantic, potentially disrupting the flow of warm water from the tropics to the north. Scientists worry that slowing or shutting down this “conveyor belt” could lead to drastic changes in the world’s climate.

In February of this year 140 nations, accounting for 55 percent of greenhouse gas production as of 1990, approved the Kyoto Protocol to control greenhouse gases. Parties to the agreement include Russia, Japan and the nations of the EU, which were particularly motivated following warming-induced floods of the last decade. Of these, 35 have agreed to reduce their greenhouse gas production by 2012 by 5 to 8 percent below levels measured in 1990.

But it is only a symbolic advance. China and India, the two nations with the most rapidly developing economies, and in the top four in greenhouse gas production, have not only not agreed to any reduction, they have increased their output markedly since 1990 as they push for economic growth and profits. The Kyoto Protocol, signed eight years after its inception in 1997, will expire in 2012, leaving no formal framework in place and little accomplished.

The principal industrialized nation holding out against Kyoto is the United States, which produces about one-fifth of the world’s greenhouse gases—and the United States is increasing its production. As of 2002, the British Royal Society calculated that U.S. production of greenhouse gases was about 13 percent above that of 1990.

Clearly the Bush administration, with its ties to the petroleum and electric power capitalists and its need to bolster a faltering economy, is unwilling to act to control global warming. It prefers to study the matter and has ignored or blocked efforts to develop renewable sources.

But there is no time to delay if global warming’s disastrous effects are to be slowed and stopped. Scientists estimate that in order to reverse the existing buildup of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the world will need to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 40 to 70 percent by the end of this century. Such changes will require restructuring the world’s energy and transportation systems.

But such changes require massive investment and represent a threat to existing capitalist industries, their growth and profits. Capitalism requires profit and economic growth to survive. And profit must be made *now*. The future has little meaning in a profit-driven society.

Environmental reforms are not the answer. Even those feeble efforts of the past have been eroded. The Bush administration has been so effective at rolling back environmental regulation and increasing fossil fuel consumption, that capitalist pundits have recently declared the environmental movement to be dead. If the future is not to be plagued with the floods, droughts and other catastrophes predicted related to global warming, the political and economic system of capitalism must be brought to an end.

Accordingly, the Socialist Labor Party urges workers to organize to abolish capitalism and institute socialist production for use. Society will then have the means to employ the renewable resources we now have available and develop new ones, but only if society's focus is on the common good rather than capitalist profit.

Fraternally submitted,
 BERNARD BORTNICK, Chair
 DONNA BILLS, KARL HECK
 Committee on Resolutions and Platform

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

Mileage Committee

M. Wenskunas 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	
Don Borowsky	\$424.50	(advanced)
Bernard Bortnick	\$484.00	(absorbed)
Robert Burns	\$320.00	(absorbed)
Frank Cline	\$400.70	(due)
Henry Coretz	0	(absorbed, no amount reported)
Bruce Cozzini	0	
Thad Harris	\$350.00	(due)
Karl Heck	\$100.00	(absorbed \$348.90)
John Houser	\$330.00	(due)
Charles Johnson	\$349.50	(advanced)
Diane Secor	0	
Michael Wenskunas	\$414.80	(due)
Nat'l Sec'y Robert Bills	0	

In keeping with this report, your committee recommends that the delegates be paid the amounts due them, the total being: \$2,369.50.

Fraternally submitted,
MICHAEL WENSKUNAS, Chair
DONNA BILLS
Mileage Committee

On motion, the report was approved.

On motion, the convention expressed its gratitude to those who were able to absorb their travel expense.

At 12:30 p.m. the convention adjourned until 4 p.m.

AFTERNOON SESSION, MONDAY, JULY 11, 2005

The convention was called to order at 4:10 p.m.

On roll call, all present.

Reports of Committees

Committee on Party Finances and Headquarters—T. Harris reported progress.

Committee on Party Press & Literature and Editorial Matters

K. Boettcher presented the following report:

Report on Party Press and Literature

After review of the section of the National Secretary's report on Party Press and Literature and interviews with other delegates and the National Secretary, this committee reaffirms the recommendation of previous conventions that all members should be encouraged to take out a bundle subscription and strive to find as many library and other outlets as possible for *The People*.

We also reaffirm that continued bimonthly publication of *The People* should be one of the Party's highest priorities with the goal in mind of eventual resumption of monthly publication as Party finances and human resources allow.

We recommend that the convention instruct the incoming NEC to make the updating and publication of first, the questions and answers pamphlet, and second, the home study course, two of its utmost priorities. Comrade Bruce Cozzini has offered to provide the NEC with an initial assessment of the task involved in revamping the home study course and preparing it for publication. If the incoming NEC takes Comrade Cozzini up on the offer, we would like to encourage the adoption of a

plan to undertake the task as soon as possible.

Other New York Labor News publishing and reprinting efforts should be continued as feasible, and the NYLN presence on the Web should be expanded as soon as the National Secretary can arrange for that to happen. We do not believe the NYLN component of Party activity can be allowed to languish. One of the methods this committee sees as most fruitful in bringing new titles to the NYLN catalogue is the method that was used for the pamphlet *Capitalism and Unemployment*, where articles published in *The People* over a period of time were later tied together in pamphlet form, and we hope the incoming NEC will revisit this process in its future publishing efforts.

The committee recommends that any future effort to garner new subscriptions for *The People* include an attempt to bolster free email subscriptions. Comrade Ken Boettcher has volunteered to assist the National Secretary in researching ways and means of promoting these free email subs.

We recommend that a redesign of the website should be undertaken, with emphasis given to expanding the online presence of *The People*. Comrade Ken Boettcher has volunteered to assist the National Secretary in planning and implementing the redesign.

As part of this redesign, we also recommend that the National Office investigate the arrangements necessary for a PayPal an online payment service or similar account that can be interfaced with our website to handle online payments for contributions, NYLN orders and regular subscriptions to *The People*. Further, we recommend that the possibility of utilizing a PDF search engine on our redesigned site be incorporated into the research. Comrade Boettcher has also volunteered his assistance on this research.

Lastly, we commend and reaffirm the National Office's Secretary's ongoing effort to post more of De Leon's works and other SLP material on the website, and recommend that it continue as our resources allow.

Fraternally submitted,

KEN BOETTCHER, Chair

DON BOROWSKY, CHARLES JOHNSON

MICHAEL WENSKUNAS

Committee on Party Press & Literature and Editorial Matters

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the report. An amendment was passed that the word "Office's" be replaced with "Secretary's" in the last paragraph. An amendment was passed to strike "a PayPal" and replace it with "online payment service" in the seventh paragraph. On motion, the report as amended was adopted.

K. Boettcher presented the following report:

Report on Editorial Matters

The situation that exists in the Editorial Department, with labor borrowed from the Business National Office and volunteer writers writing from the field, is hardly desirable but unfortunately unavoidable at present.

The National Secretary and Comrade Donna Bills are owed the Party's thanks for the extra efforts they have had to make, as are the volunteers in the field who have worked so hard as well to keep *The People* going.

The situation depends upon so many variables working together that it seems unworkable, yet the experience of the past few years has shown that with SLP resolve it has produced results for *The People* that, while not the best that *should* be produced, are results of which we can nonetheless be proud.

At present, there is no other way to continue publishing *The People* except to continue this seemingly unworkable—yet proven—method.

To change the situation will take time and effort not only by the members presently involved in “Editorial Matters,” but also by the whole Party.

Every effort should be made by members in the field to step up their study of Marxist-De Leonist principles and attempt to stimulate the development of more members capable of writing and submitting articles for publication. As more writers become available to submit articles from the field, some of our more experienced writers may be able to be freed to take a shot at producing new leaflets, new Socialist Studies or something like them, and new pamphlets. We encourage the ~~acting Editor~~ National Secretary to consider publishing, from time to time as he sees fit, filler copy that informs the readership of *The People* of the Party's ongoing need for writers and encourages short submissions on class struggle subjects of local interest as a means of “getting into the game” of writing for *The People*.

This committee does not feel that placing an arbitrary limit on the length of each issue would be fruitful. These and other matters concerning the details of production must be left to the judgment of the ~~acting Editor~~ National Secretary and the “staff” he has available. We would, however, like to encourage the ~~acting Editor~~ National Secretary to make easily available to members—perhaps in the newsletter, and also in filler copy in *The People*—any “writing tips” he has made available to potential writers in the past. Further, though we know his time is ~~short~~ limited,

we feel that every bit of feedback the ~~acting Editor~~ National Secretary can give to those who make attempts to write is important to developing the writers we need, and would like to encourage such feedback.

The committee would also like to encourage the ~~acting Editor~~ National Secretary and his “staff” of volunteers to make every effort to work out ways and means of introducing more planning into the content of each issue, with specific emphasis on developing articles that, once used in *The People*, may also be used as Socialist Studies or as components of future pamphlets.

Lastly, we want to encourage the study of newspaper and editorial writing techniques by all our writers, so that the “mechanics” of articles submitted from the field are less time consuming for the ~~acting Editor~~ National Secretary to straighten out.

While we feel that the Party’s situation in the “Editorial Department,” such as it is, is on shaky ground indeed, past experience with the arrangement, as well as SLP dedication and work toward overcoming our deficiencies in the future, make the possibilities for correcting the situation far from bleak.

Fraternally submitted,

KEN BOETTCHE, Chair

DON BOROWSKY, CHARLES JOHNSON

MICHAEL WENSKUNAS

Committee on Party Press & Literature and Editorial Matters

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the report. An amendment was passed to strike the word “Business” and replace it with “National” in the first sentence. An amendment was passed that the words “acting Editor” be replaced with “National Secretary” in every instance. An amendment was passed to replace the word “short” with “limited” in the seventh paragraph. On motion, the report as amended was adopted.

Committee on State of Organization—B. Cozzini reported progress.

At 5:20 p.m. a five-minute recess was declared; reconvened at 5:35 p.m.

Committee on Resolutions and Platform

B. Bortnick presented the following report:

Re Resolutions

In view of the fact that most of the source material that the NEC members’ ~~resolutions~~ resolution manuscripts depend on is not available to the committee, we recommend that all four ~~resolutions~~ resolution

manuscripts be referred to the National Office for possible use in *The People*.

Fraternally submitted,
 BERNARD BORTNICK, Chair
 DONNA BILLS, KARL HECK
 Committee on Resolutions and Platform

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the report. An amendment was made to substitute the words “resolution manuscripts” for the word “resolutions.” The report as amended was adopted.

B. Bortnick presented the following:

National Platform

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 robbed 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 unemployed, including many of whose jobs have been outsourced. Others ~~whose jobs have been outsourced~~ 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 and discrimination is pervasive. The nation's educational system is deteriorating. 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 worsens. Crime and corruption are widespread at every level of capitalist society. Many workers suffer from alcohol and drug abuse. Homeless men, women and even children roam our streets. Thanks to capitalism's exploitation of workers 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 2005 level of over 33 million, 13 million of whom are children.

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.

A confluence of diminishing oil supplies, rapid industrialization of previously agricultural societies and the bloated wasteful energy demands of capitalist society have added to the social malaise enveloping the world. Thus wars for the domination of oil sources and spheres of influence in Afghanistan and Iraq are serving to satiate capitalist industry's appetite for profit and survival. Meanwhile, new emerging threats to U.S. hegemony have arisen in Iran, Korea and China, promising future chapters of class-rule cataclysms.

~~When the Socialist Labor Party was organized over 110 years ago, A~~ century ago there were no computers, no space exploration and no nuclear weapons. Nor was there great concern regarding pollution of the land, air and water on which all species—humanity included—depend 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.

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 same 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 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, these integral socialist 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.

Fraternally submitted,
 BERNARD BORTNICK, Chair
 DONNA BILLS, KARL HECK
 Committee on Resolutions and Platform

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the report. An amendment to insert the words “including those” in the fourth paragraph was not concurred in. An amendment was passed to strike the words “whose jobs have been outsourced” in the fourth paragraph. An amendment was passed to strike the word “industry’s” in the seventh paragraph. An amendment was passed to insert “including many of whose jobs have been outsourced” in the fourth paragraph. An amendment was passed to strike the words “When the Socialist Labor Party was organized over 110 years ago” and replace them with “A century ago” in the eighth paragraph. An amendment was passed to strike “years after the Johnson administration’s so-called ‘War on Poverty’” in the fifth paragraph. On motion, the proposed National Platform as amended was adopted.

Committee on Party Finances and Headquarters

T. Harris presented the following report:

National Headquarters

The National Secretary’s report clearly sets forth the issues confronting the National Headquarters and its staff.

Upon consideration of the National Secretary’s report and also upon consulting with the National Secretary, this committee makes the observations and recommendations as follows: The staff at the National Headquarters consists at this time of two full-time compensated employees, namely the National Secretary and his assistant, Comrade Donna Bills.

This committee expresses its gratitude to the National Secretary and Comrade Donna Bills for the fine work that they have done and continue to do to keep the National Headquarters performing at the high level of excellence that it has maintained in the last years. The committee also expresses its appreciation to Comrade Ken Boettcher, who while not a member of the staff at the National Headquarters, has provided invaluable assistance to the staff of the National Headquarters ~~from time to time~~.

The committee recognizes the vital functions to the Party that the staff at the National Headquarters has performed. These vital functions include but are not limited to being the first contact for those who seek information concerning the Party, its platform, and its policies; publishing *The People*, which is and has been the written word of the Party since

its inception over one hundred years ago; broadcasting the message of the SLP on the Internet and in making available written pamphlets, books, and other literature to the public concerning the Party and Socialism; coordinating meetings and events between the members of the SLP; and organizing and educating the working class towards the goal of socialism and the overthrow of the capitalist system.

We find that a National Headquarters and staff are essential to the performance of the vital functions of the Party. We therefore recommend that the National Headquarters and its staff be maintained. We further recommend that the National Headquarters staff be empowered to do all things reasonably necessary to carry out the recommendations as set forth in this report.

Fraternally submitted,

THAD HARRIS, Chair

HENRY CORETZ, FRANK CLINE

Committee on Party Finances and Headquarters

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the report. An amendment was made and seconded to strike the words “from time to time” in the third paragraph. A substitute amendment made and seconded to strike the words “from time to time” in the third paragraph and replace them with “frequently” was not concurred in. An amendment was passed to strike the words “from time to time” in the third paragraph. On motion, the report as amended was adopted.

At 6:30 p.m. the convention recessed until 7:30 p.m.

EVENING SESSION, MONDAY, JULY 11

The convention was called to order at 8:30 p.m.

On roll call, all present except K. Boettcher who arrived shortly.

Chairman B. Cozzini ceded the chair to D. Borowsky, the vice chair.

Reports of Committees

Committee on State of Organization

B. Cozzini presented the following reports:

Lisa Toth Membership Application

Lisa Toth, a former member who resigned some time in the late '80s, for reasons as she said of “immaturity,” has reapplied for membership.

She answered all questions on the membership application in the affirmative and sent a very thoughtful supporting letter. In recent years she

states she has begun, in earnest, her “studies of Marx, Engels, De Leon, Luxembourg, etc., in preparation for my fitness and hopefully re-admittance to the Party.” She also pledges that she will do her “utmost to uphold the high principles of the SLP and will support, with every fibre of my being, the best interests of the working class....”

We recommend that her application for membership be approved.

Fraternally submitted,

BRUCE COZZINI, Chair

ROBERT BURNS, JOHN HOUSER

DIANE SECOR

Committee on State of Organization

On motion, the report was adopted.

John Silvano Membership

After three delinquency notices without response John Silvano is ~~five~~ six months delinquent and has not responded to his last delinquency notice. We recommend that he be dropped from membership.

Fraternally submitted,

BRUCE COZZINI, Chair

ROBERT BURNS, JOHN HOUSER

DIANE SECOR

Committee on State of Organization

A motion was made and seconded to accept the report. An amendment was passed to change “five” to “six.” On motion, the report as amended was adopted.

David J. Heywood Membership

After two delinquency notices, without response, the last one refused delivery, David J. Heywood ~~remains~~ is six months' delinquent on his dues. We recommend that he be dropped from membership.

Fraternally submitted,

BRUCE COZZINI, Chair

ROBERT BURNS, JOHN HOUSER

DIANE SECOR

Committee on State of Organization

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the report. An amendment was passed to strike “remains” and insert “is six months'.” On motion, the report as amended was adopted.

Jay Chapman Membership

After three delinquency notices without response Jay Chapman re-

mains delinquent on his 2004 mileage assessment. We recommend that he be dropped from membership.

Fraternally submitted,
BRUCE COZZINI, Chair
ROBERT BURNS, JOHN HOUSER
DIANE SECOR
Committee on State of Organization

On motion, the report was adopted.

Report on the Richard Wilson Matter

The committee has studied the correspondence between the National Secretary and Comrade Richard Wilson and the circumstances from which it arose, and has reviewed the National Executive Committee's decision to suspend Comrade Wilson for conduct unbecoming a member of the Socialist Labor Party.

Your committee found that the NEC's motion to suspend Comrade Wilson for an indefinite period of time left this matter unresolved. Comrade Wilson should be given a reasonable amount of time to respond to the National Secretary's latest letter to him, which asks questions that Comrade Wilson deserves the right to answer should he choose to do so. With no time limit yet established on the matter we feel that the convention cannot act, except to refer the matter to the incoming NEC for the earliest possible action.

Accordingly, we recommend that the matter be so referred.

Fraternally submitted,
BRUCE COZZINI, Chair
ROBERT BURNS, JOHN HOUSER
DIANE SECOR
Committee on State of Organization

On motion, the report was adopted.

State of Organization

The state of our organization is ~~dire~~ critical but not bleak. As the working class is adapting to new conditions fostered by a rapidly changing capitalist landscape, so must we conform to changing material conditions if we are to survive and ultimately succeed in our mission of social emancipation. With our Party dependent upon only two comrades in the National Office (and no contingency plan), with *The People* reduced to bimonthly publication, with our membership dwindling in the face of age and infirmity, with new members falling away for lack of Marxist/De Leonist nourishment, with sections struggling for survival and new con-

tacts failing to respond to our best overtures on their behalf, we are simultaneously faced with growing domestic hardship, wars and global catastrophe, all induced by our deteriorating and antisocial economic system. The SLP is more vulnerable than at any time in our history, and unless we act, the demise of our Party seems a question of downward mathematical progression.

The National Secretary's report on "State of the Organization" notes the gains and losses in membership in 2003 and 2004, with the losses unfortunately outnumbering the gains. The losses sadly included the deaths of 20 members.

In addition we lost one section and find other sections in major cities in jeopardy. ~~Comrade Bills'~~ The National Secretary's approach to the problem in Section New York was appropriate. His response to a letter from Comrade Al Mitch describing the section's decline was constructive, seeking assistance, asking "as a first step, I wonder if you (or any other member of the section) are familiar enough with the list of current subscribers in and around the city to identify any who should be members and might be approachable," sending this also to all members of the section, hoping to gain information that might allow the organization to grow. In addition, he offered ways to relieve some forms of section routine with National Office assistance. Unfortunately, no members of the section responded.

The suggestion of a "mini tour" by the National Secretary or other appropriate representative of the national organization to help organize the process of section rebuilding was a good idea that has possibilities if the information needed can be gathered beforehand and if the time can be found to do it.

The National Office mails the *SLP Newsletter* directly to the individual members to maintain contact between them and the organization. Only if the members follow through and begin activities and start contacting prospective members can Section New York reverse the decline. Similar problems exist for Chicago and Detroit.

Fraternally submitted,
 BRUCE COZZINI, Chair
 ROBERT BURNS, JOHN HOUSER
 DIANE SECOR
 Committee on State of Organization

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the report. An amendment was passed to strike the words "Comrade Bills" and replace them with "the National Secretary's" in the third paragraph. An amendment was passed to delete the word "dire" and replace it with "critical" in the first sentence. On motion, the report as amended was adopted.

B. Cozzini presented the following reports:

In response to the National Secretary's report on the National Executive Committee we submit the following two related reports:

1. Report on the National Executive Committee
2. Report on the Online Discussion List

Report on the Press Committee

While the Press Committee was able, with some difficulty, to respond with statements on the Houston platform and the Abu Ghraib prison, it did not come up with useful results in the questions and answers pamphlet. A possible reason for difficulties that arose in all these projects were problems in communication between members separated geographically and with time demands that did not allow immediate communication. Another was the inherent difficulty of "writing by committee." If the Press Committee is to stay in existence, it may be best to assign projects to individual writers and use the committee to review them.

Report on the Online Discussion List

On August 4, 2003, the NEC established a national member-at-large online discussion list to be moderated by NEC member Comrade Carl Miller, in conjunction with the rest of the committee and the National Office for the purpose of facilitating the integration of new national members-at-large (NMALs) into the Party in accordance with organizational principles and traditions. In the following 17 months this online discussion list received only 19 nonmoderator-generated messages despite the fact that almost immediate and unlimited electronic communication via the Internet appears to be the complementary solution to the increasing problem of a widely dispersed and isolated Party membership. We do not believe that the "languid success" to date can be attributed to the nature of the electronic tool at our disposal or to the working class. It may be due in part to a lack of experience in moderating techniques which can be corrected in time, but it may also lie with how this new tool has been structured and its focus on a group which lacks adequate socialist grounding.

The SLP foundation of new NMALs, which apparently is not always strong enough to keep them in the Party, may also prevent them from responding to the relative freedom and benefits of an online discussion group. If so, it may be necessary to restructure and refocus our online potential into a disciplined study class format that would provide not only a method of integration but also raise new NMALs to a higher level of socialist understanding where the Web could begin to serve effectively

as a cohesive means to Party-coordinated agitation. The effective deployment of this newly formed and redirected electronic tool would require NEC and the National Office supervision with active and capable NMAL/Section support. It would also require the thoughtful development of an up-to-date study guide format—which is, in any case, an imperative of many applications for our future success.

We have no doubt, however, that with continued perseverance the format pioneered by Comrade Miller will yield ever-increasing success. As he states in his report: “The value of the discussion list is that a channel of communication is open between the members-at-large and the Party any time they see fit to use it. It is also there for the Party to reach out to those who are isolated. Even though activity is not where we want it to be or where it should be, it is still a great resource.” The committee wishes to commend Comrade Miller, in particular, for the initiative and dedication displayed in blazing this new and important avenue of Party communication. The committee also encourages the National Office, as resources permit, to continue development of this resource to its fullest potential. We are convinced that in time the Party will benefit greatly from both approaches outlined above—but in different ways.

Fraternally submitted,
 BRUCE COZZINI, Chair
 ROBERT BURNS, JOHN HOUSER
 DIANE SECOR
 Committee on State of Organization

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the report. An amendment was passed to strike the word “section” in the third paragraph. On motion, the report as amended was adopted.

**Re National Secretary’s Report—
 Constitutional Amendment on Article V, Section 8(g)**

Your committee concurs with the recommendation in the National Secretary’s report to delete Article V, Section 8(g) of the Party’s Constitution:

“to be represented at the National Convention by the National Secretary, who shall have a voice in all its proceedings, but no vote, and bear no other credentials.”

Members of the outgoing NEC are now required to attend the National Convention, with a voice and vote in all convention proceedings. Thus the NEC has no need to be “represented” by the National Secretary at National Conventions.

Fraternally submitted,
BRUCE COZZINI, Chair
ROBERT BURNS, JOHN HOUSER
DIANE SECOR
Committee on State of Organization

On motion, the report was adopted.

**Re National Secretary's Report—
Constitutional Amendments on Article IX**

1. Your committee concurs with the National Secretary's recommendations to amend Article IX, Section 8, by inserting "whether in print or online" and "publishers" and by striking "group publishing such paper":

*"Section 8. The election of editors of other publications recognized as Party organs, **whether in print or online**, shall be subject to the approval of the NEC. The NEC shall demand from the publishers the immediate removal of an editor who in its judgment has proven to be incompetent or disloyal, and in case of noncompliance with this demand, the NEC shall at once take charge of such publication and appoint an editor, pending election of a new editor by the ~~group publishing such paper~~ **publishers**."*

The Internet has become a common means of communications. These proposed changes make it clear that the existing constitutional provisions cover online publications, as well as the print media.

2. Your committee also concurs with the National Secretary's recommendations to amend Article IX, Section 9 to insert "or magazine, whether in print or online" and "such publication" and to strike "such paper": *"Section 9: No member, committee, or Section of the Party shall publish a political paper **or magazine, whether in print or online**, without the sanction of the NEC, and then only on condition that all the property of ~~such paper~~ **such publication** be vested in the NEC free from any financial or legal liability, the editor of ~~such paper~~ **such publication** to be subject to the provisions of the preceding section."*

These proposed changes remove any doubt that the existing provisions for NEC authority and ownership of any SLP publications do apply to the Internet as well as to the print media.

Fraternally submitted,
BRUCE COZZINI, Chair
ROBERT BURNS, JOHN HOUSER
DIANE SECOR
Committee on State of Organization

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the report. A motion was

passed to consider the recommendations seriatim. On motion, the first proposal was approved. On motion, the second proposal was approved. On motion, the report as a whole was approved.

Thereupon, the National Secretary requested a five-minute recess. The chair granted the request at 9:35 p.m.; reconvened at 9:45 p.m.

B. Cozzini presented the following report:

Re Guidelines for Conducting Party Activities by Internet

Your committee also recommends that the “Interim Guidelines for Sections and Members Using the Internet to Conduct Party Activities,” which was adopted by the 45th National Convention, be adopted by this convention as standard Organizational Norms and Procedures with the following changes: Strike “Interim” from the title and delete “Wherever possible” from item #5. These guidelines provide practical means to make sure that all SLP Internet activities, set up by members and subdivisions of the SLP, operate under the supervision of the section or the NEC. These guidelines provide ways for the section or the NEC to have some control over these websites to make sure that the Party’s position is correctly represented, and that the content is in keeping with the SLP Constitution and Organizational Norms and Procedures.

Fraternally submitted,

BRUCE COZZINI, Chair

ROBERT BURNS, JOHN HOUSER

DIANE SECOR

Committee on State of Organization

Interim Guidelines for Sections and Members Using The Internet to Conduct Party Activities

(Adopted by the 45th National Convention of the
Socialist Labor Party, June 1–4, 2001)

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

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

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

4. That ownership and control of email groups, discussion lists, chat

rooms and websites dedicated to SLP propaganda or activity should rest with the section and/or the NEC.

5. ~~Wherever possible~~ [The] section and/or NEC shall review the content of SLP websites and recommend changes where necessary.

6. A link to the national website shall be prominently displayed.

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

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

9. Another question that has arisen is the fact that section email addresses listed in the SLP directory in some cases do not belong to the section organizer who may not have Internet service. Organizers who have email should have their email addresses listed in the directory since they are responsible for all communications to and from the section. In the event that the organizer does not have Internet access, one possible solution is that members of the section who have Internet access be named email secretary by the membership. This email secretary would be responsible for conveying all email correspondence dealing with SLP matters to the attention of the organizer for appropriate action.

On motion, the report was adopted.

New Business

B. Cozzini proceeded to place the following names in nomination for the National Executive Committee: Ken Boettcher, Bernard Bortnick, Bruce Cozzini, Carl Miller, Diane Secor and Michael Wenskunas.

The floor was opened for further nominations. Thad Harris and Robert Burns were nominated. R. Burns declined. T. Harris accepted. John Houser was nominated. J. Houser declined.

On motion, Ken Boettcher, Bernard Bortnick, Bruce Cozzini, Thad Harris, Carl Miller, Diane Secor and Michael Wenskunas were elected by acclamation to constitute the NEC for the 2005–2007 term of office.

B. Cozzini reported the committee had no candidates for the offices of Editor and Financial Secretary.

B. Cozzini proceeded to nominate Robert Bills for the post of National Secretary. There were no further nominations. R. Bills accepted.

On motion, Robert Bills was elected unanimously by vote of acclamation.

Thereupon, the National Secretary briefly addressed the convention to express appreciation for the confidence being placed in him. The National Secretary also reiterated his faith in the program and principles of the SLP, in the resiliency and determination of the Party and its membership, and expressed confidence in the new NEC to guide the Party's work during the 2005–2007 term of office.

On motion, the convention offered its thanks and appreciation to Frank Prince for his service as sergeant at arms and other things he has done for the Party.

On motion, the convention expressed congratulations to delegate Henry Coretz on the occasion of his 70 years' membership, which he will mark next week.

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

On motion, the matter of a raise for the National Secretary and his staff was referred to the NEC.

A motion was made and seconded to readmit Harvey Rodich to the ranks of the Socialist Labor Party. The chair ruled the motion out of order.

On motion, the minutes of Sunday's and Monday's sessions were approved as read. On motion, the minutes as a whole were approved.

On motion, the convention adjourned *sine die* at 10:20 p.m.

Fraternally submitted,
DONNA BILLS
Recording Secretary