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## THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

[No Date]

Gentlemen,

I am a former subscriber of *The People*. My good friend Comrade Edward Leader [of Section New York City] informed me of the suspension of the publication of *The People*.

I would be interested as to what the SLP has to say about the Barack Obama presidency.

Can you please help me.

Sincerely,  
MARTIN TURPANJIAN

May 20, 2009

Martin Turpanjian

Park Ridge, N.J.

Dear Mr. Turpanjian:

Thank you for your recent letter, which you did not date, but which it seems you mailed on May 17. The question you ask is a broad one, and so must be the answer.

The key word in the phrase "Obama administration" is not Obama, but administration. What Mr. Obama and his appointees to the executive department seek to administer is the government, i.e., the political state, as did the Bush, Clinton and other administrations before it.

Marx taught that the executive of the modern state is nothing but a committee for managing the affairs of the capitalist class, just as the feudal state that preceded it administered the collective affairs of the ruling aristocracy of pre-modern times.

Just as the administration of the feudal or pre-capitalist state varied from country to country, e.g., from England to France to Spain, etc., and from one monarch to another, the administration of the modern state varies in certain particulars from one administration to the next, depending on the needs of the times. Regardless of the administration and the administrative details of each, however, all seek to serve the same fundamental purpose, that of managing the collective affairs of the modern or capitalist ruling class.

Broadly speaking, then, the Obama administration is indistinguishable from any of its predecessors. It simply does what it thinks best to fulfill its responsibilities toward the ruling class.

There is not much more I could say about this without knowing what, if any, particular policy of the current Obama administration interests you and how that policy might serve to confirm the preceding generalization.

Sincerely yours,  
ROBERT BILLS  
National Secretary

## THE SLP

*Dead or Alive?*

**From:** Bernard Bortnick  
**Subject:** Canadian Inquiry  
**Date:** February 27, 2009

Dear Comrade Bills,

This evening I received a telephone call from Mike Bisailon . . . asking if the SLP is still functioning? I told him that we were in a transitional period trying to raise funds for a smaller operation and that we had to close our previous HQ for insufficient funds. He wanted to know if you had been a party employee. He stated he had long followed the SLP's activities. He had been in touch with former member Miller from Houston.

Bisailon is a trade union organizer, apparently for correctional officers which he was at one time a member. He said he was currently working on a masters degree in history.

He asked me a number of questions, membership strength etc., but one thing that did emerge: Wikipedia apparently is spreading false rumors about the SLP. I haven't checked it yet but I'm going to

## GENEROUS MEMBER HELPS BOOST THE PEOPLE'S 'RESUMPTION FUND'

March 25, 2009

National Secretary

Socialist Labor Party

Dear Comrade Bills

Sorry to hear, although I sensed it before reading the newsletter, about the hardship you and Donna are enduring and the great difficulty conducting administrative duties.

Regarding the last paragraph of your September 29, 2008, letter to Comrade Bortnick [Spring 2009], I have had similar thoughts and concerns about the situation.

"Incidentally, and apart from the implications of the current crisis, the decline of the productive and hence exploited branch of the working class, together with the growth of its nonproductive and unproductive branches, was and remains the source of my concern that the SIU program, while still correct in its essence, can only decline in its appeal as more and more of the working class derives its income from 'a portion of the profit.'"

Enclosed is a \$1,000.00 contribution, which I am able to do because of a recent change in my financial situation. After reading about the possibility of resuming publication of *The People*, it appears rather bleak. Therefore I am thinking more towards the SLP Sustainer Fund but I leave it to your discretion in the advent that an unforeseen improvement to the status of resuming publication of *The People* happens.

Fraternally,  
DONALD J. DONAKER  
National Member-at-Large

(Continued on Page 2)

look into it. We talked at length about other so-called socialist parties, particularly the SWP and its numerous offshoots.

We should begin adding to articles and commentary to our Web site. What is to prevent us from doing that so we can at least direct people to current commentary?

Fraternally,  
B. BORTNICK

**From:** Michel Bisailon  
**Date:** February 27, 2009

Does your party exist [*sic*] or is it desolved [*sic*]?

**From:** Socialist Labor Party  
**Date:** February 27, 2009

Dear Mr. Bisailon

Thank you for your inquiry. Yes, the SLP still exists. May I ask why you ask?

Sincerely  
ROBERT BILLS  
National Secretary

**From:** Michel Bisailon  
**Date:** February 27, 2009

If you read the Wikipedia article, it implies that the party has dissolved. I am interested from a historical point of view. The SLP being America's oldest Marxist party.

Thanks,  
MIKE BISAILLON

**From:** Socialist Labor Party  
**Date:** February 29, 2009

Dear Mr. Bisailon:

Thank you for your response to my question.

The Wikipedia article implies something different to me than it does to you. It starts with a little box off to one side where the address of the SLP appears as clear as day (not an error in it) and ends by suggesting that the author was too lazy to write and find out if what he or she had to say on the subject was correct. Who this self-appointed expert on the affairs of the SLP happens to be is, of course, a mystery. (Richard Winger [Editor of *Ballot Access News*] at least picked up his telephone and talked to me.)

Wikipedia, blogs and other such things are the modern day equivalent of the back country general store, where old men sat along the porch and gossiped, grumbled, chewed tobacco and tried to spit farther over the rail than the fellow next to him, while the women stood around the flour barrel inside and did essentially the same thing, minus the tobacco but with just as much venom. It doesn't quite measure up to the lowest standards of Journalism 101, not even when graded on the Murdoch curve, much less those of an encyclopedia.

Sincerely,  
ROBERT BILLS  
National Secretary

**From:** Michel Bisailon  
**Date:** February 28, 2009

Hi Robert:

Thanks for responding. I agree with your assessment of Wikipedia. One of my profs (btw [by the way] I am a life long student, 47 years old, do not want to give the impression that I'm a kid . . . lol [laugh out loud]) scolded me for using it. However, I have tried to keep track of your party and will read just about anything written on it.

Your group is very fascinating. I am happy I called and got the scoop from Bernie. I used to keep in touch with a fella named Carl Miller (out of Houston) about your organization. Also did a couple of essays on De Leon. I only have respect for someone who espouses Marxism in the USA. At least in Canada when you tell people you are a Marxist they don't look at you like you have 3 heads.

*Nous Sommes le Pouvoir* [We are the power],  
Merci,

MICHEL BISAILLON

## TWO QUESTIONS ANSWERED

May 4, 2009

Mr. Robert Bills  
*The People*

Mr. Bills:

Please note enclosure of a small contribution in the amount of \$2.00 for the republication fund of *The People*. I would like a receipt and also would like to know if the official journal of the SLP

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## CHINA AND SOCIALISM

The following was written to the Editor of China's People's Daily newspaper in response to an editorial posted with the online edition of June 26. The editorial held forth with, among other things, the following:

"In order to get to know the basic economic system at the primary stage of China's socialism, people have to grasp two essential points: one is to take public ownership as the main body and the other is to adhere to the common growth of economy belonging to diverse forms of ownership.

"Taking public ownership as the mainstay is a fundamental principle of socialism. In a socialist country like China, where people have become masters of their own destiny, it is imperative to keep public ownership of means of production as a basis of the socialist economic system. So, adherence to public ownership as the main body is of vital importance in giving play to the superiority of the nation's socialist system, increasing the nation's economic strength and promoting social harmony in the country.

"As is known to all, public ownership economy in China comprise not only the economy of state ownership (or the whole people's ownership) and the economy of collective ownership but also the state and collective share in mixed ownership forms."

The letter to the Editor of the People's Daily is followed by a brief exchange between NEC Member Bernard Bortnick and the National Secretary.

**From:** SLP <[socialists@slp.org](mailto:socialists@slp.org)>  
**Date:** June 26, 2009  
**To:** *People's Daily*  
**Subject:** CHINA'S ECONOMIC SYSTEM

Dear Editor:

If by "public ownership" you mean state ownership ("China to adhere to basic economic system," June 26), then you are sadly mistaken in your assertion about the meaning of socialism—at least the socialism envisioned by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Marx declared the political state as being "inseparable from slavery," and Engels described socialism as an "administration of things" rather than of people and landed territory. To claim that the people of China are "masters of their own destiny" because the state owns the means of life—the land on and the modern tool (machinery, etc.) with which to work—is an insult to the memory of Marx, Engels and the millions who have striven for genuine socialism. When the working class of China organizes its political and economic might to establish a stateless industrial or economic democracy, then and only then will the people of China become "masters of their own destiny. Censor this if you will, but the truth ultimately will prevail.

Yours for the socialist revolution in China and throughout the industrialized world.

Sincerely yours,  
ROBERT BILLS  
National Secretary  
Socialist Labor Party of America  
(established 1890)

**From:** Bernard Bortnick  
**Subject:** China and Socialism  
**Date:** June 27, 2009

Dear Comrade Bills,

I assume that the letter you had written was in response to the *People's Daily* article. Whoever wrote that fawning piece may "go to the head of the class" of class-rule apologists for it is just a matter of time before the rising powerful capitalist class asserts their dominance over the political contraption that claims to be socialist, that is if they already haven't. Indeed if three quarters of the productive capacity of the country is privately held, it's just a matter of time

(Continued on page 2)

## CAPITALISM IS FALLING APART

June 15, 2009

Dear Comrades . . .

I stand by with all of our true comrades in commending and honoring you both in the great work you have wrought in laying the foundation and building the great wall of socialism until its completion. Only the voice of ignorance and a lack of understanding the true aims of socialist goals would think otherwise.

There are many Americans who are comfortable with the status quo. These blind, ignorant and pathetic gnomes still believe that this evil system of capitalism has something to offer them. Many of them are narcissistic and self-serving. They feel secure, wrapped up in their wage-slave jobs and having the impotent means to intoxicate themselves with self-defeating drugs and alcohol. The entertainment industry and media encourage them to remain in limbo. They have groped around in the dark at mid-day for years, and it has become very difficult to effect a noteworthy change in them.

But I believe that through your efforts and faithfulness to the cause all these years, that things are beginning to take shape now for the ushering in of a new "Socialist Era." Capitalism is falling apart at the seams, as you and I clearly see.

To continue to use logic and preciseness of expression as our weapons in order to defeat the erratic contradictory falsities of impotent minds will guarantee a victorious triumph for ourselves and our children. We encourage you; we encourage each other to fight the good fight.

Fraternally yours,  
ANTHONY WILLIAM GRECO  
National Member-at-Large

P.S. I believe it would be more to everyone's liking that the 48th National Convention take place in the year 2011 in order to rebuild sizable funds.

## 'CURRENT CRISIS OF CAPITALISM'

*Discussions We Should Have*

Dear Comrades :

I was particularly interested in the discussion on the "Current Crisis of Capitalism" in the Spring issue. I think that this is exactly the type of discussions that we should be having on questions, such as surplus value and "productive" segments of the working class, etc. This is the way that we keep up-to-date and develop the correct stands over a long period of time, as we see changes in the present capitalist system.

Best Wishes always,  
Fraternally,  
DIANE SECOR

## CHINA . . .

*(Continued from page 1)*

before that ownership must reflect itself in domination over the political apparatus. Otherwise I endorse your statement.

Fraternally,  
B.BORTNICK  
NEC Member

**From:** SLP <socialists@slp.org>  
**Subject: Re: China and Socialism**  
**Date:** July 9, 2009

Bernard Bortnick  
NEC Member

Dear Comrade Bortnick:

This belatedly acknowledges receipt of your second email of June 27 regarding what you correctly identified as my response to the *People's Daily* editorial on "the primary stage of China's socialism." I agree completely with what you said about the eventuality of China's new capitalist class asserting its control over the political state and, by extension, an end to the Communist Party's domination over the state and its monopoly over political power generally. No doubt I should have said more about the editorial's description of China's ["mixed"] economy and a few other things, besides,

in particular the perpetuation of the wages system and the CP's complicity in shielding some of the worst exploitation of wage labor in the world today. I wrote the thing in about 15 minutes and chose to take my shot at the nonsense about the "Chinese people" controlling their own destiny. At any rate, there's no shortage of opportunities to combat misrepresentations of socialism and outrageous contentions attempting to link the world's problems to Marx and Marxism. Indeed, just yesterday [July 8] the *Asia Times* carried an article on the ethnic riots in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region under the heading of "Ghost of Marx haunts China's riots," in which this choice assertion nearly leads the article:

"At the heart of the escalating problem are China's antiquated policies towards its ethnic minorities—a raft of Marxist measures that are now pleasing neither the ethnic Han, nor the minorities."

\* \* \*

Fraternally yours,  
ROBERT BILLS  
National Secretary

## TWO QUESTIONS

*(Continued from page 1)*

is not published, can I expect a refund of this contribution as well as any unexpended monies from my subscription? Also, do you know when the final decision will be made regarding these questions?

On another note I have asked this question before, but have not received any answer. I am still hopeful of a reply. Specifically, whose decision was it to move the headquarters of the party from New York to San Francisco? Also, I realize hindsight is 20/20 as they say, but I would like to know if you had given any consideration to a more central and less expensive location at that time, and will do so in the future.

\* \* \*

Thank you for answering my questions. It is appreciated.

Sincerely,  
K.M. DAVIS

May 8, 2009

K.M. Davis

Muncie, IN

Dear Mr. Davis:

Thank you very much for your letter of May 4, with which you enclosed a \$2 bill and the remittance form you downloaded from our website. As you see, however, I am returning your \$2 bill with this. The reason for that is that the SLP cannot accept contributions with such conditions attached as the one you specify.

You asked two questions you state you have raised before without receiving an answer. I apologize for that, though my recollection is that I did attempt to answer them at one time. At any rate, the answers are as follows:

No decision as to when, or even if, *The People* will resume publication has been made. That decision will be made when the minimum amount needed to start again with reasonable assurance that we have funds on hand sufficient to continue for at least one year have been raised. We are slowly approaching that level, but have not reached it yet. The best I can say is that we hope to begin again during the current calendar year, and that if we do not succeed in raising the funds needed before the end of the current year, we will be offering refunds to those who have them coming. You are, of course, free to ask for one at any time, though I have not taken the time to search our records to determine what the amount would be.

The decisions to move out of New York City in 1974 and to settle in the San Francisco Bay Area were taken by the SLP's National Executive Committee and by the NEC's Subcommittee, with the concurrence of the former. Both decisions, reached separately, were upon recommendation of the then National Secretary, Nathan Karp.

The decision to move out of New York City was prompted by a combination of factors, among them the deterioration of the city and city services (well known at the time) and rising costs (rent, utilities, etc.), which became prohibitive, and the

hardships these conditions imposed on the headquarters staff of the time. The decision to move to Northern California came after an extensive search in other major metropolitan areas, among them Long Island, Chicago, Detroit and others, for the right combination of facilities, services and costs. You realize, of course, that 1974, when the move occurred, was long before the area became known as "Silicon Valley," and long before real estate here became as expensive as it did in later years. It was a good decision in the circumstances and a major factor in prolonging the SLP's ability to maintain a headquarters on a scale comparable to what it had in New York, and to do so for nearly 20 years. Thereafter, i.e., into the 1990s and down to the present day, our needs and, hence, our costs have declined; but, unfortunately, our means have declined even more.

I hope these answers are sufficient to satisfy your curiosity.

Sincerely yours,  
ROBERT BILLS  
National Secretary

## 'RESUMPTION FUND'...

April 2, 2009

Donald Donaker

National Member-at-Large

Dear Comrade Donaker:

I am in receipt of your check for \$1,000.00 and the letter of March 25, with which it was enclosed. I thank you very much for the latter as much as the former, because I know that both are a reflection of your commitment to and concern for the future of the Socialist Labor Party and its official journal, *The People*. I attach a receipt for your records, showing that the funds have been applied to *The People's* Resumption Fund.

That decision should tell you that I remain optimistic about our chances of resuming publication later this year. I must confess, however, that the obstacles are formidable and that the prospects for doing so may, as you suggest, be "rather bleak." As to that, much depends on Party members emulating your example and acting decisively to build up the Party's cash reserves. The funds still come in, but apart from a few sizable contributions comparable to your own I must again confess that they come in at a dribble more than as a flood.

As to the concern I expressed to Comrade Bortnick regarding the "appeal" of the SIU program, it was no more than what I said during the NEC's discussion (by correspondence) on SLP Problems and Solutions, a complete record of which was included as an Appendix to the published proceedings of the 2003 NEC Session. Although the NEC adopted reports that seemed to agree with what I had to say during that exchange, I cannot say that anything worthy of comment has occurred along those lines in the intervening six years. I have to assume some responsibility for that, of course, but in the end it remains a collective problem that must be addressed by those who still share in the conviction that the SIU program, i.e., the need for, and means to organize for and to establish, an economic or socialist democracy is absolutely critical to the future safety and well-being of the human race.

With regard to our personal situation, the "hardship" you mention was partly a result of all the tension and pressure we were under to arrange for the preservation of the Party's archives and records, which were far more voluminous than I realized. We had no income to speak of for a while, which only added to our anxiety, but that has changed since Donna succeeded in landing a job that pays as much as she and I earned together as Party employees and includes health "benefits" even better than we had as Party employees. We feel more or less secure financially now that Donna is well established in her new job and that my unemployment "benefits" have been extended for several months. The latter will bring us very close to the point where I can begin to collect full social security, starting early next year. In the meantime, I continue to work on the remaining archives, on preparing additions for the Party's website and responding to correspondence—all in an-

icipation of the day when enough has been collected to give serious thought to resuming publication of *The People*.

Again, I thank you very much for your generosity and your continuing commitment to the SLP.

Fraternally yours,  
ROBERT BILLS  
National Secretary

## WHAT IS SOCIALISM?

SOCIALISM is the collective ownership by all the people of the factories, mills, mines, railroads, land and all other instruments of production. SOCIALISM means production to satisfy human needs, not as under capitalism, for sale and profit. SOCIALISM means direct control and management of the industries and social services by the workers through a democratic government based on their nationwide economic organization.

Under socialism, all authority will originate from the workers, integrally united in SOCIALIST INDUSTRIAL UNIONS. In each workplace, the rank-and-file will elect whatever committees or representatives are needed to facilitate production. Within each shop or office division of a plant, the rank-and-file will participate directly in formulating and implementing all plans necessary for efficient operations.

Besides electing all necessary shop officers, the workers will also elect representatives to a local and national council of their industry or service—and to a central congress representing all the industries and services. This ALL-INDUSTRIAL CONGRESS will plan and coordinate production in all areas of the economy. All persons elected to any post in the socialist government, from the lowest to the highest level, will be directly accountable to the rank-and-file. They will be subject to removal at any time that a majority of those who elected them decide it is necessary.

Such a system would make possible the fullest democracy and freedom. It would be a society based on the most primary freedom—ECONOMIC FREEDOM.

For individuals, socialism means an end to economic insecurity and exploitation. It means workers cease to be commodities bought and sold on the labor market, and forced to work as appendages to tools owned by someone else. It means a chance to develop all individual capacities and potentials within a free community of free individuals. It means a classless society that guarantees full democratic rights for all workers.

SOCIALISM does not mean government or state ownership. It does not mean a closed party-run system without democratic rights. Those things are the very opposite of SOCIALISM.

"SOCIALISM," as the American Socialist Daniel De Leon defined it, "is that social system under which the necessities of production are owned, controlled and administered by the people, for the people, and under which, accordingly, the cause of political and economic despotism having been abolished, class rule is at end. That is socialism, nothing short of that." And we might add, nothing more than that! Remember: If it does not fit this description, it is not socialism—no matter who says different. Those who claim that SOCIALISM existed and failed in places like Russia and China simply do not know the facts.

SOCIALISM will be a society in which the things we need to live, work and control our own lives—the industries, services and natural resources—are collectively owned by all the people, and in which the democratic organization of the people within the industries and services is the government. SOCIALISM means that government of the people, for the people and by the people will become a reality for the first time.

To win the struggle for socialist freedom requires enormous efforts of organizational and educational work. It requires building a political party of socialism to contest the power of the capitalist class on the political field and to educate the majority of workers about the need for socialism. It requires building SOCIALIST INDUSTRIAL UNION organizations to unite all workers in a class-conscious industrial force and to prepare them to take, hold and operate the tools of production.

You are needed in the ranks of Socialists fighting for a better world, to end poverty, racism, sexism, environmental disaster and to avert the still potent threat of a catastrophic nuclear war. Find out more about the program and work of the Socialist Labor Party at [www.slp.org](http://www.slp.org) and join us to help make the promise of socialism a reality.

Explore @ [www.slp.org](http://www.slp.org)