

Twenty-Ninth National Convention Socialist Labor Party

FEBRUARY 7-11, 1976

Minutes, Reports, Resolutions, Etc.



Price \$3.95

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National Convention
Socialist Labor Party**

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Published 1976
Socialist Labor Party
P. O. Box 10018
Palo Alto, CA 94304

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Printed in the United States of America

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NATHAN KARP
National Secretary

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY

P. O. Box 10016, Palo Alto, California 94304

404-1531
Tel: (415) ~~626-5577~~

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 29th NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY

February 7 - 11, 1976

Stouffer's Northland Inn, Southfield, Michigan

Morning Session, Saturday, February 7, 1976

Prior to formally convening the convention, National Secretary Nathan Karp addressed the assembled delegates and visitors as follows.

Comrades:

It is with profound regret that I convey to you the sad news that on Thursday, February 5, in mid afternoon, Comrade Arnold Petersen died. He would have been 91 years old this coming April.

I learned of this sorrowful event just a few minutes after I arrived here Thursday evening. As I write, my information regarding details is sparse. I understand that at Comrade Petersen's request no funeral services were held.

It is difficult to express our feeling of loss and impossible to pay Comrade Petersen the tribute he deserves at this time. The opportunity for doing so will come at a memorial meeting which the Party is preparing to hold. Arrange-

ments for such a memorial are yet to be made and all Party members will have a chance to pay their last respects.

But even after we have paid our last respects, and held our memorial meeting, it will remain for history to take the measure of a man whose life and work are inseparably bound with the SLP and the cause of socialism.

Comrade Petersen's membership in the SLP spanned nearly seven decades. He joined the Party in 1907, and just seven years later was elected to the important post of National Secretary, a post which he was to fill for more than half a century.

Thirteen times the members of the SLP re-elected Comrade Petersen to the office of National Secretary. The last time, in 1968, he was forced to accept with the provision that he be free to leave after the national campaign.

On February 4, 1969, Comrade Petersen submitted his resignation and, in April of that year, he stepped down, 55 years and two months after he had first assumed that office.

Many of us here know how full those years were--laden with monumental events, not only for our Party, but for the nation and the world as well. The active role Comrade Petersen played during these turbulent and historic times is amply recorded in the history of our Party.

In most cases the recognition and tributes that men and women earn through their life's work are paid them only after they are no longer with us. Perhaps we can take some small measure of comfort in the fact that the Party took note of

Comrade Petersen's important contribution while he was still alive.

In 1939, in the 25th year of Comrade Petersen's tenure as National Secretary, he was honored at the "annual winter social" conducted by the New York sections, a memorable event that in fact turned out to be a well-organized surprise party.

In 1964, on the 50th anniversary of his service as National Secretary, the Party again had occasion to show its recognition of Comrade Petersen's many years of devoted work.

Shortly after his resignation, the 1969 NEC banquet wished him well in his well-earned retirement. And just last year, on his 90th birthday, we again had occasion to offer a tribute.

And though we will honor Comrade Petersen again at a memorial meeting, we would do less than justice to his memory if we were to overlook the critical problems and serious threats that confront our Party today. If there was one dominant theme running through Arnold Petersen's work in the socialist movement, it was a determination to preserve the organizational integrity of the Socialist Labor Party. He, like all of us, believed that the SLP had an indispensable role to play in the inevitable struggle for socialist freedom.

And so we must do as he would have wished, in fact, as he himself did when after just a few months in office the SLP was struck with the loss of Daniel De Leon. Like Comrade Petersen himself, we must grapple with and solve the pressing problems which today confront the Socialist Labor Party.

Let us pay a really memorable tribute to Arnold Petersen.
Let us rise in a moment of silence--then let us go to work.

*

The entire assemblage rose and stood for a minute of
silent tribute to Arnold Petersen.

The National Secretary then called the 29th National
Convention of the Socialist Labor Party to order at 10:10 a.m.
with the following opening address:

Every medium of communication and information in the
nation, as well as a host of commercial opportunists and
their public relations or advertising representatives, is
letting us know daily that 1976 is a special year in American
history--the bicentennial of the American revolution. We may
be assured that the capitalist class will exploit that mile-
stone in the nation's history for all it is worth, while sup-
pressing or distorting whatever significant historic lessons
its revolution of 200 years ago may have for the present gen-
eration.

The year 1976 also is a milestone of sorts in the his-
tory of the Socialist Labor Party. For it was one hundred
years ago--shy a few months--that representatives of the
North American Federation of the First International, the
Labor Party of Illinois, the Social Political Workingmen's
Society of Cincinnati and the Social Democratic Party met in
Philadelphia for four days--July 19-22--in what was known as
the Union Congress. The result was the organization of a new

party--the Workingmen's Party of the United States. Philip
Van Patten, described as "an active member of the Knights of
Labor," was elected national secretary. The organization laid
primary emphasis on trade union activities as opposed to po-
litical action.

The next convention of the Workingmen's Party of the
United States was held in Newark, New Jersey, on December 26,
1877. According to reports, the delegates to that convention
decided to give greater emphasis to the need for working-class
political action. The name of the party was changed to the
Socialistic Labor Party. Its preamble declared in part:

"The industrial emancipation of labor, which must be
achieved by the working classes themselves, independent of
all political parties but their own, is...the great end to
which every political movement should be subordinate as a
means."

Thus the Workingmen's Party of the United States, set on
foot one hundred years ago, was the precursor of the Socialist
Labor Party of America, whose 29th national convention we are
about to convene. It is a convention that will be meeting
not only during a most critical period in the history of the
nation and the world, but at a critical point in our Party's
history.

It is no routine convention that we are about to begin.
We have important matters and difficult problems to consider
and far-reaching decisions to make after the most thorough
and careful deliberations. So that we can get down to the
weighty business that demands our attention, I now call this

29th national convention of the Socialist Labor Party into session.

George S. Taylor (Pennsylvania) was elected temporary chairperson.

Herbert Steiner (California) was elected temporary vice chairperson.

Elizabeth Stanich (California) was elected temporary recording secretary.

The following were elected a Credentials Committee: Lowell Miller (Michigan), Alan Karp (California), Paul Barnes (Pennsylvania).

The following were elected a Committee on Agenda: R. Clement (New Jersey) and B. Reitzes (New York).

A 20-minute recess was declared to permit the Credentials and Agenda Committees to do their work.

The Credentials Committee reported 31 delegates present representing the following states:

California, 4 delegates: Elizabeth Stanich, Edward Wizek, Alan Karp, Herbert Steiner; Florida, 2 delegates: Vito DeLisi, Mathew Kovach; Illinois, 2 delegates: Louis Fisher, Edward C. Gross; Indiana, 1 delegate: John Morris; Massachusetts, 1 delegate: Constance Blumen; Michigan, 4 delegates: James C. Horvath, Frank Girard, Lowell Miller, James Sim; Minnesota, 1 delegate: Karl H. Heck; Missouri, 1 delegate: Bernard Bortnick; New Jersey, 2 delegates: Robert Clement, Julius Levin; New York, 4 delegates: Arnold Babel, Walter Steinhilber (alternate serving in place of John Emanuel), Robert

Massi, Bernard Reitzes; Ohio, 3 delegates: Fater Kapitz, John O'Neill, Joseph Pirincin; Oregon, 1 delegate: Sid Fink; Pennsylvania, 3 delegates: Paul Barnes, Joseph Sabato, George S. Taylor. Connecticut, no delegate elected.

The Credentials Committee recommended these delegates be seated. On motion, concurred in.

The Credentials Committee reported the receipt of two letters, one dated Feb. 7 addressed to the 29th National Convention from the National Secretary stating that an invitation had been extended to the SLP of Canada to send a fraternal delegate to this convention and to be our Party's guest at the convention banquet. Donald R. Chamberlain had been appointed by the Canadian SLP's NEC Subcommittee to represent the Canadian organization. He was present and had presented his credentials. On motion Chamberlain was seated and his expenses ordered paid.

The second letter dated January 9 stated that ordinarily the Editor of the Party's official organ would represent the editorial department at a national convention. In the absence of an Editor, the NEC Subcommittee, at its regular meeting of January 9, 1976, had appointed Stanley Karp, who was the choice of the Weekly People staff, to represent the editorial department at this national convention. On motion Stanley Karp was seated as a nonvoting delegate.

Comrade Bernard Reitzes reporting for the Agenda Committee recommended adoption of the following Order of Business and Rules:

- A. 1. Organization.
- a. Election of Permanent Chairperson and Vice Chairperson
 - b. Election of Permanent Recording Secretary
 - c. Appointment of Permanent Sergeant-at-arms
2. Report to the 29th National Convention.
3. Election of Committees.
- a. On State of Organization
 - b. On Party Press and Literature
 - c. On Availability of National Officers
 - d. On Availability of National Candidates
 - e. On National Campaign and Related Matters
 - f. On Constitution and Matters Pertaining Thereto
 - g. On Resolutions
 - h. On Platform
 - j. Others
4. Roll Call of Delegates for the Introduction of Resolutions (for referral to Appropriate Committees.)
5. Adjournment first day no later than 4:30 p.m.
- B. The following Order of Business for each day after the first.
- 1. Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson
 - 2. Roll Call
 - 3. Reading of minutes of previous session
 - 4. Unfinished Business
 - 5. Reports of Committees
 - 6. Last half hour of each afternoon session (except

on final day): New Business and introduction of resolutions.

On motion the proposed Order of Business and Rules were adopted.

On motion, the following officers were made permanent for the day: George S. Taylor (Pa.) chairperson; Herbert Steiner (Calif.) vice chairperson.

On motion, Elizabeth Stanich (Calif.) was elected permanent recording secretary.

Kenneth Ellis, Robert Beaudette and Josephine Clement were appointed sergeants-at-arms.

On motion, Genevieve Gunderson and Doris Ballantyne were elected to serve as Mileage Committee. The committee was authorized to pay all justified expenses and instructed to submit a complete report to the convention in due course.

On motion, the convention recessed at 11:15 a.m. to reconvene at 12:30 p.m. in executive session to hear the entire report of the National Secretary to the 29th National Convention.

Afternoon Session, Saturday, February 7

The convention was called to order by chairperson Taylor at 12:33 p.m.

On roll call, all present.

The National Secretary was called upon to read his report at 12:54 p.m.

[Note: A copy of the report and the appendix was handed to each delegate with the explanation that the report did not

include those sections that had been written after January 20 and the appendix did not include letters received from or written to NEC members between January 20 and February 5, but that all such additional material was available for any committee that would require it and would be included in the printed proceedings of the convention that would be sent to the membership.]



NATHAN KARP
National Secretary

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY

P. O. Box 10018, Palo Alto, California 94304

494-1532
Tel.: (415) 888-5577

REPORT TO THE 29th NATIONAL CONVENTION SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY

February 7, 1976

Comrade Delegates--Greetings:

The four years since our last national convention have been marked by historic developments and events that clearly testify to the revolutionary era in which we live. Without exaggeration we can safely say that U.S. capitalism and U.S. imperialism are demonstrably weaker and four years closer to collapse than when we met in 1972.

In Southeast Asia, U.S. imperialism has suffered its most visible defeat in history. Over the long course of the Vietnam war, the direct connection between the retreat of U.S. imperialism abroad and the decay of U.S. capitalism at home became clearer than ever--so clear it has even been driven into the heads of the U.S. ruling class, which daily ponders strategies to reverse this historical process.

While this march toward retreat abroad and collapse at home is by no means near completion--and in fact has only begun--we may well be witnessing a real turning point. The imperialist expansion and the imperialist prosperity of the post-World War II era is finally coming to an end. Though the bourgeoisie has many labels for the various aspects of

this great historical movement, from the "Decline of the West," to a "crisis of confidence," none of its labels can hide what for the oppressed classes of the world is a progressive march toward oblivion for capitalist class rule.

A century ago, when Marx surveyed the prospects for socialist revolution in Europe, he posed a problem in a letter to Engels. "The difficult question for us is this," he wrote, "on the Continent the revolution is imminent and will immediately assume a socialist character. Is it not bound to be crushed in this little corner, considering that in a far greater territory the movement of bourgeois society is still in the ascendant?" (Oct. 8, 1858.)

Here we see that even then Marx could perceive how the onset of the imperialist phase of capitalism would affect the course of proletarian revolution in the dominant capitalist countries, and how imperialist expansion around the entire globe would open up new frontiers for the bourgeois class. In line with Marx's dictum that "No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it, have been developed," this expansion could only mean a prolonged life for the bourgeois system. And the imperialist expansion of the last century, and specifically the U.S. imperialist expansion of the last four decades, has indeed carved out room for a bourgeois class destined to exploit the whole world.

It is this process, however, whose end may now be in sight. The most arrogant imperialist would have a hard time finding an area where "the movement of bourgeois society is still in the ascendant." Unlike the republican revolutions

of the 18th and 19th centuries, which strengthened a growing world bourgeoisie, the national revolutions of the 20th century have failed to take on a fully bourgeois character. In fact, they tend to take on a character that places them in opposition to the interests of Western imperialism. As one writer put it, the bourgeoisie has made the entire world into the workshop of its overthrow.

Beginning with the Russian revolution, these movements often assumed a "socialist character," though lacking a large industrial proletariat and a developed productive system, they were unable to bring these socialist aspirations to fruition. But while they have not ushered in the socialist era, nor established a "socialist camp," they have circumscribed the reign of the Western bourgeoisie and raised a resistance to Western imperialist expansion that is shaking the capitalist foundations in the industrialized countries. The anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist revolutions of the 20th century are among the most significant developments of our time, and have had a considerable impact on the course of recent history.

That the revolutions discussed above, however significant, have not yet instituted the socialist era is of course best shown by the Soviet Union, where the first victory of a working-class government degenerated into the world's number two imperialist superpower. The U.S.S.R. continues to commit the most brutal imperialist crimes and shore up the most repressive class rule all in the name of "socialism."

During the past four years, the prospects for world war have also become more ominous. In conjunction, the two major imperialist superpowers, the U.S. and U.S.S.R., have

declared an era of "detente," one of the most hypocritical and arrogant policies two imperialist ruling classes have ever perpetrated on the world. As if they had an ordained right to shape and divide the entire globe, these two imperialist giants have deigned to "negotiate" their various imperialist claims to the markets, resources and peoples of the world. While both continue to amass new stockpiles of nuclear terror, they proceed, like the unprincipled opportunists they are, to make common cause wherever their imperialist aims converge.

But this facade of negotiation is nothing more than the same kind of imperialist maneuvering which preceded two world wars in this century, and which holds the terrible prospect of still another imperialist world war, only this time on an advanced nuclear superpower level. While some may be lulled by the apparent "relaxation of tensions," socialists would do well to step up their reminders that nothing short of socialist revolution in the imperialist countries will prevent the advance of the coming war.

At home, the capitalist economy has entered a severe crisis. On the one hand, this crisis has demonstrated the continued sickening movement of capitalism's cyclical crises, in the process confirming the essential validity of the Marxist economic analysis. On the other hand, the current economic crisis has exploded as never before the bourgeoisie's reformist and Keynesian alchemy for containing those crises and their contradictions. Like imperialist expansion, inflationary patchwork is running up against its limitations. This development

could have ominous political implications, for a bourgeoisie whose fiscal basis for reformism is more tenuous than ever will increasingly move toward reaction.

In addition, the farce of capitalist politics reached new heights in the past four years. A ruling class which traditionally speaks out of both the Republican and Democratic sides of its mouth has found the American people thoroughly disgusted with its two-party doubletalk. American workers stay home from the polls in droves, realizing there is no choice between Republican capitalists and Democratic capitalists, and not yet seeing the socialist alternative.

In 1972, the bourgeoisie found unprecedented unity in supporting Richard Nixon against George McGovern, choosing reaction over reform to deal with the problems of the day. Yet the arrogance, corruption and particular brand of reaction represented by the Nixon administration, coupled with its incredible ineptitude, split the ruling class and for the first time forced it to oust its chief executive. Simultaneously the endemic corruption of bourgeois politics claimed the career of the up and coming reactionary demagogue, Spiro Agnew.

In the person of Richard Nixon, the bourgeoisie had bared its real soul, its real moral stature and intellectual level. Yet this accurate reflection of itself was so revolting that the bourgeoisie was forced to disown its own creation, and when Richard Nixon destroyed his usefulness, he was replaced, leaving a stain of corruption that won't be easily removed.

But the underlying material forces that created Water-

gate, namely the tendency of monopoly capitalism toward concentrated state power and the incompatibility of bourgeois democracy with decaying monopoly capitalism, could not be reversed. And though Nixon was pensioned off to San Clemente, nothing substantial changed. His reactionary policies were reincarnated in the administration of Gerald Ford, a so-called "decent man" who is a reactionary menace with a heanderthal mentality. His greatest achievement up to the moment has been his ability to escape indictment.

The Nixon reaction and its legacy are most clearly reflected in the unbridled assault on democratic rights witnessed over the past few years. This wave of repression was unleashed by the ruling class to counter the "uprisings and anarchy" of the 1960's. It has taken any number of forms--legislative, judicial and, not the least, military, in the creation of more deadly, neo-fascist police units throughout the country.

Free elections have come under such persistent and insidious assault that they can scarcely be said to exist any longer. Endless exposures of the foreign and domestic secret police of U.S. capitalism have ripped away the mask of "protectors" and exposed the FBI, CIA and their many counterparts as enemies of democracy wherever they're found. And Senate Bill S.1--a recycled and codified version of every reactionary tendency exhibited by both the right-wing and the liberal bourgeoisie--is the most comprehensive attack on the Bill of Rights in this country's history. The recent period has demonstrated, with crystal clarity, that only the working class

in general, and the socialist movement in particular, can put up a consistent, principled defense of democratic rights.

Equally evident in the recent period has been the treacherous response of the class-collaborationist labor movement to the ferocious attacks on the living standards, security and safety of American workers. While the rank and file has shown considerable signs of militancy, willingness to fight and instinctive solidarity, the labor lieutenants have worked overtime to contain unrest and channel discontent into empty reformism. While capitalism entered its worst economic crisis in four decades and sought to make workers pay the price, the labor bureaucrats did absolutely nothing but capitulate, compromise and sell out. As a consequence, the gap between the rank and file and the labor lieutenants is widening. At the same time, 75 percent of American workers remain completely unorganized. At no time has the working class as a whole needed classconscious socialist unionism more, and only the SLP offers such a program.

The list of momentous developments since our last convention is nearly endless: war and imperialist diplomacy in the Mideast, perhaps the most complex and crucial focus of ^{superpower} contention now in the world; class struggles and profound revolutionary lessons from Portugal; anti-imperialist and nationalist upheaval in Asia and Africa; political and economic crises in Britain and Italy; fiscal collapse in New York City; racial strife in Boston and other areas where reactionary "anti-busing" movements have been active; the growth of the women's movement, which like all others has shown the stamp

of the classes active in it; continued environmental suicide, energy crises, and more. One must stop arbitrarily.

And yet despite these monumental developments, every delegate to this convention knows that during this period our Party has been largely preoccupied with the consuming problems of our organization. We should have no illusions on this score.

We are in a pre-revolutionary period that has deepened over the past four years. We should be expanding our efforts and building our ranks. We should be turning outward to reach more workers, in new and more effective ways with the revolutionary Marxist-De Leonist program for replacing capitalist chaos with socialist society. Everyone, both in and out of the Party, should know the SLP's position on each of the important questions presenting themselves to the working class. Yet it is no secret that our many-sided organizational difficulties prevent us from responding to the current situation and the current opportunities in the way we should.

The dimensions of this Party crisis have been detailed before, and they will no doubt come up again here. But simply describing the problem is no longer sufficient. This convention must address itself to nothing less than the goal of meeting our crisis in such a manner that our effectiveness and ability to grow as a revolutionary socialist party is restored. It is toward this goal that all our efforts at addressing specifics must be tied. It is toward this ultimate aim--revitalizing and rebuilding a vibrant Socialist Labor Party-- that all our efforts must be directed.

The job of this convention is enormous. It is crucial to the organizational survival of the Socialist Labor Party. Let us advance to the tasks at hand.

At the risk of being presumptuous, we hope that in the course of our deliberations no one will seek refuge in any of the following:

- The SLP has always had problems and always will.
- The SLP's problems stem from its uncompromising revolutionary stance.
- We should refer this matter to the NEC, the Subcommittee, the National Secretary or anyone else.
- We tried this years ago and it didn't work.
- We've never done it this way.

The national convention is our Party's highest body. It is here that members of the SLP must deal collectively with the problems confronting our organization and our movement. It is here that all basic organizational and policy directions should ultimately be set. If this hasn't always been the case in the past, and admittedly it hasn't, this has only been part of the problem.

Before proceeding further, a brief word about the context in which this report is presented. The views expressed in it do not necessarily represent those of the NEC, as will be made clear. They definitely represent the views of the National Secretary and the headquarters staff. It is necessary to state this clearly because the views of those charged with carrying on the day-to-day operations of the Party, including the pub-

lication of the Weekly People, should be known to the Party as a whole, especially in a situation where the normal executive machinery is not functioning efficiently.

In the process of wrestling with this difficult period, it has become our collective conviction that our Party as a whole has not effectively made use of the tools of criticism and self-criticism in a constructive, nondivisive manner. Yet this is exactly what our present situation requires, for in our judgment the problems we face are, in large measure, of our own creation.

By that we mean only this: A revolutionary party, such as ours, can experience a profound decline for several reasons:

- 1) It is viciously repressed and damaged by its class enemies.
- 2) It passes through a nonrevolutionary period when the class whose interests it represents cannot be expected to respond sufficiently to ensure its survival.
- 3) It adopts, and fails to correct, methods of theoretical and practical work which destroy its effectiveness.

We believe the third reason comes closest to explaining our current situation. It is also our conviction that the sole method by which a revolutionary party corrects its mistakes is to engage in self-criticism and the collective correction of errors.

Certainly, there are those who may disagree with this assessment and we are prepared to be corrected ourselves. But those who do not see our problems as largely the result of our own mistakes should be prepared to offer other explanations for how, after over eighty years of work, we have arrived at this

critical juncture.

We cannot emphasize too strongly that we are not inviting an exercise in self-flagellation. Nor do we wish to dig up and refight battles of the past. However, at this point it is not enough to simply list our problems. We must get to their sources. It is not enough to state a problem and go on to ask, "What is the solution?"--until and unless we have first asked, "What is the cause?" This is how Marxists analyze society. We must use the same method to analyze our own organization. The importance of our Party and our movement demand no less.

Since 1973, when the editorship was vacated and the headquarters situation became so precarious that the drastic decision was made to move across country, our Party has been in a state of acute crisis. In two reports to the NEC, in numerous circular letters, through countless discussions and a number of membership meetings, the National Secretary has attempted to explain the nature and extent of this situation as he and the headquarters staff see it.

In the process we became convinced that the Party faced a crisis not just at the headquarters level and in the editorial department, but at all levels including the local. It became painfully obvious, to some more quickly than others, that we did not have the literature, the speakers, the writers, the organizers, the candidates, nor even the functioning educational and policy-making apparatus that we needed to meet the minimum demands of the times. It also became clear that those Party members trying to fulfill these tasks were often being spread

so thin their effectiveness was seriously undermined.

Through the various channels mentioned above, the attempt was made to open broad discussion of this situation. At best, this effort met with partial success. On the one hand, the Party's executive bodies offered little, if any, direction in this crisis. On the other, there was a paucity of response from sections and members to the Party's situation that was frankly alarming.

What's more, those who did respond, by and large, did not represent the veteran SLP membership, that experienced hard core of dedicated SLP members. Rather, they came from relative newcomers to our movement. And most of them came to the National Headquarters solely on the strength of the National Secretary's efforts. Moreover, at least two of those members were recruited on the basis of the National Secretary's anticipation that a full and competent staff would soon be installed at the National Headquarters, an anticipation which proved unwarranted. The important point to be drawn from this, we believe, is that the ability to restaff the National Headquarters, to the extent that it has been done, did not in any real sense represent a trend or spontaneous response from within the Party.

This lack of response to the general situation has finally led us to several conclusions:

One, that our problems cannot be adequately described as "manpower" or "help" problems. They go much deeper and call into question our integrity and viability as a revolutionary organization.

Two, that not enough SLP members fully comprehend the nature and scope of our current problems, understand the interrelation of both our local and national problems, and further, understand the sources of these problems.

Three, that only by bringing the discussion of this situation to the membership in a systematic way could we even hope to turn it around.

These conclusions have, of necessity, risked opening up painful areas, forcing the issue and perhaps further burdening an already burdened Party with^a debate that in all honesty we felt we could no longer avoid. It is a debate that may tax the resources and energies of many SLP members who in good conscience have given years of hard work to the Party. It questions any number of assumptions and premises upon which we have operated for years. It challenges the commitment of those who contend they are revolutionary socialists, yet have fallen into, or never escaped, nonrevolutionary styles of thinking and working, or have simply abandoned their revolutionary responsibilities.

In the case of the Party's executive body, as we will detail in this report, we believe its failure to provide direction has been largely an abdication of tasks that are constitutionally its responsibility. The NEC, which is the Party's governing body between conventions, simply does not have the option of leaving problems put before them unresolved. It is its responsibility to make appropriate efforts at solving such problems, or to take steps toward bringing those problems to the membership, or in the final analysis, to advance some systematic

explanation for why these problems cannot be solved that amounts to more than its members' individual inability to "come up with anything."

This the NEC has not done. The complete lack of direction at this level has contributed materially to the difficulties we have had in maintaining a National Headquarters and an official organ for the past four years.

But though we are critical of the NEC's role, our problems cannot be laid solely at its doorstep. The responsibilities of the NEC and of the National Headquarters, in the final analysis, go back to the membership. If mistakes have been made at any level, if responsibilities have gone unfulfilled, it is ultimately the membership that must take responsibility and action. In fact, a more active participation by the membership as a whole in the internal organizational life of the Party, and in the political debate and education needed to keep a Marxist party healthy, is essential if we are to find a way out of the current dilemma.

One manifestation of our crisis is the small size and declining number of our membership. While there are still some who believe that our size is the cause of our problems rather than a sign of them, there are others who are rather fatalistic about it. Both these views should be corrected.

The SLP has always had a realistic perspective on the question of size, but the arguments used to discuss the potential of a highly disciplined, organized and skilled Marxist party in a revolutionary crisis are not germane to the present problem of critically low numbers. We are not now talking about

organizing the working class and making a socialist revolution, but of keeping the Socialist Labor Party alive and vital. At present we are not recruiting nearly the numbers that the times and the nature of our Party should make possible. Nor are what younger members we have always ready to take over important organizational responsibilities, a process which is essential if we are to maintain the continuity of our Party.

This "crisis of numbers" has two aspects. One is the small size of the actual membership. The other is the even smaller percentage of those on the rolls who can fairly be characterized as active Party members contributing what they can.

For many years the Party has allowed petty-bourgeois outlooks and styles of living to go largely uncriticized. It did not wish to put everyone through a "revolutionary wringer" and have them coming out as miniature caricatures of Marx, Engels, De Leon or Lenin. This kind of fanaticism is best left to any number of groups in which people burn themselves out in a flash of revolutionary fervor.

Nevertheless we seem to have moved too far in the other direction. The SLP has perhaps been tolerant for too long of those in its ranks who neglect their revolutionary socialist obligations in order to pursue illusions of security. This problem becomes more acute and less tolerable as the Party's situation worsens and the strength of the still involved, still active members becomes less able to carry along those who merely pay their dues. We must, if we are to reconstitute our

strength, bring pressure on those who have not been active to give substance to their commitment. We cannot afford "Marxists" who don't want to study, "revolutionaries" who don't want to fight, and "socialists" who carefully ration their revolutionary commitments.

The smallness of the number of those acting as Party spokespersons, writers, etc., and the reluctance on the part of others to prepare themselves for the roles of speaker, candidate, writer, organizer, or even to do contact work, leaflet and ballot work, etc., has placed an intolerable burden on a few, both at the National Headquarters and in the field. It has also nourished a tendency to be less critical and less rigorous in the application of the standards of revolutionary Marxism, especially on questions of theory and analysis. This was clearly reflected in the case of the Weekly People from 1969 to 1973 when the paper went uncriticized because--

- Members who themselves could have helped the situation were afraid to raise the question for fear they would be called upon to do just that;
- Members substituted "willingness to do the job" and "good will" for the need to accurately and correctly represent the Party's position and Marxism;
- Members had apparently become so lax in their own understanding, they failed to recognize glaring errors of Marxism and Party policy.

This relaxation of a really thorough scientific spirit of Marxism is highly dangerous. It manifests itself in any number

of ways. On the one hand, dogmatism, cliches, rigid formulations and simplistic rhetoric are substituted for Marxist science and dialectical analysis. On the other hand, half-truths, superficial analyses and generalizations become all that's absorbed. Basic socialist premises are substituted for a substantive analysis of specific questions. In fact, many of these questions are simply liquidated if they do not fit neatly into commonplaces about there being only two classes, about the law of value and surplus value, about what determines wages, etc., etc. The tight unity, common understanding and common agreement that was once one of the SLP's strongest points, gives way to all kinds of inconsistencies and misunderstandings within the Party regarding its position on vital questions. It also feeds a timidity about dealing with unresolved issues and even an erosion of elementary principles of Marxism-De Leonism.

Comrades, it is imperative that our education and continued study not end with our admission to the Party, but be carried on in an uninterrupted, organized way. Our entire Party must be brought into the discussion and study of important questions. We must discard such sectarian roadblocks as there is no Marxist thought on anything outside the literature of the SLP. We must not assume that all issues have been settled and summed up long ago, and that our task is merely to spread an already fully formulated analysis of the entire world.

Membership study classes, state and national convention debate, internal discussion of all sorts should be rekindled. To borrow Lenin's words, "We must at all costs set out, first,

to learn, secondly, to learn, and thirdly, to learn, and then see to it that learning shall not remain a dead letter, or a fashionable catch-phrase (and we should admit in all frankness that this happens very often with us), that learning shall really become part of our very being, that it shall actually and fully become a constituent element of our social life."

In this regard we suggest neither interminable discussion and vacillation with no conclusion or advance, nor the sterile dogmatism that memorizes Marxist works and misses their essence. We seek the continued study of Marxism-De Leonism and the realization at all times that it is a science and a method that must be mastered and applied.

That the above considerations are really the problems lying at the bottom of our present difficulties is something we hope to prove with the rest of this report. But we have felt it necessary to get to the point as we saw it as quickly and sharply as possible, without the gentle progression and cushioning that more time might have permitted, or even the tact which four very difficult years may have worn away.

On every front, and with every problem we have faced, we have tried to turn to the membership for their advice and their help. We do so here. For the solution to these critical Party problems depends on the collective efforts of all of us who are committed to the survival of the SLP.

If the convention sees in this introduction and the report that follows nothing but a hopeless picture, we will have failed and they will have misread our purpose. If it wishes to dispute

our evaluation of the mistakes we have made--the tendency toward a dogmatic approach to theory and analysis, toward complacency and even conservatism in our practical work, toward insufficient self-criticism which has been so lacking in our Party and at which we are so unpracticed that it is even difficult to begin the process anew--then you will have to give us other reasons for our problems. For the next steps, the steps toward meeting these problems, depend on first reaching a common understanding of their cause. It is first absolutely necessary to agree on the nature of the situation we confront.

And lastly, we believe that in the past four years or more, we at National Headquarters have demonstrated our commitment to building, preserving and defending the Socialist Labor Party. We have not stopped. In fact, we see this report and this convention as crucial steps in that process.

The NEC

Past reports to the national conventions of the Socialist Labor Party have generally been presented as reports of the National Executive Committee. For the most part, however, they have not really been reports made by the NEC. In essence, they have been the reports of the National Secretary who prepared them. With rare and partial exceptions, those reports received no prior reading, review or discussion by any Party body. They received their first consideration when they were presented by the National Secretary to the national convention.

In the report to the Party's 28th national convention in 1972, specific reference was made to the section on the "help problem" at National Headquarters, noting that it could not properly be considered a part of the NEC's report; that it was the National Secretary's summary of the problem and its possible consequences. It was clearly stated that "the views and opinions expressed are the National Secretary's." Basically, that was true of the rest of that report as well. However, since it was really the first report to a national convention prepared by me, I followed the long-standing tradition of presenting it as the Report of the NEC, with the one exception noted.

In light of that tradition, I think it important to emphasize that this report is less than ever the report of the National Executive Committee. It is primarily the report of the National Secretary and the National Headquarters staff.

(The NEC's views, to the extent they are available, are expressed in the correspondence that passed among its members since the last NEC session and which appears as an appendix to this report. To avoid any possible misunderstanding, I shall make it clear, whenever there appears to be the possibility of doubt, whose views are being expressed in the various sections of this report.)

We believe, and we believe very strongly, that this Party administration and staff have both the moral and organizational obligation to make as clear as possible to this convention, and through it to the Party membership, their views on many pressing problems and matters that vitally affect the Party's present and future welfare.

In doing so we seek neither easy answers nor scapegoats for our problems. However, we do not believe we shall be meeting our collective and individual Party obligations and responsibilities if we suppress our feelings--and they are strong feelings--or hide our beliefs that all have not faced up fully to their Party and revolutionary responsibilities and have not made the kind of determined, persistent efforts required to bare the cause of, and seek answers to, our many Party problems. Consequently, if in addressing ourselves to what we view to be our primary problems, we appear to speak bluntly and emphatically, it is because we feel strongly that our Party is in desperate straits.

In the past, I have dealt with these matters in terms that I hoped would clarify them, stress their importance and arouse

a sense of urgency regarding the need to deal with them, yet I did so with moderation and in generalities so as to avoid the risk of offending anyone. That approach, I have come to believe, is a luxury that the Party can no longer afford, if, in fact, it could have afforded it before. For the simple truth is, that approach has not worked.

The time has come to speak with absolute frankness; to point out what we see as deficiencies wherever they may lie; to cite examples that in our judgment demonstrate the need for a change in approach, in form or even in personnel. For if there is one thing that has been impressed upon us at National Headquarters these past 32 months, it is that intolerable situations that are permitted to go unresolved for prolonged periods finally achieve the status of normalcy; they are accepted as existing facts to be tolerated and lived with until some "miracle" or "someone else" resolves them.

In entering now into a more direct discussion of the nature of our difficulties and their possible source or sources, I shall try not to repeat what has been said in previous reports, particularly in the reports to the two NEC sessions that were held during 1975, the NEC session that was held in 1973 and the national convention in 1972. This seems unnecessary for two reasons:

First, you have all been requested to reread the published proceedings of those events and I have no doubt all of you have done so.

Second, as indicated, we no longer believe that our diffi-

culties stem from what can be adequately summed up as a "help" or "headquarters" problem. At this point, we believe that the "help" or "headquarters" problem is a consequence of a more basic problem--what we refer to as a "political problem," one that embraces our understanding and attitude as revolutionists and our concept of the role of our Party and the individuals in it.

Needless to say, despite my resolve to try not to repeat what has been said before, some repetition no doubt will occur--in fact, is a necessary frame of reference for this report.

In 1971, I told the NEC in session that we had "entered a very critical period in our Party's history." And I expressed the view that what we did during the next two years "might determine the future of our Party."

In 1972, after again reviewing the situation confronting the Party, I expressed the fear that it threatened our very existence as a functioning organization.

In 1973, I urged the NEC to objectively evaluate every possibility to find "practical, workable sensible solutions," or the Party would "face dire consequences."

In 1974, there was no NEC session as you know. On December 16, 1974, however, I wrote the NEC a lengthy letter reviewing the situation, stating in part, "There is in my judgment a definite need for 'new thinking' about our problems." And I added that "there must be a clear and commonly-shared understanding of the nature and scope of our problems. There must be a thorough examination of their possible causes and a free and uninhibited exchange of views on how to attempt to solve them."

I went on to suggest that the NEC was not only the logical body to make such an examination, it was the body that was "obligated to do so between national conventions." And I concluded that the situation demands "that it be done soon."

That letter led to the decision to hold the special NEC session in San Francisco, March 7-11, 1975. In turn, that was followed by a regular NEC session less than three months later in New York City (May 31-June 2).

I need hardly tell you that the 1972 national convention came up with no solutions. That was reported to the 1973 NEC session in explicit terms.

The 1973 session did not come up with any solutions either. In fact, when it adjourned it left unresolved a new problem of massive proportions and of the most serious implications, a vacancy in the editor's post--a post that remains vacant to this day.

In 1974, the Party's headquarters were moved to the West Coast. The NEC decided not to meet that year.

Nor were any major steps forward taken in 1975 at either the special session in March, or at the regular session that convened on May 31. And I refer not just to an absence of concrete progress, but the absence of progress toward a "commonly-shared understanding of the nature and scope of our problems," as well as an absence of any "thorough examination of their possible causes" and of any truly "free and uninhibited exchange of views."

Since the last regular session, the NEC as a body seems

further removed from a realization of the nature and cause of our problems and the extent to which it is responsible for attempting to deal with them persistently until a solution is found. In fact, we believe it is fair to say that the NEC's approach to Party problems and its concept of its responsibility in connection with those problems, are really additional reflections of the Party's overall problems, just as is the "help and headquarters" problem.

Or put another way, we believe that the ineffectiveness of the NEC has been, and is, an important symptom of the Party's crisis. It has been confronted with various aspects of this crisis at two NEC sessions and come up with few suggestions and even fewer solutions. More disturbing, however, is its failure as a body to grasp the nature of the problems, the difficulty it has shown in delegating consideration of them to appropriate and competent committees and its apparent inability to distinguish between effects and causes or otherwise deal with those problems objectively and effectively. This is true not only of major problems like the editorship problem, 1976 campaign problems, problems involving Party policy, etc., but also of relatively minor problems like the question of a correspondence study course, or the release of Party files at the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Following the special session in March, at which Comrade Joseph Pirincin had introduced for discussion "the matter of the serious decline in Party activity around the country," he wrote me expressing concern at the "uncalled for optimism on the part of some" during the discussion. "It seems to say,"

he wrote, "we've always had problems, but things came out O.K.," and implies that the problems will 'take care of themselves'..." In response I wrote Comrade Pirincin that in my view the attitude of some was not merely "uncalled for optimism," it was serious self-delusion. And as we shall see a bit later, it is persistent, serious self-delusion--reflecting a political attitude and perspective that we believe must be challenged and changed.

But if the special session of the NEC was not nearly as productive as we at National Headquarters had hoped it would be, the regular session and what followed has been little short of an organizational disaster. In this connection, speaking strictly for myself, I had to muster all my SLP convictions and revolutionary determination to keep from being overwhelmed by frustration or demoralized by the growing fear that perhaps the situation was beyond salvation.

While the published proceedings of the May 31-June 2 session give some indication of the actions taken, they can hardly convey a complete or even illuminating picture of the session, and particularly of the actions not taken, the discussions not engaged in, the important problems left hanging. During consideration of some of the most serious problems, some NEC members said nothing, others offered the most unsubstantial generalizations, still others declared they had nothing constructive to offer.

Discussion generally was in inverse ratio to the importance of the matter under consideration. For example--

- Only the most limited effort was made to air the important questions raised in the National Secretary's report about the 1976 campaign, and that effort came only after the National Secretary raised strenuous objections to the first committee report on the 1976 campaign--a report which obviously had been prepared without taking those important questions into account, despite the National Secretary's emphasis on the need for the "most careful thought, the most detailed analysis, the most thorough airing" of them before making decisions that could "have a vital--perhaps determining--effect on our Party."
- No consideration was given to the matter of the availability of national candidates, or to the radio/TV problem, though these were listed among the "very important" problems confronting us.
- There was no comment on the resolution adopted by the California state convention which had been included in the National Secretary's report as one that "summarizes our problems and what ought to be our attitude toward them individually and collectively..."
- There was silence when the chair called for discussion following the report of the Party Press and Literature Committee on the matter of the May 10, 1975 Weekly People editorial, "The Vietnamese Victory." Only after the chair's call for the vote had been interrupted by the National Secretary's expression of amazement that a matter of such importance and implication was about to be acted upon without any discussion, was it decided to act on the report seriatim. That resulted in

some rather perfunctory discussion, in which only half the NEC participated.

• Even in the face of the National Secretary's blunt and specific statements that the Weekly People editorial of May 10 and the letter to Section St. Louis of May 23 represented a change in the Party's view of the Vietnam war, the NEC dealt with the matter as though in every respect the position advanced by the National Secretary and the editorial staff expressed what had been the Party's Vietnam position all along. There was no effort on the part of anyone other than the National Secretary, to either explain their support, silent or otherwise, of the "new view" or to contest it. (There will be more on this point later.)

In sharp contrast was a 12-minute discussion at one point whether to declare a 15 or 30-minute recess. The decision finally was to declare a 15-minute recess, which then lasted 33 minutes before the NEC was called back into session.

And the fact remains that the NEC again failed to take any steps to try to fulfill its constitutional responsibility vis-a-vis an editor. Except for the references (in two paragraphs) in the report of the Committee on State of Organization, there was no consideration given the matter in open discussion on the floor during the session.

The committee collectively demonstrated a complete lack of competence--even to the point of being unable to allocate matters in the report requiring action to the appropriate committees.

Since that regular 1975 NEC session ended, some correspondence has taken place among the NEC members that not only further demonstrates some of the unfortunate prevailing attitudes toward our problems but also attests to a serious deficiency within our Party in its capacity for objective self-criticism. The correspondence, all of which is included as an appendix to this report, started with a letter from Comrade Georgia Cozzini, NEC Member from Region No. 6, written the day after the regular 1975 NEC session ended. (If in the following relatively brief discussion of that correspondence it appears to any of you that a letter has been unfairly characterized, I invite you to refer to the entire text of that letter in the appendix.)

Comrade Cozzini wrote that she was deeply disturbed at the manner in which things were handled at the session. She suggested that "each and every member of the NEC honestly review his conduct and his contribution to the Party, while in session and throughout the year," and that they make such "honest self-assessment before the next year's nominations take place."

Among other things she stated that she would like to see the NEC "more in harmony with the youth and vigor represented by the total National Headquarters staff." She added that the "essence" of what was disturbing her "were signs in the conduct of the 1975 NEC session of a non-recognition of reality."

As soon as circumstances permitted, copies were made of

Comrade Cozzini's letter and sent to all members of the NEC, without any comment on my part as National Secretary. It was my hope that at long last, as a result of an urging from one of its own members, the NEC would now engage in a fruitful discussion that might go to the heart of the cause of our problems.

The discussion has in a sense proven fruitful, not in the manner hoped for but in what it revealed. Two agreed in substance with Comrade Cozzini. One agreed in some respects and disagreed in others. Three apparently didn't think her letter warranted any comment. They ignored it, though one did send a postcard acknowledging it. The three remaining members promptly came to the defense of the NEC.

Comrade A.M. Orange cited the NEC's unanimous endorsement of the proposals to give up the Party plant and move the National Headquarters to the West Coast as proof that the Party was not "traditional," as Comrade Cozzini had stated.

Comrade J.C. Horvath responded with considerable sarcasm, disparaging the suggestion for "self-assessment" as utterly outlandish. "Is it possible she wants us to go through a self-purification process as they do in China?" he asked. "Maybe we could set up a special committee for confessions," he added. But Comrade Horvath was not entirely negative. He made some positive claims.

"First," he wrote, "The NEC did act, so they could not have been inactive." He did not say how the NEC had acted.

"Second," he said, "Things were accomplished at the NEC

Session." He did not say what.

Then he concluded that if the Party implemented the unspecified acts of the NEC, the Party would be much better off. It was a perfect example of the all too common tactic of offering assertions instead of arguments.

He contended that the NEC members could not be expected to digest a report that takes 4 to 6 hours to read. That, he said, "is asking a little bit too much." For the record, the report to the special NEC session had been read in one hour and 10 minutes. The report at the regular session took approximately 2 hours and 35 minutes to read, and it dealt with substantially the same matters as came before the special session, so that the NEC had three months to think about them. That may still be a lot for some to digest, but it's a long way from 4 to 6 hours.

Comrade H. Steiner also took issue with Comrade Cozzini's letter. He contended that the Party had kept pace with the "changing times" or it could not have survived. Such circular logic misses the point entirely. Certainly, it is technically true that the Party has survived. But the important question is: In what condition has it survived?

Is it capable of functioning in an effective fashion?

Is it organizationally viable with all its essential posts adequately manned?

Are the lines of communication between the National Office and the state and local organizations open and operative?

Is the Weekly People staff adequate to the demands of

today's rapidly occurring events?

Is our literature up to date?

Is a steady level of activity being maintained?

Are we participating in local and state elections wherever we have subdivisions?

Are we showing an acceptable, reasonable degree of steady growth, or at least holding our own?

Are we training and preparing a new generation of Marxist-De Leonist revolutionists?

Are our executive bodies meeting their organizational and constitutional obligations and responsibilities?

How many of these, to us, relevant questions is Comrade Steiner prepared to answer in the affirmative and substantiate the answer with evidence? Or doesn't he think those questions are relevant? What are the standards by which he judges the Party to have "kept pace"?

Comrade Steiner asks what could an NEC "composed of 'young' members" do? In the first place, none of these important questions are questions of age per se. Nor did Comrade Cozzini propose an NEC of "young" members. She said she would like to see an NEC "more in harmony with the youth and vigor represented by the total National Headquarters staff." That's quite different. It was not age, but attitude and approach she was talking about. And she clearly indicated that in the context of her letter, in which among other things she observed that she "wondered for years why the NEC is so 'traditional' as to be almost ritualistic." To reduce these

points to a question of age is a convenient but unproductive way of avoiding them.

Comrade Steiner claimed that the 1972 convention and the NEC at its 1973 session made some "radical" decisions to solve the help problem. It would have been a great help if he had spelled them out. The most "radical" decision of the 1973 NEC session--one that I can't forget--was its decision to adjourn and go home and leave the problem of getting out the Weekly People with the National Secretary. And it has met and adjourned at least twice more since, leaving that problem unresolved.

Commenting on Comrade Cozzini's tentative suggestion that "maybe" membership on the NEC should be limited to four consecutive terms, Comrade Steiner recalled the 1968 proposal to limit the age beyond which a National Secretary could serve to 65 and then suggested the reasons for the two proposals were "probably...analogous." While I do not agree with Comrade Cozzini's tentative suggestion, I find Comrade Steiner's charge highly objectionable on two counts:

First of all, the record is clear that the 1968 proposal to limit the age beyond which a National Secretary could serve was discriminatory, deliberately aimed at a specific individual. It was the product of a disruptive situation and was in no way analogous to the motives of Comrade Cozzini nor the circumstances under which she made her proposal. Secondly, even if the above were not incontestably so, such an argument substitutes precedent for reason--an all too common practice.

Finally, Comrade Steiner advanced an interesting explanation as to why the National Secretary has a voice in NEC proceedings, namely, "so he can call attention to an important item overlooked." It is a most interesting bit of reasoning. Is it the National Secretary who is to blame for the NEC's having "overlooked" such "important items" as its constitutional obligation vis-a-vis the editorship, the matter of looking into the availability of national candidates and the like?

Comrade J. Pirincin, whose physical limitations prevent him from writing at any length, expressed his agreement "in substance" with Comrade Cozzini, though he cautioned against making age the basis for judging qualifications. What he did stress was the need for NEC members to be concerned with Party problems on a continuous, year-round basis. That, to my recollection, elicited no comment from anyone.

It was Comrade B. Bortnick who expressed the greatest degree of agreement with Comrade Cozzini's views. He, in turn, raised additional questions, made some suggestions and offered a motion.

Comrade A.A. Albaugh wrote that he agreed with parts of Comrade Cozzini's letter and questioned others. One point he made deserves comment. He wrote: "I personally favor the opinions of elder statesmen providing that their mentality hasn't become fossilized. There's something which elder statesmen have in their possession which younger statesmen lack and that is living history. Younger members must

acquaint themselves with reading NEC reports for the past fifty years to understand how and why we arrived at our present state of organization. 'Elder statesmen' could give us first-hand accounts."

I can't help wishing that Comrade Albaugh had told us why the "elder statesmen" he had in mind have not told us to date "how and why we arrived at our present state of organization." That's the answer or explanation we've been looking for, particularly at the last two NEC sessions. The truth is, this is another of those platitudes without substance.

Copies of the six replies to Comrade Cozzini's letter of June 3 were sent to all NEC members. The responses (or lack of them) further illustrated the attitudes of the members of the NEC. Only one NEC member responded to them--Comrade Bortnick, under date of August 29. In that letter he commented on the contents of the various letters, raised some questions, made some suggestions and offered a motion.

Copies of Comrade Bortnick's letter went to all the NEC members but elicited responses from only two of them--Comrades Steiner and Albaugh. In the meantime Comrade Bortnick wrote again under date of October 13. Copies of the three letters were sent to all the NEC members. This time five members responded--Comrades Horvath, Cozzini, Steiner, Braunstein and Albaugh.

Since all the correspondence mentioned here is included in the appendix, I shall make no effort at a detailed discussion of the contents of each letter, though the temptation to

do so is great. In fact, I very much regret that circumstances at National Headquarters prevented me from commenting on most of the contents of those letters before copies of them were forwarded to all the NEC members.

Since all the correspondence is appended, the delegates and subsequently the membership will have the opportunity to judge for themselves its relative merits and implications. And that includes also the implications of the failure of some NEC members to participate in the correspondence at all--or only to a limited degree.

There are, however, some aspects of the correspondence on which I am impelled to comment here.

In his August 29 letter, Comrade Bortnick said he would be "interested in hearing" what the NEC members considered to be the qualifications for serving on the NEC--other than the technical qualifications set forth in the Party's Constitution. Comrade Albaugh agreed it was an important question, but did not know how to resolve it. "Even with IQ and lie detector tests," he wrote, "members with all 'A's' could be uncovered as disrupters and even agents provocateurs." We find it absolutely incredible that an NEC member could consider such comments responsive to the serious question raised.

In his comments on Comrade Bortnick's August 29 letter, Comrade Steiner declaims: "It [the Party] called the shots [on historical events] with unerring accuracy." Such self-criticism is truly overwhelming. Wasn't there a single miss somewhere along the way? Not even a near miss? What about

Vietnam? Didn't the NEC, including Comrade Steiner, unanimously endorse the staff's reply to Section St. Louis? And didn't the staff's reply record something less than "unerring accuracy" in the Party's earlier position on Vietnam? And even if it could be proven beyond a doubt that every "shot" the Party "called" was unerringly correct, would that prove that the Party had "called the shots" on every important event that has occurred? Does it include having "called the shots" on all the conflicting factors in the Mideast, the PLO, the Third World, etc., etc.? It is this kind of rhetorical overstatement Comrade Steiner indulges in that has done us no good and continues to do us no good, not only because it is inaccurate, but because it builds an illusion of infallibility that erodes the Marxist spirit of analysis. It is simple dogmatism.

Comrade Bortnick had also made the following points: that "the critique" of the former editor had fallen "exclusively" on the National Secretary; and "that the move to the West Coast was not an idea that sprang from the NEC, as Comrade Steiner seemed to imply..."

In response to the second point, Comrade Steiner cavalierly dismisses the import of how or where the idea to move originated or developed. "The important thing," he states, "is that the NEC made the decision that culminated in the move." This is an evasive rationalization. The fact is that the NEC endorsed a Subcommittee recommendation from which there was no turning back. And no one has ever accused the NEC of not being an endorsing body.

Commenting on the first point, Comrade Steiner states: "Suppose the NEC had written the 'critique' [on the former editor], the end result would have been the same." Not only does this response miss Comrade Bortnick's point--which turned on the failure of the NEC to exercise its responsibility--but it is quite a supposition we are asked to make. Was there any indication that the NEC had the remotest intention of doing anything about the Weekly People in 1973? Not in the slightest, and every member of the NEC knows it, including Comrade Steiner.

Comrade Steiner argues that if the Party had not kept pace with changing times, "it would have been sucked into the vortex of reformism and compromise." Whether Comrade Steiner is ready to admit it or not, he has not presented the only possible consequence of a failure on the part of the Party to keep pace with changing times. It could have disappeared from the scene entirely. Or it could have been reduced to a totally ineffective and inactive theory-spouting sect. Or it could have found itself confronted with serious difficulties as it finds itself today. And I dare say we can think of a few more alternatives.

In discussing China, regarding which Comrade Bortnick had raised some questions, Comrade Steiner contends in effect, that whatever we have said about Russian Stalinism applies, or in time will apply, to China. In support of his view, he states:

"In Capital Marx wrote: 'The country that is more devel-

oped industrially only shows to the less developed, the image of its own future.' This with appropriate changes can be applied to China."

Here is a perfect example of the same lack of insight into our Party problems, only in this case applied to an international question. The entire history of a unique revolution in a unique country involving one-fourth of the human race is dismissed by citing a quote and saying, "This with appropriate changes can be applied to China." Not only are these "appropriate changes" not even suggested, not only does this completely fail to address the question raised by Comrade Bortnick, but the quote is used completely out of context.

Marx made the statement (in his preface to the first German edition of Capital) in relation to the "natural laws of capitalist production" and their "working with iron necessity towards inevitable results." Comrade Steiner makes no effort to explain how this quote (which incidentally was followed by the most monumental work clearly delineating those laws)--how this quote, made before anything resembling the Chinese or Russian revolution was even conceived of, is applicable here. Maybe it is, but if this argument is to be raised, its legitimacy would turn precisely on the "appropriate changes" which are absent.

As a matter of fact, on the very next page of the same preface Marx wrote, "One nation can and should learn from others" and while a society "can neither clear by bold leaps nor remove by legal enactments the obstacles offered by the

successive phases of its normal development...it can lessen and shorten the birth-pangs." Perhaps this with "appropriate changes" can be applied to China. The point is not that Comrade Steiner failed to provide an exhaustive analysis of the Chinese revolution, but that through the citation of a quote and a simplistic application of it, he tried to deny that there was any need for a study of developments in China, or even that there could be the slightest question of a gap in a Party position. Such an approach is all too familiar.

Incidentally, in his October 13 letter, Comrade Bortnick, after asking why it is that motions are neither acted nor commented on; after noting that three NEC members failed to respond to Comrade Cozzini's June 3 letter; after further noting that no one had responded to the four motions he and Comrade Horvath had offered; and after expressing the opinion that "in retrospect" the "trickle...of correspondence" affirmed Comrade Cozzini's "misgivings" particularly in view of "the critical and weighty problems" facing us, Comrade Bortnick declared: "Considering this, plus the impending National Convention, the inactivity of our committee is a disgrace." This statement aroused several members of the NEC.

Comrade Horvath branded the statement "unwarranted," adding condescendingly that he "excuse[s] him for thinking the way he does," because Comrade Bortnick had stated that he was "a raw initiate and novice."

Comrade Steiner declared that he resented the statement and considered the "language not only injudicious but unwar-

ranted."

Comrade Braunstein, who finally wrote a letter on November 26, almost five and a half months after he had received his copy of Comrade Cozzini's June 3 letter, concluded with his "wish to register his disapproval."

Comrade Albaugh gratuitously suggested that ^{Comrade} Bortnick be assigned "a list of duties [including leaflet distribution, writing articles for the Weekly People, lecture assignments, etc.] that are in dire need of performance." He then concluded: "When Comrade Bortnick has reported an accomplishing effort on the above list of activities, I for one, will then be disposed to consider our 'inactivities.'" Comrade Albaugh's suggestion, if it may be dignified as such, was a convincing demonstration that he was not even consciously thinking of the kind of inactivity that Comrade Bortnick was calling a disgrace. It was not the NEC's inactivity in leaflet distribution, or in writing articles for the Weekly People or in accepting speaking assignments that he called a disgrace. It was its inactivity with respect to its constitutional and organizational responsibilities. I am prompted to observe that in my view, too, the failure of an executive body of the Socialist Labor Party to make consistent efforts to carry out its responsibilities is a disgrace.

And it ought also be noted that while four NEC members were prompted to register an objection to Comrade Bortnick's language, there was no outburst of indignation at the persistent disregard of official correspondence by other NEC members

over varying periods of time. How ought that to be described? Contemptuous? Contemptible? Disgraceful? Injudicious? Irresponsible? Unwarranted? Or should such inaction simply be ignored--as it has been?

Comrade Blomen, for example, has written two letters to the National Office as an NEC member since the regular 1975 session. One was a letter received July 14, merely acknowledging several items and concluding with "I hope soon to comment on Comrade Cozzini's letter," which ^{he} never did. The other was a three-page letter, dated August 10, which dealt with a subject of far less importance than did any of the official correspondence sent him during the same period. He has not deigned to respond to a single piece of that correspondence. I made that clear to him when I wrote him rejecting his complaint. I sent copies of my letter to the NEC members. Except for an incidental comment from one, perhaps two members--and I mean incidental--there was no resentment or indignation expressed, no judgment rendered, no disapproval or protest registered. I did receive three separate envelopes recently from Comrade Blomen. Each contained a signed pledge by Comrade Blomen accepting renomination to the NEC. The last one was received on January 15, 1976, a day after the deadline. The signed pledge--and the enclosed nomination by Section Lynn, of which Comrade Blomen is organizer--bore the date of November 6, 1975. But they had not been mailed until January 12, 1976 and, as stated, arrived after the deadline.

Since the regular session, I have at this writing re-

ceived nothing from Comrade Taylor as an NEC member, except a June 16, 1975 postcard reading, "Copy of Cozzini letter received," a brief letter dated June 13 dealing with a few routine matters and concluding with an inquiry regarding the status of the NEC Subcommittee (to which I promptly responded) and, more recently, his signed pledge accepting renomination to the NEC.

I could go on at length, but I shall limit myself to one more point.

In response to Comrade Bortnick's question (Oct. 13 letter) why NEC members fail to act or respond to motions made by one NEC member, at least three NEC members responded that it was because the motions lacked a second. While that might conceivably serve as a rationale for not voting on a motion, it hardly explains why the NEC members would not and so often do not comment on matters or information of importance sent to them. One wonders why they think the material was sent to them--solely for their information? In that case, such matters could well simply be conveyed through the NEC Subcommittee minutes, as most other matters are conveyed.

Certainly, it was not for lack of a second that three members of the committee failed to comment on Comrade Cozzini's letter of June 3. [I cannot seriously accept Comrade Braunstein's contention that his postcard of acknowledgment constituted a reply. Nor can I seriously consider his belated explanation that he did not want "to get involved in a discussion of youth vs. age..." as a valid reason for his long silence.]

Is it lack of a second that is responsible in all this time for only one or two members ever having commented on Comrade Blomen's persistent and continuing failure to pay the slightest attention to his NEC obligations or to acknowledge, or comment, or even vote within the set deadlines on NEC matters submitted to him?

Is it for lack of a second that only one member has commented on Comrade Taylor's six-month silence on NEC correspondence?

Is it or was it for lack of a second that all but one member of the NEC simply ignored Comrade Bortnick's expressed "interest in hearing" what the NEC members considered the necessary qualifications for membership on the NEC--other than the technical qualifications specified in the Party's Constitution?

I think it may be relevant to note that it has not been customary to require seconds for motions made by NEC members by mail. For example, nobody raised the question of a second when A.M. Orange made his motion to dispense with the 1974 NEC session. And that motion, so readily approved, was in fact unconstitutional.

Nor did anyone demand a second for H. Steiner's motion last December to hold a special NEC session. That was not a routine or insignificant motion either. In fact, I would find it enlightening if some NEC member would recall for me when any motion made by an NEC member by mail was submitted for a second.

At the recent general membership meeting held on the East

Coast, one member raised the question: How can we judge the performance of our NEC member? It is a legitimate question and deserves an answer. But even more important questions that deserve prior answers are: What is an NEC member expected to "perform"? What are the NEC members' responsibilities and obligations? Is the whole NEC or executive set-up suitable to the present conditions prevailing in the Party and to the developments and events with which the Party must cope? Should or can it be modified? If so, how?

Would the Party function better with an annual convention and an executive body that would meet three or four times--or even once a month--between conventions? Or would some other combination of convention and executive procedure be more practical and effective?

If the present NEC is not able to meet even its basic constitutional obligations, is the present set-up serving the Party's best interests? Can it or should it be permitted to go on ignoring its constitutional obligations? These are, I believe, legitimate questions that the NEC has never faced.

If the NEC believes it is not at fault, that it cannot be held responsible for the lack of available capabilities and human material, who is responsible? Is the Party as a whole somehow responsible? If so, how, why and what can be done about it? Shouldn't the NEC these past several years have been asking itself these questions and probing for answers? These too are legitimate questions.

If the NEC cannot find an Editor or an assistant to the

National Secretary or a replacement for the National Secretary, etc., does this also explain why it has not provided analytical and theoretical direction between conventions? And if the NEC hasn't the collective capacity or ability to provide such direction, shouldn't we be asking why and probing for answers?

If the members of the NEC have not been able to fulfill their responsibilities in the areas mentioned above--and they obviously have not--if they have no suggestions for coping with the difficulties confronting the Party, should they not, as Comrade Cozzini has suggested, make an "honest self-assessment" before accepting renomination and reelection to the highest executive body of the Party, whose continued effective existence is threatened by its executive body's inability to meet the challenges of the time?

And shouldn't the membership be paying closer attention to the accomplishments of its executive bodies in relation to the Party's problems before automatically renominating the same members year after year--not only to the NEC but to its national conventions as well?

If it is the view of the NEC (and others) that our problems are due entirely to factors outside our control, does that not amount to a surrender to those forces--and an admission that it is only a matter of time before the Party disappears?

How much smaller does the NEC, or this convention, or the Party generally believe our membership can get and the Party still survive? It's a question we had better think about

hard, and now!

Our claim to being a revolutionary socialist party--a bona fide Marxist organization--imposes certain obligations upon us.

We are not seeking merely to engage in scholarly exercises in history, or politics, or economics, or sociology, etc.

We are not merely seeking to establish a reputation for being exclusive--even if right.

We are seeking to bring classconscious understanding to our class; to make it see the validity of our program; to assist it in reaching a state of classconscious revolutionary understanding and organization.

I do not believe we have a chance in the world of doing that unless we recognize the seriousness of our organizational problems; our need for political revitalization individually and collectively; our need to establish our relevancy in the eyes of concerned and socially awakening workers; our need to search for, consider and find ways to conduct our work more effectively as revolutionists motivated by our own knowledge and convictions and with the dedication that such knowledge and convictions should--must--engender.

To do that we must admit our shortcomings, confront mistakes where we find them, steel ourselves against dogmatic or sectarian habits of thought and action. Then and only then will we be able to approach our problems objectively, discuss them frankly and without resort to rationalizations. Our problems will not be solved by slogans, quotations, claims of in-

fallibility, refusal to face facts or admit errors or shortcomings, or by failure to realize and accept responsibilities or similar nonrevolutionary attitudes. They will be solved only by determination, self-criticism and hard work.

We must put our egos aside; abandon our defensiveness; stop all dogmatic efforts to justify everything we ever said or did; and proceed to deal with our problems as classconscious men and women committed to revolutionary change, not to preserving illusions or pretentious reputations.

If in the judgment of this convention we are wrong, then you as delegates representing the Party membership have the serious obligation and responsibility of making our errors clear to us and to the membership. And if we prove incapable of representing what you conclude to be the SLP's views, you have the further responsibility to take such steps as will enable the membership to place the Party's national office, its official organ, its publishing department--in short, its entire national headquarters--in the hands of Party officers and members who can and will reflect those views and who will conduct the Party's affairs in keeping with those views.

It is important--extremely important--to the continued functioning of the SLP that progress--tangible progress--come out of this convention.

State of Organization

We have tried to point out before that our current Party dilemmas cannot be surgically separated from one another. For that reason this entire report might logically be considered a report on the "State of Organization." However, dealing separately with a few particular matters under this heading would seem to serve a useful purpose by emphasizing some previous points or adding a few others.

It would be a serious mistake to conclude that the revitalization of the Party depends solely on resolving the editor problem, or the headquarters employment problem, or redesigning our executive machinery, or solving all three problems, though such progress certainly would be decided steps in the right direction. But they should not be permitted to overshadow the fact that these problems reflect a basic weakness that involves all of us and our individual and collective revolutionary grasp and understanding and our revolutionary commitment to the movement.

In short, as we have indicated earlier, the crisis confronting the Party is evident at all levels. We find it difficult not only to find members capable and willing to serve in the editorial department, or the national office, or as national candidates, or as national organizers, but also as speakers, writers, study class instructors, discussion group moderators, state and local candidates, etc., etc.

We even suffer from a lack of members capable and willing to serve as state secretaries, state committee members, section

organizers, recording secretaries, chairpersons and more.

The point has been made that we are not attracting new members at a rate that might be reasonably expected these days. It is essential that we clarify this reference to numbers and keep it in realistic perspective.

On several occasions, when the question of numbers arose, the immediate and spontaneous reaction ^{was} that numbers are not important. While we can, and probably do, all agree that numbers per se are not important, we should not succumb to the danger of taking that view absolutely literally.

Actually, there is a point beyond which the matter of numbers cannot be ignored. Though that point cannot be set at a specific number, it can be established in a general, yet very convincing, fashion. We can no longer ignore the question of numbers when we find it extremely difficult or impossible to muster the number of qualified members needed willing to fill the essential Party posts at the local, state and national levels. Just as there is a requisite minimum to what can constitute an effective force during a revolutionary crisis, there is a minimum to the number required to keep a Party like the SLP alive, vital, active, relevant and effective.

We are dangerously close to that minimum point. There is even the possibility that that is the optimistic view and that we have reached and passed that point.

There is no readily available running record of Party membership, though it could be tracked down through reports to national conventions, NEC sessions and the files and rec-

ords available at the National Headquarters. It would, however, be a difficult and time consuming task. It is evident, however, even from a cursory examination of our records, that there has been a steady decline in membership these past 40 years.

Equally alarming in recent years have been signs of an organizational breakdown, perhaps best exemplified by a weakening of the link between the National Office and the subdivisions. This, I believe, is the result of several factors. One is the obvious inability of the National Office to give prompt attention to the daily correspondence and the matters it brings requiring action. There was a time when, with rare exceptions, mail was acknowledged and/or answered the day it was received. As the help problem intensified, the exceptions increased. Since the vacancy in the Editor's post, matters calling for attention by the National Office are too often left pending for long periods, and some never do receive attention.

Moreover, there has been a marked reduction in general letters, particularly the kind urging the intensification of activities, suggesting new activities, sponsoring special efforts, etc. That, no doubt, has been a contributing factor to the drop in activities generally. Largely because of the drop in activities, reports and correspondence from the field has decreased. The overall result has been a general decrease in communication between the National Office and the subdivisions.

A by-product of that development has been a developing tendency for subdivisions and even individual members to bypass the National Office by writing directly to one another on official matters, not even sending copies of such correspondence to the National Office. We learn of such matters, often long after they have taken place, from state committee minutes, incidental references in activity reports, reports to state conventions, and other indirect sources. Even then, as often as not, we are unable to move to close the growing gap for lack of time.

In short, as I noted in the September 30 call for nominations for delegates and alternates to this convention, the arrangement currently prevailing at National Headquarters not only has serious detrimental effects upon the efficient operation of the National Office and the editorial department, it also has highly detrimental effects on the Party generally. There is an overall breakdown of efficiency and procedure.

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During the last several months, in an effort intended to serve several constructive purposes, general membership meetings were held in Michigan, Oct. 4; in Chicago, Oct. 5; and on the East Coast, Nov. 29. A primary objective was to call members' attention to some of the specific problems confronting the Party, encourage frank and open discussion of them in the hope that such discussions would not only result in a better collective understanding of the problems, but would lead to an exchange of views that might provide some direction to our search for causes and solutions to those

problems.

I believe those meetings were worth the effort, though they did not produce any spectacular results nor elicit any immediate widespread response that would indicate major progress. What they may have produced is a better understanding among some members of the seriousness of the problems, perhaps an awareness of the need for such meetings and, hopefully, a basis for developing or encouraging frank and open discussion of problems among members in a constructive fashion.

But in order to fully draw the membership into an exchange of views, we think many more such meetings or equivalent "forums" will have to be conducted. They cannot be expected to provide the entire solution, but can be a step.

As evidence that more concerted and more direct efforts are required to arouse and unify our membership, consider the following examples.

On October 1, a letter addressed to every member of the Party stressed the desperate need for help if we were to make the ballot effort and appealed for commitments to assist in that respect. The detailed results of that appeal will be given under ballot matters. Suffice to say here, the response was not overwhelming.

On November 25, a letter addressed to all the sections requested the names of those who in the section's judgment were qualified to serve as field workers. Again the response was hardly overwhelming, indicating two things--one, there is a definite shortage of qualified members in the view of the

sections; two, there is an even greater shortage of qualified members willing to place themselves at the Party's service.

I think I can speak with a modicum of authority and a good deal of sympathy on the conflicting emotions that an SLP member experiences when confronted with a request that he consider coming to work for the Party. So can most of the members who are currently working at National Headquarters. It is not an easy decision to make, particularly for one who may have assumed or acquired a degree of family or other responsibilities.

Nor are we suggesting that in order to be a good SLP member one must be constantly prepared to come to work at National Headquarters--though without a minimum number of such comrades, we cannot survive. We do suggest, however, that the shortage of competent workers at the national level is a direct reflection of inactivity at other levels.

True, the SLP is a voluntary organization. Is it not a legitimate question, however, whether we have given that view too literal an interpretation and application for a revolutionary party? Aren't there some limits to the voluntary claim in such an organization? The decision to become a member of a revolutionary organization is, of course, voluntary. So, too, is the decision to remain a member. But do not these voluntary acts carry with them a commitment to become a revolutionist? And does not the individual revolutionist have some mandatory obligations? And doesn't the Party have a right to demand fulfillment of those mandatory obligations?

More than two decades ago, former National Secretary Arnold Petersen, speaking of the obligations of SLP men and women, declared:

"...Not for long, certainly not indefinitely, can there be toleration of half-hearted efforts...The SLP does not demand of its members that they become monomaniacs, or that they live the lives of ascetic monks. The SLP does demand that members share burdens and responsibilities with one another, fully and equally, and that there be no toleration of chronic laggards or 'free-riders.'..."

Does it really? Actually, haven't we tolerated both the most routine performances of duties and the most innocuous excuses for neglecting or avoiding a full commitment to Party activities? Have we not reached the point where Party survival demands that we consider what steps can or should be taken to convince every member to give substance to his or her membership by sharing SLP "burdens and responsibilities... fully and equally"? Had we better not determine before it is entirely too late where to draw the line between legitimate pressure on members and improper interference with their personal prerogatives and their rights to privacy and personal pursuits?

We suggest further that our circumstances require that we begin frankly and objectively to question not only the quantity of our work but also its quality, for the two are closely bound.

If we gave as much time at our section meetings to the

consideration of organizational and/or theoretical problems as we give to planning our social affairs, would we not have a more effective Party?

If we devoted as much time at a convention to a consideration of world developments and what they mean to our Party and how we ought to deal with them, as we have to reviewing past activities and repeating resolutions calling for a continuation of such routine activities would we not be contributing more to the effectiveness of our Party?

Should we not expend at least as much energy on study and agitation as we do getting on the ballot and meeting the strictures of election laws?

Do we not need to constantly stop and sum up our work, and after 85 years in the socialist movement, make sure we are not spending more time on our history than on the present tasks confronting us?

We speak of SLP policies and positions being formulated at some specific level of Party responsibility, for example, the national convention. In essence, however, policies and positions must be the reflex of an alert, informed, involved membership working through the Party's organizational channels. That, in turn, demands constant study, review, discussion and debate. For it is not merely essential that we survive as an organization, but that we survive as a dynamic revolutionary organization.

1976 National Campaign

Back in 1909, De Leon, noting the growth of ballot restrictions, observed that they were "intended to render free suffrage expression difficult and more and more so--all obedient to that sentiment...that...causes the ruling class to scent danger in the suffrage and to strain for its abolition as a proletarian weapon."

Nevertheless, during the almost seven decades since De Leon made that observation, the Party has expressed, and operated on, the view that despite growing restrictions and expensive setbacks in time, money and energy, we must persist in our efforts to place the Party on the ballot wherever there was a reasonable possibility for doing so. And I believe it fair to say that on more than one occasion we took the most optimistic view in order to conclude that there was indeed a reasonable possibility for getting on the ballot.

Needless to say, with each passing year our ballot and campaign problems have grown progressively more difficult. Since 1972, the increase in those problems has probably been greater than ever. So much so, that in both the report to the 1975 special NEC session and the 1975 regular NEC session, I noted that "the outlook for the 1976 national campaign was not at all promising."

I listed five areas of major concern and posed several "important and difficult questions," all relating one way or another with what we generally call the ballot problem. The action taken by the NEC has been reported in the published

proceedings, hence there is no need for me to detail it here.

Up until now, to the extent that our circumstances at National Headquarters have permitted, we have proceeded on the premise that we can and will conduct a national campaign in 1976. In keeping with the requirements of the latest version of the federal campaign act, a campaign committee has been established to handle campaign funds. It has registered with the newly established Federal Election Commission and to date has filed all reports required under the law. The officers of the SLP Campaign 1976, as it is officially titled, are Comrade E.A. Swistek, Chairman, and Comrade Genevieve Gunderson, Treasurer. Special bookkeeping and fund handling procedures have been established in compliance with the requirements of the law as we understand them; though the phrase, "as we understand them" requires a bit of elaboration.

Although Watergate and the demise of the Nixon administration represented considerably more than campaign corruption, it was this aspect that was seized upon by the capitalists and their political henchmen, and this "sin" they promised to purge as penance. Accordingly, there has been the most extensive passage of campaign legislation by the very class whose power this legislation is supposed to curtail. The fraud in this performance is no doubt clear to every socialist. And though De Leon's observation may be a bit over-used, there are few better examples of reform as a concealed measure of reaction than this package of repressive measures passed under the title of "campaign reform."

Perhaps no single effort to circumscribe the ballot and undermine the electoral process has been as effective in accomplishing these undemocratic results as the host of campaign finance laws enacted at all levels ostensibly to legislate morality and honesty into capitalist election campaigns. As the Weekly People noted, the result of these laws has been to "keep the hands of politicians out of the 'public till' by dumping the public till into their pockets." And the courts, the supposed last line of defense of constitutional rights and freedoms, have so far upheld those laws.

We have been severely handicapped in our fundraising efforts because of the federal election law. As I wrote one member last September, "The problems imposed upon us by the 1974 amendments to the federal campaign act would take hours to reduce to writing. Suffice to say they are many and complicated...We have sought legal and accounting advice, but many grey areas remain..."

Five months later, the problems remain many and complicated--even more so than we had feared. Despite implementation by rulings and advisory opinions, the number of grey areas have been increased rather than lessened.

We appear to be caught in the web of a series of laws and bureaucratic regulations that not only fail to take into account any of the problems or organizational features of a minority party such as the SLP, but, in general, are vague and complicated to the point of ridiculousness. We face a host of technicalities that we have not yet been able to put into

clear and concise perspective; nor have we found anyone able to give us explicit advice on how to deal with them so as to be sure that we are complying with them in a manner that will be considered acceptable by the FEC.

The few questions we have posed directly to the Commission have gone unanswered. There are additional questions we are planning to present. In fact, we hope to be able to get a special hearing before the Commission at which we would try to explain the nature of some of the unreasonable and irrational problems certain provisions of the law present to us and seek to be exempted from them. Neither our attorney nor any of us at National Headquarters have any idea what the chances for success in such ^{an} effort may be. We are not overly confident.

As Comrade Sim put it at one point in our exchange on these laws, "Damn the reformers."

Comrade Swiatek, as all of you know, has come to National Headquarters for the "duration" to serve as campaign manager. Unfortunately, I have not been able to work with him as closely as both of us would have wished and as the Party's interests required. The same is true with regard to Comrade Gunderson, who has come to Palo Alto as a permanent member of the National Office staff. All things considered, our two comrades have done good work--more than we had a right to expect under the circumstances. In a very real sense, they were tossed into the pool and told to swim.

In anticipation of the fact that this convention would

have to make some important decisions, the campaign committee submitted the following report.

The National Campaign Committee's Report
On The 1976 Ballot Effort

The following is a brief summary of some of the grim facts that must be taken into account in connection with the upcoming 1976 presidential election. The problems to be considered are many, and they call for some important decisions. As the Campaign Committee sees it, the problems fall into the following general categories:

1. Availability of national candidates.
2. Increasingly restrictive state ballot laws governing minority parties.
3. The new federal election laws, their detailed reporting and disclosure provisions and other difficulties they pose for the SLP.
4. The growing number of state laws regulating campaign financing and their disclosure provisions.
5. Availability of signature gatherers and other campaign workers.
6. Changes in Section 315(a) and other provisions of the Federal Communications Act.
7. The situation at National Headquarters.

* * * *

As to 1, the availability of candidates, this committee has been in no position to do any investigating.

[As National Secretary, I did make some efforts in this

respect. During my visits to the areas where the membership meetings mentioned earlier were held, I spoke to six members who I believed to be qualified to serve as one of our national candidates, if nominated by this convention. I did not press for immediate answers, urging each one to give my inquiry the most thorough consideration before replying, but requesting that they do so in "several weeks." At this writing, four have informed me that they could not accept such nomination. One told me promptly that he would not accept, though he left open a very slight possibility that he might be prevailed upon in an absolute emergency. The remaining one has not answered me to date, although it is now more than three months since I spoke to him.]

As to 2, we have checked the ballot requirements in most of the states in which the Party would be likely to make the ballot effort.

A similar check is being made by Comrade R. Massi of New York with the assistance of several attorneys. When the latter check is completed we will no doubt have a more detailed picture than we otherwise could expect to have.

As an example of what we are facing as far as signature gathering is concerned, here is a list of the signature requirements the SLP would have to meet in some of the more important states: Calif., 636,460; Illinois, 25,000; New York, 20,000; Ohio, 30,700; Pennsylvania, 30,000; and Massachusetts, 37,900.

Of course, we would have to gather many more than the

minimum in order to be sure to have sufficient "qualified" signatures to meet the requirements in each state--in most instances at least 50 percent more. And there are other technicalities that must be observed, any of which could prove a stumbling block even if we got the names. We are sure we need not spell that out in any greater detail.

As to 3 and 4, the federal election laws and state laws dealing with campaign financing, disclosure, etc.

To convey some idea of the scope of these laws, we need only mention that a booklet summarizing only the federal election campaign act as amended in 1974, compiled under the direction of the secretary of the U.S. Senate, consists of 88 pages. In addition since the Federal Election Commission was established, there has been a torrent of regulations and advisory opinions streaming out of Washington giving various interpretations of sections of the law. It is questionable whether they clarify more than they confuse.

The individual states have their own campaign financing laws which also call for detailed information on contributions and expenditures. It is a practical impossibility for a party like the SLP to keep abreast of these laws and their manifold senseless details.

As to 5, availability of signature gatherers and other campaign workers.

On September 25, 1975 a questionnaire was sent out seeking information as to the availability of members for full and/or part-time work during the campaign. Of the approxi-

mately 670 members so contacted, only 201 replied. Of this number, 65 advised that for various reasons they were not available; 121 advised that they could give limited or part-time assistance evenings, weekends or during vacation periods. Only 15 reported that they were available for full-time signature gathering. How much additional positive response can be expected between now and the time when this work must get under way, cannot be established at this time.

As to 6, changes in Section 315(s) of the Federal Communications Act.

In his report at the National Executive Committee session in May-June 1975 our National Secretary warned that we could expect attacks on what remained of the FCC's "equal time" provision and "fairness doctrine." Since then, the FCC issued a Declaratory Order that "on the spot coverage of bona fide news events" and "bona fide news interview programs" would no longer be subject to equal time. This further narrows the slim possibility of securing "free time" over the airwaves during the coming campaign.

As to 7, the situation at National Headquarters.

In our judgment it would be a mistake to assume that because the undersigned now constitute a campaign committee, the problem of managing the 1976 campaign has been solved. Your present campaign committee came into the picture virtually without experience, thus making it necessary to rely upon the National Secretary and others at National Headquarters for help and advice, at a time when other Party matters are making heavy

demands on their energy and time.

Despite our inexperience, however, and on the basis of what we have observed and learned these past seven months, we offer the following observations for the Party's consideration without making any specific recommendations.

In the past it was "unthinkable" that the fighting SLP would not make a strong ballot effort, especially in such critical industrial states as New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, etc.

But the fact is that the laws are increasingly prohibitive; in some cases they may be insurmountable.

Each campaign it seems we are compelled to spend more and more time and money on the ballot effort and correspondingly less and less on the campaign itself.

As a result are we perhaps reaching fewer workers with our message than we could by devising new strategies?

Has the time come to stop trying to storm the legal barricades to the ballot and instead use our limited energies and funds on other methods for reaching the working class with our message?

As relevant to these questions, we refer again to the following from the National Secretary's report to the NEC session in May-June 1975:

"All these factors--the growing difficulty of ballot access; the problems created by the proliferation of laws governing campaign finances; the possibility that less free radio and TV time than ever may be obtainable; and the other prob-

lems discussed above--pose some important and difficult questions:

"Would the Party gain more if we used our available human and material resources for agitational and educational activities such as widespread leaflet distribution, contact work, subscription drives, etc., rather than for signature gathering?

"Would the Party's interests be better served by a 'mixture' of activities--making the ballot effort in states where it would not be likely completely to exhaust our resources; and planning other activities where the drain of the ballot effort may prove enervating or where the chances for success are questionable?

"Would the Party reap greater and more constructive benefits if we concentrated on a 'total' educational program of activities--concentrating on the Weekly People and other literature?

"Would it be wise to concentrate on devising, or attempting to devise a plan to make a major effort on radio and television?

"These are not questions that can be disposed of with off-hand answers. They require the most careful thought, the most detailed analyses, the most thorough airing, before reaching conclusions. For those conclusions will have a vital--perhaps determining--effect on our Party. If we make the right decisions, we may see our Party grow and prosper. If we make the wrong ones, we may deal it a critical--even fatal blow.

"Accordingly, our conclusions must be based upon as objective and realistic an assessment of the facts as we are collectively capable of making, and not upon what we might personally feel, or even believe, is the easiest way out of a difficult situation.

"Put another way: We have difficult decisions to make; decisions that cannot--or rather should not--be considered lightly or made hastily."

We agree, they are difficult decisions to make, and they should not be made hastily.

Fraternally submitted,

[signed] Edward A. Swiatek

[signed] Genevieve Gunderson

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Comrades Swiatek and Gunderson are not the only ones who are deeply concerned about how we ought to evaluate the general ballot and related problems confronting us. For example, last August, when signature gathering in Michigan was showing signs of bogging down, Comrade James Sim wrote in part:

"Judging from the scant amount of press and TV and radio coverage in the 1974 campaign some members are questioning the financial and personal cost of signature gathering with so little compensation in publicity. Your report to the recent NEC session raising questions as to the possible 'enervating' effect of long and costly signature-gathering campaigns on the organization is of vital importance. Of course, we should also consider the effect on the membership of the

picture of other groups masquerading under the name of Socialist appearing on the various state ballots and the absence of the SLP."

This last point by Comrade Sim is not one lightly to be brushed aside. In fact, not only must the possible effect on the membership be considered, but also the possible effect upon our nonmember supporters and workers in general. The effect on all those mentioned could be greater in 1976 than it might be in another campaign year because of the bicentennial "observance" of the American Revolution.

We perhaps must also ask ourselves whether abandoning the effort to conduct a national campaign would not amount to a voluntary surrender of the ballot, at a time when in actual fact, despite all difficulties, it is not yet universally denied us; that if we could muster our full physical potential we could still make a substantial ballot showing.

It will be up to this convention to consider the pros and cons of all the factors noted--and others that may be raised--and make final decisions regarding the 1976 national elections and the kind of campaign, if any, that the Party should attempt to wage.

If it decides that we are to press ahead with a campaign, it must set some standards that will assist us in deciding in what states to make the ballot effort, in what states to conduct "write-in" campaigns and how extensively to tour our candidates.

If it decides against a campaign, it must take steps to

minimize the effect of that decision by drawing up an extensive plan of organizational and agitational work to be carried out in its place.

The Editorial Department

Never in the 85-year history of the Weekly People has our Party's journal gone for nearly three years without an editor as it has since 1973. One consequence of this unfortunate fact has been that since 1973 there has been no overview of the situation as it appears specifically from the editorial department, though, of course, as the only remaining elected officer at National Headquarters I have been involved in, and have dealt with, many aspects of its operation in various letters and reports.

Nevertheless, as I have pointed out on earlier occasions, despite the extent to which I have been involved in the editorial department's work and problems, I am not fully involved in, or aware of all the details that must be dealt with or difficulties that arise in the every-day, week-to-week operations. Therefore, I cannot present the full perspective of the operations of the editorial department and/or the detailed views and judgments of those who have been coping with them.

In short, in the absence of an editor, a report from the Weekly People staff is essential to give this convention a total picture of the situation in the editorial department. For that reason, and because we expect that the editorial department will undergo some changes following this convention, I asked the editorial staff to prepare a report for inclusion here. They agreed to do so.

Though the staff and I cooperated considerably in its

preparation, what follows is substantially their report. I hasten to add, however, that I am in agreement with all of its essentials.

Report of the Weekly People Staff

The staff felt it would be useful to present a brief but coherent overview of the editorial operation and the Weekly People's development during the recent period. In doing so, we hope to describe the situation as the present staff found it, explain how we tried to deal with that situation, and perhaps also suggest what has not been done.

The current staff, assembled largely by the National Secretary, over a period of months following the exit of former editor John Timm, assumed the task of publishing an official party journal that had not only lost its editor, but which had just been officially criticized for misstating SLP positions and operating below acceptable SLP standards.

All of us working on the paper were aware of those views and agreed with them, though we soon found that no concrete suggestions had been made as to how these deficiencies might be corrected. We also found, as the National Secretary implied in his 1973 report to the NEC, that the faults of the Weekly People could not be laid solely at Comrade Timm's door. More than individual mistakes, the condition of the Weekly People reflected a very poor editorial operation in terms of implementing policy and practical procedures. It suffered from inadequate resources as well as minimal support for, or response to, the paper on the part of the readership

(with the exception of generous financial support).

Since all of us were at least partially familiar with the way the Weekly People office had functioned under Comrade Timm's editorship, we were also able to draw one important conclusion. Comrade Timm for several years had attempted to deal with an unworkable and unfeasible editorial operation, not by trying to change it, but by meeting a growing and unreasonable individual copy quota. We knew how hard he had worked toward that end, but we also realized that this way of meeting the situation had proven disastrous for the paper and the Party. While we were determined to work toward correcting whatever we could, we felt from the start that the task of improving the Weekly People was one that required organizational steps as well as individual determination.

It soon became clear that the consolidation of a new and adequate editorial staff would not be readily achieved. For many months only Comrade Robert Bills was in the editorial office full-time. Comrade Mary Jane Grohs gradually moved from the business office to the editorial department. Early in 1974, Comrade Dick Bell came from Denver to join the staff and in July of the same year Comrade Stanley Karp went to work in the editorial office.

This bareboned description, however, hardly offers a picture of how the editorial office functioned in those months or how the Weekly People was published. The four of us, who, with the National Secretary's help, were charged with writing and producing the official organ of the SLP, had varied capa-

cities and were hardly prepared for the task. In fact, two of us were not even Party members at the beginning of this period. We had also anticipated further additions to the staff and never expected this situation to last as long as it has.

We were confronted with a total absence of established editorial procedures for the planning and production of the paper. There was no plan for a division of labor, for deciding what should be covered, or for deciding what should be printed. There were insufficient resources in every area--including an extremely poor and disorganized flow of information into the editorial office, which had apparently relied heavily on a very few sources and which kept virtually no files. There were few steady outside contributors. Even the Weekly People library was completely disorganized.

In addition there was the absence of editorial direction and, as became readily apparent, a difficulty in determining and therefore presenting Party policy in a number of areas the Weekly People could be expected to cover, particularly those areas or topics that were continually developing and changing.

Given this starting point, it is perhaps easy to see why there was an overwhelming dependency on the National Secretary, who was not only enmeshed in nearly every area of headquarters activity, but was also directing the move of the National Headquarters to the West Coast. In fact this extensive reliance on the National Secretary has been a major concern of the

editorial staff and the national headquarters staff as a whole. Where possible we have tried to assume more responsibility and as much of the editorial work as possible and we think we have made some progress toward that end.

But the continued dependence of the editorial staff, the headquarters in general, and therefore in large measure the SLP, on one man is a constant reminder and reflection of how precarious our situation has been and remains. In this respect we have been pressing our luck, and if the situation is not corrected at this convention, we can only foresee a quantitative and qualitative decline in headquarters activity. Obviously the resolution of this problem will have a direct bearing on the ability of the editorial office to maintain its current operation.

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Within this context, our first goal was uncomplicated if not easy--namely, to maintain uninterrupted publication of the Weekly People. The accomplishment of this task was no small matter and we wonder how many in the SLP are aware of how tenuous the operation has been. It was our belief that any suspension of issues or reduction in size would be the kind of setback from which we could not easily recover; and while these steps were considered, they were rejected in the hope that solutions for our difficulties would be imminent. Again, our continued ability to avoid these measures will largely depend on the outcome of this convention.

Our second aim was to raise the standards of the Weekly

People and to correct some of the mistakes which had been cited. At first we did not necessarily approach this task in a systematic way, though later on more conscious efforts were made in this direction.

In hindsight we might separate the efforts to improve the Weekly People into two categories: One, the effort to improve its contents and coverage; Two, the effort to break it, and the editorial office, out of the isolation that characterized its operation.

Toward improving the contents we have taken a number of steps. And though it would take too many pages in this report to fully discuss why the following things were done, what they sought to change and whether they were successful, we do hope that in some way this convention will be able to take up these points and examine them. In the past three years we have tried to do the following:

1. Expand the variety of topics covered--particularly on the international field where we felt coverage had been especially poor.
2. Cover more class struggle issues, such as strikes and protests, from the point of view of the workers involved.
3. Attempt to present stories in a Marxist framework throughout, and from the point of view of class struggle, instead of simply tacking on "socialist" conclusions to undirected discussions of an issue.
4. Express SLP views on current and developing topics in an effort to present Party positions through the events

of the day.

5. Wherever possible employ fresh language and approaches that clearly explain our position with as little stilted rhetoric as possible, avoiding stereotyped styles of writing and thinking.

6. Follow stories as they develop in order to cover various angles, to work out a more complete analysis of events, and to show that not only do SLP conclusions differ from those of the bourgeois press, but that the way in which Marxists understand and perceive developments is also different.

7. Reconsider the way in which our articles ordinarily end (a move which has brought critical comment from opposite sides).

8. Address ourselves not only to new readers, but also to those more familiar with socialism and the SLP.

9. Avoid repetitious use of quotes, and cut down on filler and reprints where fresh material is available.

10. Provide relevant information not always available elsewhere and make the Weekly People more helpful to speakers, discussion group moderators, etc.

11. Improve and vary the appearance of the paper.

As we said, each of these aims could be discussed at length and of course their execution is considerably more difficult than proclaiming them. The list could also be expanded, but it should provide some idea of the direction in which we have tried to move the contents and coverage of the Weekly People.

As for the attempt to extend the paper's reach and end the isolation of the editorial office and the individuals working in it, we have:

1. Drastically increased the exchange of views, criticism and self-criticism ^{within} the office. This increase, however, is relative to its virtual absence in the past and we do not suggest by any means that the editorial staff is currently functioning as a cohesive, fully integrated unit. It is not. There are serious deficiencies in the planning and review of our work which have not been corrected.

2. Reinstated a letter column to solicit readers' views.

3. Vastly increased the amount and kinds of information coming into the office and also organized it in a more accessible form.

4. Made repeated efforts to develop contributors and solicit articles from the field.

5. Worked with Comrade Milton Herder on an advertising campaign to boost circulation.

Like the efforts to improve content, these steps could be discussed at length. We wish to make only a few points here.

For example, while some have noted changes in the paper over the past few years, and those who have tend to support the changes, the Weekly People continues to elicit what we consider a minimal response from its readership. In the course of an average week we do not even receive sufficient

correspondence to maintain a letter column. Its sporadic appearance in the paper does not represent a selectivity on our part, but largely a paucity of response.

Likewise the development of field correspondents has been grossly inadequate. Even the passage of the St. Louis Resolution on this subject has had little impact. In fact, the way in which this resolution has been handled organizationally supports some of the National Secretary's observations about the breakdown in organizational procedure.

For example, although the resolution passed overwhelmingly and thereby became binding on all sections, only 24 of the 45 sections have sent the names on the committees to the office. Only eight of the committees have submitted articles (a total of 36 over a seven-month period, and half of those came from just two committees). These numbers, however, are not precise because there are members submitting an occasional article who may be on committees, but whose section has never forwarded the names of committee members, making it impossible to keep sensible records.

Other sections have elected committees who month after month ignore the job they have assumed, yet no action is taken. Others continue to send us routine clippings despite repeated attempts to discourage this practice. A few have contended that the problem in developing correspondents is the lack of response to contributions on the part of the staff.

As to this latter point, we are aware of the need for

a liaison with contributors and we discussed this in the material that accompanied the St. Louis Resolution. We mentioned the difficulties this would entail and requested patience. We also included guidelines and a number of suggestions which we asked be turned over to the correspondence committees. But in the current situation our ability to free someone for more of such work depends precisely on eliciting sufficient response to free someone from writing copy. In addition, some have concluded on the basis of just one or two submissions that no further efforts toward contributing should be made. (We might also point out that Weekly People staff writers produce article after article and rarely if ever get any feedback on them.)

The point we wish to make is that the efforts to sustain correspondents have not been successful to date and, in our view, this stems not from this or that difficulty in the procedure, but from the more general breakdown in Party activity and effectiveness described in the National Secretary's report.

Nevertheless, the development of a network of field correspondents is critical to any long-range improvement in the paper. It is necessary not merely to have isolated individuals around the country producing occasional articles to lessen our burden, but to expand the Weekly People's contacts, to get reports from those who are closer to the events and struggles that need to be covered, to encourage local SLP writers to increase their own contacts with the workers in their

area, to develop writers who can handle specific assignments and issues, to tap whatever expertise exists in our Party, to make the paper more of a collective production, to stimulate Party interest in the Weekly People, to serve as a vehicle for Party discussion. As stated in the letter which accompanied the St. Louis Resolution, "Three, four or five people cannot sit in an office and produce a weekly Marxist journal of a high level. They can form the core of a vital, constantly improving editorial staff that can produce an ever-improving paper--but only if they begin to receive the concrete support of the entire membership and build a reliable network of correspondents, photographers, artists and others upon whom they can depend."

In other words, we are not looking to buy time until we can return to the kind of editorial operation used in the fifties or sixties, where a minimum number of writers in the editorial office "got out the paper," but to change the nature of the Weekly People operation in order to expand it and improve its quality.

As we said before, it would require a more complete discussion to evaluate the changes made in the Weekly People over the past three years. In our opinion, we have improved it considerably over what it was when we assumed its production. We believe it is fresher, more readable, more coherent, contains better and more substantial analysis in many areas, looks more attractive and offers promise of being more effective.

As one example, we might recall that one of the goals of improving our paper was to revive a source of Party literature. Until the move was completed that was not possible. However, since last January we have made some progress and have produced three new leaflets--one still at the printer's--from the paper.

The Press Committee has also taken steps to prepare material originally used in the Weekly People for publication in pamphlet form. Prompted by a suggestion from Comrade Bortnick, we have begun work on five new pamphlets: on the economy, on unionism and labor, on unemployment, on Portugal and on the international scene generally. Our first aim is one on the economy which we had hoped to get out before this convention convened. That proved impossible, but the material for such a pamphlet is now coordinated. It awaits only an introduction to be sent to the printer, after which we will go on to the others.

We hope this will be the beginning of the end of a disastrously dry period in the production of Party literature. But this, too, depends on steps taken toward solving our general Party crisis.

We also mentioned that there were things not done, and indeed they outnumber what has been accomplished. If the Weekly People is to improve rather than just sustain itself, and truly meet the demands of the period ahead, the changes before us must be even greater and more qualitative than the changes already made.

One of the real difficulties of the situation has been the lack of opportunity and perhaps even the authority, to open up certain vital areas and questions for discussion. This problem is closely related to the question of formulating policy, a complex subject which needs thorough discussion.

The following areas provide only an indication, a few examples, of some of the areas that urgently require coverage in the Weekly People, yet have not been effectively dealt with.

- A thorough examination of the groups and parties in the American left.
- Coverage of the internal and external policies of the People's Republic of China.
- More thorough examination of the internal workings of the Soviet Union.
- Increased examination of theoretical questions, e.g., the national question, the right to self-determination, questions of theory and tactics, a clear examination of Lenin's work, an examination of the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its varied application abroad and misapplication in the U.S., and many others.
- A broader coverage of cultural topics from a Marxist viewpoint.
- A much more comprehensive treatment of the Middle East.

There are a number of factors limiting our capacity to deal with such topics. The normal week-to-week tasks of preparing the paper within the current set-up make it virtually

impossible to do the necessary careful research, theoretical investigation, and coherent writing that these complex questions require. At the same time, we feel that simplistic treatment of such subjects would do more harm than good.

Nor have we found it possible to divide up these projects into manageable tasks, or assign them to members outside the office.

Another factor nourishing a reluctance to treat these subjects is the absence of comprehensive Party declarations on them and the minimal amount of debate that has apparently taken place on these questions. With no editor, and for the most part, no action along these lines by any Party bodies, there has been even less direction than in the past (though from all indications this problem stems back for quite a while).

In short, there are areas where we are not sure of exactly what the SLP position is, meaning we can find no substantial treatment of the question that serves as a clear guide to further development, or where we ourselves are unsure what we think the Weekly People's position should be.

To cover the extensive range of subjects and complexity of developments that a Marxist-De Leonist paper must treat today, we need a thorough, efficient and up-to-date mechanism for formulating Party policy. Neither historical precedents, which may be more or less analogous to current situations, nor a few resolutions every four years at a national convention, are sufficient to guide the week-to-week efforts of the

SLP's official organ.

In general we think policy statements, in order to effectively express SLP positions, are best formulated out of a thorough debate of the questions at hand with as many members as possible playing an active role and perhaps even the columns of the Weekly People thrown open to debate on specific questions.

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In the past three years we have also received a number of criticisms of the Weekly People. Some were printed in the letter column, some answered individually, others simply noted and filed. Only two issues were raised that led to exchanges of any length.

One involved a criticism from Comrade H. Steiner of an article in the Nov. 15, 1975 Weekly People entitled "On the Transition to Socialism." Comrade Steiner's letter was answered in a statement prepared by the staff. This led to another letter from Comrade Steiner to which the National Secretary replied. Several NEC members also commented on this exchange, which touched on questions of tactics and the nature of criticism.

All this correspondence appears in the appendix. We feel it speaks for itself and therefore refer the convention to the statements involved for whatever action it may see fit. We also urge all SLP members to read the documents. [See p. 263.]

The other major issue revolved around the front page editorial on the Vietnamese victory last May 10. A criticism

of the editorial was raised by Section St. Louis. The National Secretary and the Weekly People staff responded in a statement that was subsequently endorsed unanimously by the NEC. This material appears in the proceedings of the regular 1975 NEC session.

However the reply to Section St. Louis, and even more, the action of the NEC at its May 1975 session, did not resolve all the questions raised by the issue. In fact in several ways, as we hope to show, the action of the NEC in unanimously endorsing the reply to Section St. Louis raised as many questions as it answered. What's more, this entire issue and the way it has been dealt with bear directly on the problems of setting Party policy, the way in which theoretical problems are handled, and perhaps even on the relation between our theoretical outlook and our practical work, problems which the National Secretary has pinpointed in his report as part of our Party's basic difficulties.

It is precisely because this episode reflects the kind of theoretical errors we have made, and even more, the inadequate manner in which our Party has dealt with those errors, that we feel it necessary to pursue the issue. Therefore, after having consulted with the National Secretary, we have decided to explain briefly how, in our opinion, the criticism of the editorial on Vietnam and the way in which it was handled, reflect the kind of premises, procedures and habits of thought which have contributed to our Party's present difficulties.

At the heart of the issue presented to the NEC at its regular session in May 1975 was a clash between two views of the Vietnam war and in fact two views of the entire international situation. The difference between the two positions is considerable and a thorough examination of them and how they were arrived at might well be called for. Here we wish only to demonstrate that the view endorsed in May 1975 by the NEC was wholly incompatible with earlier positions it had adopted, positions which, however ineffectively argued, were reflected in Section St. Louis's criticism.

In essence the view advanced in May by the staff and the National Secretary was that socialists (especially socialists in the imperialist countries) had an obligation to support the right of oppressed nations fighting for national self-determination, that Vietnam was such a case, and further, while the conflict had a dimension of Soviet-U.S. imperialist contention, this did not alter the main character of the war which pitted progressive Vietnamese nationalism against U.S. imperialism.

Previously the SLP had advanced the position that the basic character of the Vietnamese war was a fight between two superpower imperialist camps, that socialists should not support the Vietnamese liberation forces who were pawns of the Soviet Union and China (perhaps no better than the U.S. puppets), and that in most cases the nations fighting for national liberation since World War II were not nations at all but "anachronisms," and that everything that occurred in the

international arena was completely dominated and determined by the superpowers.

A careful reading of the May NEC proceedings dealing with the Vietnamese issue, coupled with a familiarity with past Party history on this issue, cannot help but show that in endorsing unanimously the reply to Section St. Louis, the NEC was reversing a previous Party position.

What is of greater importance, however, is that there was no attempt by the NEC to explain its reasons for concurring with the new position. There was no attempt to criticize the old view that was being superceded, or to even comment on this belated reversal on perhaps the most significant issue of the past decade. In fact there was virtually no recognition or admission that a change was occurring and several NEC members expressly tried to deny on the floor that such was the case.

The Party's official view of the world situation was being altered and very nearly reversed. We were clearly abandoning an earlier position. Yet not the slightest conclusion was drawn nor was the slightest examination made into what had led us to a false view in the first place.

A significant number of NEC members said nothing at all, despite the fact that at least half the NEC was comprised of members who had been instrumental in endorsing and upholding a position in direct contradiction to the one endorsed last May.

In correcting our earlier position on Vietnam and the

international situation, it was our feeling that we abandoned a mistaken view of the world that hampered our thinking for many years. Yet the implications and even benefits of making such a needed adjustment have not been fully grasped because we did not squarely and explicitly confront our past error, and therefore have not necessarily gotten to its roots and corrected the factors that led to it.

Moreover, since none of this was fully explained to the membership, there is considerable question whether the Party as a whole fully understands and agrees with the implications of the changed outlook.

The entire process was an object lesson in how we embraced one position, only to abandon it later, without engaging in any self-criticism or even substantial debate. We believe such procedures can themselves play a large role in leading to incorrect positions and in fact are fatal to a revolutionary party.

If there is any doubt that the positions we are discussing are diametrically opposed and incompatible, compare the following statements taken on the one hand from the 1975 NEC session and on the other from the 1966 NEC session.

In the 1975 report we find that "...to argue that the imperialist drives of the major powers completely negate the national independence of all nations is a gross overstatement and has nothing in common with Marxism, or for that matter, with reality...As long as imperialism and colonialism exist, peoples will fight for the right to self-determination and

national independence. Under certain conditions they can win. And so long as a people are fighting against the imperialist powers, on the side of historical progress...their movement should be recognized as progressive."

Continuing, the 1975 report states, "...to reject out of hand the possibility of any successful national movement is completely mechanical. To rule out all support for national liberation movements in all cases threatens to reduce socialist internationalism to an empty phrase or theoretical posturing. The socialist movement has consistently supported the right of oppressed nations to self-determination..."

Further, "The presence of imperialist interests on both sides of a war does not automatically negate the nationalist character of a war....To deny the possibility of political independence or the chances of a nation winning self-determination is to grossly exaggerate the abilities of the superpowers to shape events and to underestimate the forces of resistance."

And finally the 1975 report declares, "While the final death-blow [to the superpowers] must come from the industrial proletariat in the imperialist countries, the struggle of oppressed peoples in other nations plays a significant role."

Contrast the above view with the position endorsed at the 1966 NEC session. The 1966 report declares:

"As we have emphasized again and again, the struggle is proving itself more and more as one of a series of global contests between the economic imperialism of plutocratic

United States on the one hand, and Sino-Russian bureaucratic politico-economic imperialism on the other. Whatever other elements are injected into the global struggle, they are incidental to it. This remains the well-considered judgment of the SLP on this ruthless contest for imperialist supremacy in the dying capitalist world, and nothing that has happened or has been argued has in any degree affected this judgment. Indeed no other judgment makes any sense in the full context of the global struggle in this confused and turbulent period."

A few paragraphs later, that same report stated, "Nor is it the concern at this late date of Marxian socialists to aid the fight for so-called liberation of small states...It is the worldwide struggle between the two giant imperialisms, East and West, that sets the tone, and marks the real issue involved in this Wagnerian "Goetterdämmerung," this twilight of the evil gods of universal class rule. They, and not the incidental petty victims in the international class struggle, determine the issue and vital interests at stake, as far as men can so determine." (Emphasis added.)

And lest there be any question as to the status attributed to this position, the 1966 report includes a Press Committee statement that declares, "having been adopted unanimously by the NEC in session," this view "is now the Party's carefully considered Marxian analysis of, and position on, the global imperialist conflict...."

As we said earlier, we did not intend in this report

to make a full examination of these two views and their differences. But we do wish to make a few comments.

The earlier position in our opinion is incorrect and even dangerous. Not only does it run counter to the course of history in the twentieth century, but it contradicts the most basic premise of Marxism, namely that the course of history is shaped by class struggle between oppressed and oppressor. Instead it contends that history is shaped by the antagonism or contention of ruling classes among themselves.

This narrow outlook tends to isolate the Western industrial proletariat and the Party itself from the revolutionary national and class struggles sweeping the globe. It was also this thesis that was largely responsible for the incorrect analysis of the Vietnam war, an analysis which colored considerably our practical work in the sixties.

In fact, we do not think it too strong to say that a position which dismisses the revolutionary movements of the non-Western world as "petty, incidental victims," not only fails to comprehend their significance, it abandons socialist internationalism.

What's more, attributing everything to the superpowers holds the inherent danger of substituting a simplistic generality for a concrete analysis of international situations. In fact, this view tells us in advance that "whatever other elements are injected into the global struggle [between the superpowers], they are incidental to it." If in this manner everything is attributed to the contention of the superpowers,

we create a rationale for avoiding a concrete Marxist investigation of the various struggles around the globe. Instead of leading us toward a deeper understanding of them and of the course of history today, such a view leads us toward deadening generalities and isolation.

But even more important than the difference in these two views, on which we feel quite strongly, is the totally passive, almost unconscious manner in which one was substituted for the other. Without debate, without explanation, without discussion, either at the NEC session or even from the membership upon receiving the proceedings, a critical Party position and world outlook was reversed.

We can conceive of only two possible explanations. Either our Party has become so lax and unattentive to important questions that this glaring contradiction passed completely unnoticed, even by those who had strenuously upheld the old position against all challenges in the past. Or, our membership has become so inactive and resigned to having "someone else" determine Party policy that it seeks to take no active role in internal discussions of position. How else can this lack of response or inertia be explained?

As indicated before, we are not seeking to refight past battles. But it seemed absolutely necessary to provide at least one concrete example of what is meant by a "less rigorous application of the standards of Marxism," "a dogmatic approach to theory," the absence of sufficient Party debate, and in general an example of "methods of theoretical and

practical work" that destroy our effectiveness.

We believe that a thorough discussion of this situation, in which we have all played a part, will help us develop ways of correcting these habits and result in a fuller and more effective participation in our organization and make all of us better socialists.

Fraternally submitted,

Richard Bell
Robert Bills
Mary Jane Grohs
Stanley Karp

Weekly People Staff.

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Considering the length and the difficulties of the period it covers, the report of the Weekly People staff is relatively brief. Like myself, the staff felt the need for frankness, the need to get to the point as quickly and as sharply as possible, as expressed in the opening section of my report.

Despite its brevity, however, it clearly raises important matters that should receive the most careful attention. One, though only one, of these matters is the editorship of the Weekly People. Resolving that problem has now become the unavoidable responsibility of this convention, which I'm sure comes as no surprise to any of you. We have reached a point where the solution to that question, as well as a thorough evaluation of the other matters raised in the above report, have become absolutely essential to the continued publication of the Weekly People.

General

Circumstances here did not permit us to compile the usual statistics or prepare summaries and comments on general agitational activities such as leaflet distribution, public lectures, study classes, discussion groups, etc. Nor were we able to prepare resumes on such matters as radio and television, self-service newsstands, police interferences, the field work by Comrades Mike Murphy, Constance Blomen, Sidney Blanchard and William Braatz, contacts, New York Labor News sales and other subjects that would ordinarily be included in a report to the national convention.

We have, however, compiled some statistics on Weekly People subscriptions and bundle orders. And we do, as a matter of course, keep records on leaflet and pamphlet printings. Consequently, I am able to present the following information here.

Party Press

The average weekly number of Weekly Peoples printed during 1975 was 10,350, the best weekly average in quite a few years. While it by no means represents any spectacular increase in total circulation, it does reflect small increases in all three areas--subscriptions, bundle orders and special issues. Thus, the most encouraging aspect of the average weekly figure was that it attests to a reversal of the trend of the past several years. We hope, of course, that it proves to be a permanent reversal, and that we can now concentrate on steadily

and significantly increasing the circulation--and particularly the subscription list--of the Weekly People.

With that aim in view, we have made two attempts to launch a Weekly People publicity drive. The first--a very limited effort--proved to be a failure, primarily because we did not time it at all well. The second cannot be fully evaluated yet. Initial results, however, have not been very encouraging and lead us to think that we would do well to consider other means than the college papers, union papers and selected periodicals that we used for our first attempts.

One area where we know that better methods must be applied and efforts intensified is in trying to secure renewals. Neither the follow-up material sent by National Headquarters, nor the follow-up efforts of our subdivisions and members in the field, are adequate to this important aspect of our work. Yet, despite all our resolves, we have not yet been able to improve them.

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During 1975, we printed over 2,200,000 leaflets. This is almost as many leaflets as were printed during the 1972 national campaign. While I do not believe it to be a record, I have no doubt that there have been few noncampaign years during which a greater number of leaflets were printed, shipped and, I assume, distributed.

Since the last report on books and pamphlets printed (1973 NEC session) the following have been printed:

<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Year</u>
1,022	Ancient Society	1975
2,025	Capital and Labor	1975
4,700	Crises In America	1975
2,500	Marxism vs. Soviet Despotism	1975
1,000	28th National Convention Supplement	1973
700	28th National Convention Report	1973
1,000	Reform or Revolution	1974
2,500	Socialism: Questions Most Frequently Asked and Their Answers	1975
2,500	Socialist Industrial Unionism, The Workers' Power	1974
2,500	The Truth About Inflation	1974

Currently, "Unionism: Fraudulent or Genuine?" is at the printer's. Other pamphlets are scheduled for reprinting as soon as we can review them for possible updating.

Party Finances

For the first time that I know of, the national convention is meeting prior to the annual audit by a firm of certified public accountants of the Party's financial books and records for the previous year. That audit is now scheduled for the first week in March. It will be made by the firm of Bartig, Basler and Ray, the same one that did the audit for the year 1974. As soon after that audit as possible, arrangements will be made to supply every member with a copy of a financial statement clearly and concisely presenting the Party's financial operations and financial condition.

Whether it will be printed as a separate document or included in the report of the proceedings of this convention (as last year's was included in the printed proceedings of the May 31-June 2 NEC session) is yet to be determined.

International

Australia

Except for a brief letter dealing with routine matters received in mid-July, I have heard nothing from the SLP of Australia for over a year. As I reported to the NEC at its regular session, I had written Comrade Frank Prince on May 2, bringing him and the Australian comrades up to date on developments in our Party and commenting on several matters that Comrade Prince had raised in his last letter to me. Under separate cover, I also sent him a copy of the printed proceedings of the 1973 NEC session, receipt of which he routinely acknowledged in his July letter. Comrade Prince added a P.S. stating, "I will write later re matters arising from your May 2 letter." However, as indicated, he has not done so to date.

At this writing, I cannot tell you the status of the Australian SLP's account with our business office. It will be given when the financial report has been completed. At present, all I can report is that 62 copies of the Weekly People are sent to Australia each week for which the Australian SLP pays--50 to Comrade O'Conal and 12 to the Victoria Labor College in Melbourne.

After the above had been written, I received the follow-

ing from Comrade Frank Prince.

23-1-76

Mr. Nathan Karp
National Secretary
S.L.P. of America

Dear Comrade Karp:

The following is a summary of activities during the period February 1, 1975 to date of writing.

Routine work has been maintained at about the same level as the preceding 12 months. The 2 main centres of our activity continue to be the Sunday afternoon outdoor meetings and the monthly Discussion Meetings.

DOMAIN MEETINGS

Nineteen of these we held. We try to go every fortnight weather, sickness etc. permitting. The speaking is done by Brian Blanchard whilst I look after the literature selling. We start at 2 PM with Brian speaking from about 3 to 5 PM. Our literature stands and general display attract a lot of attention throughout the afternoon. In October last, Brian drew 5 new boards which freshened up the display. At the Domain this year 248 pamphlets and 81 Weekly Peoples have been sold.

Audiences have again been variable both qualitatively and quantitatively. Actual numbers range from 12 to 200. Unfortunately we have not yet built that reliable core of regulars necessary for more consistent audience numbers. Most of our listeners show interest in what we have to say and many have expressed agreement. But few show any inclination to commit themselves in any meaningful way.

CONTACTS

The main source of contacts is the Domain Meetings from which we received 32. These constitute people who have purchased literature and given name and address when asked if they would like further information. Our leaflet work brought in 6 coupon inquiries and the WEEKLY PEOPLE on sale at the Railway Stations brought in 2 subs and one interested person.

Our mailing list is now 60, all of whom, with the exception of 7 who live out of Sydney, are sent Discussion Meeting notices.

LITERATURE SALES

This year we purchased 415 pamphlets from the NYLN.

Party literature is on sale at:

Domain Meetings
Discussion Meetings
2 Sydney Bookshops
Rationalist Association Bookshop
Rationalist Association Domain Meeting
Victorian Labor College

30 pamphlets were sold to mail buyers.

NEWSSTANDS & BOOKSHOPS

These are serviced by me every 3 weeks. Sales of both WP and pamphlets have been disappointing and have shown no improvement over the year.

LEAFLET DISTRIBUTION

We did not reprint any leaflets this year. Stocks were built up in 1974. Leaflet distribution was as follows:

May Day March	1,650
Redfern Housing Complex	2,000
Sydney Technical College	1,160
Surry Hills Housing Complex	750
	<u>5,560</u>

This was done by me with the help of a sympathiser who also lends a hand at the Domain occasionally.

LECTURES

Brian Blanchard gave a talk entitled "Marxism Today" to the Rationalist Association of New South Wales. Audience was 60 and Brian spoke for 45 minutes and answered questions for an hour. He and other party members answered questions after the meeting was officially ended.

MAY DAY

We make a special effort to mount as big a display as possible at the gates of the Sydney Domain where the May Day Procession terminates.

In addition to our usual literature racks and display boards we had a special display of De Leon's works. A 7' x 5' copy of a Steinhilber cartoon exposing the labor fakir caused comment. Two 5' x 4' signs with large photos of Marx, Engels and De Leon complete our set-up for May Day.

DISCUSSION MEETINGS

Discussion Meetings were held on the 4th Sunday night of each month, February to November, and the 1st Sunday in December.

Attendances range from 5 to 14 with an average of 9. Whilst the Discussion Meetings have not been as successful as we would like, we do have a small core of regulars.

At each meeting selections of pamphlets and papers are on show. The general procedure has been a 30-40 minute talk by me on a facet or facets of the SLP followed by questions

from the floor which are answered by Brian or me.

The December 7 meeting was devoted to De Leon and his contribution to Socialist thought.

In 1976 we will hold 12 Discussion Meetings as per notice enclosed. At the last meeting in 1975 it was decided to devote time at future meetings to the study of basic Socialist literature.

CONCLUSION

As I re-read this report I'm well aware the sum total is not what we would like it to be or in some ways what it could be. However with due consideration of a number of factors it is not an easy matter to see how we can at present improve the situation. We should be able to increase activities in certain areas and will try to do so later on in the year.

The Australian working class is continuing its self-defeating process of Liberal Party in--Labor Party out. As a number of commentators have pointed out this pathetic procedure goes on without any real conviction on the part of the people as a whole. There is no evidence of increased social awareness within the working class. The reforms of the Labor government left over 300,000 unemployed. The resultant disillusionment brought on the conservative, "sensible government" Liberal Party into power. Outside of the Liberal/Labor perimeters there is no activity to speak about. The workers as a whole or in significant numbers seem to have no conception of an alternative to this system of capitalist exploitation. Yet we know even from our limited contact with workers at the

Domain etc. there are many workers who agree that Socialism is the solution to problems facing us today. And we realise that we must discharge the obligation placed upon us by our understanding of capitalism and the sure knowledge that only positive working class action can arrest the slide to social anarchy of frightening proportions. Socialism must overcome all and we must play our part.

With best wishes from us all here in Australia to our American Comrades from whom mankind demands so much.

Yours fraternally,

[signed] Frank Prince

Correspondence Secretary.

Canada

Due to the lengthy Canadian postal strike, contact with the SLP of Canada was minimal during the latter part of 1975. I finally called Comrade Alan Sanderson on December 10 with regard to sending a fraternal delegate to this convention. During that telephone conversation, I asked him to prepare a brief summary of SLP activities in Canada for inclusion in this report. That report follows:

Mr. Nathan Karp
SLP of America

Dear Comrade Karp:

The following is a brief summary of Canadian SLP activities for the year 1975:

*

On the whole, 1975 was another busy year for the SLP of

Canada, although the amount of literature distributed was down considerably from the high of the past few years for a number of reasons, including the fact that age is slowing down some of our members. No new members were added in 1975 and one National member-at-large, Janet Gabow, resigned in September when she moved to the U.S.A.

Section Montreal carries on a consistent mailing program, in addition to random distribution of literature in public places such as public transport. During the year the Section distributed in these ways a total of some 3000 French language and 2000 English language leaflets. In addition to this the Section distributed nearly 2600 copies of the Weekly People and nearly 300 copies of the Socialist Press Bulletin. Eight one-year subs, one six-month sub and one three-month^{sub} were sent in to the Weekly People, and approximately \$100 worth of literature was sold at one bookstore and to contacts. The Section expects that it will soon have some additional leaflet titles available for French-Canadian workers.

Section Toronto distributes the bulk of its leaflets at shopping plazas and in apartment buildings. For the past few years, owing to decreasing manpower, it has used paid help in this work on special occasions such as election campaigns. During 1975 total distribution was approximately 50,000 leaflets, 3000 Weekly People and 150 Socialist Press Bulletin--down a bit from the previous year but nevertheless representing a determined effort on the part of the few persons engaged.

The Section fielded Comrade George Shand in Riverdale

riding (Metro-Toronto) in the September 18 Ontario general election. 20,000 election leaflets, "Socialist Labor Party: Position and Program" were distributed in the riding and the Section held a public meeting there in conjunction with the campaign, with Comrade Shand as speaker.

Three other public meetings were held during the year-- a Paris Commune commemoration meeting in March, a May Day celebration meeting, and a De Leon commemoration meeting in December. The attendance at these meetings, as well as at the election campaign meeting, was small.

In August the Section again held its annual picnic at Charles Daley Park on Lake Ontario. Attendance was down somewhat from the previous year but a near record collection of \$120 was achieved with the help of some comrades and friends in absentia.

At the end of May the Section moved with the National Office from the old shared headquarters at 153 Church street to the second floor of an office building at 85 King street east. Although the move was a change for the better in most respects, it meant giving up a prime location for the Section's Weekly People box--the outside of the Church street entrance. The result has been a sharp decline of sales to about \$55, or about half that of the previous year. Also contributing to the decline was the fact that Canadian Customs officials held up bundles of Weekly People at the border during the recent prolonged Canadian postal strike. Literature sales, also, appeared to suffer from the move, down from \$165 to about \$100.

Thirty five contacts requested information during 1975, a few of whom are now receiving the Socialist Press Bulletin.

Although the Section's Study Class was again poorly attended as far as numbers are concerned, one student attended regularly every week from near the beginning of the year until mid-May, when his work took him back to his home town of Peterborough, Ontario.

In early October, by arrangement with their teacher, six young students from a Metro-Toronto secondary school visited Section headquarters for a briefing on the Party's principles and program by Section Organizer W.B. Hendry. Comrade Hendry reported that they asked some very intelligent questions, and he added: "Their expression of thanks, and eagerness to accept the free literature given them was most encouraging."

Section Vancouver reports that it operated with seven members in 1975 but that three were out of town a good part of the year, and that because of this shortage of manpower the Section's activities did not measure up to the previous year. Even so, door-to-door leaflet distribution totalled 42,300, and this resulted in twelve write-in contacts. A bright spot was the sudden increase in Weekly People sales during the last half of the year. \$165.70 was collected on self-service stands in spite of the usual vandalism. Also, 756 copies were sold in stores.

During the postal strike the Section received its regular bundle of 200 Weekly People via Greyhound bus. Section Organizer J.A. Fedoruk wrote: "This was not only expensive

but very annoying. Canadian Customs at the border in Blaine, Wash., held up the bundle, so it was necessary to drive there each week in order to retrieve it. This was always a very long and tedious procedure. The stupidity of the bureaucracy is almost unbelievable."

Section Vancouver's literature sales during the year totalled \$47.25. The Section was also successful in collecting \$64.92 from a Vancouver book store on behalf of New York Labor News. This was a debt that should have been paid at least a year ago, and, according to Comrade Fedoruk: "The manager of the store apologized for the delay and expressed his hope to do business with us in the future."

Comrade Minal, the Section's prolific letter writer, wrote 156 letters to various newspapers throughout Canada and the U.S.A. It is not known at present how many were printed.

A highlight of the year was a successful arrangement made by the Section to get the SLP on a Victoria, B.C. radio station "open line" program last June, with Comrade Killman from Washington as guest. Comrade Fedoruk reported that: "The questions or comments phoned in were mainly from cranks. Comrade Killman had a tortuous trail to follow. Nevertheless, he did manage to explain our program quite well, and struck a telling blow at the 'phony socialist' N.D.P. government of B.C."

Our 11 National Members-at-large are more or less isolated and removed from the mainstream of Section activities. Nevertheless, most keep in touch with National Office from time to time and several, notably Comrade Steve Gabow and Harold Row-

bottom, live fairly close to Toronto and participate on occasion in Section Toronto's activities, while on the west coast Comrade C.C. Roth of Hatzic, B.C., in the Fraser Valley, is able to visit our Vancouver comrades once in a while.

The Socialist Press Bulletin mail circulation is again down slightly as compared with the previous year. As of January, 1976 our mailing list for individual copies was down to 329 from 338 in March, 1975. Bundle orders were down to 88 from 110. Total Bulletin expenses for 1975 were \$1157.69. Donations to the Bulletin fund were a total of \$717.45. We continue to need more writers.

Leaflets printed during 1975 totalled 60,000, consisting of 20,000 "Socialist Labor Party: Position and Program" on bond (costing \$763); and 40,000 of this leaflet in abridged form, on newsprint (costing \$851).

Literature purchased by our National Office from New York Labor News during 1975 totalled \$78.15. Literature sales totalled \$105.73. National Office stock on hand at the end of the year was approximately \$315 in English language and \$50 in foreign languages.

National Contacts: At the end of the year National Office placed an ad measuring about 3 1/4 x 5 inches in four maritime province newspapers at a total cost of \$280. The ad advertised the pamphlet "Socialism: QUESTIONS Most Frequently Asked and Their ANSWERS," also free literature. To date as a result of these ads we have had four replies from Newfoundland, nine from Nova Scotia and seven from New Brunswick, and have sold a total

of \$8.35 worth of literature. We hope some will request the S.P. Bulletin, also subscribe to the Weekly People. In any case, we feel that the response is encouraging.

Financial: During 1975 National Office received \$7278.48 and expended \$7599.35. We are still solvent, but unless rising costs soon take a breather, we will soon need greater contributions than ever before from members and friends in order to remain solvent.

To conclude, I won't dwell on our problems as I think the American SLP already has enough of its own to contend with. However, I might just point out that there seems to be a fairly large cloud coming up on our horizon in the shape of the Ontario Election Reform Act, 1975. This was spotted last September when Section Toronto fielded Comrade Shand in the Ontario general election of that month. It seems that Canadian reformers can be just as zealous in undermining democracy as are their American counterparts. Although Comrade Shand represented the SLP in Riverdale (Metro Toronto), he was officially registered as an INDEPENDENT candidate because the SLP is not a registered party in the province. But that's just the beginning. The requirements for registration are all but prohibitive for a party of our small numbers. So what about the next Ontario election when the machinery of the Act will presumably be in full swing, and what about the work of our Party in Ontario generally? According to our "liberally-minded" Ontario legislators, New Democratic Party members among them, the following provision, among other legalistic jargon,

shall obtain: "No political party and no person, corporation or trade union acting on behalf of the political party shall accept contributions for the purposes of the political party or for the purposes of any constituency association or for the candidacy of any person at an election or for an election campaign of any person unless the political party is registered under this Act." (My emphasis.) We took this matter up with the Ontario Commission on Election Contributions and Expenses and were advised that the Act meant what it said, moreover that the Commission had considered our letter pointing out the Act's seeming denial of political democracy but "did not feel any action by it was called for at this time."

Well, we shall see what the future will bring to Ontario in the way of political suppression, and whether the federal government will not soon follow suit with more reform of its own to knock the minority parties out of the running. One thing seems sure, that determined action by a united working class is called for, and that very soon, if political dissent is not to be gagged and the majority not to be mired in industrial feudalism. We believe with you that Socialist Industrial Democracy is the hope of humanity, and towards the early realization of that lofty goal the Canadian SLP extends to the SLP of America in Convention assembled GREETINGS, and strong hopes that your labors may be rewarded with every possible success.

Faternally submitted,

[signed] Alan Sanderson
National Secretary

January 20, 1976

National Headquarters

There would be little point to repeating here any of the details relating to the move of our National Headquarters from Brooklyn, New York to Palo Alto, California. All the important details are already a matter of record, having been conveyed to the subdivisions and members via general letters and the reports to the last two sessions of the NEC.

This does not mean that all members are aware of those details. In fact, there can be little doubt that there are members who are not aware of what goes on at National Headquarters and who does what there. Whether that is due to their failure to attend section meetings, or to pay close attention to the correspondence presented there, or to read the proceedings of the NEC sessions and/or conventions, or to read the Weekly People thoroughly, I cannot say. Perhaps all of these reasons play a part.

I am, therefore, prompted to list again the members of the staff and the department in which each of them works:

The Weekly People staff consists of Comrades Richard J. Bell (D.J.B.), Robert Bills (R.B.), Mary Jane Grohs (M.J.G.) and Stanley Karp (S.K.).

The business office staff consists of Comrades Doris Ballantyne, our bookkeeper, and James J. Horvath, who handles the subscription department, assists Comrade Ballantyne and helps out with the mailing of the Weekly People.

Comrade Ken Ellis is the Labor News shipping clerk and the Weekly People mailing clerk.

Comrades Donna Bills and Genevieve Gunderson are the national office staff. (Until she was laid up with a bad back in mid-December, Bessie Gabow worked in the national office part-time--four five-hour days per week.)

Comrade E.A. Swiatek is here for the duration of the campaign as campaign manager.

Comrades Robert McLintock and Louis Lipcon help out consistently on a voluntary basis. Comrade McLintock helps with the Weekly People mailing and Comrade Lipcon keeps the Weekly People file up to date.

Needless to say, the work of the members of the staff is not confined to the department to which they "belong." Most of them are often called upon to help out elsewhere.

Incidentally, I also work at National Headquarters.

In Memoriam

It is always a sad and painful duty to report the names of SLP comrades and supporters who have been claimed by death. The list recorded below is distressingly lengthy. It affords little consolation, and in no way minimizes the loss to our Party, to note that the list covers a longer than usual period--from May, 1973 to the end of 1975.

In recording their names, we give recognition to all of them as men and women whose character, integrity and devotion to principle have earned our respect and a place in our memories.

Members

D.S. Tomcheff	Sect. Cook County, Ill.	May 21, 1973
Mildred Bopp	Sect. St. Petersburg, Fla.	May 20, 1973
Raymond J. Gray	Sect. Lynn, Mass.	June 30, 1973
Milton Weinberger	Sect. New York, N.Y.	July 13, 1973
Rose Weber	Sect. Milwaukee, Wis.	July 11, 1973
Matt Karlovich	Sect. Milwaukee, Wis.	Sept. 7, 1973
Rebecca Bama	Section New York, N.Y.	Oct. 7, 1973
Sarah Karp	Sect. Philadelphia, Pa.	Oct. 19, 1973
Peter Goonis	Sect. Wayne County, Mich.	Nov. 12, 1973
Peter Anastasoff	Sect. St. Louis, Mo.	Oct. 24, 1973
Vito Carnelli	Sect. Rockford, Ill.	Nov. 14, 1973
Pete Buzoff, Sr.	Sect. Los Angeles, Ca.	Nov. 26, 1973
Abraham M. Scherzer	Sect. New York, N.Y.	Dec. 14, 1973
E.O. Larsen	Sect. Tacoma, Wash.	Oct. 1, 1973
Peter Martincek	Sect. Allegheny Co., Pa.	Oct. 1973
W.C. Carl	Sect. Los Angeles, Ca.	
George Williamsa	Nat'l. m-a-l, Ariz.	Feb. 4, 1974
George Scheftel	Sect. Kings Co., N.Y.	Feb. 28, 1974
Abe Fisher	Sect. Milwaukee, Wis.	March 12, 1974
Gust Evanoff	Sect. St. Louis Co., Mn.	March 21, 1974
Jennie Sacridier	Sect. San Francisco, Ca.	April 6, 1974
Christ L. Stoyanoff	Nat'l. m-a-l, Ill.	April 6, 1974
Gladys Arosen	Sect. Oakland, Ca.	April 26, 1974
Joseph Connolly	Sect. Wayne Co., Mich.	June 1974
John Stoyanoff	Sect. St. Louis, Mo.	July 1974
Charles Murdock	Sect. San Francisco, Ca.	July 15, 1974

Joseph Koss	Sect. Wayne Co., Mich.	Aug. 7, 1974
Oscar J. Burden	Sect. Akron, Ohio	Aug. 25, 1974
Christ Evanoff	Sect. Wayne Co., Mich.	Nov. 14, 1974
Carl D. Corbin	Sect. St. Joseph Co., Ind.	Oct. 2, 1974
Sture Tilly	Sect. Waltham, Mass.	Nov. 3, 1974
O. Martin Olson	Sect. Jamestown, N.Y.	Feb. 15, 1975
Ferdinand Seibert	Sect. Minneapolis, Mn.	Feb. 23, 1975
Velian Dishlakoff	Sect. Onondaga Co., N.Y.	Jan. 20, 1975
Rudy Kosic	Sect. Los Angeles, Ca.	April 26, 1975
Sarah Schneider	Sect. Oakland, Ca.	June 1975
Joseph Riedl	Sect. Akron, Ohio	July 13, 1975
Robert Hamilton	Sect. New York, N.Y.	July 16, 1975
Max Lauer	Sect. St. Joseph Co., Ind.	May 25, 1975
Dan C. Morrill	Nat'l. m-a-l, Virginia	Aug. 5, 1975
Frank Landwehr	Sect. Pontiac, Mich.	
Anna Epstein	Sect. New York, N.Y.	Sept. 5, 1975
James Wagoner (Arabadjieff)	Sect. St. Louis, Mo.	Sept. 7, 1975
Juliana Antonoff	Sect. Los Angeles, Ca.	Sept. 29, 1975
Sophie Lipcon	Sect. San Francisco, Ca.	Oct. 1, 1975
Wm. Kelenic	Sect. St. Petersburg, Fla.	Oct. 6, 1975
Peter Evanoff (Pascal Vaneff)	Sect. Akron, Ohio	Oct. 8, 1975
Katie Grbavcic	Sect. Cleveland, Ohio	Dec. 7, 1975
Joseph Tasich	Sect. Akron, Ohio	Nov. 21, 1975
Morris Cantor	Sect. Gr. Miami, Fla.	Dec. 14, 1975
Olaf Skoogfors	Sect. Philadelphia, Pa.	Dec. 20, 1975
Fred Schnautz	Sect. Evansville, Ind.	May 16, 1975
Charles W.L. Marret	Nat'l. m-a-l, Ky.	Oct. 6, 1975

Sympathizers

Sten Brandborg	Richmond, Calif.	Jan. 1973
James Kuroly	Wyandotte, Mich.	Aug. 1973
Elizabeth Mitich	Akron, Ohio	Sept. 5, 1973
Ellen Lanneau	Fayetteville, Ark.	Sept. 16, 1973
Steve Andrews	Edwardsville, Ill.	Nov. 10, 1973
Peter Dimich	West Wyoming, Pa.	
Mary Papadopolos	Buffalo, NY	April 17, 1974
Harry Fertik	Philadelphia, Pa.	July 6, 1974
Anna Galcoey	Cleveland, Ohio	Sept. 1974
Lillian F. Shapiro	St. Petersburg, Fla.	Sept. 27, 1974
James Murphy	Hartford, Ct.	Sept. 27, 1974
Katie Thallander	San Francisco, Ca.	
Anton Kopchaff	Chicago, Ill.	Dec. 27, 1974
Mark Kotur	Steubenville, Ohio	Jan. 17, 1975
Daniel Brezbrodica	Bronx, NY	Feb. 12, 1975
Anna Kulusich	Reseda, Ca.	Jan. 30, 1975
Patty Braatz	Minneapolis, Mn.	April 18, 1975
Joseph F. Sibley	San Diego, Ca.	May 7, 1975
Victoria Colich	St. Petersburg, Fla.	June 9, 1975
David John Morris	Gary, Ind.	July 14, 1975
Bruce Benson	Denver, Colo.	Aug. 4, 1975
Joseph Lentz	Milwaukee, Wis.	Oct. 5, 1975
Theresa Gotal	St. Petersburg, Fla.	Oct. 28, 1975
Stanley Gledich	Chicago, Ill.	Oct. 27, 1975

Conclusion

Comrades: Many hours of thought, discussion and reflection have gone into the preparation of this report. While we would be less than candid if we denied experiencing occasional periods of frustration and pessimism, it would be a mistake to see this report as the product of those sentiments.

We believe that the picture of the serious problems presented here is as real as it is threatening. In fact I personally believe I would be remiss in my duty and delinquent both in my responsibility and loyalty to SLP principles if I failed to present the situation with absolute frankness.

At two past NEC sessions I stated that what we did or failed to do would play a decisive role in determining the future of the SLP. I repeat that statement to this national convention. If I knew how to make it stronger, I would.

The national convention is the highest single body in our Party. What better arena to thoroughly and frankly discuss our problems, fully examine our difficulties and make a determined effort to resolve them? To what other arena can we turn for proposals and solutions?

We of the SLP confront more than one kind of problem. We face the difficult tasks of proletarian revolution, and the particular problems of our own organization. By the same measure, our response must be of more than one kind. It must be both individual and collective.

It must be individual because those of us who have the

capacity or the potential to serve the Party and our cause must do so, now. This is an immediate, practical question which can no longer be tabled.

Our response must also be collective, because without the alert, well-informed, active support of the membership, no individual efforts can sustain a revolutionary socialist party. Our collective membership alone can provide the will and determination that gives our movement life. To borrow De Leon's words, they alone can serve "as the instruments of the revolution."

It is no easy task that confronts us. There are no ready-made answers available, no outside agencies to turn to, no substitutes for our own collective effort and determination. As Comrade Arnold Petersen once wrote, "History will judge our Party not alone as regards the merits of our program for a new and infinitely higher social order, but also with respect to ourselves as individual members, living up to all its implications and obeying its imperious and stern demands."

Many of us here have given years, some decades, of hard work to the Socialist Labor Party. We have come through many difficult periods together, united by our common goal. All those years of effort, the very existence of our Party, is now on the line. Anything short of concrete steps forward will be the equivalent of failure.

If we do our work well, if we respond as the importance of our Party demands, we will not only be able to leave this con-

vention stronger than we came, we will make sure we return again with a healthier, stronger organization, better prepared for the inevitable struggle ahead and closer to the socialist world to which we are all committed.

Fraternally submitted,

William Z. Foster
National Secretary.

With the omission of the sections dealing with the 1976 National Campaign, Party Press, Party Finances, International and In Memoriam, the reading of the report was completed at 3:35 p.m.

On motion, it was decided that the report be discussed before being referred to any committee or committees.

On motion, discussion of the report was scheduled for Sunday morning's session.

Since time permitted, the National Secretary read the section of his report dealing with the 1976 National Campaign. On motion, discussion of this section was also scheduled for Sunday.

On motion, the rules were suspended and the convention proceeded to the election of a Committee on the Availability of National Candidates.

On motion, it was decided to elect a committee of five. The following were elected: Joseph Pirincin (Ohio), Louis Fisher (Illinois), Frank Girard (Michigan), John O'Neill (Ohio) and Robert Clement (New Jersey).

On motion, the rest of the agenda for the day was dispensed with and the convention adjourned until Sunday, 9 a.m.

Morning Session, Sunday, February 8

The convention was called to order by chairperson Taylor at 9:15 a.m.

Alan Karp was elected chairperson for the day.

John O'Neill was elected vice chairperson of the day.

On roll call, all present.

Minutes of sessions of Saturday, February 7 adopted as read.

On motion, the convention went into executive session.

Sergeant-at-arms reported credentials of all in attendance had been checked. Two members who had forgotten their membership cards had been vouched for. On motion, these members were admitted.

On motion each delegate to be asked to comment on the National Secretary's report section by section as presented.

On motion the discussion started with the introductory section of the report.

On motion a ten-minute recess was taken at 11:20 a.m.

On roll call all present when the convention reconvened with the exception of A. Babel who was recorded absent with excuse because of illness.

Sergeant-at-arms reported three members present without membership cards but who were vouched for by others. On motion they were admitted.

Discussion of the introduction to the National Secretary's report by the delegates continued until 1:30 p.m.

Motion made to recess until 3:00 p.m. and then proceed with discussion of the next section of the report.

Before declaring the recess, the chairperson read communications received from Monica Prince, SLP of Australia, and Section St. Petersburg expressing best wishes for a successful convention.

Afternoon Session, Sunday, February 8

The convention was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

On roll call all present except A. Babel who was absent with excuse.

Sergeant-at-arms reported another member present without membership card but vouched for. On motion the member was admitted.

The discussion proceeded on the NEC portion of the National Secretary's report.

A. Babel arrived at 4:00 p.m. and was seated.

On motion a 10-minute recess was taken at 4:55 p.m.

Roll call taken upon reconvening showed all delegates present.

Upon completion of the discussion on the section dealing with the NEC, motion was passed that the sections on State of Organization and the Editorial Department be excluded from the original decision to discuss each section of the report in convention assembled before referring it to committee.

On motion it was decided to proceed with the election of committees as on agenda.

1. Committee on State of Organization.

On motion this committee to consist of five members. The following were elected: James Sim (Michigan), Arnold Babel (New York), Julius Levin (New Jersey), Robert Massi (New York) and George S. Taylor (Pennsylvania).

2. Committee on Party Press and Literature.

On motion this committee to consist of three members.

The following were elected: Bernard Bortnick (Missouri), Frank Girard (Michigan) and Alan Karp (California).

3. Committee on Availability of National Officers.

On motion this committee to consist of three members.

The following were elected: Bruce Cozzini (Wisconsin), Peter Kapitz (Ohio) and Vito DeLisi (Florida).

4. Committee on National Campaign and Related Matters.

On motion this committee to consist of five members.

The following were elected: Herbert Steiner (California), Karl Heck (Minnesota), Paul Barnes (Pennsylvania), Joseph Sabato (Pennsylvania) and Constance Blomen (Massachusetts).

5. Committee on Constitution and Matters Pertaining Thereto.

On motion this committee to consist of three members.

The following were elected: Bernard Reitzes (New York), Louis Fisher (Illinois) and James Horvath (Michigan).

6. Committee on Resolutions.

On motion this committee to consist of three members.

The following were elected: John Morris (Indiana), Edward Gross (Illinois) and Robert Clement (New Jersey).

7. Committee on Platform.

On motion this committee to consist of five members.

The following were elected: Lowell Miller (Michigan), Robert Massi (New York), John O'Neill (Ohio), Bernard Bortnick (Missouri) and Henry Killman (Washington).

On motion it was decided to elect a Committee on Educa-

cational Materials and Development, the committee to consist of three members. The following were elected: Edward Wizek (California), Walter Steinhilber (New York) and Bruce Cozzini (Wisconsin).

Motion made and seconded that all committee meetings be open to all Party members for purpose of observation and comment. Amended to provide that the committees shall reserve the right to declare executive session. Motion passed as amended.

The delegates were polled for introduction of resolutions. On call from the chairperson the following were submitted:

1. From Section Los Angeles, Calif., per E. Wizek, resolution on SLP activity reports in Weekly People. Referred to Committee on Party Press and Literature.
2. From Section Los Angeles, Calif., per E. Wizek, resolution on local statements. Referred to the Committee on Party Press and Literature.
3. From Section Los Angeles, Calif., per E. Wizek, resolution on activity and involvement of membership. Referred to Educational Materials and Development Committee.
4. From Alan Karp, Calif., resolution on Senate Bill S.1. Referred to Committee on Resolutions.
5. From Constance Blomen, Mass., resolution proposing a constitutional amendment that would require delegates and NEC members to call membership meetings following conventions and NEC sessions. Referred to Committee on State of Organization.

6. From James Sim, Mich., proposing that all references to language federations be deleted from the Party's Constitution. Referred to Committee on the Constitution.

7. From Section St. Louis, Mo., per Bernard Bortnick:

a. Resolution proposing change in Article VII, Section 1, of the Party's Constitution. Referred to Committee on Constitution.

b. Recommendation that, if at all feasible, Nathan Karp be nominated as presidential standard-bearer for the Party's 1976 campaign. Referred to Committee on Availability of Candidates.

c. Recommendation that, if at all feasible, Nathan Karp should be nominated as Editor of the Weekly People. Referred to Committee on Availability of National Officers.

8. From Section Passaic County, N.J., per Robert Clement, resolution on creating closer ties between the National Office, the sections and the NEC member. Referred to Committee on State of Organization.

The National Secretary recommended that the sections of the report on the NEC and State of the Organization be referred to the Committee on State of Organization. On motion so ordered.

The National Secretary recommended that the section on the Editorial Department be referred to the Party Press and Literature Committee. On motion so ordered.

The National Secretary recommended that the section on 1976 National Campaign be referred to the National Campaign

Committee. On motion so ordered.

9. From Section Grand Rapids, Mich., per Frank Girard, proposing that Article II, Section 49 (a) of the Constitution be deleted. Referred to Committee on Constitution.

10. Resolution from Illinois State Committee proposing constitutional change to provide for national convention to be held the year preceding a national election. Referred to Committee on Constitution.

11. From Section Minneapolis, resolution regarding activity within unions, etc. Referred to Committee on State of Organization.

12. The National Office submitted the following resolutions:

1. On Study of Convention Proceedings.
2. On Membership Meetings Following Sessions of the NEC.
3. On Class Struggles in Portugal.
4. On Capitalist Economic Crisis.

On motion all four were referred to Committee on Resolutions.

13. The National Office submitted proposed changes in the following provisions of the Party's Constitution:

Article	Section
I	1
II	8
II	47 d, f, g, h
II	48 c
II	49 a, b
IV	9
V	10 a
VII	13
X	1
XI	3
XIII	3
XIII	5

On motion referred to Committee on Constitution.

New Business.

Bernard Reitzes (New York) proposed consideration of the advisability and practicability of holding SLP national conventions more frequently than in national campaign years only. Referred to Committee on State of Organization.

On motion the convention adjourned at 8:45 p.m. to reconvene at noon, Monday, Feb. 9.

Afternoon Session, Monday, February 9

The convention was called to order at 12:10 p.m. by chairperson Karp.

Alan Karp was re-elected chairperson for the day.

George S. Taylor was elected vice chairperson for the day.

On roll call all present.

Minutes of the sessions of February 8 adopted as corrected.

Report of committees.

Committee on Resolutions, R. Clement reporting:

1. Recommended that the resolution on Study of Convention Proceedings and the resolution on Membership Meetings Following Sessions of the NEC be referred to the Committee on State of Organization. On motion recommendation concurred in.

2. Submitted the following resolution on Class Struggles in Portugal:

Since April 1974, the Portuguese people, led by the Portuguese working class which forms a majority of the population, have been determinedly seeking a path out of nearly 50 years of fascist rule.

The overthrow of Portuguese fascism, which was propped up by the U.S. and NATO powers, by the political machine of the Roman Catholic Church, and by a colonial empire in Africa, represented a major setback for world capitalism and world imperialism.

While the immediate collapse of the fascist regime was precipitated by the struggle of Portugal's African colonies for independence, the anti-fascist military coup unleashed a wave of domestic class struggle that has pushed Portuguese society far beyond the objectives of the military elite. That military elite, supported by the Portuguese capitalist class, sought to impose a neo-colonialist settlement in Africa, to reorganize Portuguese fascism in such a manner that its contradictions would pose less of a threat to the underlying class structure, and to provide the bourgeoisie with a "more favorable" climate for capitalist development.

However, after 50 years of fascist oppression the workers and peasants of Portugal had their own goals. At a furious pace the Portuguese people, especially the industrial workers, demanded more than a change of regimes for Portugal. They pressed for real improvements in their conditions of life, for real freedoms and democracy, and for real control over the development of their society. Despite five decades

of fascist propaganda, fostered illiteracy, and terror from the secret police, the Portuguese working class, almost instinctively, came to realize that [the word for] what it wanted was socialism--the one hope of the oppressed proletariat.

From that point on Portugal became, and remains today, a focus of the international struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie. The fundamental contradiction between the two major classes in modern society raged again in a Western European arena that had not witnessed such conflict for many years.

However, the goal of socialism is not easily attained. The Portuguese workers have encountered many obstacles in their way as they sought to find a road to socialism.

In addition to the burdensome legacies of fascism, the workers' struggle was hindered by the continued efforts of Western capitalism, including the U.S. and the CIA, to support the most reactionary elements in the country and defeat the workers' advance. As usual the U.S. government has pursued a policy in the imperialist interests of the U.S. capitalist class, a policy that is in direct conflict with the interests of the majority of the American people who are workers and who only stand to gain if the Portuguese working class gains its freedom.

On the other hand, the imperialists of the Soviet Union saw an opportunity to pursue their imperialist designs in what was once a "Western stronghold." Their interference and maneuvering have proven once again that the U.S.S.R., which

parades under the name of socialism, is an enemy to workers' movements everywhere.

While many bourgeois and reactionary elements, such as General Spínola, have been exposed and chased from the country, many of these elements remain and continue to seek a full restoration of bourgeois, or even fascist, control.

Even more damaging, the workers suffered from the completely unreliable, reformist and opportunist "leadership" of the Communist and Socialist Parties who vie for the role of political arm of the military hierarchy that controls the government. The SP wants to establish a "liberal" capitalist society complete with ties to Western imperialism. The CP wants to establish a repressive bureaucratic state society complete with ties to Soviet imperialism. Neither of these two parties can lead the workers to socialism.

The successes the working class has had in meeting many of these threats is known to all those who have followed their struggle. They have beaten back rightist attempts to regain power. They have guarded against foreign penetration. They have rallied against repression from the various provisional governments.

Most important, however, is the fact that the Portuguese working class has made significant progress toward building its own independent organizations without which socialism is impossible. In the workers council movement the embryos of a socialist industrial-type government emerged. This movement is still developing and its gains are still fragile. But

already it has verified two basic principles of socialism.

One, the Portuguese workers have affirmed that the emancipation of the working class must be the classconscious act of the workers themselves.

Two, they have shown that the establishment of socialism depends on building new forms of proletarian government to replace the class state through a political and industrial movement that places all power and social control in the hands of the working class directly.

While currently suffering from a renewed rightist offensive, the Portuguese working class is far from defeated. Although it is too early to say whether final victory can be won, the Portuguese workers have already demonstrated their courage and their contribution to the cause of international socialism.

Therefore, the Socialist Labor Party of America, in session at its 29th National Convention, resolves:

1. That the SLP declares its solidarity with the workers of Portugal in their struggle against the Portuguese bourgeoisie and all its allies.
2. That the SLP condemns the intervention of the imperialist superpowers in Portugal which is directed against the best interests of the proletariat.
3. That the SLP condemns the anti-working-class maneuvers of the Communist and Socialist Party leaderships.
4. That the SLP supports all those elements in Portugal honestly working to build a movement based on the workers coun-

cils, the important organs of working-class organization that must be expanded and consolidated, and the one possible basis for establishing socialism.

5. That the SLP realizes that the Portuguese working class must settle matters for itself and that no outside force can direct or liberate it.

6. That this resolution be disseminated as widely as possible as an example of the SLP's support for the cause of socialist internationalism.

Fraternally submitted,

Robert Clement
John M. Morris
Edward C. Gross

Committee on Resolutions.

The committee's motion to adopt was seconded. Amended to add the words "the word for" following the word "that" in the 12th line of the fourth paragraph, as indicated in brackets above. The amendment carried. The resolution as amended was adopted.

Don Chamberlain, fraternal delegate from Canada, informed the convention that it would soon be necessary for him to return home and asked for the privilege to address the convention at this time. The request was granted. Chamberlain then addressed the convention, among other things, conveying the fraternal greetings and good wishes of the SLP of Canada.

B. Bortnick and R. Massi submitted their resignations from the Platform Committee because they were preoccupied with work on other committees. On motion both resignations

were accepted.

Sid Fink was elected to the Platform Committee.

On motion the convention recessed at 2:10 p.m. to reconvene at 6 p.m.

Evening Session, Monday, February 9

The convention was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by chairperson Karp.

On roll call all present with exception of R. Clement and L. Miller, both of whom arrived shortly thereafter.

Sergeant-at-arms Kenneth Ellis asked to be relieved because of other obligations. He also reported that sergeant-at-arms R. Beaudette had had to leave. B. Presser was appointed sergeant-at-arms.

Reports of committees.

The Committee on State of Organization reported progress. Committee on Party Press and Literature, B. Bortnick reporting:

1. Reported progress on several of the matters that had been referred to it.
2. Recommended nonconcurrence in Section Los Angeles' resolution on SLP activity reports in the Weekly People. On motion the recommendation was concurred in.

The Committee on the Availability of National Officers reported progress.

Committee on the Availability of National Candidates, L. Fisher reporting:

Your Committee on the Availability of National Candidates

has interviewed some members and wishes to inform the convention that there are members available who would be willing to act as national candidates.

Fraternally submitted,

Louis Fisher
Joseph Pirincin
John O'Neill
Frank Girard

On motion, the report was accepted.

Motion made and seconded that the committee inform the convention of the names of those who had indicated willingness to serve as national candidates, if nominated. The motion failed.

The Committee on Constitution and Related Matters reported progress.

The Committee on Platform reported progress.

The Committee on Educational Materials and Development reported progress.

The Committee on National Campaign reported progress.

Motion made and seconded that the nomination of national candidates take place after the Committee on National Campaign has rendered its report. Amendment to include the report of the Platform Committee failed. The original motion carried.

Motion passed to adjourn and reconvene at 1 p.m. Tuesday and that the first order of business be the report of the Committee on National Campaign.

Afternoon Session, Tuesday, February 10

The convention was called to order at 1:05 p.m. by chairperson Karp.

Alan Karp was re-elected chairperson for the day.

George S. Taylor was re-elected vice chairperson for the day.

On roll call all delegates were present.

The minutes of the Monday sessions were adopted as read.

Report of Committees.

Committee on 1976 National Campaign, J. Sabato reporting, submitted the following report:

The 1976 national campaign presents itself to the working class so thoroughly wrapped in restrictive, undemocratic, unconstitutional legislation that the Party must seriously consider whether in some cases the ballot has become a means to drain the efforts and resources of our membership without any real advantages. The limited availability of signature gatherers and campaign workers and the increase in many states of the number of signatures required, along with the restrictive campaign finance laws all combine to force us to be very careful in determining what states we will attempt to place the Socialist Labor Party on the ballot; being concerned not to expend all of our resources on that attempt alone and neglecting or in other ways allowing our other important agitational and educational activities to suffer.

While there still remains a degree of access to the ballot in some states, your committee recommends that the Social-

ist Labor Party conduct an active presidential campaign by using both the ballot and write-in for that purpose.

Therefore your committee recommends that the Party make an all-out effort to get on the ballot in as many states as possible within our financial and manpower resources.

In reviewing the ballot requirements efforts be made in those states where we have a fair chance for success. Those states are: Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Delaware and North Dakota.

Your committee recommends that we engage in write-in campaigns in the following states: California, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Massachusetts, Ohio, Oregon, Arizona, Florida and wherever else possible.

Touring Presidential Candidates

Instead of touring the candidates in the traditional manner, the tours of the candidates should be centered in the greater populated areas for longer periods of time. This would constitute a considerable savings of human as well as financial resources.

It is therefore recommended that an itinerary be arranged that will allow maximum exposure to each candidate on TV, radio, schools, picnics, socials and meet-the-candidate type programs.

We recommend: That each subdivision be urged to obtain free radio and TV time; that the national organization purchase radio and TV time and place ads in public and college

newspapers.

The celebration of the revolution of 1776 will provide a high degree of potential for agitation through many means. Leaflet distribution is one. To facilitate mass leaflet distribution throughout the country your committee recommends that SLP Campaign 1976 organize traveling leaflet distribution crews wherever feasible.

We recommend a goal of 5,000,000 leaflets be set by the convention for distribution.

Your committee concludes that the national campaign of the Socialist Labor Party in 1976 will be the most crucial one ever waged--crucial in regard to its efforts to organize the working class as well as to the organization itself.

The issue is not merely prolonged existence of an obsolete criminal system, capitalism, but the survival of the human race.

If the Socialist Labor Party is to remain the Marxian/De Leonist vanguard of the working class, it must prove itself to this task by making an effort of the greatest magnitude. It means that every SLP man and woman throughout the land must give their very best to this campaign.

In this bicentennial year of the American revolution, the SLP campaign must utilize every possible opportunity to instill in the minds of the workers the need to build for socialism in 1976--the need to organize and take over the industries and to issue a new declaration of independence on a higher plane--the independence of labor from capital.

Fraternally submitted,

Herbert Steiner
Karl Heck
Paul Barnes
Joseph Sabato
Constance Blomen

Committee on National Campaign.

On motion paragraphs one, two and three were adopted as read.

On motion paragraph four was amended to read as follows:

"In reviewing the ballot requirements, we believe we have a fair chance to get on the ballot in the following states: Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Delaware and North Dakota. Depending on manpower availability, your committee also recommends New York, if possible."

On motion paragraph five was amended to read as follows:

"Your committee recommends that we engage in write-in campaigns in as many states as possible."

On motion paragraphs six through fourteen were adopted as submitted.

On motion the entire report was adopted as amended.

On motion the nomination of national candidates was set for 1:00 p.m., Wednesday, February 11.

At 2:35 p.m. the convention recessed for ten minutes.

Called to order at 2:45 p.m. On roll call all present. Committee on Resolutions, R. Clement reporting, submitted the following resolutions:

1. On Bill S.1

Symptomatic of the prevailing and increasingly reactionary tendencies of capitalist society is the fact that the bicentennial commemoration of the founding of America's political democracy finds virtually all bourgeois democratic rights to be on the very brink of extinction.

For proof of this, one need only take note of reports published daily in the capitalist press and emanating continuously from the halls of capitalism's highest legislative and executive bodies. Such reports document the chilling detail and extent to which our democratic freedoms have been subverted by the activities of those very institutions and agencies which have been entrusted with their protection. These reports demonstrate further that such activities have infiltrated virtually every facet of American life.

In the name of maintaining domestic tranquility, the FBI and other government agencies have kept dossiers on millions of Americans, while subjecting groups and individuals in any way questioning the status quo to electronic surveillance, physical harassment and general intimidation.

In the name of protecting America from its foreign enemies, the CIA has undermined democratically elected governments, waged world-wide covert military operations and plotted the assassination of foreign leaders.

In the name of fulfilling America's commitment to defend democracy, the government has waged unconstitutional war in Southeast Asia.

In the name of election reform, the Congress has opened

the public treasury to the two major parties, and in so doing, has not only discriminated against minority parties, denying them the financial resources necessary to conduct their political campaigns, but also imposed bureaucratic regulations which threaten to all but eliminate opposing viewpoints from the American political scene.

In the process, such activities have not only undermined our individual and collective freedom, but have also exposed bourgeois democratic precepts and institutions as expedients of ruling-class interests rather than the practical embodiment of democratic ideals.

However, past efforts to circumscribe our constitutional rights may appear mild in the face of what is to come. Such is the inescapable conclusion when one finds the Congress, in the form of its current consideration of Senate Bill S.1, on the verge of legislating a sweeping repeal of what is left of America's political democracy.

By incorporating provisions too numerous to fully cite here, Bill S.1 would effectively abrogate the Bill of Rights in the name of "codifying, revising and reforming" a vast body of federal law. Typical of the bill's broad and loosely worded provisions are those which would make illegal virtually any attempt to amend or change our present form of government.

For example, the bill's section 1103 constitutes a direct attack on Article V, the amendment clause, of the Constitution and typifies the threat posed by the bill to constitutional liberties. It declares: "A person is guilty of an offense

if, with intent to bring about the forcible overthrow or destruction of the government of the United States or of any state as speedily as circumstances permit, he: (1) incites other persons to engage in conduct that then or at some future time would facilitate the forcible overthrow or destruction of such government: or (2) organizes, leads, recruits members for, or participates as an active member of an organization or group that has as a purpose the incitement described in Par. (1)." (Emphasis ours.)

Under the terms of this provision, whereby virtually any criticism could be construed by the government to be an "incitement" that "would facilitate" its overthrow or destruction, such an "offense" would be punishable by 15 years in prison and/or a \$100,000 fine.

In like manner, other provisions of the law would severely erode our right to free speech, free press, free assembly, and individual privacy. Government wire-tapping would be permitted whenever the President discerns that there is "danger to the structure" of government. The right to a free and unobstructed press would be curtailed by making it illegal to reveal any information which the government classifies as secret, even if the information "was not lawfully subject to classification at the time." It would become illegal to cross a state line, use the mails, or make a telephone call to help promote or plan a "riot," a "riot" being defined by the proposed law to include a gathering of five people that creates a "grave danger" to property. And these provisions

represent only a small fraction of the nearly 800-page content of this reactionary bill.

Of course, there exists among the ruling class that element, also professing public outrage at the threat which illegal government activities and bills like S.1 pose to our constitutional liberties, which contends that such threats do not flow from any fundamental defect in the American system but rather reflect the actions of a few overzealous bureaucrats and politicians. Accordingly, we are told that legislative safeguards can be introduced and/or rewritten to bring about a "proper balance" between our individual freedoms and the requirements of government.

One would have to be naive to believe that. The fact is that the reactionary trend of recent years has been aided and abetted by both major political parties. Bill S.1 is only the culmination of this trend. Originated under the presidency of Lyndon Johnson by a commission headed by the liberal ex-governor of California, Pat Brown, rewritten by John Mitchell and Richard Kleindienst under the Nixon administration, and currently sponsored in Congress by such reactionaries as Senators Hruska and Eastland and such reputed liberals as Mike Mansfield, it is a brutal manifestation of bipartisan ruling-class political interests.

Accordingly, the trend toward repression in America must be viewed not as the incidental failing of a fundamentally sound democracy, but as the inevitable reaction of a ruling class confronted as it is by a restless and potentially

revolutionary working class in an era of social anarchy and collapse.

As such, this reactionary trend cannot be overcome by turning to the legislative bodies which the ruling class is so effectively using to its advantage. Indeed, legislative prohibitions of government attempts to suppress our rights inevitably result in the establishment of legal bases upon which previously illegal activities become acceptable under certain conditions.

However, there is a force far greater than legislative pressure that the American working class can mobilize in defense of its individual and collective rights. By organizing ^{their} collective economic might, workers can successfully challenge and overturn the concentration of wealth now providing the base for the political power wielded by the capitalist state. In so doing, the working class can end the threat of totalitarianism by destroying the material foundation of the power and influence used by the ruling class to impose it.

Furthermore, by instituting a worker-controlled industrial democracy in place of corrupt and outmoded bourgeois democratic institutions, workers will not only secure previously acknowledged rights, but also extend democracy to include the vital sphere of economic life. In this manner, the American working class can not only stem the rising tide of oppression, but also transform the hypocritical pretenses of bourgeois democracy into a reality of security and free-

dom for all.

Fraternally submitted,

John Morris
Edward Gross
Robert Clement

Committee on Resolutions.

Motion passed to strike from the resolution all references to "bourgeois," "bourgeoisie," etc., and substitute "capitalist," "capitalist class," etc. On motion the resolution was adopted as amended.

2. On Capitalist Economic Crisis

For the past two years the capitalist economy has been beset by its worst crisis since the Great Depression of the thirties. By the winter of 1974-1975, the "recession" had become a full-fledged crisis of major proportions. The unmistakable signs of a capitalist crisis of "overproduction"--overstuffed inventories, production cutbacks and wholesale layoffs--were evident everywhere.

With millions of working people living in shabby tenements and crumbling houses, the construction industry virtually shut down.

With the nation's transit system in desperate need of reconstruction, the transportation industry slowed down, throwing as many as 40 percent of the nation's auto workers off the job.

With urban decay spreading and pressing educational needs unmet, social services and school systems were drastically reduced.

In short, with tens of millions of Americans lacking the basic essentials of life, the nation's economy was operating at less than three-fourths of its capacity. Why?

The answer is not hard to find. Capitalism has always been and remains a system in which the enormous wealth produced by the working class constitutes a problem; not because it can't be used, but because it can't be sold at a profit. The capitalist market, limited by the wages of the working class, which represent but a fraction of its total product, is unable to absorb the mountain of commodities produced for sale.

This basic contradiction is at the heart of the disastrous slump of the past two years.

In addition, the recent crisis saw new signs of capitalist stagnation emerging. The traditional outlets for capitalist surplus began to show their limitations.

The new markets, both foreign and domestic, which capitalism needs to survive, have been glutted by an unparalleled period of capitalist expansion. Where international markets and potentials for capitalist investment do appear, such as in the Middle East, they are the focus of intense, war-breeding competition among all the class-ruled nations of the world which rest on the same foundation of wage-labor exploitation.

Even more striking has been the inability of capitalism's other major prop--inflationary stimulation--to fully solve the problem of capitalist surplus. With each year, ever larger doses of inflationary stimulation have been needed

to stave off collapse. This is no longer a temporary, stop-gap measure, but a permanent feature of capitalism's chronic crises. Despite the Ford administration's pretensions to "fiscal conservatism," it has been forced to submit the largest budgets and deficits in peacetime history.

But even this has not been enough. The cumulative threat of years of monetary debasement threatens the very structure of the capitalist economy, and has thrown capitalist government into fiscal crisis at all levels. Instead of expanding government employment and social services to cushion the impact of the economic crisis, the state itself has been imposing austerity, layoffs and cutbacks. The fiscal basis for Keynesian manipulation and its political counterpart, "liberal reformism," is more tenuous than ever.

Throughout this entire period, capitalism has not only displayed its anarchy and profit greed, but has revealed its class nature at every turn. It is the working class that has suffered the insecurity, the poverty and the increased exploitation that plague wage-workers under capitalism.

While bourgeois economists are already proclaiming "recovery," this has only further exposed the system's class nature. By massive layoffs, speed-up and government subsidies, the capitalist class has indeed been able to "recover" a measure of its profit health. Its share of the wealth stolen from labor is recovering at a rapid rate.

But for workers, there is no recovery in sight. Unemployment will remain at depression levels indefinitely. Mil-

lions are passing through the ranks of the reserve army of the unemployed into permanent poverty. Insecurity, lower living standards, increased exploitation and other hardships, show no signs of ending.

If the past is any guide, the working class will resist these hardships with the weapons they have at hand, and in line with the level of organization and understanding which they possess. Yet this is not enough. As the complete capitulation of the procapitalist unions has shown in this crisis, workers are not currently organized well enough to take effective defensive actions, let alone make real progress toward getting to the heart of their problems.

Therefore, the SLP in session at its 29th National Convention resolves:

1. That the capitalist source and class nature of this economic crisis be made clear to workers at every opportunity.
2. That the one solution to repeated and worsening crises is the complete overthrow of the capitalist system of production and its replacement with a socialist economy based on worker control of the tools of production, democratic industrial administration, production for use and collective ownership of all the means of production and exchange.
3. That in order to achieve this goal, the working class must organize politically into a party of its class to confront the power of the capitalist class and its state on the political field.
4. That the workers must organize their classwide strength in a classconscious industrial union movement, that alone

can present a united resistance to capitalist exploitation while amassing the numbers and the knowledge required for the final establishment of socialism.

Fraternally submitted,

John Morris
Edward Gross
Robert Clement

Committee on Resolutions.

On motion the resolution was adopted as submitted.

The Committee on Availability of National Officers, no report.

The Committee on Availability of National Candidates, no further report.

The Committee on Constitution reported progress.

The Platform Committee reported it would be ready to report later in the evening.

The Committee on Educational Materials and Development, no report.

At 3:20 p.m. a 30-minute recess was declared. Convention called to order at 4:15 p.m. On roll call all present. Committee on Party Press and Literature, B. Bortnick reporting:

On motion executive session was declared and the sergeant-at-arms instructed to check the membership cards of all present.

Bortnick then submitted the following report:

Report of Committee on Party Press and Literature

Dealing with the article on
"The Transition to Socialism"
in Nov. 15, 1975 issue of Weekly People

Part I

1. Was there anything wrong in the article?

Your committee after a careful reading of the article found it to be in accord with Marxism-De Leonism.

The subject is introduced by three paragraphs. The first emphasizes the need for the Party to be alert in correlating tactics and existing material conditions. The second directs our attention to two issues upon which tactics devolve--violence and legality--while citing current events that have brought the question of both to the fore. The third introduces the issue of violence by historical examples of peaceful and violent revolution and emphasizes that the important point, historically, is not violence vs. peaceful revolution but the "class content" that evokes both.

Under the heading of "Violent Posturing" follow four paragraphs. The first explains the familiar charge and the posturing that link violence with militancy and revolutionists. The second refers to this as characteristic of the petty bourgeois mentality which has been so prevalent in the U.S. over the past decade. The third emphasizes the non-Marxist character of such posturing, the decisive relationship in the development of the tools of production and class relations, the importance of organizing the working class both politically and economically, while openly educating them, "and the importance of avoiding suicidal attacks on the most powerfully armed ruling class in history," ending with the petty bourgeois mentality ignores the industrial basis of modern mili-

tary power.

The fourth paragraph scores the eclecticism of the phony revolutionary who acclaims "the rhetoric of the strategy of 'People's War'" as the way to socialism while in reality fueling state repression and isolating the proletariat from revolutionary enlightenment.

The subheading "Pacifist Error" contains four paragraphs.

The first defines pacifism as "idealist bourgeois ideology" which leaves the worker defenseless, nourishes illusions that reduces violence to inborn human traits, and fetters the working class with a moral code that can only follow the end of class-divided society. The second emphasizes that pacifism subordinates tactical questions determined by the very nature of the revolutionary working class, to pie-in-the-sky principles, and feeds additional illusions about militarism, cloaks the material basis of moral concepts, and stunts the growth of a revolutionary proletarian movement.

Now follow the two critical paragraphs that form the basis of Comrade Steiner's primary objection.

The third declares that in the U.S. today Marxism-De Leonism avoids an exaggerated emphasis on either a peaceful transition or a violent struggle but turns to the crucial issues of building the political and economic organization of the working class, with primary emphasis on the former.

Finally, the fourth summarizes that "revolutionary progress" while best employing peaceful and legal means today may find that tomorrow it need "resort to the last resort and

physically mop the earth with the barbarian capitalist class" as De Leon stated in "As to Politics." Then, it is again restated that socialists reject both sending workers into "suicidal battles" and emasculating the revolution with "pacifist illusions."

Question of Legality subheads four paragraphs.

The first establishes the context of the use of the term legality, which finds its justification in the inherent right of every oppressed class to overthrow its oppressors.

The second paragraph cites the quotation of Engels in the Preface to "The Class Struggles in France" that elaborates the thesis of paragraph one wherein Engels refers to "The right to revolution...as the only real historic right upon which all modern states rest..."

The third paragraph demonstrated the application of this principle with the example of the founding of the American bourgeois republic, and the incorporation of this "right" into the Declaration of Independence.

The fourth concludes that to pretend that the right to revolution rigidly aligns itself with the precepts of bourgeois legality makes it a mockery and courts revolutionary impotence.

In "Summing Up," three paragraphs summarize the preceding discussion in these terms:

The first reiterates that both organizational and educational agitation can today best proceed along legal and peaceful avenues, but tactical circumstances dictated by today's material conditions should never be allowed to deter-

mine the revolutionary needs of our class.

The second paragraph refers to Engels' insight into the subservience of tactics to goal when he demonstrated how, with the arrival of universal suffrage, the German and European proletariat could progress with greater strides, while he avoided the pitfalls of political and parliamentary reformism.

The concluding and final paragraph to the article quotes Engels as pointing out that though the ballot is working well for the working class in Germany during his time, and choking the capitalists, by no means does this exclude renouncing the use of illegal means if material conditions change.

Part II

In its report, the Weekly People staff noted that the correspondence regarding the article "On the Transition to Socialism" touched not only on questions of tactics but also on the nature of criticism. Indeed, it may well be said that questions on the latter constitute an aspect of this issue having equal if not greater significance than the specifics of the Party's stand on tactics. And, in view of the fact that a considerable portion of the correspondence on the article in question has dealt with this more general topic, the committee offers some thoughts and conclusions on this matter.

Considerable comment has been directed by Comrade Steiner to the WP staff's reference to dogmatism in its Nov. 15 statement replying to Comrade Steiner's criticism. Your committee wishes to state for the record that, in its opinion, the WP staff did not directly accuse Comrade Steiner of being

a dogmatist. What the staff did do, however, was characterize the arguments used by Comrade Steiner on this specific issue as being dogmatic. We believe that the application of the word dogmatic to an individual or to a line of reasoning are two different things and, certainly in this case, the distinction between them is evident.

Based on his correspondence and statements made before this committee, we conclude that Comrade Steiner failed to perceive this distinction, thus regarding the staff's use of the word "dogmatic" as personal invective. Yet, even Comrade Steiner himself is ambivalent on this point. In his Jan. 27 letter, pg. 114 of the appendix to the Nat'l. Secy's. report, Comrade Steiner writes, "I have no quarrel with the term 'dogmatism' but what I reject is the labeling of my criticism as dogmatic. I consider the charge 'inaccurate, unsubstantiated and misapplied.' A conflict of views should not degenerate into name calling." As to Comrade Steiner's characterization of the staff's reference to dogmatism as "name calling" your committee wishes only to again state its disagreement and its conclusion that this assertion by Comrade Steiner reflects inferences neither intended nor implied.

However, like Comrade Steiner, your committee has "no quarrel" with the term "dogmatism" and did consider whether or not it is in fact applicable to the criticism presented by him. Your committee concurs in the WP staff's contention that it is.

This conclusion is based, in part, on the appearance by

Comrade Steiner before your committee, in which he was unable not only to present how he arrived at his critical conclusions but also to clarify what his criticisms were in the first place. For example, much reference is made to the use of De Leon's statement from "As to Politics." Your committee remains unclear as to the specific nature of Comrade Steiner's criticism. The closest he could come in that regard was to say that he felt the quote contributed to the article's "vagueness" and that it was subject to misinterpretation.

If, as Comrade Steiner suggested, he was merely expressing a subjective preference on a minor point, we would be inclined to let the matter rest whether Comrade Steiner's point were clear to us or not. That he regarded this as more than merely a "subjective preference" or a minor point however is borne out by the fact that this criticism was accompanied--though in our opinion not supported--by an extensive series of quotes which formed no definable line of argumentation. To a large extent then, the committee was confronted with vague, unsubstantiated criticisms regarding points over which Comrade Steiner was nevertheless, markedly "disturbed," as he put it.

Based on our discussion with Comrade Steiner, the committee can report his contention that his correspondence correctly reflects long-standing Party policy on the question of tactics. The committee however is forced to conclude that what Comrade Steiner did was to state a conclusion however nebulous in the belief that it was correct, and to then pro-

ceed to assemble quotes from highly regarded sources which would by inference rather than substance lend weight to that preconceived conclusion. We concur with the WP staff that this process constitutes dogmatism.

That dogmatism has concrete detrimental consequences is reflected in the lack of clarity, and to the extent that it is not vague, faulty statements which characterize the criticism under consideration. We do not for a moment suggest that the shortcomings of Comrade Steiner's criticism are unique in our Party nor do we attribute the shortcomings to any sinister motives or even a conscious intent or any other thing. However even if this were a case of honest error, it is one which must be addressed and collectively rectified if we wish to maintain the validity of Party stands. Indeed one danger of unchallenged dogmatism lies in the fact that honest members can unintentionally perpetuate incorrect positions which could readily be challenged if warranted by the facts.

One other matter which may properly come under the heading of "the nature of the criticism" is Comrade Steiner's comment that the article's opening paragraph creates by inference the impression that "...[the Party] must begin to [examine and re-examine tactical questions] now." We concur with the WP staff that this inference originates solely from Comrade Steiner himself. However, even if Comrade Steiner's inference were correct, in our opinion it would hardly constitute a point deserving criticism. On the contrary, your committee supports the idea that examination and re-examination not only

of tactical, but of any and all substantive issues begin now. Though this has always been the Party's stand in principle, it has not as Comrade Steiner suggests, been so in practice. In support of this fact we need not repeat but do cite the material provided in the National Secretary's report.

Part III

Your committee has taken note of Comrade Steiner's call for censure of the WP staff, a case in effect rejected by the majority of the NEC. It is the majority opinion of this committee, Comrade Girard dissenting, that motions of censure are not in order on any counts.

Part IV

With regard to the organizational procedure used by the National Secretary, your committee unanimously agrees with the National Secretary that his submission of correspondence to the NEC and the NEC Subcommittee was fully in accord with long-established Party procedures.

Fraternally submitted,

Bernard Bortnick
Alan Karp

Committee on Party Press
and Literature.

On motion part 1 was adopted as submitted.

On motion action on part 2 was postponed pending further consideration.

At this point Paul Barnes (Pa.) informed the convention that he was ill and requested that he be permitted to withdraw and that alternate delegate Edna Barnes be seated in his place.

On motion, Barnes's request to withdraw was granted.

On motion (at 5:05 p.m.) the convention recessed until 7:00 p.m.

Evening Session, Tuesday, February 10

The convention was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by chairperson Alan Karp, continuing in executive session.

On roll Call H. Killman was reported ill and absent with excuse. All others present. Edna Barnes presented her credentials and was seated as a delegate from Pennsylvania.

The Committee on Party Press and Literature, B. Bortnick reporting, submitted the following additional report:

Majority Report of the Committee
on Party Press and Literature

Re Article in WP "On Transition to Socialism"

Your committee submits the following additional findings:

1. The article is a correct statement of the Party's position on tactics.
2. Comrade Steiner's criticism fails, as noted by the WP staff, "to present specific argument, develop it fully and connect it to the article under discussion."
3. Within the context of the article the use of De Leon's quote from "As to Politics" is not subject to misinterpretation.
4. De Leon's quote from "As to Politics" is not symbolic but is a literal recognition of the fact that the tactic of armed force could be dictated by specific circumstances.
5. We concur with the WP staff that "Comrade Steiner has presented a dogmatic criticism that neither addresses the ques-

tion at hand nor contributes to a clarification of the issue." That is, we agree that he has provided a "mechanical recitation of passages instead of the systematic application of Marxism-De Leonism."

6. We emphatically reject Comrade Steiner's call for censure of the WP staff. In our opinion, the staff's reply to his criticism confined itself to a discussion of the issue on its merits.

7. We agree with the National Secretary that his submission of correspondence to the NEC and NEC Subcommittee is in accordance with established Party procedure.

Fraternally submitted,

Alan Karp
Bernard Bortnick

Committee on Party Press
and Literature.

On motion the report was acted upon seriatim. Items one, two, three, four and five were adopted as read. During the discussion on item five, chairperson Karp surrendered the chair to the vice chairperson Taylor, Karp resuming the chair after item five had been adopted. Items six and seven were also adopted as read. On motion the report as a whole was adopted as submitted.

The Committee on Party Press and Literature also reported on Section Los Angeles's resolution on "Section Statements for Local Distribution." The section's resolution read as follows:

Recommend that sections be permitted to issue manifestos

on local issues for publication in local newspapers and distribution at local public affairs. These manifestos subject to NEC approval if time permits.

Note: We encourage writing letters to the editor and participation in call-in programs by individual members on behalf of the SLP. It seems the collective wisdom of the section would be a safer guide for involvement on local issues.

It is true that there is an element of danger here--that the section may not issue as clear and accurate a statement as could be done by the NEC. Criticism will follow and we will learn to do better and become more self-reliant. So long as we adhere to fundamental principles, any error will be in emphasis or judgments and would not be fatal in principles so long as the facts are correct. The alternative is lost opportunities of involvement in local issues for which there is no appropriate leaflet, or to supplement a general leaflet with a local section statement.

The Committee on Party Press and Literature submitted the following report and recommendations:

Re Resolution from Section Los Angeles, Calif. on "Section Statements for Local Distribution."

Your committee recommends concurrence subject to the following considerations:

1. The section qualifies their resolution with "subject to NEC approval if time permits." Although there are sections that may have qualified members capable of drafting faultless Party statements, the exceptions to this are more numerous.

Are we therefore to permit some sections to engage in distributing local statements while others not? Certainly this would not be advisable. Therefore, we recommend "if time permits" be dropped from the resolution.

2. In this connection we note that a recent inquiry from the Press Committee regarding the advisability of sections lifting material from the Weekly People was answered by the NEC Subcommittee accordingly: that sections should check with the National Office before incurring the expense.

3. We recommend that if a section has composed a statement they would like distributed locally that they send it by mail to the editorial desk of the WP for review, give it two days for passage in the mails, and phone the National Office for a brief discussion on its merits or fault and if it is approved then it can be published.

Fraternally submitted,

Bernard Bortnick
Alan Karp
Frank Girard

Committee on Party Press
and Literature.

On motion the committee's report was acted upon seriatim. On motion item one was approved. On motion item two was rejected. On motion item three was approved. On motion the report as amended was adopted.

Committee on Constitution, B. Reitzes reporting:

Your committee has reviewed the revisions of the Party's Constitution suggested by the National Office and submits the following recommendations:

Art. I, Sect. 1. Substitute the word "Office" for "Secretary."

COMMENT: In the listing, the National Office would appear to be more in line with the rest of the subdivisions.

On motion approved.

*

Art. II, Sect. 8. Reword the section as follows: "The Section shall adopt an order of business including, but not necessarily limited to, the following:"

COMMENT: There appears to be little point to making the entire order of business inflexible. The sections should be permitted to suit the order of business to local conditions, so long as they include those items that are considered essential to all subdivisions.

On motion approved.

*

Art II, Sect. 8 cont'd. Delete "New members" and "Party press and literature," and the numbering.

COMMENT: "New members" can be handled under "New business" and "Party press and literature" can be handled under "Reports of committees" or under "New business" depending on the nature of the matter brought up. The order of the items of business should be left to the sections, hence the numbers should be deleted.

On motion approved.

*

Art. II, Sect. 47 (d). Delete the last phrase, "and there only."

COMMENT: The three words are redundant.

On motion approved.

*

Art. II, Sect. 47 (f). Delete the entire section.

COMMENT: It is rather naive and unrealistic; leads to needless controversy because of its unintended implications. In many cases it is simply ignored.

On motion approved.

*

Art. II, Sect. 47 (g). Delete the entire paragraph.

COMMENT: This too is unrealistic and unenforceable. It serves no useful purpose while creating (frequently) a bad impression with newcomers.

On motion approved.

*

Art. II, Sect. 47 (h). Delete the entire last sentence.

COMMENT: This kind of thing presents a practical problem that should be handled by the instructor. Codifying it in the Constitution serves no practical purpose.

On motion approved.

*

Art. II, Sect. 48 (c). Place a period at the end of the word "Section" and strike the rest of the paragraph.

COMMENT: This, too, presents a practical problem that should be handled by the moderator. Codifying it in the Constitution serves no practical purpose.

On motion approved.

*

Art. II, Sect. 49 (a) and (b). Delete both paragraphs.

COMMENT: Paragraph (a) bespeaks a lack of confidence in members' capacity to handle such matters. Moreover, it is based on the questionable premise that economics courses are a greater source of miseducation and/or misinformation than history courses, social studies courses, or a host of other courses offered by such "institutions of public education." (This amendment was also suggested by Section Grand Rapids, Michigan.)

Paragraph (b) shuts off what may be legitimate opportunities to good SLP work at some colleges, so-called "free schools and/or universities," and even at community educational projects that function in some areas today. Whatever problems "labor colleges" may have once presented, they are not a problem today.

On motion approved.

*

Art. IV, Sect. 9. Delete the reference to "State Convention," in both places.

COMMENT: This is a sweeping prohibition, enacted about 40 years ago in response to a statewide disruption. Today, however, it inhibits and discourages what could be constructive and enlightening discussion that could be of benefit to the members and the Party alike. Most members cannot attend national conventions. Where else but at a state convention can they have the opportunity to discuss and exchange views with members outside their immediate areas?

On motion approved.

*

Art. V, Sect. 10 (a). Delete the phrase "in May."

COMMENT: The scheduling of NEC sessions should be kept flexible. The time restriction has caused problems more than once.

On motion approved.

*

Art. VII, Sect. 2. Change the figure 20 to 15.

COMMENT: The Party's desperate need to develop a more responsible, experienced membership to share decision- and policy-making responsibilities demands a substantial increase in the number of those involved in such endeavors on a Party-wide as well as on a local basis. This proposal would provide for such an increase.

On motion approved.

*

Art. VII, Sect. 3. Delete two sentences beginning "The delegates" and ending with "the other" and add following at end of paragraph: "The process of nomination and election of delegates shall be submitted to the Sections first, after completion of which the same process with respect to alternates shall be submitted. State Committees and Sections shall convene special meetings if such are necessary to establish or meet deadlines in any phase of these processes."

On motion approved.

*

Art. VII, Sect. 13. Rephrase as follows: The proceedings of executive sessions shall be published separately from

the proceedings of sessions open to the public, and shall be issued to the members in suitable form.

COMMENT: This is simply intended to put the matter grammatically.

On motion approved.

*

Art. X, Sect. 1. Delete words "and National Convention delegates" and add following paragraph: "The fare of National Convention delegates shall be defrayed from the same fund providing doing so does not conflict with federal or state laws."

On motion approved.

*

Art. XI, Sect. 3. Insert the words, "Between conventions," at the beginning of the section.

COMMENT: None should be necessary, the intent being self-evident.

On motion approved.

*

Art. XIII, Sect. 3 (a). Delete entire final line of paragraph beginning with "be..." and add following: "be by secret ballot. Those charged with furnishing such ballots to members and tabulating their results shall record the number of ballots furnished and cast."

COMMENT: Experience attests to the fact that this provision has an intimidating effect. Why should the Party not have a secret ballot?

On motion approved. (George S. Taylor requested that he be recorded as voting "no" on this proposition.)

*

Art. XIII, Sect. 5. Insert the words, "The latest edition of" at the beginning of the section.

On motion approved.

*

With regard to the motion submitted by Comrade J. Sim to

have all references to foreign language federations deleted from the Party's Constitution, your committee recommends its adoption, the reasons for not having done so before no longer likely to be present now.

On motion approved.

*

As for the similar recommendations of Section St. Louis, Mo. and the Illinois State Committee with respect to possibly holding national conventions at which national candidates will be nominated, etc., in the years preceding national campaign years, your committee feels that this, as with other proposals, should be deferred until this convention decides on how frequently national conventions will be held hereafter.

On motion approved.

*

Fraternally submitted,

Louis Fisher
J.C. Horvath
Bernard Reitzes

Committee on Constitution.

Upon the call of the chair for the introduction of resolutions for referral to appropriate committees, Frank Girard (Mich.) introduced a "Resolution on Earlier Disruptions," calling for a review of "all cases within the last ten years of former members who were expelled from the Party for attacking the N.S. [National Secretary] or the Party Organization or Party policy or who resigned in criticism of these." On motion, the resolution was not concurred in.

L. Fisher (Ill.) submitted a proposal from the Illinois State Committee that "negative voting on balloting for candidates for S.L.P. offices be eliminated." On motion the proposal was rejected.

James C. Horvath (Mich.) moved that "the entire Weekly People staff be given a vote of confidence for the good work they have accomplished under the most trying circumstances in these past few years, and that they have expressed the Marxian-De Leonist analysis befitting our times." The motion carried.

At 10:25 p.m. motion carried to adjourn and reconvene at 12 noon, Wednesday and to proceed with the following order of business: Report of the Committee on State of Organization until 1 p.m.; nomination of national candidates at 1 p.m.; continuation of consideration of the report of the Committee on State of Organization, if necessary; report of Committee on Party Press and Literature; Election of Party Officers.

Afternoon Session, Wednesday, February 11

Convention called to order by chairperson Alan Karp at 12:05 p.m.

Alan Karp was reelected chairperson for the day. George S. Taylor was reelected vice chairperson.

On motion the convention went into executive session.

On roll call all present except H. Killman, J. O'Neill and N. Karp. Killman was absent with excuse, being ill. O'Neill and Karp arrived shortly after roll call.

Archie Simm presented his credentials as alternate dele-

gate in place of James C. Horvath who was unable to attend the afternoon session. On motion A. Sim was seated.

The minutes of the Tuesday, February 10 sessions were adopted as corrected.

Reports of Committees.

Committee on State of Organization, Robert Massi reporting, presented the following resolution on the failure of the NEC to fulfill its constitutional obligations:

The National Executive Committee is the highest governing and directing body of the Socialist Labor Party between national conventions. The duties imposed upon this body are both serious and extensive. They include overall responsibility for addressing and attempting to solve the problems facing our organization.

The NEC does not have the right to ignore any of its constitutional obligations nor to shift those responsibilities onto other Party officers. Members of the NEC are expected to treat their duties as their prime obligation. They do not do so when they apply less than their complete abilities to their tasks or give them only pro forma attention. If, for any reason, they cannot meet a responsibility, it is incumbent upon them to explain the reasons and to propose corrective measures. The NEC must be a vibrant living organism at the helm of the Party.

Instead, the NEC has failed to perform its constitutional duties. The details of this are provided in the report to the national convention by the National Secretary and in the

correspondence between the National Secretary and members of the NEC contained in the appendix to the report. They are too lengthy to be reiterated here. But a brief summary of the abrogation of its constitutional duties follows. Among other things:

1. The NEC has failed to diligently attempt to appoint an editor.
2. It has failed to maintain responsive correspondence.
3. It has failed to initiate actions and to make policy decisions.

Therefore, be it resolved that

1. This convention agrees that the NEC has failed to perform its constitutional obligations and notify the sections accordingly.

2. Considering the closeness and importance of NEC elections the convention directs the National Office to submit the proceedings of the convention to the membership at the earliest possible date.

3. The National Office is to delay the submission to the sections of nominees for election to the NEC until after the proceedings of this convention have been distributed to the membership and until after they have had reasonable time in which to discuss the facts and issues.

4. As part of special sessions set up to discuss the convention, the sections are to study the NEC section of the National Secretary's report and are to consider the implications of this section in voting for NEC members.

5. Members are to be cautioned on their choice for the NEC. This should be made only after consideration of the facts and views found in the convention documentation. No one should be nominated or elected solely because he or she is a long-time faithful and active member; certainly not because the member was the only one who volunteered or because it has become habitual to elect this person. Consideration must be given to the individual's ability to actively direct Party activities as a member of the NEC, the member's analytical capability (vital in forming policy), the willingness of the individual to work and, in some cases, past performance on the NEC.

6. We recommend concurrence with the section of the National Secretary's report dealing with the NEC.

Fraternally submitted,

Robert E. Massi
Arnold Babel
George S. Taylor
James Sim
Julius Levin

Committee on State of
Organization.

On motion the resolution was acted upon seriatim, as follows:

Paragraph one concurred in.

Paragraph two concurred in.

Paragraph three concurred in.

Item one under paragraph three concurred in.

On motion action on the committee's report was suspended to permit nominations to be made for national candidates.

On motion the convention went out of executive session.

On motion a five-minute recess was declared.

Upon reconvening, John O'Neill (Ohio) placed the name of Julius Levin in nomination as candidate for President of the United States. Approved unanimously.

The chairperson called upon Levin to address the convention. Levin delivered a brief acceptance address.

Joseph Pirincin (Ohio) placed the name of Constance Blomen in nomination as candidate for Vice President of the United States. Approved unanimously.

The chairperson called upon Blomen to address the convention. Blomen delivered a brief acceptance address.

Both candidates were then excused to meet the press.

On motion the convention declared executive session and resumed consideration of the report of the Committee on State of Organization, specifically the resolution on the NEC.

Item 2 under paragraph three, concurred in.

Item 3 under paragraph three concurred.

Resolve No. 1 concurred in.

Resolve No. 2 concurred in.

Resolve No. 3 concurred in.

Resolve No. 4 concurred in.

Resolve No. 5 not concurred in.

Resolve No. 6 concurred in.

On motion the resolution on the NEC was adopted as amended. The Committee on State of Organization submitted the following resolution on annual national conventions, changes in NEC pro-

cedures and membership study classes:

Over the past four decades the Party, in both structure and substance, has undergone a progressive deterioration that has reached what appears to be a final crisis point at the very same moment in history when the capitalist system is apparently entering a final phase of decline and when great opportunities for the development and expansion of a revolutionary working class movement are tragically being allowed to slip by because of our internal weakness as an organization.

The National Executive Committee, the Party's governing and policy-making body, has failed to meet many of its constitutional obligations and to perform its executive duties properly. It has evolved into a passive body, aloof from the membership and unresponsive to its needs, that merely endorses measures recommended, or ratifies actions already taken, by the National Office. With respect to the selection of NEC personnel, the membership in general has failed to utilize the information available to it in evaluating the performance of NEC representatives or to seek out more adequate methods of obtaining such information.

It is clear from the present situation of the Party that the membership at this time is both absolutely too small, in terms of its actual numbers, and relatively too small, in terms of the proportion of active members in its ranks. Consequently, the Party is in grave danger of being rendered incapable of maintaining a sound and viable revolutionary organization.

Furthermore, the present membership, because of a laxity toward continued study and critical reflection, has fallen into a state of theoretical stagnation that has in turn resulted in the development of a dogmatic outlook and a sharp decline in effective practical Party work.

This internal decomposition of the body of the Party has led to a situation, no longer tolerable, wherein an ever increasing and unsupportable burden has been shifted to the National Secretary, the National Office staff and the staff of the Weekly People. And this in turn has resulted in a disastrous breakdown of the lines of internal Party communication and organizational procedure and discipline. It has also created a situation that is a menace to the very existence of the Party in that because of its lack of adequate numbers and the inactivity of a large portion of the membership, the Party is unable to readily fill vital posts both locally and nationally so that even a minimum level of operational cohesion can be maintained.

There is an obvious need to improve the quality and quantity of Party activity, to raise the level of comprehension of Marxian science among the membership and to increase the size of the membership. And because of the complexity of the issues and problems that confront the Party at this time in history, there is also a need to develop a greater and more direct involvement of the membership in the decision and policy-making process at the highest levels.

Therefore, be it resolved:

1. That the SLP henceforth conduct annual national conventions;

2. That regular NEC sessions be conducted once every year between national conventions;

3. That the National Secretary be required to deliver a formal report only to a national convention;

4. That NEC members be required to initiate discussion with the sections within their respective regions on the content of each NEC session shortly after such session takes place;

5. That significant NEC correspondence be published annually;

6. Upon receiving the printed proceedings of NEC sessions and national conventions, each section is to hold a special meeting for the purpose of membership discussion of the various matters raised and to exchange views, raise questions and otherwise study and evaluate those proceedings;

7. That the sections arrange special meetings at which discussions are to be conducted on Party activity and theoretical questions;

8. That the sections conduct periodic study classes for members using Marxian literature as a basis of discussion; and

9. That the membership be reminded that it has the duty to remove any elected Party official whom it finds is not fulfilling his or her constitutional obligations.

Fraternally submitted,

[Committee on
State of Organ-
ization]

Robert E. Massi
Arnold Babel
George S. Taylor
Julius Levin
James Sim

On motion the six introductory paragraphs were approved and the resolves taken up seriatim.

Resolve No. 1 concurred in and referred to the Committee on Constitution for implementation.

Resolve No. 2 concurred in.

Resolve No. 3 concurred in and referred to the Committee on Constitution for implementation.

Resolve No. 4 amended to provide that "any expenses incurred are to be paid by the National Office, if necessary."

On motion approved as amended.

Resolve No. 5 concurred in.

Resolve No. 6 concurred in.

Resolve No. 7 concurred in.

Resolve No. 8 concurred in.

Resolve No. 9 concurred in.

On motion the resolution was adopted as amended.

The Committee on State of Organization submitted the following resolution on membership revitalization:

The proceedings of this 29th National Convention reveal to us, in a most shocking manner, that our Party has been in a state of steady decline for many years. This decline has now reached a point where the continued existence of the Party, as an active, effective means of propagating a program to emancipate the working class is in serious jeopardy. Our National Secretary's report shows that this crisis is evident at all levels of our organization. It cites the dangerous decline in membership in the Party which, if permitted to continue,

would eventually, and probably a lot sooner than most of us might expect, result in the demise of our Party. There is a breakdown of communication within our organization, and a general lack of adequate response of members to fill various posts, such as writers, speakers, study class instructors, organizers, state secretaries as well as national officers and national organizers. The report also points to the lack of membership involvement in the study and application of Marxism-De Leonism and that this has led to sterile, dogmatic approach to many vital problems that confront us. We need to constantly question and reevaluate our organizational structure, tactics and also our assessment of other groups in these constantly changing situations throughout the world. Our failure as a Party to adopt this approach has contributed in large measure to the general decline of our Party. Our National Secretary stressed this point in his report where he says that "A revolutionary party, such as ours, can experience a profound decline" because "it adopts, and fails to correct methods of theoretical and practical work which destroy its effectiveness," and he logically concludes that "the sole method by which a revolutionary Party corrects its mistakes is to engage in self-criticism and the collective correction of errors."

Believing that the National Office is most able to help guide the general membership in correcting these deficiencies, we recommend that they issue a guide on the study of Marxism-De Leonism, especially as it relates to organiza-

tional and theoretical matters and that this project be given a high priority.

Fraternally submitted,

Arnold Babel
Julius Levin
James Sim
George S. Taylor
Robert E. Massi

Committee on State of
Organization.

On motion the resolution was adopted as submitted.

The Committee on State of Organization submitted the following resolution on study of convention proceedings:

The proceedings of the 29th National Convention provide a concise and accurate picture of the critical problems facing the SLP. In order to resolve these problems, which include practical and theoretical matters that affect every aspect of our Party's work, it is necessary to have the most thorough understanding and discussion possible of the current situation. Every SLP member must be involved in this process.

It is also clear that earlier efforts to describe the difficulties confronting our Party have not received the study and evaluation, nor elicited the response necessary to assure a thorough examination of the situation. Some members have not read earlier reports, others have not discussed them, others have not acted to correct the problems cited in them. This situation must be changed if we are to succeed in building up our Party.

Therefore be it resolved:

1. That upon receiving the printed proceedings of this

convention, including the report prepared at National Headquarters, each section meet in regular or special session if necessary, to discuss the various matters raised at the convention, the various actions taken, and to exchange views, raise questions and otherwise study and evaluate those proceedings.

2. That a brief summary (1-3 typed pages) of the responses and proposals of the section be drawn up reflecting the various reactions of the section members. Such summary to be approved by majority vote as a fair representation of the section's discussion.

3. That this be done within one month of receiving the convention proceedings.

4. That such summaries be forwarded to the National Office, which in turn shall circulate the various responses among the membership, thereby initiating an exchange of views on internal Party matters.

5. That if this process proves fruitful and constructive, it may by virtue of a section proposal and approval by referendum vote, be continued as a new channel of communication among Party members.

Fraternally submitted,

Arnold Babel
Julius Levin
James Sim
George S. Taylor
Robert E. Massi

Committee on State of
Organization.

On motion the resolution was adopted as submitted.

On motion a ten-minute recess was declared at 2:30 p.m.

Convention called to order at 2:40 p.m. On roll call all present except H. Killman, absent with excuse (ill).

The Committee on State of Organization recommended nonconcurrency with Section Passaic County's resolution suggesting yearly general membership meetings in the ten NEC regions, publication of abbreviated NEC Subcommittee minutes and other ideas intended to promote "closer ties between the National Office, the sections and the NEC members." On motion the committee's recommendation was concurred in.

The Committee on State of Organization recommended that Section Minneapolis's resolution proposing the establishment of "a committee to deal with organizational questions of 'new unions,'" etc., be referred to the NEC. On motion the committee's recommendation was approved.

The Committee on Party Press and Literature submitted the following majority report (F. Girard dissenting):

Re Article Appearing in the May 10, 1975 Issue of the Weekly People "The Vietnamese Victory"

We have reviewed the article, "The Vietnamese Victory," and related material including that material and the report of the Weekly People staff.

Your committee recommends:

1. We concur with the article and the position endorsed by the NEC; that is we agree that "...socialist, (especially socialists in the imperialist countries) [have] an obligation to support the right of oppressed nations fighting for national

self-determination; that Vietnam was such a case, and further, while the conflict had a dimension of Soviet-U.S. imperialist contention, this did not alter the main character of the war which pitted progressive Vietnamese nationalism against U.S. imperialism."

Furthermore we agree that the Party's previous position contradicted "...the most basic premise of Marxism, namely that the course of history is shaped by class struggle between oppressed and oppressor. Instead it [contended] that history is shaped by the antagonism or contention of ruling classes among themselves."

2. In view of the fact that at the recent NEC session the NEC expressed "...virtually no recognition or admission that a change [in past policy] was occurring and [that] several NEC members expressly tried to deny on the floor that such was the case," your committee wishes to state for the record that a change in Party policy and abandonment of an earlier Party position is in fact what is at issue here.

3. Since this reversal of position was made virtually without debate on the part of the NEC and in ^{the} absence of any subsequent comment from the subdivisions, we recommend that all sections reexamine their [the] position on this issue at the earliest opportunity and submit a summary of commentary to the Weekly People staff.

4. Since the lessons of this issue are not confined solely to the case in point, we recommend that review of Weekly People articles and Party positions generally be made

as a regular part of every section's work. In keeping with the spirit of this recommendation we urge that the "resolution on increasing and improving Party activity" recently adopted by the SLP of California be endorsed by this convention.

Fraternally submitted,

Alan Karp
Bernard Bortnick

Committee on Party Press
and Literature.

On motion item 3 was amended by striking the words "and submit a summary of commentary to the Weekly People staff" at the end of the paragraph.

On motion item 3 was further amended by substituting the word "the" (see bracket above) for "their" in the next to last line.

During the debate on the above resolution A. Karp surrendered the gavel to vice chairperson Taylor in order to participate in the discussion.

On motion the majority report was adopted as amended.

A. Karp resumed the chair.

The Committee on Platform, S. Fink reporting, recommended that the convention readopt the 1972 National Platform and that the National Office prepare campaign statements [leaflets] for circulation during the campaign. On motion the report was accepted and the ^{re}commendations concurred in.

No other committees being ready to report, a recess was declared at 4:10 p.m. to reconvene at 7 p.m.

Evening Session, Wednesday, February 11

The convention was called to order at 7:15 p.m. in executive session. On roll call H. Killman (still ill), F. Girard and J. O'Neill were absent. Girard and O'Neill arrived later.

The Committee on State of Organization, R. Massi reporting, submitted the following resolution on Party's positions:

In the view of this committee it is clear that from a review of the occurrences at the most recent NEC session of May 31-June 2, 1975 and the measures adopted by that session, analysis set forth in the Weekly People on certain world events over the past year and opinions expressed at, and resolutions adopted by the present national convention, there has been a marked shift in the application of Marxist-De Leonist principles and analysis by the SLP. This is in no way to be construed to mean that the Party has in any way modified its fundamental Marxian basis or that it has changed the basic De Leonist principles and program that are the very essence of its being as a revolutionary socialist organization. However, the Party, in its statement on Vietnam (as delivered at the aforementioned NEC session), its statement on Portugal (as expressed in a resolution already adopted by this convention) and statements made on a number of topics recently covered in various Weekly People articles, has broken with certain traditional habits of thought and re-evaluated and clarified its positions on many [several] subjects.

Until this national convention, however, it is apparent that there has not been any formal recognition and approval of this trend by any policy-making body of the Party. The need for such an acknowledgment is of obvious importance. This is especially true in times like these when the Party is engaged in a critical reevaluation and reassessment of positions of great importance to both the Party and the working class.

Therefore be it resolved:

1. That this convention acknowledges that a significant change in the Party's analysis of present conditions has indeed occurred;
2. That this convention considers that change to be the result of an improved application of Marxian analysis;
3. That this convention concurs in this development.

Fraternally submitted,
James Sim Arnold Babel Julius Levin
Robert E. Massi George S. Taylor
Committee on State of Organization.

On motion the word "several" (see brackets above) was substituted for the word "many" in the last line of the first paragraph. On motion the resolution was adopted as amended.

Massi noted that the committee had not dealt directly with the problem of adding people to the National Headquarters staff, suggesting that the National Secretary be requested to comment on this subject. The National Secretary stated that four members had offered to come to work at the National Headquarters in the near future in various capacities. Arrangements in this connection have begun. He added, however, that these additions to the staff would not immediately resolve the problems in the editorial office, specifically the absence of an editor.

The Committee on Availability of National Officers, Bruce Cozzini reporting, reported that one member was available to serve as National Secretary if nominated and elected.

On call for nominations, Cozzini placed the name of Nathan Karp in nomination for National Secretary.

On motion the vote on Karp was postponed until after the Committee on Availability of National Officers had reported. The committee then reported as follows:

This committee, after interviews with the National Secretary, several members of the National Office staff, a number of NEC members, and a number of people suggested as possible candidates for national officers, summarizes our current situation as follows:

It is physically impossible for the current National Secretary to continue for any length of time in his dual role as both National Secretary and a supervisor of the publication of the Weekly People. Although a small number of members have been identified whose capabilities would allow them to assume one of these positions, none of these, for family, professional, financial or personal reasons is immediately available. Serious consideration is still being given by a few individuals, but their problems are (again) such that there is no guarantee of solution in the very near future.

While it may be hoped that the addition of the four members who have recently expressed their willingness to join the National Office staff may remove some of the burden of work from the National Secretary, the burden of dual responsibility is still intolerable. Hopes that those currently on the staff or presently to join the staff may develop the

needed attributes for one of these offices present no solution to the current problems, whatever promise they may hold for the future.

The committee strongly urges those who have been contacted in this regard to continue working towards the goal of making themselves available to the Party. The committee also urges all members to take the responsibility of evaluating the capabilities of themselves and their fellow members, and to suggest those whose talent or potential measure up to the standards required for National Office positions to their NEC member for consideration.

In spite of the difficulties under which the National Office and the Weekly People staff have had to operate, the recent improvements of the Weekly People have been remarkable, and deserve expression of appreciation by this convention.

It is with all of these considerations in mind that this committee recommends that the current organization of the staff of the Weekly People continue, on a temporary basis, until suitable persons can be found to man either the position of Editor of the Weekly People or the National Secretary.

Fraternally submitted,

Bruce Cozzini
Peter Kapitz
Vito DeLisi

Committee on Availability of
National Officers.

On motion the report was adopted and the recommendation concurred in.

Nathan Karp was unanimously elected National Secretary.

The members of the Committee on Constitution were excused so the committee could complete its work.

The Committee on Educational Materials and Development, E. Wizek reporting, submitted the following report:

In keeping with the National Secretary's report on the importance of the continued education of and study by the membership (page 14): "In fact, a more active participation by the membership as a whole in the internal organizational life of the Party, and in the political debate and education needed to keep a Marxist party healthy, is essential if we are to find a way out of the current dilemma," your committee makes the following recommendations:

1. The NEC shall form an Educational Materials Subcommittee responsible for the development and dissemination of educational materials within the Party, in much the same way as the Esperanto Committee functioned.
2. The duties of this committee shall be:
 - a. To make available for sections' use tapes and other educational materials from the files of the National Office;
 - b. To encourage sections to participate in the further development of a correspondence study course;
 - c. To encourage sections to develop educational audio-visual materials for use in schools and study classes;
 - d. To encourage sections to develop new educational materials.

Fraternally submitted,

Walter Steinhilber
Bruce Cozzini
Edward Wizek

Committee on Educational
Materials & Development.

On motion the report was adopted as submitted.

The Committee on Mileage, G. Gunderson reporting, reported that to that time \$3,253.10 had been paid out to the delegates for mileage expense. [The final figure for delegates' mileage expense was \$3,341.10.]

On motion a 30-minute recess was declared to permit the Committee on Constitution to complete its report.

The convention was called to order at 8:05 p.m.

B. Reitzes submitted the following supplementary report for the Committee on Constitution:

The following proposals for amending the Party's Constitution are recommended by your committee in implementation of acts of this convention previously taken with regard to the report of the Committee on State of the Organization:

1. Article VII, Sect. 1

Delete entire section and replace as follows:

a) "The Party shall hold a national convention every year, the location and date of each convention to be established by the preceding year's convention.

b) The Party's national candidates shall be nominated by the convention preceding the one held in a national campaign year.

c) If ten sections in three different regions so demand, a general vote shall be taken as to holding a special convention. Except for the number of seconds required, the procedure for initiating such proposal, calling for seconds and submitting it to a general vote shall be the same as provided in Article V, Section 13 (h)."

2. Article V, Section 10 (a)

Insert on second line after words "regular session" the phrase "between national conventions."

3. Article V, Section 10 (b)

Delete entirely.

4. Add new Article VI, Section 7 as follows:

"The National Secretary shall deliver formal reports to national conventions."

5. Article V, Section 13 (f)

Delete phrase at end of sentence as follows: "and make a full report to such conventions on all Party matters."

6. Add new Article V, Section 13 (1) as follows:

"NEC members shall initiate discussion with the sections within their respective regions on the contents of each NEC session shortly after the holding of such session. All expenses incurred by NEC members in this regard shall be borne by the National Office."

Several suggestions made by the National Office in the foregoing general regard, as well as the proposals of Section St. Louis, Mo. and the Illinois State Committee with regard to nominating national candidates earlier than heretofore, are encompassed by the above proposed constitutional amendments.

If any provisions of the current Constitution, which may have been overlooked by your committee, conflict with any of the foregoing proposed amendments, we recommend that the National Secretary (with the approval of the NEC) be authorized to alter those provisions accordingly.

Fraternally submitted,

L. Fisher
J.C. Horvath
Bernard Reitzes

Committee on Constitution.

On motion the proposed constitutional amendments were taken up seriatim.

New Article VII, Section 1 (a): on motion adopted.

New Article VII, Section 1 (b) was amended to read: "National candidates shall be nominated at the convention held during the year preceding the national elections."

New Article VII, Section 1 (c): on motion adopted.

Article V, Section 10 (a): on motion the proposed amendment was adopted.

Article V, Section 10 (b): the deletion of this section was approved.

New Article VI, Section 7: on motion adopted.

Article V, Section 13 (f): on motion the proposed amendment was adopted.

New Article V, Section 13 (l): The last of the proposed new section was amended to read: "Expenses incurred shall be borne by the National Office." The new section was adopted as amended.

On motion the supplementary report of the Committee on Constitution was adopted as amended.

On motion Article V, Section 13 (g) was deleted from the Constitution.

On motion the National Office was authorized to make all changes in numbering and lettering made necessary by the constitutional amendments adopted.

At 8:45 p.m. a 10-minute recess was declared. On roll call, upon reconvening, all present except H. Killman, absent with excuse.

On motion it was decided to hold the 1977 national convention in Chicago during the month of May.

Motion that Cleveland be designated alternate site for the 1977 national convention lost.

Motion that Milwaukee be designated alternate site lost.

Motion that Twin Cities be designated alternate site lost.

Motion that New York be designated alternate site lost.

On motion the Akron-Cleveland area was designated the alternate site.

On motion appreciation was extended to all who contributed to the convention's success.

On motion the Mileage and NEC Expense Assessment was increased from \$2.00 to \$5.00, and the National Office authorized to make the necessary change in the constitutional provisions governing same.

A 15-minute recess was declared to permit the recording secretary to complete the minutes.

Motion that the National Secretary be directed to establish contacts with any party or group in the world with whom we are in sympathy lost.

Convention reconvened at 9:26 p.m.

Moved and seconded that the proceedings of this convention be available to the public. Amendment that they not be made public until after the next convention lost. Original motion passed.

On motion the published proceedings of the 29th National Convention are to be supplied to members without charge.

On motion the minutes were adopted as corrected and subject to additional editorial changes before publication.

On motion National Secretary Nathan Karp was called on and he briefly addressed the convention.

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

Fraternally submitted,
[signed] Elizabeth Stanich
Recording Secretary.

APPENDIX

Note: All letters addressed "To the Members of the NEC" are from the National Secretary.

From Georgia Cozzini, Region No. 6, June 3, 1975

Dear Comrade Karp:

I have just returned from the NEC session, and find my thoughts centering not on what was accomplished, but how it was accomplished, and I am deeply disturbed. On pain of burdening you with the perusal of a long letter, I must express the sum total of what is disturbing me.

When Comrade Bernard Bortnick was rendering the report of his committee on Monday, my thoughts flashed back to telephone conversations I had had with Comrade Elizabeth Schnur, after she had accepted the nomination for the 1975 NEC, and then discovered that Comrade Bortnick had likewise been nominated. She said that in view of her age, she felt that she shouldn't put the Party in a predicament of having to select an emergency replacement, and asked my opinion of Comrade Bortnick's qualifications. Without hesitation, I said that I had heard or known of nothing but favorable comments on his ability to work with and grow in the Party. I remarked that I too had from time to time wondered if there was not someone in my Region who would not be able to bring to the NEC more than I had to offer. I began in the year 1953, after Comrade Frank Schnur's death. In the late 50's, I inquired of Comrade Louis Fisher if he would accept, and the answer was always no because he felt he could be of greater use as State Secretary in Illinois. In the 60's, more than once I inquired of Comrade Genevieve Gunderson, and she declined, in her self-deprecating manner. Elizabeth wistfully said, "I'll miss get-

ting the NEC correspondence, being 'in' on the Party's current situation." I confessed that I too felt pangs of regret at the thought, but, like her, I did not consider that a determining factor.

And so, while Comrade Bortnick was conveying his committee's resolutions, I looked around the table at the NEC members, putting aside my deep affection and respect on a personal level. I found myself wondering who among them felt that the prime consideration for their acceptance on the 1975 NEC was that they had years of "experience" at that post. (I put that word in quotes because the word "traditional" keeps coming to mind. Or to put it more bluntly, do we have self-judged "elder statesmen" in the Party?) Have our decades in the highest representative body in the Party caused us to use our experiences as a deterrent to new methods and procedures? (I have heard, more times than I care to recall, the remark: "The Party never did it that way.") Have we allowed ourselves the self-indulgence of believing that since the membership of our respective regions keep electing us to that post, we are therefore the best our region has to offer?

I am pointing my finger at no member in particular. I merely would like to have each and every member of the NEC honestly review his conduct and his contribution to the Party, while in session and throughout the year. I am writing this letter now to ask each NEC member to make an honest self-assessment, before the next year's nominations take place.

Since I have decided as Comrade Elizabeth Schnur did,

not to accept another nomination on the NEC, and like her I see good S.L.P. members who can replace me, I feel free to make these comments, and tell it like I see it.

For instance, I have wondered for years why the NEC is so "traditional" as to be almost ritualistic. I have been an NEC member for 22 years, and have never been nominated to be its recording secretary, although I believe I would have been fairly competent. There is no aspersion cast on Comrade Orange in this comment. It is only that no other NEC member has been granted the chance to gain experience at that job. Comrade Orange is the "traditional" recording secretary of the NEC, and not by his seeking it. Likewise, in my 22 years I have never been nominated as chairman. Again, I believe I have a fair knowledge of Roberts Rules of Order, but I'll never know, because I was never allowed the experience, how capably I might have acted in that post. "Traditionally" there were two or three in the 22 years who manned the chair. (And when I use the word "manned" it positively has no reference to sex discrimination. In fact, my entire point is not one of discrimination, it is one of traditionalism.)

In this rapidly changing world, I would like to see the NEC shake off its traditionalism and become innovative. I would like to see it more in harmony with the youth and vigor represented by the total National Headquarters staff. Maybe this could be accomplished by making a constitutional ruling that NEC membership cannot be held for more than four consecutive years at a time. Maybe the NEC can be revitalized

if other members throughout the country are given the opportunity to bring new ideas and to grow in experience within the Party in implementing those ideas, as NEC members.

One last observation: Comrade Karp, I had the feeling that it is this traditionalism that has troubled you most about the NEC in this as in past sessions. I watched you and marveled at your restraint, when time after time it was obvious that a point brought up in your report had been either not recognized, not understood fully, or ignored. It was as though there exists a picture of the Party and its operations that is a Potemkin village--a facade that hides the real conditions. Since the facade is more pleasant to view, why not keep it there? The essence then of what is disturbing me, is that there were signs in the conduct of the 1975 NEC session of a non-recognition of reality. Thus my critical analysis of WHY this is so.

I am grateful to the Party for the opportunity of gaining experience that being an NEC member has given me. I wish I could say that the Party has gained as much as I have, but I know that is not so. I treasure the great number of times you have contributed to my S.L.P. education, as an individual member and in committee work. Your patience and kindness have been unceasing.

This is not a "swan song" letter. I intend to live a long time as an active S.L.P. member. One of my chief concerns is that you do likewise! If the NEC through inaction shortens your life by over-burdening you, we will have reason

to rue our Potemkin village. It was a sad thing for me to have to report for my committee that we had no promise of permanent help at the National Office. This must not keep us as NEC members from an unceasing search for someone in our region to accept employment at the Party headquarters, and not to wait until the next NEC session to do anything about it.

I guess that concludes my thoughts on the 1975 session.

*

To the Members of the NEC, June 13, 1975.

Dear Comrades:

Enclosed you will find copy of a letter dated June 3, from Comrade Georgia Cozzini to the undersigned.

Copy of that letter is being sent to you at the specific request of Comrade Cozzini.

Please acknowledge receipt on the enclosed postcard.

*

From Aaron M. Orange, Region No. 2, June 28, 1975

Dear Comrade Karp:

I have carefully read Comrade Georgia Cozzini's June 3rd letter to you recounting her thoughts on the 1975 NEC Session.

I am sure that all NEC members were deeply concerned that the session was unable to come up with solutions to the major problems plaguing the Party, viz. finding an Editor of the Weekly People, an Assistant to the National Secretary, and other help required at National Headquarters. But I believe

that even a reconstituted NEC--less "traditional" and more "innovative"--could not have solved those basic problems from which flow many of our other problems.

Can it be claimed that the NEC was "traditional" when, just a short time ago, it unanimously endorsed the untraditional recommendation of the NEC Sub-Committee to move our National Headquarters to the west coast? Can it be claimed that the NEC was "traditional" when it unanimously endorsed the untraditional recommendation to give up the Party's printing plant? I believe circumstances have dictated our actions, not "tradition."

I am sure no one can disagree with Comrade Cozzini that "each and every member of the NEC honestly review his conduct and his contribution to the Party, while in session and throughout the year" before accepting nomination. But this brings us to the essential consideration that whether accepting or making a nomination, such decision should not be based on "tradition" or long experience, or age--"young" or "old"--but on qualification to serve.

*

From James C. Horvath, Region No. 4, June 21, 1975

Dear Comrade Karp:

I acknowledge the following material from the National Office:

Copy of letter to Vincent Lamb, June 13, 1975

Letter to NEC Members, June 13, 1975

Letter to National Secretary dated June 3, 1975 from
Georgia Cozzini

To Frank Girard (copy) dated June 10, 1975

Letter to NEC Members under date of June 16, 1975

Re: hospital plan and National Secretary cut in pay.

Minutes of the Regular NEC Session May 31-June 2, 1975.

Regarding the matter of taking a pay cut of ten dollars I wish to go on record as being opposed to this action on the part of anyone in the national office. The cost of living being what it is and the fact that the pay of our staff is already too low, no cut in pay should be allowed.

Regarding letter of Georgia Cozzini on NEC meetings I wish to state that she is not stating my feeling on this matter. At a latter date I will draw up a set of suggestions (that I am now working on) that I will send to the National Office on what I feel would be a more practical way of conducting our future NEC sessions.

*

From James C. Horvath, Region No. 4, July 12, 1975

Dear Comrade Karp:

I stated in my letter to you under date of June 21, 1975 that at a latter date I would send to the national office a set of suggestions that would help in the conducting of future NEC Sessions in a more practical way than we have in the past. My recommendations will be included in the closing part of this letter.

In a letter to the National Office sent by Comrade Georgia Cozzini under date of 6-3-75 and received at your office on the date of June 9, 1975, I found a host of statements that did not seem right to me, therefore I am going to give my assessments to these remarks. My remarks may not set well with some of my comrades on the NEC but because of the Cozzini letter I am compelled to go ahead with it. The points that I refer to in the Cozzini letter will be by page number and line numbers:

Page 1, lines 1 thru 14, reference is made as to why Comrade Elizabeth Schnur "felt that she shouldn't put the Party in a predicament of having to select an emergency replacement" and she (Schnur) asked the advice of Comrade Cozzini on the qualifications of Comrade Bernard Bortnick, who at the time also had his name on the ballot in the same region for the office of NEC. Comment: It seems rather unusual to me that a comrade from region 7 should be asking a comrade from region 6 on the qualifications of a member not in his or her own region. Had Comrade Schnur removed her name from the ballot, would it have been because of her age? Or because she felt that Comrade Bortnick was more qualified to be on the NEC? Comment: My opinion in this matter is, that if Comrade Schnur (or any other comrade in similar circumstances) was not personally familiar with Comrade Bortnick, then she of course should keep her name on the ballot. To take ones name out of the running upon the say-so of another comrade alone, I think to be bad judgement. The proper thing to do

in the case of Comrade Schnur, would have been to contact Comrade Bortnick himself, then assess the information given and then act accordingly.

Page 2, lines 2 & 3. This statement, to me, has an entirely different meaning. I would have put the statement this way: I will never miss correspondence that spells inactivity and trouble for the Party. I, like Comrade Karp, would like to get only good correspondence telling of the "full of life work" that is or should be going on in the Party throughout the nation, where the revolutionary spirit moves ahead full blast. But alas it is not so.

Page 2, lines 7 thru 10. In accepting nomination on the NEC I did not in any way consider my past "experience" (nor do I think others did either) as the reason for running for that office. The reason I ran, is that all of the Sections in Region 4 nominated me and am sure the membership felt that I was qualified to serve on the NEC. I had nothing to do with determining my own qualifications. The respect and honor given me by my comrades is good enough cause to run for any office that they elect me to. Unlike my comrade (G.C.) I did not "wonder" off during the session wondering why this or that comrade accepted their respective nominations. In the first place, I did not vote for my comrades from other regions, therefore I had no cause (to) worry why anyone accepted or not. Things I have no control over I do not worry about.

Page 2, lines 14 thru 18. The words "best our region has to offer" I think is in poor taste. However, since it was used by my comrade from Region 6, I would have to say,

that, if these were the names nominated to the NEC and no others would accept the nominations at the time, then we got the "best" or the only ones that were available. This action cannot be laid at the door of "tradition" but can only be put in the door of inactivity on the part of many members that may have become "tired" or perhaps apathetic. When one gets to the point where one thinks that he or she is "best" for any task in the Party, we may have on hand a person with an ego problem, in which case when the ego is blown big enough, the Party will prick this bubble and deflate it and put the person in his proper place.

Page 2, lines 19 thru 22. My comrade makes the statement that she is not "pointing my finger at no member in particular." The implication however, appears that she is pointing her finger at everyone when she asks, "each and every member of the NEC honestly (is it possible that some might make a dishonest appraisal) review his (her) conduct" etc. etc. Is it possible that she wants us to go through a self-purification process as they do in China. Since I have no apologies nor excuses to make, I remove the finger that might, by accident, be pointing in my direction. The implications leave me cold somehow. If I understand her statement correctly, then I must conclude there "must be a lot-o-sinners among us." Maybe we could set up a special committee for confessions.

Page 3, lines 4 thru 18. The use of the word "traditional" is in bad taste, and to conclude that the NEC has

been almost "ritualistic," is to make self incrimination by admitting that for 22 years one has been contributing to these "ritualistic" actions. To my knowledge I have found nothing in the proceedings of NEC minutes, for the past 22 or so years, wherein my dear comrade ever fought any of these things she refers to as "traditional." The question arises, do you blow off steam when you know that you will no longer run for the NEC, by pointing out what may appear to be wrongs, and then wait for the newly elected NEC members to right the wrongs committed by the "traditionalists" of the past? If Comrade Cozzini refuses to run again, if she is nominated, I too will never know if she would have been a good recording secretary for the NEC Sessions, nor will I ever know if she can "man" the post as chairman. What a pity, just when I was thinking of nominating her for one of the said roles at the next NEC session (assuming that the members in Region 4 elect me again).

Page 3, lines 19 thru 26, and page 4 line 1. The wish is the father of the thought in this case. How can one equate the "youth and vigor represented by the total National Headquarters staff," seems a little misleading. Part of the "total National Headquarters Staff" is not in the youth category by a long-shot. (National Secretary and our D. Ballantyne.) If it wasn't for the vigor, basically, of these two old timers (please don't tell Doris that I said she is old) that are cementing these youths together, I'd hate to say it, but the N.O. might very well have to close shop. (And I am not casting

any aspersions or reflections on my younger comrades at the N.O., because in time, and I hope very soon, they will be the cream of the crop in the SLP. Comrade Cozzini states, that "maybe the NEC can be revitalized if other members...are given the opportunity to bring new ideas and to grow in experience." The source of all of our problems lies not in the NEC or the National Office, but in the general apathy or something, and inaction on the part of members in the Party, in other words our membership in many cases is going through a period of lethargy. "New ideas" and "experience" must be practiced at the ground-roots level by the members and the Sections as a whole, and if successful these ideas etc., can be passed on to the NEC for national action (or via resolutions to National Conventions).

Setting a limit on the number of years an NEC member can accept that post, is to develop experience and once having gained the experience(4 years or so) you do not allow him to carry on any longer because someone new at that point must be given the experience. The end result would be that everyone on the NEC would be getting experience and yet no one will have the opportunity to apply this experience once having gotten it.

Page 4, lines 1 thru 12. "One last observation" is a poor one. I fail to see where Comrade Karp showed "restraint" when "time after time it was obvious" etc., "had been either not recognized, not understood fully, or ignored." For the record I did recognize and I did understand fully our National

Secretary, and I did not ignore him, nor do I feel that anyone else did. I distinctly remember, that Comrade Karp held back no punches where they were needed and that he was in there swinging up to the last part of the session. To me it was obvious that the National Secretary was perturbed (and who wasn't) by many things. The marvel of it all is how he held up under the strain that was so pressing. What our Comrade Karp has gone through, I would wish upon no one.

As for the misunderstandings regarding the National Secretary's report at the Session, I think that problem can be solved easily in the future. (See recommendation at end of this letter.)

Page 4, lines 21 thru 26. The statement "If the NEC through inaction shortens your life by overburdening you," is one statement that I for one would never make. First-- The NEC did act, so they could not have been inactive. Second-- things were accomplished at the NEC Session. Because misunderstandings may arise at times, is no cause for alarm. The time to be alarmed is when corrections are made and we don't live up to them, then we are in real trouble. Despite the ups and downs of the last NEC session, where, even personality clashes may have appeared, the material we had to work with, things were accomplished. Now if the actions of the NEC can be implemented through-out the Party the Party as a whole will be much better off.

After all the complaining, the main question is still not resolved. As was stated at the last session, general

activity is at a low point. Many of our old-timers are departing from our ranks. The young, as yet, are not flocking to our sides, but the work must go on as best we can, with what we have to work with. Crying over spilled milk, or the mistakes we have made in the past will do us no good. Complaining without the ability to stimulate action, is good breath wasted. You don't have to put the real revolutionists on fire to act, because the flame of revolutionary spirit burns within the revolutionist. The need of the hour is more revolutionists. In understanding social problems, the real revolutionist is duty bound to act. Lacking that understanding, you have the half-baked revolutionist, who can only act when special moments inspire him. So let's stop blaming one another and start inspiring others by setting good examples ourselves.

I hope that this long letter will not take us into a long unnecessary debate on the above mentioned subjects. I wish some of the matters would never have come up in the first place.

In concluding my letter I wish to make the following recommendations for changes in the way NEC meetings are carried on:

Recommendation 1. That at all NEC Sessions, all matters that come before the house be handled by the committee as a whole on the floor. Eliminate the need for electing committees to the already existing NEC. The Executive committee is not that large a body that it has to split up its work into still smaller committees. There are times in the past when

committees of the NEC go into their separate rooms, long and wasteful time is spent, when some committees get their work done early while other committees may work many hours longer. result is that many members of the NEC then have to spend wasteful time either in coffee shops or waiting in lounges until the session is again called to order.

With no special committees to deal with, we can dispense with the unnecessary calling of recesses because this or that committee has not completed its report to the session. We should use the recess periods for coffee breaks or dinner periods. This way we can hammer all problems out on the floor of the session proper. If we wish to make the sessions interesting to the visiting members who may have come long distances to hear what is going on, then by eliminating (what to me are unnecessary recesses) recesses, all of these members will really know what is going on. Behind the scene actions of committees with the host of recesses becomes very frustrating to those who would want to learn anything about our Party's work. (One out of town member left to go home early one day because he got tired of coming to the meeting on and off again because of the many recesses that took place). If we want to kill the interest of members in coming to these sessions, as we ran the last session, then lets continue our work in the same manner. To expect these visiting members to attend session after session and not let them hear what is going on, is to discourage them from attending any future sessions. (There may be someone who might say, well, if they are

interested enough in the sessions they will stay until the end, come what may.) To me, being a visitor is one thing, and being on the NEC and being a part of the session is quite another thing.

Recommendation 2. That the reading of the lengthy National Secretary's report be dispensed with at future NEC sessions. In its place the National Secretary should be instructed to submit his report to all NEC members at least 10 days before any session that may be called. This will allow NEC member ample time to study the secretary's report, communicate with each other thru phone, on all matters that might call for action, and go to sessions prepared to act both intelligently and with efficiency and speed. (The secretary's report will be printed in the minutes where every member will be able to read for his or herself.) In using this procedure, no NEC member will henceforth have an excuse that they did not have enough time to digest the material at hand. This alone could cut the time of conducting NEC sessions in half, and also would not wear the voice of the National Secretary out. To expect NEC members to digest contents of a report that takes 4 to 6 hours to read and took maybe one to two months to prepare, is asking a little bit too much.

I personally feel, that if the above suggestions and changes are made, the sessions can be made much shorter and more interesting to everyone concerned. What now takes 4 or 5 days to do, we can end up doing the same amount of work in two or at the most three days.

Recommendation 3. So that we will never have to look for last minute replacements to fill NEC member posts, I recommend that when NEC members nominations are called for, we at the same time have a vote for nominations for Alternates to the NEC. I make this recommendation because of the statement made in the letter of Comrade Cozzini anent the matter of "emergency replacement" on page one of her remarks regarding a conversation she had with Comrade Schnur on reasons for not being on the NEC etc.

I hope that I have covered all matters that may be of interest to the national office and the members on the NEC and that my recommendations will be endorsed. If I made any remarks that may appear offensive, it was not so intended, in which case I must make apology.

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From Joseph Pirincin, Region No. 5, June 20, 1975

Dear Comrade Karp:

This is to confirm my phone call to you of June 18 and to acknowledge receipt of the following correspondence--

June 13--your letter to me re: M. Murphy

June 13--copy of your letter to NEC Members, enclosing copy of Comrade G. Cozzini's letter to you of June 3.

June 15--copy of your letter to NEC Members, enclosing copy of minutes of the 1975 regular session of the NEC.

June 19--copy of your letter to Comrade Murphy.

June 19--copy of your letter to Comrade Vincent Lamb, St. Louis.

June 13--copy of your letter to Comrade P. Kapitz.

When talking with you I agreed to help Comrade Murphy as best I can when he comes to work in the Akron-Cleveland area.

Regarding Comrade Cozzini's letter, I agree in substance. But we must guard against electing or selecting anyone for any post on the basis of age. Regardless of the age or the composition of the NEC, the need is to have and to develop further a sense of Party responsibility on a national basis. Above all, the need for NEC members to be concerned with Party problems must not be limited to NEC meetings that last but a few days each year, such concern should be continuous.

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From Bernard Bortnick, Region No. 7, July 12, 1975.

Dear Comrade Karp:

With our 6000 mile marathon auto tour now just a fading memory, I have finally gotten around to reviewing the items of NEC correspondence. My comments on each of them are as follows:

1. Comrade Cozzini's letter of June 9, 1975:

Her call for a "self-assessment" by each NEC member makes me wonder whether I should have accepted nomination for Region 7 since I believe there are more qualified members. However her plea is also one for development of each member and it is in this spirit that I accepted nomination for the office, knowing that whatever happens and however effective

I might function, I will benefit with a broader knowledge of the party.

Her reference to the NEC's "traditionalism" is, I believe, a valid observation. It is also understandable how it came about eg.; relying upon the National Office and Weekly People staff to formulate party policy while it assumed the role of an endorsing body. I believe to some extent members have become accustomed to this and accordingly have sought the "experienced" party member whose endorsement of a particular decision carried the weight of years and not necessarily individual research.

There is merit in her suggestion that a four year consecutive term be set as the limit for each NEC member, although this will not necessarily make for a more aggressive NEC. It might stimulate a greater measure of familiarity of the membership with the various functions and needs of the party. It would stimulate a greater study of our literature and Marxism generally as each newly elected member would be obligated to contribute in formulating party policy on various issues and events. However, there may be some difficulties if a region could not provide suitable nominees for alternate four year terms--although I hope no region ever becomes that weak. There might be a serious problem in continuity if 4 year terms were not staggered. A whole new slate of NEC members would put a terrific strain on the smooth functioning of the party. (In this regard I believe it would be beneficial if the incumbent NEC member turned over his or

her files to the newly elected member.) If possible I believe it might be desirable to have a majority of NEC members who had attended the previous session, although I recognize that such a constitutional requirement would impinge upon the democratic basis of this elected body.

Comrade Cozzini's concern about the health of the members at the N.O. and particularly your health being ruined by the burdens of the "help problem" is I'm sure shared by all members of the NEC. Accordingly, and in line with two items of unfinished business left from the last NEC session, namely: finding another comrade for employment in the N.O. and ascertaining the availability of candidates for the 1976 National Election, I would like to submit the following motion:

I move the NEC be provided the names, addresses, and if possible phone numbers of all members in their respective regions for the purpose of determining, by a careful screening of each member, whether (a) another member can be found to fill a vacancy in either the business office or on the staff of the Weekly People, and (b) to determine the availability of qualified members to run for national office in the 1976 Presidential Election.

The thought has also crossed my mind re: the help problem, as to the availability of a comrade in either the SLP of Australia, or the SLP of Canada to aid us at this particular time. I believe if such a person were available, with the understanding that it would be for a temporary period, the bonds between us would be strengthened. This suggestion

is not made in the spirit of attempting to raid our fraternal parties but in recognition that a strengthening the SLP of America will ultimately fortify the fraternal parties.

One thing I have found very puzzling since I joined the party, which is apparently the result of the reticence of the NEC as a body, is how an individual member judges the performance of an NEC member aside from the NEC sessions (that all members cannot attend)? In this respect I find it very useful to have had the opportunity to read the correspondence by NEC members on various issues in the recent special session report. I believe, when possible, this practice should be continued. Moreover, I believe a useful exchange could be initiated if NEC members were obligated to meet with the various sections from their regions for the purpose of answering specific questions and elaborating on certain important points.

Comrade Cozzini's remark about being "deeply disturbed" about "not what was accomplished, but how it was accomplished" was I believe a reference to the necessity for the frequent interjections by the National Secretary as he attempted to draw the attention of the various NEC members to important omissions in their reports. On several occasions I was deeply apprehensive about the amount of time which the NEC set aside to deal with various issues. Later I found that my fears were justified when the reports had to be recommitted precisely because the committee had not deliberated long enough on the issues at hand. I believe that it would be very beneficial if in the future a one day session could be set aside for the

NEC to organize itself, and have the opportunity of reading in advance the NS report, making appropriate notes and comments, talking with the NS on an informal basis to help clarify issues. On the following day the NEC session would formally convene. Also, would it not be more appropriate for the Banquet to occur prior to the opening of the NEC session? I believe we would get more accomplished, in a more relaxed manner, if the NEC assembled for informal sessions on a Friday morning, with the Banquet set for Friday evening, and then had the entire weekend to deal with the issues at hand.

2. Your letter of June 16, 1975:

I was on vacation when the draft of the minutes was sent and didn't really have a chance to review them until I arrived home. However since then I have done so and find them in order.

3. Comrade Swiatek's letter of June 17, 1975 and your reply of June 20, 1975.

I assume that despite the misunderstanding, Comrade Swiatek will be there in August. This is what I understand he is agreeing to do as per para 4 in his letter.

4. General letter dated June 20, 1975.

In view of the pending "concentration of efforts as outlined in para 5 page 2, I believe that an attempt should be made to have the sub-committee absorb some of the routine correspondence dealing with it as a committee. Is some arrangement like this possible?***

From H. Steiner, Region No. 8, June 24, 1975

Dear Comrade Karp:

I have reread Comrade Cozzini's June 3rd letter. I do not agree with her assessment of the present NEC and the conclusions drawn.

I do not deny there is always room for improvement and innovative ideas in every phase of Party structure and its agitational methods. The Party has kept pace with the "changing times" or it could not have survived 84 years. This does not mean that we can complacently accept that the Party will muddle through no matter what. Each crisis has challenged the membership and they finally helped bring the organization into safer waters.

I sincerely believe that the NEC members are aware that the present crisis is one of the most crucial in Party history.

Suppose the NEC had been composed of "young" members. How could they have solved the help problem that has plagued the Party for years, and which became critical when Comrades Blume and A. Braunstein retired and acute when Timm walked out. What could they have done? In the November 23, 1972 letter written to Comrade Karp, Comrade Pirincin writes "Detroit offers little hope for N.O. help. Chicago and Milwaukee area are about the same as Detroit." And the same held true for New York and adjacent areas!

The 1972 convention and the NEC at its 1973 session made some "radical" decisions to solve the help problem. The move to California, the recruitment of young members for the N.O.

the high level of generous financial support from the field, helped ease the tensions and frustrations at National Headquarters. Of course, we are not out of the woods yet, but it was a leap forward.

I do not go along with the idea of "a constitutional ruling that NEC membership cannot be held for more than four consecutive years at a time." Why limit this to NEC members since State Secretaries, Section Organizers, State Committee members are often re-elected year after year and can also fall victim to "traditionalism" and "ritualism." I recall that several years ago a section proposed an amendment that 65 years be the limit set for the office of National Secretary. Probably for analogous reasons.

The Party has always stressed that the membership should elect to the NEC those most qualified and mature in judgment. The majority may not always be right but we must rely on their collective wisdom to elect the person of their choice.

The "youth cult" is given great emphasis in capitalist society, yet there is no special quality to just being young. Youth has its own "traditionalism" and it may or may not have anymore ability than an older person to make correct decisions or use proper judgment. I don't consider myself an "elder statesman" nor do I reject "new methods and procedures" because the "Party never did it that way."

Finally, I do not accept the observation that "It was as though there exists a picture of the Party and its operations that is a Potemkin Village--a facade that hides the real con-

ditions." The National Secretary prepares the report and is thoroughly familiar with it. An NEC member reading it for the first, second, or even a third time, may quite unintentionally by-pass a point. This is why the National Secretary has a voice in the proceedings so he can call attention to an important item overlooked. I don't see how the concept of traditionalism fits into the picture.

I regret that Comrade Cozzini will not accept nomination to the NEC next year. She is a valuable member on the committee with sound judgment and her party understanding and background is an asset when important decisions have to be made.

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From A. A. Albaugh, Region No. 10, June 18, 1975

Dear Comrade Karp:

I have read the copy of Comrade Cozzini's letter to you under date of 6/3/75.

In trying to analyze Comrade Cozzini's opinions I find myself agreeing with parts of her letter and questioning others.

In Comrade Cozzini's opening paragraph she claims to have been "deeply disturbed" on "how the work of our NEC was accomplished." I must admit that I, too, was "deeply disturbed" but with me it was a mild description. I should like to attribute my "disturbance" to the personal realization that I have suddenly jumped in age from 30 to 70 without, at the same time, becoming aware of the fact that my physical and

mental impairments have also jumped from 30 to 70 even though I should have wished to leave the impairments behind.

On page 2, Comrade Cozzini "looked around the table at the NEC members" and found herself wondering how many of us felt that our prime consideration for accepting nomination on the NEC was because of "our years of experience."

What motivations others on the NEC may have had for accepting nominations, I can speak only for myself. Our Section unanimously nominated a member from another Section to serve on the NEC for 1975. The other member declined. Our Section then placed my name in nomination. I accepted. When the nominations were returned to our Section we found only my name on the list of nominees. There was no one else to vote for. So--I served on this committee to the best of my ability simply because no one else chose to be nominated. But this is the very same problem which we are butting our heads against in attempting to find members who are willing and able to accept employment at our National Headquarters. This lack of willingness on the part of some of our members to serve our Party when nominated or volunteer to serve in other capacities, is my reason for being "deeply disturbed."

With Comrade Cozzini's opinions on "tradition" and her expression concerning the "self-judged elder statesmen" in our Party, my comment would be that I can see neither of these attributes as "deterrents to new methods and procedures." There is certainly much to be said in favor of traditions which were once "new methods and procedures." When our mem-

bers have decided that "traditions" have become outmoded then I feel confident that our membership will weigh the advantages of new procedures. I would vote for that!

I personally favor the opinions of elder statesmen providing that their mentality hasn't become fossilized. There's something which elder statesmen have in their possession which younger statesmen lack and that is living history. Younger members must acquaint themselves with reading NEC reports for the past fifty years to understand how and why we arrived at our present state of organization. "Elder Statesmen" could give us first-hand accounts.

In line with the above paragraph I'm reminded here of Comrade Bortnick's resolution with regards to WEEKLY PEOPLE newspaper boxes. His suggestions sounded excellent and his illustrations were masterfully drafted. It seemed the very plan we wanted and needed until members with long experience with various problems relating to WEEKLY PEOPLE boxes raised so many questions that "tradition" held its own and the "new procedure" was found wanting in several respects.

I, for one, do not believe that, because our membership continues to elect the same members for various offices, "we are therefore the best our region has to offer." I do believe that members who accept responsibilities are the only members which we can depend on whatever feeling they might have towards their lack of capability.

About "traditionalism"--Comrade Orange would probably relinquish the post of Recording Secretary to anyone even though his name is usually the only one placed in nomination

year after year. Comrade Orange would probably be more than willing to change places with Comrade Cozzini or any other Comrade who believed himself or herself capable in that capacity. But I can't presume to speak for Comrade Orange. All that can be respected is the way the vote registers.

Comrade Cozzini's last observation concerns Comrade Karp's "restraint." Why should Comrade Karp be restrained? At any rate, I didn't observe that Comrade Karp was much restrained. It is possible, even though I must disagree with Comrade Cozzini, that points in Comrade Karp's report was "not recognized, not fully understood or ignored." These are problems subject to correction. I'm not sure that this would have anything to do with "POTEMKIN'S VILLAGE." I do believe that it closely associated with the general deterioration of our Party activities and its consequent debilitating effect on our membership.

This is the vital point, I think, around which our organization revolves; to bring our youth into the circle of our activities (and by "youth" I would suggest anyone under 60!) should be our immediate and concerted effort or else there will be no one to pick up our banner. If our class does not soon see the necessity of strengthening this "head of the lance" I'm afraid that Comrade Cozzini will look around the table and find no one there.

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To the Members of the NEC, August 15, 1975

Dear Comrades:

Six members of the National Executive Committee replied to the June 3 letter of NEC member Georgia Cozzini, copy of which I sent you under date of June 12. Enclosed you will find copies of those replies. ****

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From Bernard Bortnick, Region No. 7, August 29, 1975.

Dear Comrade Karp:

In order to more rapidly expedite the correspondence of the various NEC members I would like to move that: Henceforth, all members who intend to write on matters destined for other committee members submit 13 copies or whatever the N.S. specifies as being sufficient for general distribution. I believe duplicating can be obtained cheaply enough to make this feasible rather than burdening the N.O. with unnecessary secretarial work.

I acknowledge receipt of the minutes of the NEC session of Aug. 7 1975 dated Aug. 22, 1975;

Letter to Vincent Lamb dated Aug. 21, 1975;

Aug. 19, 1975 concerning convention arrangements;

Aug. 18, 1975 to Comrade Biomen;

Aug. 18, 1975 to Section Lynn;

Aug. 10, 1975/^{letter}from Comrade Biomen as per instructions of
Section Lynn;

Aug. 15, 1975 on the Press Committee Vote;

Aug. 15, 1975 to the NEC on the Cozzini letter and the
Convention site;

Aug. 1, 1975 minutes of the subcommittee meeting of July
24, 1975

Aug. 11, 1975 letter to Michigan members.

I would like to offer the following comments to my comrades on the NEC in regard to Comrade Georgia Cozzini's letter of June 3, 1975 and their responses:

Comrade James Horvath's letter of July 12, 1975:

Although Comrade Horvath outlines a valid approach to determining qualifications of a potential member to the NEC, I see nothing wrong with Comrade Schnur's approach particularly in view of the fact that not too long ago Comrade Cozzini was our NEC representative covering section St. Louis.

I cannot agree that "the source of all of our problems lies not in the NEC or in the National Office, but in the general apathy or something, and in the inaction on the part of members in the party..." Whereas the latter might be true the NEC is going to have a hard time living-down the period of its silence that accompanied John Timm's tenure as WP editor.

Regarding Comrade Horvath's recommendations:

(1) I am opposed to trying to resolve issues exclusively in a committee of the whole on the session floor. Can you imagine what might have transpired had we tried to resolve the issues of the Akron Study class that required extensive reading of the Study Class materials? Or what of the extensive correspon-

dence that occasionally accompanies certain matters? Are we to go through these items one at a time? Are we to expect 10 comrades to retain points of information they might want later to study, reflect upon, or refer back to in their commentary? The whole point of resolving the NEC into committees is to expedite the work of the session and it is a worthy and necessary division of labor if we are not to prolong the sessions into real tedium that will really send spectators away. However, understanding Comrade Horvath's intent to make things lively and interesting for the members would it not be desirable instead of the committees retiring to private rooms to do their work, to assemble in one big committee room that could well be the main hall. In this way with open committee sessions comrades could walk over and hear what is transpiring among the committee members. The practical aspects of this would be that typists and equipment would be readily available, members of the NEC on one committee could assist those of another if called upon or if inclined, the chairman would be well apprised when the NEC was ready to convene, and there would be less inclination to retire to the coffee shop or lounge when the committees finish their work.

(2) I am opposed to dispensing with the reading of the N.S. report. How is the membership to understand what the NEC is talking about if the report is not read in session? However, I am very much in favor of advanced dissemination of the N.S. report to the NEC.

(3) Electing alternates to the NEC has my support. However,

once an alternate takes up the duties for which he or she is elected, I assume they would continue as the regular NEC member.

Comrade Aaron Orange's letter of June 28, 1975:

He raised the crucial question of what constitutes the qualifications of an NEC member to serve, but unfortunately did not pursue the matter. I would be interested in hearing what my NEC comrades regard as qualifications beyond those contained in Art. V, Sections 4, 5, 6 and 7 of our constitution. These tell us little about the qualifications which I believe comrade Orange has in mind. Qualifications are synonymous with abilities and capabilities to perform duties and upon this subject I find our constitution lacks definition. The constitution defines the duties of the NEC as a body but not the duties of individual NEC members. A good deal in our party is taken for granted and so we assume each NEC member will be diligent. Part of the problem is that I believe that some NEC members are overcommitted locally and tend to give a minimal interpretation of what NEC responsibilities consist. In this regard I believe it is well to recall the words of Comrade Verne L. Reynolds who wrote in "The Party's Work" (1925): "The job of organizer carries with it conducting the correspondence with the National Office and calling all Section meetings to order until the chairman is seated. This is enough to REQUIRE of any one man. If he volunteers for some other work, all right provided the Section wants him to do it. The same may be said for the secretary. The Section that

will permit one or two men to hold down two or three jobs each is unfair to them and they will, in consequence, be unable to do justice to either. The man who will, of his own free will, assume such responsibilities is injuring the Party by not getting the maximum of effort out of each Party member."

This important lesson of which Arnold Petersen stated: "As he correctly points out, no one man can do justice to two or more jobs - if there are others who can be broken in to do some of these other jobs," has apparently been forgotten by the NEC. We find that a number of our committee members hold the position of organizer in the Sections they belong to. One is running for political office. I frankly can't see how they do it, and at the same time do justice to the NEC post.

Incidentally, of the little pamphlet from which the above quotes were drawn, I can't see how the party permitted its withdrawal without a replacement. An outdated pamphlet bearing-home certain lessons is better than no lessons at all. It should be rewritten - and rewritten by one of the finest organizers the party has ever had - Comrade Pirincin, even if he has to dictate it. Why couldn't it be an event of the 1976 campaign to be issued at the February Convention? Comrade Steiner's letter of June 24, 1975:

I don't agree with the statement that the party has kept pace with the "changing times." It may well be that even under the best of circumstances a revolutionary party entering the last stages of a revolutionary period can not keep pace

with the myriad aspects of disintegration and change. Although things have improved we are still a long way from "the best of circumstances."

The extent that we are behind the times was vividly driven home to me while visiting the National Office in July. On that occasion Comrade N. Karp put the question to me: What is the basis for the SLP's contention that China, and Chinese development can be disposed of by lumping China together with Russia, and treating them the same; in other words China is an imperialist and Bureaucratic State Despotism of the Stalinist variety. After discussing the pros and cons of this position Comrade Karp made the point that after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia the SLP took a sympathetic but critical attitude toward Soviet events, and he pointed out that a similar disposition has not occurred even though there are "compensating features" to the negative aspects of Chinese developments. However, our discussion of this issue underlines the neglect of this very important development; a neglect that can't be characterized as keeping "pace with the 'changing times.'"

In the General Letter to the Subdivisions dated July 15, 1975 the National Secretary makes the statement: "However, we cannot continue under the makeshift operation of recent years or return to the kind of paper and editorial operation suited to a decade ago." Events in the world have clearly changed more rapidly than we could write in sufficient depth about them to be worthy of publication. Look at the industrialization that is occurring in Africa, Asia, and Latin

America, each of which has its own local peculiarities that in order to make sense out of them have to be understood. Is it not so, as Comrade N. Karp states that, "Three, four or five people cannot sit in an office and produce a weekly Marxist journal of a high level." No comrade Steiner, I don't think we have kept pace with the times. Our lack of pamphlets on various issues easily attests to this too.

Comrade Steiner questions what a younger NEC could do about the "help problem" and the crisis following Timm's departure. There is certainly no guarantee that young SLP members could have better dealt with these problems, but I must again wonder why the critique of John Timm's editorship fell exclusively upon the National Secretary. Was it then, as is it now, the obligation of the NEC, no matter what the age of the members, to be vigilant about the contents of the party paper? Had we been so, and again there's no guarantee about a different or young NEC, we may have avoided or at least eased the problem we now have.

Since the discussion seems to frequently gravitate toward the issue of where innovation lies, I believe it is important to keep in mind that the move to the West Coast was not an idea that sprang from the NEC, as comrade Steiner seems to imply in para 5 of his letter.

Comrade Pirincin's letter of June 20, 1975, no comment.

Comrade Albaugh's letter of June 18, 1975, no comment.

To the Members of the NEC, September 26, 1975.

Dear Comrades:

Enclosed you will find a copy of a letter, dated August 29, from Comrade Bernard Bortnick, NEC Member from Region No. 7, commenting on the several responses to Comrade Georgia Cozzini's letter of June 3.

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From Bernard Bortnick, Region No. 7, October 13, 1975.

Dear Comrade Karp:

Four and one-half months have elapsed since the NEC session of May 31, 1975 and I must admit that as a raw initiate and novice to its proceedings I am somewhat bewildered by what has, and more importantly, what has not, transpired.

Specifically, I would like to ask of my fellow committee members why it is that when a comrade on the committee makes a motion to be acted upon, few committee members, and sometimes none, respond to the motion either negatively, positively - or at all! Has this always been the case?

Shortly after the NEC session comrade Georgia Cozzini wrote a letter outlining her impressions of the NEC session, and the NEC itself. Certain suggestions and comments were offered. Six comrades responded. Comrades Taylor, Blumen, and Braunstein did not.

In response to her letter 3 motions were made by comrade James Horvath and 1 by me. Both letters bore a July 12th 1975 date. Since then only one response has to my knowledge

been made to either of these. In a letter dated Aug. 29th 1975 I submitted a motion regarding expediting NEC correspondence. Moreover, other issues were raised that I believe were worthy of NEC commentary. No responses from any NEC member except the National Secretary's letter of acknowledgment, have thus far been received to my knowledge.

Generally, the reaction to Comrade Cozzini's critique was negative - that is disagreement with the conclusions she had reached. In retrospect, nothing affirms her misgivings more forcefully than the trickle, the dearth, of correspondence that has passed within our committee, especially in view of the critical and weighty problems that face the party at this time.

Considering this, plus the impending National Convention, the inactivity of our committee is a disgrace. Yet, some of us solemnly discuss the inactivity of the membership! I believe we have our own fences to mend.

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From Herbert Steiner, Region No. 8, October 20, 1975.

Dear Comrade Karp:

Referring to Comrade Bortnick's letter of August 29. I have no intention of covering all the points made by him. However, there are several that require answers.

I reiterate, the Party has kept pace with the "changing times." If it had not there would be no SLP today. It would have been sucked into the vortex of reformism and compromise.

As De Leon wrote: "... (the Party) is never for an instant confused with the rush of fitful phosphorous of a lightning bug."

We can thank our "lucky stars" that the SLP stuck fast to its revolutionary principles and Marxian analysis of historical events. It called the shots with unerring accuracy. Just to read the pages of Party literature, The People (daily and weekly), the NEC and Convention reports belies the claim that the Party has not kept pace with the "changing times."

Comrade Bortnick's comment that "It may well be that even under the best of circumstances a revolutionary party entering the last stages of a revolutionary period can not keep pace with the myriad aspects of disintegration and change." (What change?)

This is mere speculation. No one can limn the future or foresee the part the revolutionary organization will play. As Marx wrote in the "Holy Family": "It (the working class) does not go through the hard but hardening school of labor fruitlessly. It is not a question of what this or that proletariat as a whole, may imagine for the moment to be the aim. It is a question of what the proletariat actually is and what it will be compelled to do historically as a result of this being. The aim and historical action of the proletariat are laid down in advance, irrevocably and obviously, in its own situation in life and in the whole organization of contemporary bourgeois society."

In Capital Marx wrote: "The country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of

its own future." This with appropriate changes can be applied to China. Or as the WEEKLY PEOPLE of March 26, 1960 put it: "Look at Russian Stalinism! Look at the power of the Russian bureaucracy! There you will see the pattern that any other paternalistic statism and bureaucracy must model themselves after."

The Chinese revolution took place in 1949, 32 years after the Russian revolution. The Chinese leaders took their cue from the Stalinist regime, which they hailed as the great Socialist country, and Stalin as a Marxist without peer.

The "critical attitude" the Party took toward Soviet Russia was understandable at that time. The Stalin pact with the bloody Nazi beast finished that! What "critical attitude" should the Party have taken toward the Chinese dictators who embraced the "principles" of Stalinism? Does Comrade Bortnick believe the Party has been behind the times in its assessment of China for 26 years!

China is a "despotic State bureaucracy that rules that nation with an iron hand." This is the Party's stand and in the 1966 NEC Report it is spelled out once again, exposing Hass's contention that China was not an imperialist nation. As Comrade Petersen observed: "The SLP does not agree that it is correct to differentiate between class divided imperialisms...." And again: "The fact of the class struggle in society must be our guide in thought and act--the test to which all events must be submitted..." It makes little difference to the workers whether the chains of slavery are forged of

iron or made of gold.

China is fishing in imperialist waters in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and elsewhere. And have we forgotten her criminal invasion of Tibet in 1962? And what should we say about her arming of terrorist groups?

The recent revolts and strikes in China leave no doubt that the Chinese rulers are just as brutal when their rule is challenged. I quote from Time magazine of Sept. 1, 1975:

"Sabotage, strikes, production slowdowns, high living by plant managers--the problems would be familiar in any Western industrial nation. But in China? Yet lately the Chinese press has been full of references to turmoil in the country's factories. Officials have been attacked for their 'bourgeois style of living' and 'use of materials, money, feasts, and beautiful women.' The papers have bemoaned a split among workers and disruptive strikes.

"...some 10,500 troops were sent into the plants in Hangchow to 'participate in industrial labor and support social construction'--meaning to enforce party discipline and get the factories back to work. Apparently determined to make the Hangchow case an example for the country, Peking decided to publish accounts of the entire incident." "Compensating features" indeed!

What difference does it make whose idea it was to move to California. The important thing is that the NEC made the decision that culminated in the move.

I don't see the relevancy of our efforts to solve the

help problem and the National Secretary's "critique" of Timm's editorship. Suppose the NEC had written the "critique" the end result would have been the same.

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From A.A. Albaugh, Region No. 10, October 3, 1975.

Dear Comrade Karp:

This will acknowledge receipt of the NEC Subcommittee minutes of the meeting held on August 21. Also a copy of Comrade Bortnick's letter dated August 29 relating to NEC procedures with suggestions and other matters.

In commenting on Comrade Bortnick's letter it would be my opinion that some of his suggestions sound good on paper but their implementation would be something else. For instance:

1 - Even though it would lessen the work at our national office to have each member of the NEC "submit 13 copies" of matters concerning the other committee members, we can't be sure that each member has a copy machine or even the availability of a copying service. Furthermore, some members may not be able to afford such an expense. If the three pages of Comrade Bortnick's letter should represent an example of what we might expect to write, or reply to, that one letter alone, discounting any follow-ups, would cost approximately \$8.00. This cost assumes that each member would mail his copy direct to every other member and not have them mailed as a "bundle" from the national office.

However, the more I think about the above procedure the

more I would be inclined to suspect that in times of organizational difficulties we could become so involved with petty issues that it might be like letting loose a bucket of grasshoppers.

2 - The suggestion of submitting in advance, to the delegates and alternates, copies of our national secretary's report, is well taken and certainly would help the committees to facilitate their work. But if we are considering lessening the work at our national office and at the same time weigh the advantages in committee work, then we can't have the "best of both worlds." If our national secretary is requested to prepare copies in advance with which delegates and alternates could become familiar, the mechanics involved with such compliance would be almost similar to publishing an extra copy of the WEEKLY PEOPLE except with the heading, "National Secretary's Report 1976." That would be an excellent idea but where's the money and labor power to implement such a procedure?

3 - Conducting the work of the committees on the floor of the convention is not a new idea. Such procedures have been in practice in Ohio, Pennsylvania and perhaps other states. Comrades in good standing could listen in at the table of any committee and even furnish information on particular problems. Also, any committee member could assist with the work of any other committee without trying to locate room numbers or wander away until the session was called to order. I would vote for this procedure realizing, however, that our national conventions are larger in attendance

and perhaps would be handicapped with commotion and disturbance.

4 - Re: electing alternates to attend NEC meetings:

It is not to my recollection that this matter has ever come up previously. It is understandable to me to conduct elections for both delegates and alternates to national conventions. Both delegates and alternates have about equal advantages in arriving at decisions and are ready at hand in an emergency. At an NEC meeting an alternate would be at a disadvantage having less knowledge of the internal matters that have transpired through correspondence during the year, that is, unless it is intended that the alternate should receive copies of our national secretary's reports and minutes of the NEC subcommittee. I would not be in favor of adding this work to our national office. It would be my opinion under our present circumstances, in case of an emergency, that matters might just as well be resolved with nine members almost as well as with ten. Aside from this, there would be additional expense of sending ten alternates to attend NEC sessions which might be called more times than once a year. I would vote against this procedure unless further enlightenment could change my mind.

5 - The crucial questions about qualifications of NEC members to serve on this important body should certainly be resolved. BUT HOW? We do take it for granted that members residing in the region are best qualified to judge the competency of their comrades for whom they vote to fill offices or serve on committees. Even with IQ and lie detector tests, members with all "A's" could be uncovered as disrupters or

even agents provocateurs. For my part, I would much rather bear a little incompetence of Comrades moving, or willing to move, in the right direction than to suffer geniuses moving in the wrong direction. It is my opinion that members of the SLP will practice vigilance and vote according to their understanding of the issues if put squarely before them.

It would be amusing to read Comrade Bortnick's quotation from "The Party's Work" if we were in some other than the real world. "Serving as a Section's Organizer...this is enough to require of any one man," reads the quote from the pamphlet. Some Sections have lost so many members through attrition and otherwise that they are forced to meet without a quorum. To maintain a foothold in these localities, Comrades who remain find it necessary to do double and sometimes triple duty. If one were to ask Comrade Karp what all he does to keep the national office in operation, one would learn that he does more "than is required of any one man." And so it is in some Sections, because of the same "help" problem, we find Organizers serving as WEEKLY PEOPLE agents, literature agents, serving on contact, entertainment, mailing and other committees. Some of our members are modern Ben Franklins who find it impossible to move in a single groove. Of course there are other members, due to age and health, who can no longer move, period. Other members must then carry two knapsacks (maybe three) instead of one. We must agree that, for some of our members, the road gets rougher and the weight grows heavier.

There would be no objection on my part in having an up-

to-date pamphlet written on "The Party's Work" and dictated by Comrade Pirincin. But there are also other pamphlets to be re-printed being held up for lack of labor power. And to ask Comrade Pirincin to dictate material for a pamphlet--isn't that asking "more than is required of any one man"? We could all agree that Comrade Pirincin is another Ben Franklin-- but enough is enough!

With regards to the printing or re-printing of pamphlets, I would much rather see published a pamphlet dealing with the 1976 Bicentennial to commemorate the 1976 SLP National Convention. We made good use of a World's Fair motto "The World of Tomorrow" in a pamphlet titled "Socialism, the World of Tomorrow". This pamphlet was first published in 1939 and went through seven reprints. The material in this pamphlet is timeless. If we could do something like this for our 1976 Convention, I can foresee a wide acceptance with many reprints. But we're back again to the central question--Where's the labor for such an undertaking?

With the widespread strikes across the nation among the teachers (and probably more to come) we could also re-print the pamphlet "The Economic Basis of Education." But until we are able to fill our writing and publishing requirements with workers skilled in those fields, we can execute only those tasks with which we are able and capable.

This concludes my comments at this time on Comrade Bortnick's letter. May they prove helpful.

To the Members of the NEC, November 7, 1975

Dear Comrades:

Enclosed you will find copies of letters from NEC members Bernard Bortnick (dated October 13); Herbert Steiner (dated October 20) and Arla A. Albaugh (dated October 3). All three arrived while I was away from the office and this is the first chance I have had to have copies made of the latter two and arrange to send them to you.

These are the only three responses received to date since I wrote you briefly on September 26 enclosing a copy of Comrade Bortnick's letter of August 29.

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From Georgia Cozzini, Region No. 6, Nov. 10, 1975

Dear Comrade Karp:

I have received your Nov. 7 letter with Sub-Committee minutes and letters from Comrade Albaugh (Oct. 3), Bortnick (Oct. 13) and Steiner (Oct. 20).

I purposely did not answer the separate replies to my letter of comment on the past NEC session. You may recall, I merely acknowledged receipt of same. It was not my purpose to accuse nor lay blame on anyone, nor to cause long argumentative letters to be written. I merely wanted the NEC individually to reassess the session and their part in it, in order that some ideas might come forth to make us a more effectively functioning body.

Comrade Bortnick's letter of August 29 answered several

points as I would have, with only a couple of exceptions. For one thing, I do not see the need for an alternate NEC member. Also, I am opposed to reprinting Reynold's "The Party's Work." Section Milwaukee (over my objections) wrote the National Office a couple of years ago asking for a rewriting or a reprint of this booklet, and received the reply that it was neither feasible nor possible then. I was opposed because:

1. To rewrite takes longer than to start anew. If we don't have the manpower, etc. to write a membership manual now, then we do not have the rewrite-time for Reynold's book.
2. To reprint is a waste. In these days of television and hoodlumism, Section visiting committees cannot function as in Reynold's time. Outdoor meetings are no longer possible. Factory gate distribution of leaflets is obviated where wide-spread industrial parks necessitate workers driving cars, instead of travelling by busload to factory gates. And so, on and on--times have changed so drastically, I cannot agree that "an out-dated pamphlet bearing-home certain lessons is better than no lessons at all."

Comrade Steiner "reiterate(s), the Party has kept pace with the changing times." Indeed, the Party has, but not the NEC, in my opinion. The Party has, because its program and principles are evermore in league with the future, as capitalism disintegrates and the political state trips over the pieces---and we have had an able National Secretary to voice

officially that identity with the times. But the NEC has not changed, in procedure, in methods, nor in attitudes.

That was the realization which motivated my initial letter. Obviously, since I was an NEC member since 1953, I must accept the same responsibility as the other members for this condition. But having come to that conclusion, I have tried to think-forward as much as possible. I have written two letters (June 9 and Oct. 24) with a number of recommendations re the coming National Convention. (The latter I sent 12 copies of, but assume that all matters were turned over to the '76 National Campaign Committee instead of to the NEC.)

I have been searching in my mind for names of any members who might have some of the necessary qualifications for work at the National Headquarters. I have written to one. Have any other NEC members likewise been thinking and working on this vital problem? We MUST turn our thoughts to this, for the time is growing short until the National Convention. The cry has been loud and clear from the National Office---"H E L P!" All together, let's do it.

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From H. Steiner, Region No. 8, November 13, 1975

Dear Comrade Karp:

This will acknowledge receipt of copies of letters from Comrades Albaugh and Bortnick of October 3 and 13 respectively.

At the outset let me say that no one denies Comrade Bortnick's democratic right to make suggestions and offer what he

considers constructive criticism. However, it is another matter to set himself up as judge and jury.

I cannot speak for other NEC members, but I resent his statement "....the inactivity of our committee is a disgrace." I consider his language not only injudicious but unwarranted.

Comrade Bortnick indulges in rhetoric. When has the Party not faced "critical and weighty problems"? The NEC, the National Conventions and the membership have dealt with them when they surfaced, sometimes with success sometimes partially so. We are confronted with them now and we will be in the future. As De Leon put it: "Troubles in the SLP? Lots of them! And it will be worse! And the SLP will come out on top every time." Like it or not the lot of a revolutionist is not a happy one!

I believe Comrade Albaugh's comments essentially covers the points raised in Comrade Bortnick's letter of August 29. I would like to underscore one fact. His suggestion that the National Secretary prepare his report prior to an NEC session and/or National Convention was proposed some time ago. As I recall this was considered impractical for the following reasons: (1) The lack of manpower for such an undertaking. (2) That the report is still in the process of being written almost up to the "last minute" of an NEC session or a National Convention. However, if this situation has now changed I am wholeheartedly in favor of Comrade Karp submitting copies of his report beforehand to all elected delegates.

From A. A. Albaugh, Region No. 10, November 13, 1975

Dear Comrade Karp:

This will acknowledge receipt of the Subcommittee Minutes of the meeting held on September 25. Enclosed with the Minutes was a copy of a letter written to you by Comrade Bortnick dated October 13.

Comrade Bortnick asks a question; "When a Comrade on the NEC Committee makes a motion. . . (why do) few members respond . . .etc." I would suggest that, in some cases, perhaps the reason motions are not seconded signifies that the members did not think the motion worthy of introduction.

Perhaps Comrade Bortnick has reasons to declare that "the inactivity of our Committee is a disgrace." Our Party certainly needs "new/^(sic)initiates and novices" to call our attention to alleged neglect of the "weighty problems" and to suggest ways and means that our Committee might improve its actions. Some of our members have labored half a century, and longer, to improve our actions and methods of bringing the message of Socialism to our working class with the further aim of inducting our youth into this struggle for our emancipation. Members of our Committee are fully conscious that they do not have a corner on longevity.

It would seem to me that Comrade Bortnick, with his youth and intelligence, should now enter the fray for the purpose of doing what HE can to disseminate our program among the workers of America. Even if he were alone and there was no NEC Committee, either active or defunct, it would be Comrade Bortnick's

duty to do what he could to reach the minds of our class. It would seem to me that our members ought, somehow, to save Comrade Bortnick his feelings of discouragement and recommend to him that it would be possible for him to overcome his trepidation by assigning him a list of duties that are in dire need of performance such as the following;

- * leaflet distribution-
- * contributing articles to the WEEKLY PEOPLE
- * representing the Party as a candidate, touring his bailiwick, County, State or Nation.
- * writing letters to Editors of the Capitalist Press.
- * Securing lecture assignments at schools and colleges, etc.
- * arranging radio and television broadcasts-
- * writing scripts for radio and television-
- * Assist with signature gathering to place our Party on the ballot.

When Comrade Bortnick has reported an accomplishing effort on the above list of activities, I for one, will then be disposed to consider our "inactivities."

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From James C. Horvath, Region No. 4, November 15, 1975

Dear Comrade Karp:

I have received the following correspondence from the national office: from A.A. Albaugh to the N.O. date Oct. 3; from B. Bortnick to N.O. Oct. 13; to N.O. from H. Steiner

Oct. 20: to N.O. from G. Cozzini Oct. 24: Circular letter to Sections Oct 31, re: N.E.C. nominations: Minutes of NEC Sub Committee held September 25, 1975; letter from N.O. to NEC members Nov. ? ; from N.O. to G. Cozzini Nov. 12, and belated acknowledgement of NEC Sub Committee minutes of meeting held August 21.

I endorse all actions taken by our Sub Committee at both meetings.

Commenting on Comrade B. Bortnick's letter of October 13, 1975, I wish to state that he should not be offended or discouraged by the actions of the N.E.C. for not discussing any of the motions presented before that body. In understanding parliamentary procedure, it should be obvious that if there is no seconder to any motion there is no discussion to follow. If the comrades on the N.E.C. felt that any motion merited discussion, then one or more of its members would have seconded the motion. Regarding the last paragraph of Comrade Bortnick's letter, in which he states, "the inactivity of our committee (NEC) is a disgrace" is unwarranted. I wish that he would come up with something concrete and positive, like telling the S.L.P. how to implement things and get action, rather than the negative statements that came from my comrade. Like Comrade Bortnick states he is a "raw initiate and a novice", therefore I excuse him for thinking the way he does.

No comments on the other correspondence,

From A. A. Albaugh, Region No. 10, November 17, 1975

Dear Comrade Karp:

Comrade Cozzini's suggestions, contained in her letter to you dated October 24 in which she believes will save the time of the Convention, seems to me, like the farmer who expressed deep concern about his barn door slamming in the wind while his house was blowing away.

Comrade Cozzini must remember that time lost during a Convention had very little to do with the committees work on credentials and mileage compared to the enormous loss of time by committees endeavoring to work out resolutions from the National Secretary's report from which said committees have had no advance knowledge prior to its reading. Committees elected by the Convention must again ponder over parts of the report assigned to them, compose suggested resolutions and have them triple-typed for presentation to the Convention. Here's where the recesses begin and perhaps another and another loss of time.

I don't suppose that we could expect this to happen but if the National Secretary's report, at least that portion requiring action, could find its way into the hands of the convention delegates, say a week before convening, all of the delegates could become familiar with all parts of the report. Regardless on what committee a delegate may be elected to serve, said delegate would have had an opportunity to form opinions on any part of the report in advance of the Convention. Even if a delegate was not elected to a specific committee for which

he or she had prepared opinions, such opinions, in writing, could be handed to the proper committee. This is somewhat in line with Comrade Bortnick's suggestion.

Also, at our last National Convention, much time was lost in trying to locate qualified members who would agree to serve as our Presidential candidates. Unlike the capitalist parties, we don't have a barn full of potentials standing in the loft anxious to jump at the chance. But it seems to me that we could try to get some advance expressions of willingness of our few capable Comrades who would serve our Party as its 1976 standard bearers.

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To A. A. Albaugh, November 26, 1975, from the National Secretary

Dear Comrade Albaugh:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letters of November 13 (in response to Comrade Bortnick's of October 13) and November 17 (in response to Comrade Cozzini's of October 24). When circumstances here permit, copies of those letters will be made in sufficient quantities to supply copies to all NEC members. When that may be, I cannot say at this writing.

Until now, I have refrained from commenting on any of the letters that have passed among the NEC members since they received copies of Comrade Cozzini's letter of June 3. That is not because I have had no comments to make, but rather because I felt that there would be a more appropriate time for me to make them, if no one else made them before that time arrived.

However, I cannot refrain from commenting on the last paragraph of your Nov. 17 letter. That paragraph reads:

"Also, at our last National Convention, much time was lost in trying to locate qualified members who would agree to serve as our Presidential candidates. Unlike the capitalist parties, we don't have a barn full of potentials standing in the loft anxious to jump at the chance. But it seems to me that we could try to get some advance expressions of willingness of our few capable Comrades who would serve our Party as its 1976 standard bearers."

I refer you, Comrade Albaugh, to page 20 of the proceedings of the May 31-June 1, 1975 session of the National Executive Committee. There, as part of my report to that session, you will find the following:

"There are...specific problems and/or needs that confront us as far as the 1976 national campaign is concerned. These may be broken down into the following major headings:

"1....

"2....

"3. The availability of national candidates.

"4....

"5....

"These problems are not listed in any special order of importance. Each in its way is very important...."

Yet, the NEC did absolutely nothing about the matter. It did not even discuss it. There was not a single word said on the subject on the floor during three days of NEC sessions.

If it was discussed by any of the committees, I do not know since I was not privy to the deliberations of the committees. There is nothing, however, in any committee report to the last NEC session to indicate that it was considered or discussed.

There is more that could--and I believe should--be said, but of necessity I must leave saying it to another occasion.

There are also a few things to be said about the repeated references to the lack of "advanced knowledge" about the "National Secretary's report" to the convention and the difficulties attributed to that, but that, too, will have to wait.

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From Jack Braunstein, Region No. 9, November 26, 1975

Dear Comrade Karp:

This will acknowledge copy of your Nov. 12 letter replying to Comrade Cozzini's letter of Oct. 10, in which she makes certain recommendations to reduce so-called "wasted time" at the start of national conventions. I agree with the comments you make in your reply as to the impracticality of her proposals.

I might add that I personally never minded the organizing recesses at the start of the many NEC sessions and national conventions I attended as a spectator. Indeed, they furnished me an opportunity to meet or renew acquaintances. However, I have always felt that many of the time-consuming later recesses, called because unacceptable or deficient reports had to be re-committed, could have been avoided if more committees had taken advantage of the National Secretary's offer to consult

with them during deliberations. I am confident better reports would have resulted, with the need for fewer recommittals and recesses, if that had been done.

In this connection I would like to state that in my opinion too much stress is being placed on making proceedings at NEC sessions "more interesting" for the spectators, some NEC members proposing that committees all meet in one large room with any members who want to listening in. I will mention only one of several objections I would have to that: Occasionally a committee consults with, or interviews someone who would be willing to speak frankly with the 3 or 4 members of the committee, but not before a larger audience, for while everything is above board in the SLP some matters are regarded as being of a personal nature; also sometimes a committee must discuss at some length a member whose name is best withheld until contacted.

There have been a number of other recommendations as to procedures at future NEC sessions. Outside of a constitutional provision, I don't see how any decision re agenda or procedure that is made by the members of the current NEC can be binding on the succeeding National Executive Committee. Therefore, I think such recommendations are practical only at the NEC session itself or just prior to a scheduled session.

With reference to Comrade Bortnick's statement in his Oct. 13 letter that I did not respond to Comrade Cozzini's June 3 letter: I acknowledged receipt of that letter by postcard on June 27, stating that I agreed with some of the things

she said, but not with others. I made no copy for myself so can't quote my exact words. I was reluctant then, and am still reluctant, to get involved in a discussion of youth vs. age as a qualification for NEC membership. As I saw it, Comrade Cozzini had expressed some of her personal thoughts following the last NEC session and asked each of the present NEC members to make a self-appraisal before accepting renomination if tendered. It seemed to me she was inviting thought and reflection on what she had to say, and not a lot of correspondence.

I do not believe debate or discussion is mandatory on every thought expressed, nor on every proposal or recommendation made by an NEC member; nor is a vote required on a motion unless it has been seconded (except for those motions specified in the Party's constitution). If every NEC member were to comment on every thought expressed by another member we would find ourselves innundated under a sea of cross-correspondence.

I wish the Party's immediate problem--getting a qualified member to serve as Editor or National Secretary (and whatever additional help is needed), and finding qualified national candidates--could be solved simply by making changes in the composition of the NEC. But I know that the help problem has been with us over the years not because of something the NEC has done or left undone, but because the members the Party believes are qualified and who have been approached would not accept, or when accepting were found wanting after trial. We are constricted both by the lack of membership growth and the

specific abilities required for the posts to be filled. Obviously, others must be sought out--whether by the NEC members, the National Office, or the membership generally. Those who get around as speakers or organizers, or are in close touch with a large membership, of course have the best opportunities for sounding out the potentials. In the face of the National Secretary's statement in his Sept. 30 letter to the membership perhaps one of those previously approached will reconsider.

Obtaining someone with the capabilities to serve as Editor or National Secretary must be our first priority. I believe it is unrealistic to expect solutions to the Party's other problems until that has been done.

In closing, I wish to register my disapproval of Comrade Bortnick's lecture to the NEC members in his Oct. 13 letter, particularly his closing paragraph.

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From B. Bortnick, Region No. 7, Dec. 4, 1975

Dear Comrade Karp:

In Comrade Steiner's letter of June 24, 1975 he stated "The Party has kept pace with the 'changing times' or it could not have survived 84 years." In his letter of Oct. 20, 1975 writing in a similar vein he remarked: "...the SLP stuck fast to its revolutionary principles and Marxian analysis of historical events. It called the shots with unerring accuracy. Just to read the pages of Party literature, the People (Daily

and Weekly), the NEC and Convention reports belies the claim that the Party has not kept pace with the "changing times".

In stating this, I assume among other things Comrade Steiner had in mind the NEC position in answer to section St. Louis's contention that attempted to challenge, faulty as that challenge was, the article that appeared in the Weekly People entitled "The Vietnamese Victory" in the May 10, 1975 edition. Yet, during the discussion of that issue on the session floor it was clearly revealed that there had been past Party statements that had not "called the shots with unerring accuracy." As a matter of fact the article cited by the National Secretary as a case in point, written and published in the WP a few years ago, and written by Comrade Karp, made a claim not dissimilar to the contention of Section St. Louis, eg., that "the class struggle and the three-way imperialist struggle between the U.S., U.S.S.R. and China" were the primary issues in that conflict. This conclusion was cited as erroneous, contentions to the contrary having been effectively parried by the National Secretary, and the findings of the report of the NEC committee on Party Press and Literature's report was unanimously endorsed.

To make the claim that the Party has been unerringly accurate is one that not even Marx and Engels would have made for Marxism in their day. For were not they always ready to admit past inaccuracies and faulty analyses? For example in Engels' introduction to the Class Struggles in France he emphasizes: "Vulgar Democracy expected a renewed outbreak from one day to another; we already in autumn of 1850, declared

that the first phase of the revolutionary period had closed and that nothing could be looked forward to until the advent of a new economic world crisis. Wherefore we were banned with bell, book and candle as traitors to the revolution by the same people who, later on, almost without exception made their peace with Bismarck - in so far as Bismarck considered them worthwhile.

"But history also proved us in the wrong, and revealed our opinion of that day as an illusion. History went further; not only did it destroy our former error, but also it transformed completely the conditions under which the proletariat will have to do battle." (p. 8 NYLN, 1967) Had Marx and Engels assumed the intransigent posture that their past record had been unerringly accurate scientific socialism would have ended then and there.

I agree with Comrade Steiner that we have an exceptional record in having correctly analyzed past events but certainly not one that has been unerringly accurate, nor one that has been comprehensive and all inclusive as he suggests.

The vitality of Marxism is maintained by constantly testing its tenets; constantly arraigning the current events of the day before the standards of Marxian Science and not just clinging to broad conclusions, summary points or synoptic statements; valuable as they are, they remain to be constantly validated through the necessary research. Hence, the passages Comrade Steiner quoted from the Weekly People, and those from Marx are effective prefatory statements advancing a hypothesis

which then requires exposition. Or they may also be conclusions following a lengthy exposition. But it is the exposition that is lacking. It is the arduous research, study, ferreting out of facts, figures and statistics, that we lack and that has been to some extent concealed under the general appellation of "the help problem" in party reports. This is what puts us behind the times.

Comrade Steiner asks if I "believe the Party has been behind the times in its assessment of China for 26 years." To the extent that we have been unable to do the necessary research, to supply raw material for analysis, to summon the heads and hands to make the analysis and put it into literate form on this topic, I believe we have been behind the times. Nor is China the only subject. An agronomist by the name of Rene' DuMont has written a book entitled Is Cuba Socialist? Having read the book I early concluded Mr. Dumont had no business writing it since he really hasn't the qualifications to address the subject. It's a good title, and a good subject. By now we should have had a pamphlet on Cuba. However, the material that has appeared in the Weekly People over the past ten years is apparently not of the caliber that we would want bound in permanent form. The same might be said of the long period of combat and strife in Southeast Asia, or the Middle East. How long we have been behind the times on China, or any other subject, I prefer not to speculate. For me it is sufficient to recognize that there is a problem and a job to be done.

Comrade Steiner asks what difference it makes whose idea

it was to move to California and fails to see the connection between the "help problem" and the critique of John Timm's editorship. Both technically were acts of the NEC since the initiator of the actions is a member of the NEC and the issues received the endorsement of his comrades on the committee. However my understanding of the constitutional requirements of our committee calls upon this body to make a more positive commitment to their duties than merely passing judgement on items set before it, inasmuch as such judgements are also a part of NEC functions. The membership has placed a trust in certain comrades because they have demonstrated among other important attributes, their resourcefulness and dedication. Yet, at a time when the "help problem" was growing more and more acute, an already overworked National Secretary was compelled to undertake the difficult, extremely time consuming, and solitary, task of drawing to our attention the shortcomings of the former editor. Had the NEC been a participant in this we would all have been in better shape even if we had lost the former editor. Had commentary and corrective action been initiated by at least the NEC as the inconsistencies and shortcomings pointed out in the National Secretary's report were made, the party could have braced itself for the worst, while there may even have been a remote chance Timm could have been saved and continued to be of use to the Party. As it turned out we all had a rude awakening, with no offense meant to the National Secretary. That is the connection between the "help problem" and the critique.

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From Herbert Steiner, Region No. 8, November 21, 1975.

Dear Comrade Karp:

I have read and re-read the November 15 Weekly People article "On the Transition to Socialism" and am disturbed by its vagueness where it should be "plumb and clear" on the uniqueness of the Party program, which in my opinion can lead to wrong interpretations and conclusions.

The opening paragraph states "For a Marxist-De Leonist party like the SLP, which must shape its tactics to meet prevailing conditions rather than set formulas, the examination and re-examination of tactical questions is of ongoing importance." This has always been the Party's stand though inferentially the impression is created that we must begin to do it now.

In As to Politics De Leon makes the point that "The SLP is not nailed to any special 'means;' it is bent upon a 'goal.' The SLP will hail any 'means' that will stand the test of reason and experience, and would give justifiable promise of reaching the goal more swiftly than the means of combined political and economic action, to which the Party now holds."

In the conclusion of his report to the 1968 Convention Comrade Petersen wrote, "And the Party since De Leon's day has been equally flexible" (if that's the word for it) whenever the occasion and circumstances called for it. But in respect of basic policies and tactics inseparably associated with, and flowing from basic principles, the Party has stood, and stands firm, despite changing tides around it." This

certainly does not smack of "formula." Nor have "prevailing conditions" changed that would "shape its tactics." If anything, the Party's program is more applicable today than when it was first hammered out.

Throughout the article the phrase "peaceful and legal methods" is frequently used. In As to Politics, answering Giovannitti (P. 51) De Leon writes: "The continuous iteration and re-iteration of the terms 'legal,' 'legality,' 'lawful' betray a misconception of the People's posture. Giovannitti will not find the words used once by the People in this discussion. The People is not troubled with the thought of 'legality.' The People planted itself upon the principle of 'civilization'...Giovannitti's confusion of thought in the matter is such that he has read 'legal' for 'civilized,' 'legality' for 'civilization,' and that has interfered with his understanding of the People's arguments in this discussion..." This essential feature of the Party program was not set forth in the article on tactics.

To state "While this view (political and economic organization) recognizes that today revolutionary progress advances most effectively with the peaceful and legal methods available to it, tomorrow it may be forced as Daniel De Leon said in As to Politics, 'to resort to the last resort and physically mop the earth with the barbarian capitalist class'" may leave the distorted impression that De Leon meant this literally. My concern is that it may be construed as an incitement to violence by those unfamiliar with the Party's industrial union program.

That it was used only in a symbolic sense is borne out by the following from As to Politics, "More likely is the event of SLP triumph at the polls, but defeat by the election inspectors, or resistance, as the Southern slaveholders did at the election of Lincoln. In that case also the SLP would forthwith dissolve into its economic organization. That body, having had the opportunity to recruit and organize its forces, and the civilized methods of peaceful trial of strength having been abandoned, the Might of the proletariat will then be there, free to resort to the last resort, and physically mop the earth with the barbarian Capitalist Class." (P. 60)

Again on page 74: "The ballot of the SLP...demands and will demand plump and plain the unconditional surrender of the capitalist class; that ballot does, and will, place the revolution on the civilized plane of a peaceful trial of strength; last but not least, and above all, that ballot, equipped with all the experience of our Age, will school the proletariat in the absolute necessity of organizing the physical force--the integrally industrial Union of the working class--which it may and in all probability will need in order to enforce its program in case the capitalist class resorts to the brute measures of the barbarian. There is no 'double sense' or 'dissimulation' in that posture."

Continuing, "If they (the proletariat) find themselves in so weak a degree of integrally industrial organization as they are now in, or in a stronger one, yet not possessed of the minimum of strength needed for resistance, cohesion and

attraction, then the armed force of the capitalist class will mop the earth with them. Then there will be born an 'Underground America,' as there has long been an 'Underground Russia.' The handful of revolutionists will be forced into surreptitious propaganda, and the Revolution will have to raise itself above ground by its own boot-straps."

Summing up De Leon writes: "The Labor Movement must, on the contrary, place itself upon the highest plane civilization has reached. It must insist upon the enforcement of civilized methods, and it must do so in the way that civilized man does. Civilized man acts equipped with experience. Experience teaches that Right is a toy unless backed by Might; experience teaches also that the capitalist class is a brigand class bearing the mask of civilization, and that it is helped in the cheat by the undoubted circumstance that it has been a promoter of civilization. Equipped with this experience and knowledge, the civilized man will take up political action as the only means that, theoretically, promises a peaceful trial of strength; and he will simultaneously organize the integrally industrial union as the only available and the all-sufficient Might to enforce the Right that his ballot proclaims." (P. 90) (underscoring mine).

Admiration for Engels' grasp and insight into working class tactics aside from military studies is his incisive statement in Landmarks in Scientific Socialism: "In a word, the triumph of force depends upon the production of weapons, therefore upon economic power, on economic conditions, on the

ability to organize actual material instruments...economic force is the control of the great industry." De Leon wrote of modern tactics in a time far in advance of the period in which the founders of socialist theory worked and is even more "relevant."

In the light of the foregoing I strongly urge that De Leon's "Supplementary" in As to Politics be published to follow up "On the Transition to Socialism" and that this be done as soon as possible.

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Statement by the Weekly People Staff
Re H. Steiner's Criticism of the Article,
"On the Transition to Socialism,"
Weekly People, Nov. 15, 1975

We have carefully reviewed Comrade Herbert Steiner's letter of November 21 to the National Secretary in which he takes exception to the article, "On the Transition to Socialism," which appeared in the Weekly People of November 15, 1975.

Comrade Steiner states that he is "disturbed" by the "vagueness" of the article. If the article were one-tenth as vague as Comrade Steiner's letter, it would indeed be flawed. As it is, we believe the article accurately reflects the SLP position, particularly since it sought not to exhaust all sides of the question, but to "restate the standpoint from which Marxists view the questions of legality and violence." That standpoint is Marxist dialectics and materialism, a method which must be applied to the examination of all political questions, and which, unfortunately, is absent from

Comrade Steiner's letter.

The major shortcoming of the criticism is its failure to present specific argument, develop it fully and connect it to the article under discussion. Approximately two-thirds of a letter of slightly more than four pages is made up of quotes with which we are all familiar. Pages three and four, for example, consist entirely of quotes except for one paragraph in which Comrade Steiner makes a reference to Engels. That reference is unintelligible, grammatically or otherwise. Moreover, the quotes throughout Comrade Steiner's letter are cited without any indication that they have application to specific passages in the Weekly People article, without any explanation of the points he wishes to make with them, and without any conclusions drawn from them.

Quotes should be used to support an argument, not in place of one. Comrade Steiner, instead of examining the teachings of Marxists and applying their method, simply invokes passages from Marxist works as a substitute for a serious discussion of his objections.

This is not an objection to the use of quotes. We have no disagreement with the quotes at all. But Comrade Steiner does not show how they contradict the points made in the "Transition" article. In fact, we believe the quotes substantiate the article.

In what way are De Leon's remarks at variance with the article in question? This inability to relate the quotes Comrade Steiner chose to the article he finds vague is evi-

denced by the paucity of references to the Weekly People article itself. From a nearly 45-inch article, there are just two sentences quoted, and Comrade Steiner's objections to them are based on his own assertions.

In our opinion, the substitution of quotes for the application of Marxist analysis to a current situation is characteristic of a dogmatic approach which answers questions not by systematic, dialectical clarification, analysis and summation, but by the mere quotation of authorities. If dogmatism is the mechanical recitation of passages instead of the systematic application of Marxism-De Leonism, then Comrade Steiner has presented a dogmatic criticism that neither addresses the question at hand nor contributes to a clarification of the issue. This failure is at the heart of Comrade Steiner's criticism and prevents him from getting to the point.

Since we have no desire to make Comrade Steiner's argument for him or guess which passages in the article the quotes are intended to refer to, we have no comment on pages three and four of his letter, except to say again that we think they could easily be used to support the major points made in "The Transition to Socialism."

As for the other parts of the letter containing Comrade Steiner's own observations: He quotes from the first paragraph (omitting the opening sentence) and though he admits, "This has always been the Party's stand," he complains that "inferentially the impression is created that we must begin to do it now."

We refuse to be held responsible for Comrade Steiner's inferences. The paragraph says tactical questions "are always a critical concern," and their "examination and re-examination...is of ongoing importance." This is a simple statement of Party position and fact. If Comrade Steiner takes it to imply that such consideration has not been given in the past, this is his own defensive inference.

His two following quotes about the SLP's approach to tactics only prove that the sentiments expressed in the article are consistent with Party policy.

Comrade Steiner states on page two that "throughout the article the phrase 'peaceful and legal methods' is frequently used." To be precise, this exact phrase appears once. Similar phrases appear two or three other times, depending on what similar phrases are included.

Comrade Steiner then quotes De Leon's rebuttal to the anarchist Giovanitti who saw all peaceful and parliamentary methods as counterrevolutionary. If Comrade Steiner suggests that the same error has been made in the article he should point out where. Fully half the article, if not more, was devoted to the point that the democratic and peaceful methods available to the working class should be used to the utmost and that it would be wrong to abandon them. There is no confusion of "legal" with "civilized." In fact, De Leon is quoted in the article as pointing out that the revolutionary movement is not concerned with legality as such. Nor is there anywhere in the article the suggestion of using "uncivilized

methods." The democratic heritage of the U.S. and its relation to socialist revolution are clearly expressed.

Comrade Steiner follows this quotation with the statement, "This essential feature of the Party's program was not set forth in the article on tactics." What essential feature? That the "People is not troubled with the thought of legality?" That The People advocates the use of the "civilized" political means now available? These are exactly the points made in the article.

(At the risk of digressing, it is pertinent to point out that there is nothing "uncivilized" about the armed struggle of an oppressed class which has no other means of winning its emancipation. As De Leon put it, "The civilized man answers force with force." Or as the NEC put it at its most recent session: "In all cases it is the prevailing circumstances at the time, and the reaction of a defeated ruling class that determines the nature of the revolution that is in the process of being completed.")

In the next paragraph, Comrade Steiner makes his second and final quotation from the article. That sentence reads, "While this view (political and economic organization) recognizes that today revolutionary progress advances most effectively with the peaceful and legal methods available to it, tomorrow it may be forced as Daniel De Leon said in *As To Politics*, 'to resort to the last resort and physically mop the earth with the barbarian capitalist class.'"

Comrade Steiner raises two objections to this sentence:

1) it "may leave the distorted impression that De Leon meant this literally." 2) "it may be construed as an incitement to violence by those unfamiliar with the Party's industrial union program."

As to 1: Comrade Steiner argues that De Leon did not mean the proletariat would literally resort to physical force if a peaceful settlement of the social question was blocked. Comrade Steiner says "it was used only in a symbolic sense." His only argument here is to quote and underline the passage in which the statement appears. Again, the mere quoting of the passage even with underlining does not support Comrade Steiner's "symbolic" interpretation.

De Leon was no pacifist and in many cases made it clear that if a peaceful political settlement of the class struggle was not possible, the proletariat would have to change its tactics and resort to armed force if necessary. We believe De Leon meant what he said and that his own teachings on tactics are consistent with the article in question.

As to 2: Anything may be misinterpreted. But to read a sentence which says in part that "today revolutionary progress advances most effectively with the peaceful and legal methods available to it" and contend it constitutes an "incitement to violence" is ridiculous.

The Party's position on tactics and specifically the use of physical force has been seriously misrepresented recently (e.g., the Schoppa-Miles incident) and the mistake has been to err on the side of pacifism. By contrast the article

clearly expressed the dialectical materialist viewpoint that must be stressed--not a one-sided position.

In listing his quotes, Comrade Steiner ends by saying, "De Leon wrote of modern tactics in a time far in advance of the period in which the founders of socialist theory worked and is even more 'relevant.'" Well, today we are at least as "far in advance" of even De Leon's time, and must use the analytical tools he left us to examine the problems our movement confronts. The question of tactics is a case in point. We believe the Party's position as we understand it--that political and economic organization is paramount at this time--is correct and can be defended. But it can be defended only by relating it to today's conditions, not by throwing quotes at the question. When Marx and De Leon wrote, there was no standing army in the U.S., there was no FBI, no CIA, no nationally coordinated police force, no comparable magnitude of arms and resources in the hands of the state, no massive state bureaucracy, no fully developed world imperialist system. These may be developments that strengthen the Party's arguments, but by no stretch of the imagination can they be analyzed simply by quotations or reprints.

We think it also necessary to add that the kind of criticism Comrade Steiner raises, coming as it does from an NEC member, is also reflective of the serious Party problems the National Secretary has been speaking of in recent years.

If this response appears emphatic it is because we feel strongly about the matter at hand--including what we believe

to be its implications. Mechanistic and dogmatic thinking, in our opinion, has harmed the Party severely in recent years, the clearest example being the degeneration of the Weekly People under the last-elected Editor, John Timm, and the failure to correct it. Dogmatism has often been a false charge, a smokescreen raised by those who rejected the Party's principles, but this should not blind us to the fact that dogmatism is a problem that has plagued every revolutionary movement in every period and that it can only be countered if we are alert to it.

December 8, 1975

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To Herbert Steiner, Region No. 8, Dec. 8, 1975, fr. Nat'l. Sec'y.

Dear Comrade Steiner:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of November 21, in which you raise objections to the article "On the Transition to Socialism" that appeared in the Weekly People of November 15.

I do not agree that the article is vague; or that it gives any wrong impression "inferentially"; or that it charges the Party with "set formulas"; or that it fails to set forth an "essential feature of the Party Program" (the one specifically referring to the question of "legality," etc.); or that there are in the article statements that could be responsible for readers getting a "distorted impression"; or that it provides justification for readers "construing" any part of it

as "an incitement to violence."

On the contrary, I fully concur in the enclosed statement prepared by the Weekly People staff in response to your letter, the extra copy of which I had turned over to it for its comments. If I thought it necessary, I could add to that statement, further demonstrating that the article in question is in harmony with sound Marxist teachings and reasoning and thus in harmony with the Party's principles and program.

As for your urging that we publish the "Supplement" from De Leon's *As To Politics* "as soon as possible," the clear implication is that in your view the "Supplement" would serve to correct what you contend was wrong with the "Transition" article. I do not agree that any such corrective action is called for. Aside from that the "Supplement" has no direct relevance to the subject matter of the article. The former deals specifically with whether, under all circumstances, it would be better to devote energy and effort to organizing a military force instead of economic power. The article did not even touch on that question. It made it absolutely clear that "in the U.S. in 1975, the political and economic organization of the working class must be the basis for any revolutionary advance, and that the building of these organizations, . . . is paramount." Party material we believed relevant to the subject of the article in question--the excerpt from the NEC statement to the Senate judiciary committee--was printed on page five of the Nov. 22 issue. Surprisingly enough, you made absolutely no reference to that.

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To Herbert Steiner, Reg. No. 8, Dec. 11, 1975 fr. Nat'l. Sec'y.

Dear Comrade Steiner:

At its regular meeting held last night, the NEC Sub-committee carefully considered your letter of November 21, on the Weekly People article "On the Transition to Socialism" (Nov. 15 issue) my reply of December 8 and the Weekly People staff's statement of the same date. It then unanimously endorsed my letter and the statement by the staff.

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From Herbert Steiner, Region No. 8, December 28, 1975.

Dear Comrade Karp:

I received yours of December 11 with the information that the NEC Sub-Committee "unanimously" endorsed your letter of December 8 and the reply of the staff to my criticism of the article "On the Transition to Socialism."

I am at a loss to understand why you presented the criticism, the staff reply and your concurrence to the Sub-Committee before receiving my rebuttal. This is discourteous. The issue is too serious to be disposed of in a hasty endorsement. I use the word hasty advisedly since the Sub-Committee could not possibly have had enough time during a meeting to review the article in question and "carefully" analyze both sides.

I desire that my rebuttal be submitted immediately to the NEC as a follow up to the correspondence they have received, and request their comments and decision in this matter.

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From Herbert Steiner, Region No. 8, December 28, 1975.

Dear Comrade Karp:

This will acknowledge your December 8 letter and your endorsement of the Weekly People staff reply to my expressed opinion that there exists the possibility of an incorrect impression created by the De Leon phrase that was used out of context in the December^[November] 15 article "On the Transition to Socialism."

The staff's response was amazing. In my more than forty years of SLP membership I have never encountered such arrogance and hostility over a presumably fraternal discussion on party tactics. In report after report, also letters, the national office has stressed its appeal for membership participation in the Weekly People performance.

When the request is complied with in behalf of party concern over the serious matter of tactics there suddenly follows the suspension of the fraternalism that ordinarily helps to cement party relationships.

Why should this occur? Is this the proper way for the People Weekly^{People} staff to meet a difference of opinion on something printed in the official organ of the party? Instead of discussing the merits of the points involved the typical invectives of "mechanistic and dogmatic thinking" "mechanical recitation of passages" and "throwing quotes" is resorted to.

No four members who work on the Weekly People suddenly become expert beyond anyone else in the party on the subject

of "Marxist dialectics and materialism."

If a member believes there is an error in an article in the party newspaper and writes in he expects to be treated with respect not talked at by the staff or anyone else, and the discussion kept within the issue at hand and nothing more.

2) I did not read incitement to violence into "today revolutionary progress advances most effectively with the peaceful and legal methods available to it." What I was concerned with, was the tacking on at this point of three short lines from a De Leon quotation that unless fully covered could leave the wrong impression since it was used out of context.

What possible reason would anyone have for arguing that such a possibility did not exist, or that this should be avoided at all cost.

What is the staff reference for their opinion, that De Leon thought "that if a peaceful political settlement of the class struggle was not possible, the proletariat would have to change its tactics and resort to armed force if necessary" and where is this written in party literature, and what are the conditions and circumstances when it was said? It is my conviction that the article in question does invite this interpretation though this is denied by the staff in their reply.

There is nothing surprising in the fact that I made no reference to the "excerpt from the NEC statement to the Senate Judiciary committee..." in the November 15 issue. There was nothing in the statement that would lead to the conclu-

sion that the Party's tactics of political and economic action for social change in the U.S. was brought into question.

It actually pointed up what Marxists have always said, "As for general revolutionary tactics and methods we have no creed" or as Marx and Engels wrote "The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie."

Since the staff says the reference to Engels is "unintelligible, grammatically or otherwise..." I refer them to Comrade Petersen's: "Daniel De Leon: Contribution to Marxian Science (Volume I, Social Architect, page 96, headed "Bloody or Peaceful Revolution) "Engels in his 'Landmarks of Scientific Socialism' observes that the revolver triumphs over the sword, and that 'superior force is no mere act of the will but requires very real preliminary conditions for the carrying out of its purposes, especially mechanical instruments, the more highly developed of which have the superiority over the less highly developed. Furthermore (he continues) these tools must be produced, whence it appears that the producer of the more highly developed tool of force, commonly called weapons, triumphs over the producer of the less highly developed tool. In a word, the triumph of force depends upon the production of weapons, therefore upon economic power, on economic conditions, on the ability to organize actual material instruments...economic force is the control of the great industries."

Petersen then continues saying De Leon put it this way "...the 'physical force' called for by the revolutionary act

lies inherent in the economic organization;...the element of 'force' consists not in military or other organization implying violence but on the STRUCTURE of the economic organization, a structure of such nature that it parries violence against itself, shatters it, and thereby renders the exercise of violence in return unnecessary, at least secondary, or only incidental..."

Comrade Petersen thought it of sufficient importance to clinch the point at issue by quoting De Leon's Supplementary in "As to Politics" and he concluded: "There should be no doubt in the minds of reasonable men that here, once and for all, De Leon disposed of that particular question."

De Leon stated in Socialist Reconstruction of Society, "The might, implied in the industrial organization of the working class of the land, will be in a position to mop the earth with the rebellious usurper in short order and safeguard the right that the ballot proclaims." (underscoring mine)

The staff maintains that "we are 'far in advance' of even De Leon's time..." yet the same yardstick is not applied to Engels who is quoted at length on two occasions and we are told that "his grasp of tactics (is) still relevant today." It seems odd that De Leon's grasp of tactics as applied to U.S. social and economic conditions did not get the same treatment. Surely his contributions are far in advance of Engels but only two short sentences of his appear in the entire article.

Continuing, the staff writes "When Marx and De Leon wrote, there was no standing army in the U.S., there was no FBI, no CIA, no nationally coordinated police force, no comparable magnitude of arms and resources in the hands of the state, no massive state bureaucracy, no fully developed world imperialist system." How does this negate De Leon's repeated insistence that only the workers organized into revolutionary industrial unions can meet, and defeat the combined forces of the capitalist class? As the great social scientist De Leon foresaw the drift toward plutocratic feudalism with all that this implies and fought the pure and simple and the anarchists on the question of correct revolutionary tactics. What other power but industrial might does the working class have with which to repel this tremendous capitalist display of force?

By what authority does the Weekly People staff impugn the NEC as "reflective of the serious Party problems the National Secretary has been speaking of in recent years" and why is this brought into a discussion on Party tactics?

This is an affront to the entire membership who have democratically elected their representatives as well as a reversal of roles in which four members lecture the highest elective body. It is out of order, presumptuous, and should be censured.

As NEC member I have done everything in my power to live up to the signed pledge "that in the event of my election to that office, I shall loyally represent the Party

and faithfully carry out its principles, tactics and resolutions, as determined upon in National Convention and by referendum vote."

I shall continue to do so, NEC member or not.

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To Herbert Steiner, Reg. No. 8, Jan. 5, 1976 fr. Nat'l. Sec'y.

Dear Comrade Steiner:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letters (2) of December 28, replying to mine of December 8 and 11.

As soon as time and circumstances here permit, I shall (a) have copies of your letters made and sent to the members of the NEC, and (b) reply to your letters.

Your letters will, of course, be presented to the NEC Subcommittee at its next meeting, the exact date of which is in doubt at the moment.

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To Herbert Steiner, Reg. No. 8, Jan. 9, 1976 fr. Nat'l. Sec'y.

Dear Comrade Steiner:

This is with further reference to your letters (2) of December 28, receipt of which I briefly acknowledged under date of January 5.

Commenting on your "covering" letter first, your charge that it was discourteous of me to have presented the matter as I did to the NEC Subcommittee, I reject as totally unwarranted and, in fact, insulting. You wrote a letter of criticism,

the staff and I answered it. Both your criticism and our answer were presented together to the Subcommittee. There was nothing discourteous or even unusual in my doing that. During my more than 33 years of association with the NEC Subcommittee, as a Subcommittee member, as assistant to the former National Secretary and as National Secretary that has always been the procedure for handling such matters. Subsequent correspondence has always been presented as received. As a member of the NEC who has received Subcommittee minutes for many years you should know that.

Your contention that the Subcommittee "could not possibly have had enough time to review the article in question and 'carefully' analyze both sides" is a gratuitous assumption in more than one respect. How could you know how much time was spent? The Subcommittee members, you know, could have taken all the time they needed.

As for your "rebuttal" to the staff's reply, I find it inadequate to say the least. It is faulty on any number of counts only some of which I can take the time to discuss here.

1. Your rebuttal misrepresents your first letter (Nov. 21) which initiated the exchange. The staff and I did not, as you contend in your opening paragraph, reply simply to your "expressed opinion that there exists the possibility of an incorrect impression created by the De Leon phrase that was used out of context in the December 15 article 'On the Transition to Socialism.'"

In fact you did not even start to discuss that De Leon

phrase until the bottom of the second page of your Nov. 21 letter, which raised a number of other points to which the staff addressed itself. These points you subsequently ignore and instead incorrectly characterize your first letter as dealing exclusively with "the De Leon phrase."

2. There was no "suspension of fraternalism" in the staff's reply. (If that designation can be applied to anything, it can be applied to your rebuttal.) The staff responded to an official criticism lodged with the National Secretary by an NEC member. And while it did so in direct and specific terms and with strong and emphatic reasoning and argument, it was neither arrogant nor hostile. Aside from saying that, I leave it to the contents of the staff's statement and my concurring letter to further substantiate that.

3. You use a number of irrelevant arguments and straw men, and go far beyond the staff's reply in abandoning fraternal discussion. You write "No four members who work on the Weekly People suddenly become expert beyond anyone else in the Party on the subject of 'Marxist dialectics and materialism.'"

Whatever satisfaction you find in making such pronouncements, they are irrelevant and misleading. Where did the staff claim to have "become expert beyond anyone else in the Party"? Do you consider yourself "the Party"? The staff responded to your criticism, your letter, and your contentions and not to anyone else in the Party, since no one else

raised any criticism about the article.

4. Your rebuttal completely ignores the central point of the staff's reply, which was that by relying almost exclusively on quotes, you had not presented a legitimate criticism of the article in question, nor clearly argued your position, nor helped to clarify the issue.

The staff wrote a five-page statement giving its views on your criticism and explaining its disagreement with both its content and manner. It explained what it considered to be characteristic of a dogmatic approach and why it believed yours was a "dogmatic criticism." It concluded that "Dogmatism has often been a false charge, a smokescreen raised by those who rejected the Party's principles, but this should not blind us to the fact that dogmatism is a problem that has plagued every revolutionary movement in every period and that it can only be countered if we are alert to it."

Yet, you do not respond to any of this. You neither argue that your letter was not dogmatic, nor that the staff's definition of dogmatism was incorrect. You merely dismiss the staff's contention as "typical invectives" and complain that the "merits" weren't discussed. It was precisely the nature of your criticism, however, that the staff responded to, contending that such an approach made it impossible to get to any "merits." A charge of dogmatism is "invective" only if it is inaccurate, unsubstantiated and misapplied.

5. Your position as developed in your second letter is inconsistent and unclear. You apparently equate a position

that allows for the possible necessity of physical force under certain conditions with "incitement to violence." These are hardly equivalent.

However the heart of the confusion stems from your apparent inclination to cling to an essentially pacifist position namely that the SLP and De Leon rule out the use of physical force at all times under all conditions. This is incorrect. Though we have already expressed our opinions on the limitations of argument by quotation we refer you to the June 28 Weekly People and the De Leon editorial reprinted there. In it De Leon states:

"Physical force is not a batch of revolution, as anarchy pretends. Physical force is equally the batch of reaction and revolution. Revolutions must first be accomplished in the heads, before the seal can be set upon them. But that seal--physical force--has never yet been absent--and hard it is to conceive the day when it will be absent so long as class rule endures.

"It is as idiotic to deny the function of physical force as it is to impute to physical force sole and creative powers. The latter idiocy is the perverse idiocy of anarchy; the former is the resistant idiocy that anarch-idiocy incites." (Sept. 15, 1912 Daily People.)

6. On page 3 of your rebuttal you write: "Since the staff says the reference to Engels is 'unintelligible, grammatically or otherwise...' I refer them to 'page 96 of Comrade Petersen's Social Architect, Vol. I. This is an example of your failure to understand the criticism made of your

initial letter. If you look at the last paragraph on page four of your first letter, you will find the following: "Admiration for Engels' grasp and insight into working class tactics aside from military studies is his incisive statement in Landmarks of Scientific Socialism:" Engels' quote follows.

It is your introductory sentence that is unintelligible grammatically or otherwise. Your refusal to concede this is amazing. Engels makes perfect sense, it is Steiner who is unintelligible.

7. It is also amazing that you, who complain that De Leon was quoted out of context in the article, should quote Comrade Petersen as you do on page 3 of your Dec. 28 letter. You leave out the opening sentences Comrade Petersen used to introduce his discussion under the sub-head "Bloody or Peaceful Revolution." They read: "In discussing the change from capitalism the question is invariably posed: Can it be done peacefully? There are two superstitions prevalent in this connection; one is that the revolution must necessarily be peaceful; the other, that it must necessarily be bloody. Neither is inevitable, but as De Leon so eloquently pointed out, with the working class organized politically and industrially, the chances are in favor of a peaceful revolution."

Not only have you quoted Petersen out of context, you have done so in support of one of the "superstitions" that Petersen expressly rejected.

8. Much more could be said on the tactical question, particularly as it relates to the current growth of state

power. This subject needs further development, which can be done only after we have clarified the Party's basic premises. For example, the "might" with which De Leon said a revolutionary proletariat could "mop the earth" with the bourgeoisie is "implied in the industrial organization." You seem to think the "might" and the "industrial organization" are completely equivalent. Is not De Leon saying precisely that an industrially organized proletariat would be in a position to muster armed force if needed, just as a capitalist organization of industry gives the ruling class that power?

Even in the quote you cite at the bottom page 3 of your December 28 letter, in which De Leon describes the structure of the economic organization as being of "such nature that it parries violence against itself" and "renders the exercise of violence in return unnecessary," De Leon promptly qualifies the last phrase by adding, "at least secondary, or only incidental." Where do you imagine the means for this "secondary" or "incidental" "exercise of violence in return" will emanate from? Furthermore, do you mean to contend that the military and police agencies of the state will disappear the moment the industrial organization moves to take control? Such a position is downright dangerous and a disservice to the proletariat whom socialist revolutionaries must not lull into such pacifist illusions.

9. Your first two paragraphs on page 5 are little short of outrageous. You write:

"By what authority does the Weekly People staff impugn

the NEC as 'reflective of the serious Party problems the National Secretary has been speaking of in recent years' and why is this brought into a discussion on Party tactics?

"This is an affront to the entire membership..."

For some reason, you, who quote so extensively from other sources, are unable to quote accurately from the staff's reply. The staff did not "impugn the NEC." It said that "the kind of criticism Comrade Steiner raises, coming as it does from an NEC member, is also reflective of the serious Party problems...." (Underscoring added here.)

As earlier, you now conveniently equate yourself with the NEC, and then with another huge leap, say "This is an affront to the entire membership."

How can a response to your criticism be an affront to anyone but yourself, if you insist on taking it as an affront? It is you, Comrade Steiner, who is "out of order" and "presumptuous," here. It ill befits you in those circumstances to call for anyone to "be censured." "Four members" have not "lecture[d] the highest elective body," they have taken issue with you on a question which you alone raised.

Copies of your letters and this reply are being sent to the members of the NEC.

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From Jack Braunstein, Region No. 9, January 5, 1976.

Dear Comrade Karp:

This will acknowledge receipt of your Dec. 22 letter and the enclosures listed therein. Thank you.

I read all the correspondence carefully, and particularly Comrade Steiner's Nov. 21 letter criticizing the Nov. 15, 1975 WEEKLY PEOPLE article entitled "On the Transition to Socialism," and the W.P. staff's and your reply to that criticism. I agree with both replies to the criticism and want to add that in my opinion the article in question was excellent, and contrary to Comrade Steiner's claim the essential features of the Party's program were properly outlined.

I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate you, the WEEKLY PEOPLE staff (as well as the contributors to the WP) for the fine articles and editorials appearing in the WEEKLY PEOPLE.

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From Georgia Cozzini, Region No. 6, Dec. 29, 1975

Dear Comrade Karp:

I have received your letter of December 22 with the ten enclosures. As I read those pertaining to the NEC and the coming convention, I thought back to the sectional "conference" you addressed in Chicago October 5. A question was asked as to why the NEC had done nothing upon the crisis of the resignation of Timm as editor. I was called upon to answer. Even upon hindsight I know of nothing the NEC at that session could

have done to resolve the problem. It was left in the hands of the Party as a whole---personified of course by the National Secretary. The membership as a whole has been apprised ever since of the intolerable drain on the National Secretary this has presented. But no name has come forth either from the members or from their NEC representatives who has the qualifications and is willing to accept the Party's terms. My fear is that the '76 National Convention will likewise not find the answer. Therefore I earnestly hope that each of us will give our concentrated attention to this problem, rather than to continue discussion on what the NEC has or has not done in the past.

Regarding Comrade Steiner's letter of November 21, I was bewildered by it. I got the Nov. 15 W.P. out and reread the article because I had been so impressed by its clarity when I first read it. The second reading improved my opinion of it. One of my favorite quotes of Engels, substantiating the article, is the following:

"The irony of history turns everything upside down. We the 'revolutionists', the 'upsetters', we thrive much better with legal than with illegal means, in forcing an overthrow. The parties of order, as they call themselves, perish because of the legal conditions set up by themselves...And if we are not insane enough to favor them by letting them drive us into street battles, nothing will in the end be left to them but themselves to break through the legality that is so fatal to them." (I don't

know the source of the quote---I got it from a W.P. some years back.)

Therefore, I wish to go on record endorsing the Weekly People staff statement of Dec. 8, and the Dec. 8 letter of the National Secretary.

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From Joseph Pirincin, Region No. 5, Dec. 31, 1975

D.C. Karp:

I received the copies of letters from various members of the NEC, copy of your letter to Comrade Steiner and copy of the Weekly People Staff's letter on the "Transition" article criticized by Comrade H. Steiner.

My reaction to the criticism of the "Transition" article is a case of a mechanical "understanding" of the materialist conception of history and an intelligent application of that Marxian principle. It is a case of failing to understand what the poet said so well--

New occasions

Teach new duties

Time

makes ancient good uncouth.

The lines are from memory and I cannot vouch for their exactness.

I hope that our 1976 national convention will result in the kind of updating that will be a turn for the better in our Party's fortunes.

*

From James C. Horvath, Region No. 4, January 7, 1976

Dear Comrade Karp:

I have received the following letters from the National Office:

Dec. 1, 1975 to all Sections re: NEC Session and Expense and Mileage.

Dec. 1, To National Members at Large on payment of NEC Assessment.

Dec. 4, To Frank Girard, Section Gr. Rapids re: editorial "The threat to Free Elections."

Dec. 4, To J. Sim, Section Wayne Co., re: sales and displays of Party Liter.

Dec. 4, To J. Sim, Section Wayne Co., re: State Committees and Jurisdictions.

Dec. 12, To J. Sim, Section Wayne Co., re: "new format for literature"... "in bookstores and libraries."

Dec. 12, To J. Sim, Section Wayne County, re: further reference"... "regarding E. Lansing Comm."

Dec. 16, To L. Miller, Michigan State Comm. re: "arrest of Tom Girard in Battle Creek".

Dec. 17, To J. Sim, Section Wayne Co., re: "Pre-Convention publicity" and work in Detroit area.

Dec. 19, To all Sections re: payment for the banquet reservations.

Dec. 31, To all Sections re: 4 points in connection with attending the 1976 convention.

Minutes of the Nov. 6, 1975 Sub Committee meeting that was adopted Dec. 19. I approve all actions taken by the Sub Committee at that meeting.

I have also received Dec. 22 letter listing 12 letters with copies of all letters enclosed.

All of the above mentioned letters have been carefully read and contents noted.

In regards to the Statement of the Weekly People Staff, I wish to state that I am in full accord with the way in which the problem was handled by this committee, relative to the "H. Steiner Criticism of the article on 'The Transition to Socialism.'" The Staff gave an excellent analytical appraisal of the subject matter at hand. Our youngsters (Staff) show good promise. Please tell these members to keep up their good work.

As to the letters of G. Cozzini and B. Bortnick, I have noted very carefully that both have consulted past Party History and cited what to them appeared as errors committed by the Party, but in neither letter did I find any constructive criticism to remedy to the wrongs that may have been committed. If and when any member comes up with what will be determined as positive action to generate new activity in the Party as a whole, I am sure the NEC, the National Office the Weekly People staff and the membership as a whole will immediately accept and endorse the new ideas. If our foresight was as

good as our 20-20 hindsight we would be sailing smoothly.

The illis and apathetic conditions that prevail in the Party today can be traced back to years past where they were bred and nurtured. We keep telling the workers of America that they must depend, not upon leaders to do their thinking and acting for them but to rely upon themselves to do the work. In the Socialist Labor Party as far back as I can recall, the Party membership has much too often relied upon its elected officials to carry the load and work that should have been carried out by the entire membership. The sooner the membership of the Socialist Labor Party recognizes the simple fact, that the Socialist Labor Party is every member of the Party and not just some of the members, when this is done the Party will once again do what is expected of it. At this late date, blaming each other for our past mistakes will get us nowhere. We can only achieve positive action by having 100% unity in all of our Party work.

For 1976 and until the socialist revolution is accomplished let us all put our shoulders to the wheel and push our principles and program as we have never done it before.

*

From Bernard Bortnick, Region No. 7, Jan. 1, 1976

Dear Comrade Karp:

This will acknowledge receipt of the following and appropriate comments accompanying each are appended...

3. Letter of Nov 10 1975 from Georgia Cozzini:

I would have liked to have done more as an NEC member to try to locate members who would be capable of filling the vacancies at the N.O. and identifying potential Party standard bearers. Outside of offering my services as a possibility I know of no other way then to systematically poll the membership in each section and region and to some extent this is what the National Secretary has implemented in the membership meetings that have been held, and those proposed.

One of the things I feel limited by is not only not knowing as many members as I would like to know, but not having any way to directly contact them. ...

4. Letter from A.A. Albaugh to N.S. dated Nov. 14, 1975. This will be answered or comment sent under separate heading.

5. H. Steiner's letter of Nov. 14, 1975, his letter of Nov. 13, 1975, to the N.S. will be answered under separate cover.

6. Letter from A.A. Albaugh to N.S. dated Nov. 19, 1975. This will be commented on under separate heading.

7. Comrade H. Steiner's letter of Nov. 21, 1975 re: W.P. article "On the Transition to Socialism." When I first read this article I felt it was an outstanding restatement of the Party's position on violence and legality. I remember how the so-called historian Seretan warped De Leon's position on this subject, and wished I had had an article of that sort which tied tactics to the prevailing material conditions, when I was preparing that article against Seretan several years ago. I haven't had time to reread the prefaces to our pamphlets - "Peaceful v/s Violent Revolution" - Engels'

statement taken from The Class Struggles in France, or As to Politics but it could well serve as a prefatory statement to either of these pamphlets. If not there then perhaps in our contemplated "Yearbook." In any case, I concur in the reasoning of the Weekly People Staff of Dec. 11, 1975. ...

P.S. This will also acknowledge receipt of your reply to H. Steiner dated Dec. 8, 1975, and Dec. 11, I affirm your stand on this issue.

*

From Bernard Bortnick, Region No. 7, Jan. 19, 1976

Dear Comrade Karp:

I hesitate to respond to the comments I have received from some of my comrades on the NEC because I don't want to simply prolong a fruitless discussion. At this risk, and lest my silence be understood as concurrence in their reasoning I would like to offer the following points:

Regarding Comrade Albaugh's letter of Nov. 14, 1975, his explanation of why motions submitted by NEC members need not be answered, "that the members did not think the motion worthy of introduction" would be altogether reasonable if the issues which they concerned were of a less urgent nature. But what could be more urgent than the possible collapse of the organization? Yet only one motion was made to deal with the primary problem we are charged with seeking a solution to. This refers to the motion I made in my letter of July 12, 1975 in which I moved that the "NEC be provided the names,

addresses, and if possible, phone numbers of all members in their respective regions for the purpose of determining, by a careful screening of each member, whether, (a) another member can be found to fill a vacancy in either the business office or on the staff of the Weekly People ...". Maybe this was a motion unworthy of introduction. Good. Should not others then be forthcoming? Moreover, if the work of our committee does not consist of deliberation and study of our problems and correspondence in seeking answers to them, then in what does it consist?

Perhaps it was presumptuous of me to declare our committee's inactivity a disgrace. Yet our constitution defines our obligations, and among the several recent references in Party reports we are reminded of those obligations in the following terms: "In large measure, and by every constitutional and organizational precept, between National Conventions the responsibility for taking steps, or at least considering ways to take steps, toward achieving such a situation, devolves upon the NEC." (NEC Special Session Minutes of Mar 7-11, 1975 p. 12. The "situation" the N.S. refers to here is alleviating the "holding action" now in force at the N.O.)

Since when are all of the activities listed by Comrade Albaugh considered the work of NEC members? Does one run for political office as an NEC member? Does one distribute leaflets as an NEC member? Further, it is news to me that there is a "pecking order" among committee members based upon

years committed to agitational, educational, and organizing work in various capacities, and that those with the least should hold their silence in deference to those with the most. This begs the question, for the issue is not what Bortnick is doing as a member of a party subdivision outside of his NEC duties, but what we are doing as members of the NEC.

Similarly, Comrade Steiner in his letter of Nov. 13, 1975 evades the issue in stating "The NEC, the National Conventions and the membership have dealt with them ("critical and weighty problems") when they surfaced sometimes with success sometimes partially so." My comrade well knows that these problems surfaced long ago, yet what have we done to deal with them as a body? (Perhaps in a moment of weakness I have made rhetorical statements, but judging from the above statement who doesn't?)

For the sake of accuracy the motion attributed to me by Comrade Steiner, re: advanced dissemination to our Committee of the National Secretary's report; this was a proposal made by Comrade Horvath in his letter of July 12, 1975. I merely commented in terms of offering qualified support for his proposal in my letter of Aug. 29, 1975. Comrade Albaugh makes a similar allusion in his letter of Nov. 17, 1975 3rd para, last line.

When Comrade Braunstein stated "I do not believe debate or discussion is mandatory on every thought expressed, nor on every proposal or recommendation made by an NEC member; ... If every NEC member were to comment on every thought expres-

sed by another member we would find ourselves inundated under a sea of cross-correspondence." The fact is that since our May 31, 1975 regular NEC session 2 comrades have made 6 motions (discounting Comrade Cozzini's proposal for a review of the NEC Session agenda) and as of Oct 13, 1975 only one response to these was received. This is hardly inundation. It too evades the issue, for no member is suggesting what Comrade Braunstein seems to fear. Our difficulties stem from too little communication not too much.

As a case in point Comrade Braunstein wrote: "those who get around as speakers or organizers or are in close touch with a large membership, of course have the best opportunities for sounding out the potentials." This is certainly a very reasonable idea and had it been proposed as a motion months ago I believe I would have supported it. Obviously, our problems are not going to be solved by keeping our thoughts and opinions to ourselves. Solutions can only come out of a ferment of discussion and commentary - and I suppose this is what a committee is for.

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From Aaron M. Orange, Region No. 2, January 14, 1976.

Dear Comrade Karp:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of December 22, 1975 enclosing copies of eleven (11) letters from members of the N.E.C. and a statement by the WEEKLY PEOPLE staff in reply to Comrade H. Steiner's November 21, 1975 letter of criticism.

I have carefully reread the article in the WEEKLY PEOPLE of November 15, 1975 ("On the Transition to Socialism"), the criticism of H. Steiner, the refutation by the WEEKLY PEOPLE staff and the remarks of the National Secretary in his December 8, 1975 letter.

I have also noted that the N.E.C. Sub-Committee unanimously endorsed your letter of December 8th and the Statement of the WEEKLY PEOPLE staff dated December 8th.

The discussion on the question of tactics in the WEEKLY PEOPLE article necessarily covered the possibilities in the event the reactionary ruling class abandons "the civilized plane of a peaceful trial of strength" and "reverts to the brute measures of the barbarian."

I agree that the article, and the replies by the Editorial Staff and the National Secretary to Comrade H. Steiner's criticism are consistent with the Party's position.

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From Aaron M. Orange, Region No. 2, January 16, 1976.

Dear Comrade Karp:

This will acknowledge receipt of the NEC Sub-Committee minutes of the meeting of December 10, 1975...

Receipt is also acknowledged of two letters from Comrade Herbert Steiner dated December 28, 1975--letters of criticism of the NEC Sub-Committee action and further criticism of your reply of December 8th and the WEEKLY PEOPLE staff's reply to the original letter of criticism of the WEEKLY PEOPLE

article entitled "On the Transition to Socialism" in the November 15, 1975 issue.

Finally, I acknowledge receipt of copies of your letters of January 5th and 9th to Comrade Steiner.

Copies of replies by Comrade Joseph Firincin (December 31, 1975), by Comrade Georgia Cozzini (December 29, 1975) and by Comrade Jack Braunstein (January 5, 1976) are also hereby acknowledged.

I have re-read discussions of tactics by De Leon and Petersen (particularly the chapter in "Proletarian Democracy..." entitled: "Bloody or Peaceful Revolution,") and I can see no reason for changing the conclusion in my January 14th letter to you that the article: "On the Transition to Socialism" is "consistent with the Party's position."

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Excerpt from letter written by A.A. Albaugh as organizer of Section Greater Miami, Fla., dated January 19, 1976.

Correspondence relating to questions raised concerning Comrade Steiner's criticism of the WEEKLY PEOPLE Dec. [Nov.] 15 article "On The Transition to Socialism" has been received. I should like to comment on this matter at a time when I can get my thoughts directed into that channel.

From Henning Blomen, Region No. 1, January 18, 1976.

Dear Comrade Karp:

Regarding Comrade Steiner's criticism of the November 15, 1975 article on tactics in the Weekly People, I make the following remarks:

There is always a certain danger of misinterpretation of a quotation taken out of the context of a logically presented argument, especially when the argument is in itself all inclusive. For a correct understanding its presentation in toto is mandatory.

This certainly applies to the oft-quoted statement by Marx: "Religion is the opium of the people." How effectively that statement has been used by the enemies of Marxism in an attempt to discredit the latter is well known. The "curse" [?] is only successfully challenged by reading the entire argument presented by Marx.

Neither Marx nor De Leon can be charged with having to want to destroy religion and hence the Socialist Labor Party's position is simply put that religion is a private matter to be settled by individuals without interference in a Socialist society.

What is the Socialist Labor Party's view with regard to violent, bloody or peaceful revolution? The question has been amply answered by De Leon, particularly in "Socialist Reconstruction of Society," "As To Politics" and numerous other of his writings. Likewise Petersen answers this question, basing his argument on Marx, Engels, Lenin and De Leon, very

adequately in Part III, entitled, "Bloody or Peaceful Revolution," in his pamphlet, "Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Despotism."

In the latter, Petersen says:

"In discussing the change from capitalism the question is invariably posed: can it be done peacefully? There are two superstitions prevalent in this connection; one—that the revolution must necessarily be peaceful; the other, that it must necessarily be bloody. Neither is inevitable, but as De Leon so eloquently pointed out, with the working class organized politically and industrially, the chances are in favor of a peaceful revolution."

In "As To Politics," under the heading, "Fifth Letter by H.B. Hoffman, New York," De Leon says:

"The S.L.P. ballot demands the unconditional surrender of the Capitalist Class. The S.L.P. accordingly preaches the Revolution, teaches the Revolution, and thereby enables the recruiting and organizing of the physical force element requisite to enforce the Revolution. The S.L.P. does all this, including the latter, because it strikes the posture of holding the Ruling Class to the civilized method of a peaceful trial of strength.

"May be the S.L.P. will triumph at the hustings, that is, win out and be rightly counted. In this case the S.L.P. would forthwith dissolve; the political State would be ipso facto abolished; the industrially and integrally organized proletariat will without hindrance assume the administration of the

productive powers of the land. Is this impossible? We admit it is highly improbable.

"More likely is the event of S.L.P. triumph at the polls, but defeat by the election inspectors, or resistance, as the Southern slaveholders did at the election of Lincoln. In that case also the S.L.P. would forthwith dissolve into its economic organization. That body, having had the opportunity to recruit and organize its forces, and the peaceful trial of strength having been abandoned, the Might of the proletariat will then be there, free to resort to the last resort, and physically mop the earth with the barbarian Capitalist Class.

"Most likely, however, the political expression of the I.W.W. [read Socialist Industrial Union] will not be afforded the time for triumph at the polls. Most likely the necessities of capitalism will, before then, drive it to some lawless act that will call forth resistance. A strike will break out; capitalist brutality will cause the strike to spread; physical, besides moral support, will pour in from other and not immediately concerned branches of the Working Class. A condition of things--economic, political, social-atmospheric--will set in, akin to the condition of things in 1902 at the time of the great coal miners' strike, or in 1894, at the time of the Pullman-A.R.U. strike. What then? The issue will then depend wholly upon the degree, in point of quality and in point of quantity, that the organization of the I.W.W. [read Socialist Industrial Union] will have reached. If it has reached the requisite minimum, then, that class-instinct of the pro-

letariat that Marx teaches the Socialist to rely upon, and the chord of which the Capitalist Class instinctively seeks, through its labor fakirs, to keep the Socialist from touching, will readily crystalize around that requisite I.W.W. [Socialist Industrial Union] minimum of organization. The Working Class would then be organically consolidated. Further efforts for a peaceful measuring of strength would then have been rendered superfluous by Capitalist barbarism. Capitalism would be swept aside forthwith. For this consummation, however, in the eventuality under consideration, be it remembered, the I.W.W. [Socialist Industrial Union] must have reached the requisite quantitative and qualitative minimum of perfection, and that in turn will depend upon the freeness of its previous agitational work, a freedom it never could enjoy except it plants itself upon the principle that recognizes the civilized method of peaceful trial of strength--the political ballot."

I hope making use of this long quotation will be forgiven. S.L.P. people don't require that sort of thing provided they have done their homework thoroughly. However, my reason for so quoting in this instance should be obvious.

In the first place, to fight for our political freedom is of great importance in this day when they are in process of being nibbled away. Should they disappear our agitation would be confined to the rat pit.

Secondly, the designation of the capitalist class as BARBARIAN is not invective nor an expression of emotional hat-

red. It is used by De Leon in an extremely accurate sense, historically, politically and socially. Under the circumstances cited by De Leon the capitalist class will have denied the very essence of the right to Revolution and that the people have the right to use the ballot and be counted in a civilized way and, moreover, their decision--if for Revolution--must be accepted as the will of the people. If the capitalist class refuses to accept the decision of the people and organizes for counterrevolution it then becomes a BARBARIAN CLASS having read itself outside of the pale of civilization. Thirdly, to combat counterrevolution, the working class, through the integrally organized Socialist Industrial Union and the Socialist Industrial Union Administration and being in possession and control of the industries of the land, will have the necessary might to organize whatever military power as will prove necessary "to resort to the last resort and physically mop the earth with the barbarian capitalist class."

Many quotations by the founders of Socialism are useful, provided they are complete in themselves. But if a quotation such as, "Religion is the opium of the people," is made by itself, it certainly requires amplification, lest it create the wrong impression.

I have nothing but praise for the excellent articles that have appeared in the Weekly People since the committee of four young Comrades has taken over and that applies also to the November 15, 1975 Weekly People article on tactics.

However, I have one objection. Is not the quotation by

De Leon out of context? I have underlined it in the long quotation by De Leon presented above. Doubt and speculation certainly can be aroused by the quotation as used. What organization, political or industrial, or both, would be responsible for the mopping up and what will be used in the process? What would make it necessary? Why the designation: BARBARIAN? How will the new reader interpret it?

I want to apologize for not using a typewriter--I don't now own one nor did I have easy access to one.

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From George S. Taylor, Region No. 3, January 22, 1976.

Dear Comrade Karp:

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a large number of copies of letters between the National Office and various N.E.C. members. Also the minutes of Sub-Committee meetings.

After a careful reading and re-reading of correspondence dealing with the W.P. article "On the Transition to Socialism" I find myself in full agreement with the statement of the Weekly People Staff and your letter of January 9th.

I have also carefully read all of the correspondence from various N.E.C. members dealing with various S.L.P. problems and have nothing to add of my own to the discussion at this time.

I would like to suggest that a leaflet on the Bicentennial be brought out based on the hypocritical contrast between our present-day capitalist governments reveling in glory of our

200th birthday of liberty and the pending congressional bill S-1 as was so strikingly brought out in the Weekly People article on "Reaction and Revolution at the Bicentennial" in the Jan. 17, 1976 issue.

If those who are planning the coming National Convention have worked out the idea of seminars for those attending but who are not delegates, I would appreciate some idea of their thinking. I would also appreciate receiving a list of names of all the delegates to the convention.

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From Bernard Bortnick, Region No. 7, January 26, 1976.

Dear Comrade Karp:

Receipt acknowledged for the following:

Letter to N.S. from H. Steiner dated Jan. 5, 1976;

Letter from J. Braunstein to N.S. dated Jan. 5, 1976;

Letter from N.S. to the NEC with enclosures dated 23, Jan. 1976 all enclosed correspondence acknowledged.

Regarding the letter from the N.S. to H. Steiner dated Jan. 9, 1976, I have read the letters with great interest and the references as well. I concur in your reasoning and answer to comrade Steiner.

De Leon's discussion of "syndicalism" in Industrial Unionism, Selected Editorials bears on this issue. Therein De Leon described the relationship of the "retarded" industrial development prevailing in Europe at the time and the prevalence

of military conscription and how this combination gave rise in France, in particular, to the concept of Syndicalism. He goes on to point out how the economic organization, the union was seen as having the primary purpose of organizing the working class into a military force because industry had not reached that degree of concentration to offer the working class, and to rank it, a non-military means of physical force. Of course, when De Leon wrote, militarism had not made the inroads that it has today in the U.S. Essentially our present working class, figuratively speaking, "knows how to handle a gun." This does not at all argue for a change of tactics but would seem to only augment the non-military force.

It seems to me it is important to separate what we advocate as a political party, and what we recognize, may be, necessary on the part of the Industrial Union in order to establish a new society. By recognizing the possible need for military action or armed force by the working class organized as a Socialist Industrial Union does not impair or affect our insistence upon a "peaceful trial of strength" at the ballot box. It would be foolish for us to insist upon that which is properly the prerogative of the Industrial Union.

Letter from James Horvath to N.S. dated Jan. 7, 1976: I agree with Comrade Horvath's statement to the effect that membership cannot continue to rely upon the elected officials and a few others to carry the load of our work. Indeed, our party is too small to afford the luxury of non-active members except for those who by impairment of health or other dire

circumstances cannot contribute to our activities. However, when Comrade Horvath states "blaming each other for our past mistakes will get us nowhere," though this is a true statement, I trust he does not mean those questions raised by Comrade Cozzini and I about the NEC are attempts to fix the blame on individuals. I submit that the "constructive criticism" that he would like to see can only follow an honest appraisal of our past efforts, an examination of our record. I regret that during the past months, very few of my comrades on the committee have been inclined to review the record since they are in a much better position to do so than I.

Comrade Horvath's remark regarding "constructive criticism" reminds me of the response we so often get from some in presenting criticisms of capitalism - that we should offer something more constructive. But just as we insist in our agitational work that one must first understand and concur in our criticism of class-ruled society before we can go on to demonstrate the logic of the Socialist solution, so must we conduct ourselves in our own affairs.

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From Jack Braunstein, Region No. 9, January 26, 1976.

Dear Comrade Karp:

I received the minutes of the NEC Sub-Committee meeting of Dec. 10, 1975, enclosed copies of letters from NEC members and the rebuttal by Comrade H. Steiner to the WP staff's reply to his criticisms of the article, "On the Transition to

Socialism," and your reply to that rebuttal.

I agree entirely with your reply to Comrade Steiner's "covering" letter as well as your reply to his rebuttal. I am in hopes that Comrade Steiner after a careful re-reading of the WP staff's reply as well as your replies to his criticisms will come to realize that he is in error in his contentions.

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From Herbert Steiner, Region No. 8, January 27, 1976.

Dear Comrade Karp:

This will acknowledge yours of January 9th. I have no desire to continue what began as an honest criticism of a Weekly People article and subsequently turned into an unpleasant and unseemly polemic.

The facts will have to speak for themselves and the final decision made by the membership. In this letter I simply want to place several points on record.

(1) I am aware that correspondence as received is presented to the Sub-Committee. I am also aware that every rule offers room for the exception. The reply to my November 21 letter of criticism of "The Transition to Socialism" article was answered by the staff on December 8 and your covering letter of the same date was presented to the Sub-Committee on December 10. It is still my opinion that the courteous thing to do was to delay action until I was given the opportunity to answer yours and the staff's letter and then present the

entire correspondence to the Sub-Committee. Why the word "discourteous" used in this context is considered an insult I do not understand.

(2) I have no quarrel with the term "dogmatism" but what I reject is the labeling of my criticism as dogmatic. I consider the charge "inaccurate, unsubstantiated and misapplied." A conflict of views should not degenerate into name calling.

(3) If I was under the mistaken impression that the staff meant that the Engels quote was unintelligible why should it be "amazing" that I did not use the opening sentences of Comrade Petersen's introduction under the sub-head "Bloody or Peaceful Revolution?" I was primarily interested in giving the entire Engels quote followed by De Leon and ending with Petersen's concluding remarks. Had I intended to quote out of context I would not have given the source to be checked out, and why didn't the Weekly People article give the entire quote from De Leon ending with "to resort to the last resort and physically mop the earth with the capitalist class?" Weekly People readers would not have been left in doubt as to the meaning of the phrase, and to check the source for themselves if they so desired.

I know De Leon was not a pacifist. I repeat, where in party literature does De Leon categorically state that "if a peaceful settlement of the class struggle was not possible, the proletariat would have to change its tactics and resort to armed force if necessary." I read the Sept. 15, 1912 Daily People De Leon editorial to which you refer. It does not sub-

stantiate the unqualified statement made by the staff.

(4) In Webster's Third International dictionary reflection is defined as "to give back or exhibit an image, or outline." Let me ask who is responsible for the "serious Party problems the National Secretary has been speaking of in recent years" that I am reflective of? If it is not the NEC who as some claim has not responded to Party needs and the "changing times," is it perhaps the apathy of the membership that is responsible? Surely, no one member can be held responsible for the "serious party problems." Your claim that it was meant only for me does not mitigate the affront by the staff, and it was out of order, presumptuous, and censurable for them to "impugn" an NEC member.

(5) I am not so naive as to contend "that the military and police agencies of the state will disappear the moment the industrial organization moves to take control." I have always answered this question in line with the Party's stand, that in all probability the armed forces composed of the sons of the working class would come over to the side of their own class who have taken over the industries and services. And as stated in Party literature, "The source of all power is economic power. Armies, particularly modern armies, cannot operate unless they are constantly supplied with a multitude of items which flow uninterruptedly from industry. Although, an army is a military power, it is dependent on industry, hence on the workers who operate them." (underscoring in the original). If any "violence" is necessary it would be "incidental."

De Leon stressed over and over again that the real "physical force" is the industrial might of the working class. I have no "pacifist illusions" so I don't have to be told we must not "lull the proletariat" into such a trap.

No, Comrade Karp, I do not consider myself the "Party" nor do I "equate" myself with the NEC or the entire membership except in so far as every member is part of the whole. I resent your judgmental remarks. My long record of activity in the Party and my association with the members can speak for itself.

On a number of occasions I, as well as others, have favorably commented on the excellence of articles and the overall improvement of the Weekly People. But if criticism is to be treated in the manner accorded my letters then something is seriously "out-of-joint" and needs re-evaluation.

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To Herbert Steiner, Region No. 8, February 4, 1976, from the National Secretary.

Dear Comrade Steiner:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of Jan. 27.

There are many things in your letter to which I take exception. Your persistence in calling for the censure of the Weekly People staff, your refusal to concede the slightest error on your part, and your failure to reconsider your views on the proper handling of such correspondence, convinces me that no constructive purpose can be served by prolonging this exchange. Nothing in the staff's reply, nor in my letters,

or the fact that at least seven NEC members expressed agreement with those replies has apparently had any effect.

Accordingly the matter will be submitted to the national convention when it convenes on February 7.

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