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What Is May Day?

All too few U.S. workers today understand or appreciate that May Day, as observed by Socialists, has a meaning directly related to their welfare and, indeed, to their survival. Its significance is more than that of the old Maypole festivities, which had their roots in primitive societies that each spring hailed a new season's promise and the reunion of humanity with Mother Earth.

As Daniel De Leon once said, "The idea of May Day arose, not from the fragrant of the fields, but from the sooty, dusty and suffocating atmosphere of the shop, the mine, the yard."

The First of May was set aside as an international workers' holiday by the International Socialist Congress, attended by the Socialist Labor Party, that met in Paris in 1889. The Congress called for the organization of huge demonstrations in many countries on May 1, 1890, in support of a general demand for an eight-hour workday. Demonstrations for the eight-hour day were repeated for several years. They had the beneficial effect of generating a sense of international class solidarity among the workers who participated in them the world over.

Capitalism helped compartmentalize the world into "nations." "Patriotism" and other mystifications of nationalism were deliberately fostered by capitalists to keep their respective working classes blinded and enthralled.

Socialists utilized May Day to expose the "patriotism" of the capitalists as a fraud and a sham. They showed that capitalists needed the whole world for their plundering and that capitalists didn't give a hang about the skin color or the nationality of the workers they exploited for profit. May Day demonstrations illumined the class struggle. They showed workers that the capitalists of all countries were their class enemies and the workers of all countries their class brothers and sisters.

As the eight-hour day was won in more and more countries, the character of May Day demonstrations changed. May Day became the occasion for proclaiming the international solidarity of workers of all races and all nationalities, and their eventual emancipation from wage slavery—sharing with primitive Maypole activities the heralding of a season of hope, when the darkness of winter is cast off and the bright summer's sun is in the offing.

The SLP continues to commemorate May Day in that spirit, recognizing that our very survival requires that the working class unite to take affairs out of the hands of the capitalists and reconstruct society from top to bottom along socialist lines.

Washington IMF-World Bank Protests Demand Reform

Thousands of people gathered in Washington, D.C., last month to protest policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank—policies they believe are responsible for much of the underdevelopment and poverty in the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Many developing countries are deeply in debt to these two major institutions of finance capital. Speaking at the "U.S.-Africa Ministerial Partnership for the 21st Century" in March, for example, Tanzanian Foreign Affairs Minister Jakaya Kikwet said: "Debt is a debilitating factor to African economies. Africa's total external debt has been growing consistently, resulting in actual debt service expenses reaching nearly 30 percent of total domestic revenue."

"This situation cannot be sustained any longer," Kikwet added. "We are appealing for the cancellation of all debts as the only lasting solution to the debt problem."

That is essentially what the demonstrations in Washington, D.C., were about. Writing shortly before they took place, Soren Ambrose of Independent Politics News explained their purpose as follows:

"The object [of the demonstrations] is to focus the media's and the public's attention on the tremendous damage done by the IMF and World Bank: the daily deaths of children starved for medical care, the blighted lives of women and men denied education and livelihoods, the rain forests plun-



Andrew Grossman

The Washington IMF-World Bank protests included this march against the prison-industrial complex.

dered and ecosystems polluted through massive resource extraction. The institutions, even as they talk about extending their 'debt relief' programs, continue to oversee a system in which the world's most impoverished governments must spend more on debt payments than social services. Their most lethal weapons are the 'structural adjustment programs' imposed by both institutions on countries in debt trouble—packages of economic 'reforms,' including higher interest rates, devalued currency, layoffs, privatization, and an orientation toward export commodities and cheap labor. After 20 years of structural adjustment, most of the approximately 90 countries that have undergone the programs are

mired in worse poverty and higher levels of debt. The institutions most recent public relations ploy—renaming structural adjustment 'poverty reduction'—stands as one of the most crass re-orderings of truth in the history of bureaucratic shamelessness."

Similarly, Robert Weissman, Editor of *Multinational Monitor*, recently wrote:

"Structural adjustment can fairly be described as a virulent strain of Reaganomics or Newt Gingrich's Contract with America," he said. "The basic idea of these policies is to open countries' labor markets and natural resource riches to multinationals, shrink the size and role of government, rely on

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SLP Executive Committee Meets

The National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party met in Regular Session at the Holiday Inn-Great America, in Santa Clara, Calif., the weekend of April 1-2. National Secretary Robert Bills called the NEC to order at 8:10 a.m. on Saturday morning, April 1. Bernard Bortnick was elected chairman for the session and Donna Bills was elected recording secretary. An agenda was adopted which, among other things, provided for presentation of a report from the National Secretary and the election of committees for purposes of the session.

The National Secretary's report was divided into eight sections on "National Headquarters," "State of Organization," "General Activities," "Party Press and Literature," "National Executive Committee," "Matters Requiring Action," "Party Finances" and "Editorial Matters." (Excerpts from two sections of the report are printed in this issue.)

The NEC adjourned for about one hour before returning at 1:10 p.m. for an afternoon session. Following a discussion of nearly three hours on the National Secretary's report, the NEC elected a Committee on Headquarters and Party Finances and a Committee on Organization. The NEC adjourned from the afternoon session at 4:35 p.m.

after voting to reconvene at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 2. Thereafter the two committees spent some time organizing themselves before the NEC Session Banquet Saturday evening.

The social hour and banquet, which were held at the same hotel, attracted about 40 people, primarily readers of *The People* from the San Francisco Bay Area. After the meal, the master of ceremonies, NEC member Chris Camacho of Miami, Fla., introduced the National Secretary, who delivered the main address of the evening. (The text of that address is printed in this issue.) NEC member Bruce Cozzini of Section San Francisco Bay Area then came forward to take up the collection for the Socialist Education Fund. (See page 6.)

When the NEC reconvened on Sunday afternoon, April 2, the two committees reported progress and requested additional time to complete their work. The NEC adjourned and reconvened at approximately 5:00 p.m., and adjourned again for the same reasons to reconvene at 7:45 p.m. During the evening session the NEC adopted several committee reports.

The NEC adopted a report in which it took cognizance of the growing importance of the Internet and the SLP's Web site as a means of disseminating

the Party's literature and as a source of contact with growing numbers of people interested in socialism and the SLP. The NEC also elected "a special committee on Internet communications...to work in conjunction with the NEC and the National Secretary" to anticipate potential "problems and issues that ...pose new challenges to the membership..." Similarly, the NEC voted to establish a special committee of "NEC and other experienced members...to assist...in communicating with [national] members-at-large" of the party and in "responding to the many contact inquiries the National Office receives..."

The NEC also adopted some general guidelines on local SLP Web sites and it voted to invite SLP members with writing skills to attend an SLP Writers' Conference. No date was set for the conference, but a special committee was elected to prepare the invitations.

No resolutions requiring a general vote of the party's membership were adopted. However, the NEC adopted an amendment to the party's Constitution that must be approved by the referendum before it takes effect.

The NEC completed its work and the chairman declared the session closed at 11:17 p.m. on Sunday, April 2.

Los Angeles SEIU Janitors Forced Into Labor Strike

By Ken Boettcher

At press time, 8,500 Los Angeles janitors—members of Local 1877 of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU)—remained on strike. The Los Angeles strike is the first of what could be many strikes around the country this year as the SEIU pursues what it calls its “Justice for Janitors 2000” campaign.

Los Angeles janitors need justice all right. Local 1877 members voted to begin their strike April 3 against 18 janitorial firms. Those firms “are involved in the negotiations for a new master contract covering about 70 percent of the office space in Los Angeles County.” The workers rejected the employers’ “offer” of a wage freeze for one year and 40-cent-an-hour increases in the second and third years of a three-year contract. SEIU negotiators are seeking \$1-an-hour raises in each of the three years covered by the contract. Janitors presently make \$6.80 to \$7.90 per hour, according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

The numbing drudgery of the work janitors must do, under the conditions and with the hazardous cleaning chemicals they must use, is well known. Their struggle has attracted much public support, especially in a city full of publicity seekers like Los Angeles. There is no shortage of local celebs who think the janitors should have what many call a “livable wage” of \$10 an hour.

Los Angeles City Councilwoman Jackie Goldberg got herself arrested in one march supporting the janitors. So did state Assembly members Gloria Romero, Gil Cedillo and Scott Wildman and Santa Monica City Councilman Paul Rosenstein. So did “a rabbi, a priest and seven top officials from local unions,” the *Times* reported.

The state Senate even “stepped into the dispute and approved a resolution (SR26) by Sen. Hilda Solis (D-La Puente), chairwoman of the Industrial Relations Committee, calling on janitorial contractors and building owners ‘to



SEIU Justice for Janitors 2000

Janitors in major cities across the United States are being forced to consider strikes.

improve the economic conditions of hard-working janitors under their economic control.”

An anonymous donor gave \$500,000 to the SEIU in support of its campaign on two separate occasions since the strike began.

Most of these local celebs wouldn’t have any idea of what a “livable wage” was if it jumped up and bit them in the pants. The SEIU officials in charge of negotiations apparently think that a “livable wage” is \$10 an hour. As any worker making \$10 an hour could tell them, \$10 an hour—\$20,800 per year at 40 hours per week—is still perilously close to last year’s officially defined federal poverty line of \$17,184 for a family of four (a threshold that most antipoverty organizations agree is set way too low). Toss in a spouse working full time and you have something that might be called “livable” were it not for the cost of housing and day care. In fact, what you get is a family without parents—with latchkey kids and family trouble brewing.

Fact is that these janitors—and all workers—deserve a lot more than an in-

come that keeps them pegged to some politically manipulated “poverty threshold” or some bourgeois notion of what should be enough for them to live comfortably. Workers deserve the full product of their labor, and nothing less. They deserve complete social ownership and democratic control of the economy that workers have to date merely built and operated for the benefit of a tiny minority of the super rich—the capitalist class.

That demand is something the officials of the SEIU and its brethren pro-capitalist unions of the AFL-CIO will never issue. For they are tied to the existence of capitalism, the economic system under which all workers are wage slaves of the employing class. They have not and will not challenge the existence of that system, for it is what grants them their privileged positions as merchandisers of labor power.

In the short run, however, the primary strategic problem the janitors face in their strike is the way they are organized. They work in buildings in which thousands or tens of thousands of other workers are employed. Many of those

other workers are union members. Yet, the other workers, particularly the “unionized” ones, must cross the janitors’ picket lines to honor their unions’ contracts with their employers. Workers scabbing on workers is the fix that unions organized on craft or trade lines put workers in. Workers organized on industrial lines would not have that particular problem to deal with.

All the workers in the buildings serviced by the striking janitors are themselves involved in providing a service. Some of those services may be essential to the production of commodities. Whatever the service or product may be, however, every worker engaged in the same industry should be organized in the same union—an industrial rather than a craft union. There should be no janitors’ union, or clerical workers’ union, or any other union separated from the industrial union representing all workers engaged in the production of a particular product or service. Just as they work together to keep things moving in the industry that uses their labor, so they should be organized together to resist the encroachments of their employers.

Real supporters of the janitors’ cause should go beyond supporting their immediate demands for a higher wage. They should also work to let them know that a secure economic future and an abundance for all lies in establishing industrial unions that would be better equipped to fight the day-to-day battles of the class struggle and lay the foundation on which to build the Socialist Republic of labor.

Do You Belong?

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

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

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

Get Subs!

SLP’s Web Site Producing Results

The following is a portion of the “General Activities” section of SLP National Secretary Robert Bills’ Report to the National Executive Committee in Session, April 1-2, 2000.

In 1998 the SLP Web site probably received about 5,745 “hits” or visits from people all over the world. That number is based on the averages included in my reports to the 1998 NEC Session and the 44th National Convention last April.

Last year it is certain that the Web site received a minimum of 24,362 hits or visits. That total is for 48 weeks only, however, for an average of 508 a week. Multiply that average by 52 and it might be safe to say that the Web site received 26,416 hits during the year.

Even if we assumed that every person who visited the site in 1999 returned nine more times during the year there would have been over 2,640 of them. We want return visits, of course, and we want to keep adding things to the site to induce people to come back to it.

It seems unlikely that everyone who visited the SLP Web site in 1999 did so 10 times, or even five times. But even five times would put the number of individual people who visited the Web site at 5,283, or at 4,872 if we work from the 24,362 hits over the 48 weeks for which we have

definite information. To receive that number of contacts from leaflets would require a distribution of about 5 million.

The correlation between hits and contacts will not bear up under close examination for several reasons, not the least being that contacts from leaflets and other sources supply the National Office with their names and addresses, while those who visit the Web site generally do so anonymously. Nonetheless, there is enough of a correlation to show that the SLP Web site is attracting attention and that the number of visitors has grown and grown significantly in a very short time.

Apart from the number of hits recorded and reported by our Internet service provider, there is not much to be gained by speculating on the number of actual people who visited the Web site in 1999. For lack of anything better on which to base a comparison, we might establish a ratio between the number of hits and the number of people who sent e-mail letters through the Web site in 1999. As noted, 90 e-mail contacts who identified themselves were received during the year. By correlating that figure to the number of hits—26,400 in round numbers—the ratio becomes 293 to one. Roughly speaking, the ratio of leaflets distributed to contacts received has been 1,000 to one.

The NEC might spend time speculat-

ing on the accuracy of these numbers, but it would be time wasted. They are close enough. They are significant only because they show how important the Web site has become as a means of disseminating the Party’s propaganda and how much more important it is likely to be-

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Global Injustice—It's the Best That World Capitalism Can Do

Robert Bills, National Secretary of the Socialist Labor Party delivered the following talk at the National Executive Committee Session Banquet on Saturday, April 1, in Santa Clara, Calif.:

Preachers almost invariably start their Sunday sermons by citing a passage from Scripture to draw a moral by telling a tale. I would like to borrow from their example this evening by citing two passages from socialist Scripture. Both come from things that Daniel De Leon wrote. The first should help to explain why I have drawn on the second. We had occasion to cite the first in the April issue of *The People*. If you have received that issue, or picked it up here this evening, it will sound familiar to you. It was written in 1903, and the part that interests me here read as follows:

"Theoretical articles are only for the few. Only these have time and mind to sit down to such articles. But theory is needed. How convey it to the masses, who alone can carry the movement to success? There is but one way—weave the theory into the events of the day. That is a much more difficult task than to reel out, or refine upon theory. It implies a thorough grasp of the theory, so thorough as to perceive its various manifestations in running events...."

The theory De Leon had in mind, of course, was the theory of socialism and how to bring knowledge of that theory to the working class—"to the masses, who alone can carry the movement to success..." He was also speaking of the responsibility Socialists have to educate the working class to their interests—not only to impart the information so they would be better informed, but so they would act on it by organizing themselves to end capitalism and the problems it creates to establish a new social system in which those problems would be unknown or become impossible.

That is the task of *The People*—the official journal of the Socialist Labor Party, and the responsibility of those who write, edit and publish it. It is the task of socialist education, and it is not an easy one to perform successfully. It is not easy to perform successfully for many reasons, not the least being those that De Leon mentioned.



Police confront IMF protesters in Washington, D.C.

Direct Action Media Network

Another reason why it is not easy is that there is more than one theory in circulation about the world we live in. There is the theory of capitalism itself. That theory can be summed up in the hackneyed old slogan that capitalism is the best of all possible systems. The upshot, the implication, of that theory is that there is no use striving for a better social system because—flawed and imperfect though it may be—capitalism is the best that can be hoped for.

Indeed, not only is capitalism the best of all possible systems, it has never been better. These are prosperous times. That is what we are told. And so they are—for some.

Never mind that in spite of the so-called full employment and the so-called tight labor market 5.9 million workers are officially recognized as being unemployed. Close your eyes to an additional 3.4 million workers who are involuntarily locked into part-time jobs. Dismiss as immaterial the fact that another 4.6 million workers who want jobs—any job—cannot find them. And by all means do not be "misled" when you hear that yet another 16.7 million workers who have full-time jobs don't take home enough to get past the arbitrary line that capitalism has drawn to divide those of us who live in poverty from those of us said to be enjoying prosperity.

What do these 30.6 million workers have to do with the theory that capitalism is the best of all possible systems? The answer is "not a thing"—at least it shouldn't if you swallow the theory whole hog. It is the best that the best of all possible systems can do.

Of course, not everyone swallows that theory whole hog. There are those who believe that if capitalism is the best of all possible systems it could certainly do with some improvements. Taken together, those who think this way may be said to represent a second theory—or perhaps I should say a secondary theory—about the capitalist world we live in. It is the theory that capitalism can be reformed and thereby improved. And because those who subscribe to this secondary theory are numerous we don't have to dig very deep to find them. An article from *The Washington Post* that found its way into the *San Jose Mercury News* on Thursday dug some of them out for us. The article was about several demonstrations scheduled to take place in Washington this month. Said the *Post*:

"One demonstration...is the centerpiece of a week-long effort called the Mobilization for Global Justice. Protesters will try to blockade the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to keep officials from convening spring meetings April 16 and 17.

"The effort is being led by many of the same groups that delayed the 1999 opening of World Trade Organization talks in Seattle.

* * * * *

"A week of related rallies and teach-ins begins April 8. One of the largest will be a noon rally April 9 on the Mall, where unions, religious congregations and other groups will demand the cancellation of foreign debts owed by impoverished countries. It is being organized independently of the protests against the [World] bank and the monetary fund.

"On April 12...the AFL-CIO plans to have 10,000 union members lobbying Congress to block permanent normal trade relation for China....

"Five days after the last major global justice demonstration, on April 22, organizers of Earth Day 2000 expect hundreds of thousands at a rally and exposition on the Mall....

* * * * *

"After the Millennium March for Equality on April 30, one of the next events will be the Million Mom March on May 14, Mother's Day. Organizers expect tens of thousands of moms to rally on the Mall for gun control."

And so, despite the prosperity that the best of all possible system has brought on, there is discontent—plenty of it—and good reason for all of it.

We cannot hope to deal with all of these protests, or even one of them to any extent. However, the demonstration being planned against the World Trade Organization—the "Sequel to Seattle"—deserves just a moment's notice.

A group called Corporate Watch sums up what those who plan to be a part of this Sequel to Seattle object to.

This particular group does not like the way the WTO goes about making its rules. It states its complaints against the WTO with commendable brevity. The first thing it does is ask the question: "Who Makes the Rules?" Then it answers the questions by saying that there is a two-tier hierarchy within the WTO, which it describes as "The Throne" and "The Power Behind the Throne."

"The Power Behind the Throne," according to Corporate Watch, is "transnational corporations [that] make nations compete to offer the lowest wages, environmental standards, taxes, etc., in a race to the bottom," and "big investors [who] can make or break a country by pouring money in or shutting it off."

And the throne—well—

"The Throne" is occupied by governments [that] represent corporations and investors rather than the majority," and by "international financial institutions

[that are] unelected quasi-governmental organizations that write the formal rules of the global economy."

The implications of all of this, of course, are that these transnational corporations *should not* make nations compete to lower wages, environmental standards and corporate taxes; that "big investors" *should not* "make or break a country by pouring money in or shutting it off"; that governments *should not* "represent corporations and investors rather than the majority," and that financial institutions *should not* "write the formal rules of the global economy."

Well, that's not quite accurate. Corporate Watch does not say that these things should not be done—that there should be no rules and regulations—only that the rules should be different and that they should not be decided the way they are decided now. They say that the WTO and, presumably, the corporations, the governments, the banks and the International Monetary Fund should be "democratized."

Corporate Watch and others who would "democratize" the WTO, the IMF, the World Bank, the corporations and the political state have no wish to abolish the social system that creates these things. They sometimes refer to these institutions of capitalism as being criminal in their conduct, but they do not see, or do not want to see, that these institutions of capitalism conduct themselves in criminal ways because capitalism is a criminal system. They seem to believe that if they were granted admission to the counsels of these criminal institutions they could reform them.

There once was a man who said:

"The American system of ours, call it Americanism, call it capitalism, call it what you like, gives each and every one of us a great opportunity if we only seize it with both hands and make the most of it."

That man never sat on the board of a corporation, but what he said could have been said by any capitalist. It is similar in some respects to what Corporate Watch and others have to say about "democratizing" capitalism. Their theory is that if they were consulted, if their concerns were placed on the table for consideration—in short, if they had a hand in it—the best of all possible systems that could stand some improvement would reform its ways.

Well, the man who said that was Al Capone, the Chicago gangster, and the opponents of the WTO who seem to think that they can change capitalism by sitting around the table and quibbling with the beneficiaries of that system are making a big mistake. They make the mistake of believing that it is the Al Capones who make the system when it is the system that makes the Al Capones.

The second passage from socialist Scripture I want to cite is longer. It is the one I want to use to "weave the theory into the events of the day." It comes from De Leon's *Reform or Revolution*.

"Revolutions triumphed, whenever they did triumph, by asserting themselves and marching straight upon their goal. On the other hand, the fate of Wat Tyler ever is the fate of reform. The rebels, in this instance, were weak enough to allow themselves to be wheedled into placing their movement into the hands of Richard II, who promised 'relief'—and brought it by marching the men to the gallows.

"You will perceive the danger run by movements that—instead of accepting no leadership except such as stands squarely upon their own demands—rest content with and entrust themselves to 'promises of relief.' Revolution, accordingly, stands on its own bottom, hence it cannot be overthrown; reform leans upon others, hence its downfall is certain. Of all revolutionary epochs, the present draws sharpest the line between the conflicting class interests. Hence, the organizations of the revolution of our generation must be the most uncom-

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Elián's 'Protectors'

At this writing 6-year-old Cuban Elián González is still being kept from his father in the Miami home of his American great uncle. He is still constantly surrounded by a rabidly anti-Castro mob that has reportedly at times numbered in the thousands. That mob still claims to represent Elián's best interests by vowing to prevent the boy from returning to his home, father and grandparents.

But nothing illuminates the real motivation of this venomous crowd more than the chants of "War!" "War!" "War!" they uttered outside poor Elián's window.

What is it that could possibly pervert the minds of so many to utter such a grotesque incantation? What could make them turn into a political football the fate of a 6-year old boy still mourning the loss of his mother? What kind of people are these who make innocent Elián a poster child for their reactionary rantings?

The answer is to be found in the common history of many in the crowd. Some, to be sure, are or have known victims of repression by Castro's bureaucratic statist regime. But many more are or have known those thrown out of Cuba along with the dictator Fulgencio Batista in 1959 when Castro's guerrilla forces won

their popular revolution.

Among these elements were the torturers and thugs of Batista's dreaded army and police forces. Count also the wealthy plantation owners who benefited from the system of racial apartheid Batista enforced against blacks and mulattos. And the Mafia-connected local gambling bosses, drug bosses and bordello operators, and their thugs and torturers. Many, in short, were the very dregs of society, often backed by big U.S. capital.

Their cries of "Libertad!" are cries for the return of the freedom to exploit, the freedom to enrich themselves at the expense of the Cuban people. Nothing is so important as to get back, by any means necessary, the property ownership and accompanying privileges they lost in Havana and elsewhere in Cuba when their dictator-hero Batista was toppled.

Marx well anticipated these Miami throngs when he wrote in *Capital* of "the most violent, mean and malignant passions of the human breast, the furies of private interest." Their chants of "War!" illustrate the extent to which they are willing to go to get back their ill-gotten gains. They care not a whit for Elián González.

—K.B.

Lori Berenson

Lori Berenson is a 30-year-old "freelance" American journalist. Four years ago a military court in Peru condemned her to life imprisonment on a charge of "treason to the fatherland." The court that handed down the sentence was presided over by a hooded judge, and Berenson had no opportunity to defend herself.

Berenson allegedly got herself involved with the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA), a guerrilla band that the despotic Peruvian regime of Alberto Fujimori has characterized as a "terrorist" group, no doubt to distinguish it from the "law and order" represented by himself. Berenson has denied being involved with the group, though she has expressed strong sympathy for the country's down-trodden and impoverished.

The Fujimori regime has been as cruel as it has been oppressive. Thousands of Peruvians have been tossed into prison by hooded judges without benefit of trial since 1992. Thousands more have simply disappeared as under equally despotic regimes in Argentina and Chile. Fujimori is also responsible for the forced steriliza-

tion of thousands of Peruvian Indians.

In 1996, *The New York Times* claimed editorially that, "The United States government has strongly protested the entire proceeding." Last month, however, *Times* columnist Anthony Lewis conceded that, "The flagrantly illegitimate trial makes President Clinton's passive posture on the case puzzling."

In truth, the United States has done nothing to help Lori Berenson. It has played the part of a big bad wolf with a bad case of emphysema. It has huffed and it has puffed, but it has not blown a single straw from the hut of the Fujimori dictatorship. We say "has played the part" because the Fujimori regime could not survive a month without U.S. backing.

Furthermore, there is nothing "puzzling" about the Clinton administration's indifference to the plight of Lori Berenson. Its unwillingness to disturb the military-style of "law and order" maintained by the Fujimori regime is explained by the fact that U.S. corporations account for 21 percent of all foreign investments in the country.

1950/75 100 years ago

Mock-Turtle Gompers

(*The People*, May 13, 1900)

Mr. Samuel Gompers has again broken out of his genre role of mock-turtle tragedian, wherein he is not to be matched. This time it was on the stage of the variety theater known as the Central Fakerated Union.

The story of the old maid is well known, who, flying off on a certain occasion into a paroxysm of rage at some remarks about her appearance that she resented, cried out in the wild attitude of a Medea: "If anyone says I am old and homely, I shall rush to the table, grasp the carving knife, and"—all hearts stopped beating, and the climax came—"and cut myself a slice of bread."

With this master performance for a model, Gompers stepped last Sunday before the footlights of the Central Fakerated Union Theater to "denounce" the order of Judge Freedman, enjoining the Gompers International Union of Cigarmakers from supporting the striking and locked-out cigarmakers with strike benefits. Gompers struck the kind of attitude that Artemus Ward describes as the "berlud, largo, berlud!" style and fairly shrieked out: "I have come to violate Justice Freedman's injunction; I shall violate it by"—again, many a heart, in dread anxiety, stopped beating; Judge Freedman's heart? Bless you, no! The heart of the treasury of

(Continued on page 6)

A De Leon Editorial

Winking at Social Evils

Those who are conscious of social evils, but who shrug them off and take no part in correcting them, abet the evils and become obstacles to those working to correct them.

Don't Be Too Good Natured

(*Daily People*, Nov. 22, 1909)

There was a world of wisdom in what Rev. Hugh Birckhead said to the Big Brothers club of this city when he advised them not to be too good natured.

In the Rev. Birckhead's words, the man of inert good nature is a block in the path of progress, which must then fight his inertia, together with the active hostility of its enemies.

Good nature has its time and place. Without it even the most earnest worker for better things would soon wear out. But the good nature which can hear of one miner being killed in an unsafe mine, and laugh it off; the good nature which can read of one unemployed taking his life in desperation, and imperturbably say the dead man must have been "incompetent"; the good nature which can know of one mother offering to give her babes away because she can't keep them alive, and complacently assert "she should have moved from the city"; the good nature which can be informed of one family living eight in a room in a congested tenement and reluctantly sending its children unfed to school, and smugly declare they "needn't have done so if they didn't want to"; the good nature which can be posted on the reports of forced child labor in Southern cotton

mill, Northern canning factory, or intermediary coal mine, and unwinkingly ascribe it to "greed for money"; the good nature, in short, which can be confronted with any one of the myriad searing results of the present exploitative system of production, and with the "smile that won't come off" maintain that that system is alright and that only the individuals who suffer from it are at fault—that good nature deserves to be whipped from the abode of decent men.

Which does not mean that one must be morose to be good or to do good. Let the loud laugh ring which clears the brain and rests for efforts new. But the old Browningsque idea of "God's in heaven, all's well with the world" is a relic of the time man prayed to a painted stick to cure him of fevers. The earth never has become better but by man making it so. The good nature which refuses to see wrong when wrong exists, merely leaves the world free to that wrong for its unrestrained stamping ground—a state of affairs which the wrong is only too pleased to have, and will assiduously distribute large doses of "Keep Careful" chloroform to bring about. And for labor, the working class, which is the objective point and victim of the wrong of capitalism, to fall under the influence of the anesthetic, is plain suicide.

Don't be too good natured.

what is socialism?

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

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

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

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

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

Socialism does not mean government or state ownership. It does not mean a state bureaucracy as in the former Soviet Union or China, with the working class oppressed by a new bureaucratic class. It does not mean a closed party-run system without democratic rights. It does not mean "nationalization," or "labor-management boards," or state capitalism of any kind. It means a complete end to all capitalist social relations.

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

You are needed in the ranks of Socialists fighting for a better world. Find out more about the program and work of the Socialist Labor Party and join us to help make the promise of socialism a reality.

...The Best That Capitalism Can Do

(Continued from page 3)

promising of any that yet appeared on the stage of history. The program of this revolution consists not in any one detail. It demands the unconditional surrender of the capitalist system and its system of wage slavery; the total extinction of class rule is its object. Nothing short of that—whether as a first, a temporary, or any other sort of step can at this late date receive recognition in the camp of the modern revolution.”

Are the people who are leading the movements that object to the effects of capitalism today playing the role of Wat Tyler in modern dress? Are their efforts at “democratizing” the WTO and other institutions of capitalism comparable to marching on the feudal castle and crying out: “My lord, you must change your ways!” Are they courting the same disaster that befell Wat Tyler and his followers at the hands of some modern Richard II?

The Socialist Labor Party says that is precisely the danger. But by saying that we are led to some questions:

- Who can do something to change the world for the better?
- What should they change it to?
- How can it be done?

The world, after all, isn't quite like the weather. It's made up of people—thinking beings who can ask, and answer, questions about it. People can—and have—done more than that. They have changed the world—society—in the past. And, having done it before, they can do it again.

But we've raised three questions, all of which require the correct answers. Or else the world, like the weather, will whirl out of control, and the people in it will be tossed about like drops of rain.

Each one of the three questions we've raised is of critical importance. And the who, what and how are every bit as important as a fourth question we could raise—the question of when.

Socialists offer answers to all four questions. And by “Socialists,” I mean the Socialist Labor Party. If you know the least thing about the SLP, you won't be surprised by the answers we offer.

The “who” is the working class. By that we mean those millions who have no control over the productive forces—that vast majority who own nothing but the ability to perform productive labor, but who are deprived of the opportunity to exercise that ability without first turning it into a merchandise to be sold.

The “what” is socialism. And what do we mean by socialism? What does the SLP mean? Daniel De Leon put it this way: “Socialism means but one thing, and that is the abolition of capital in private hands, and the turning over of the industries into the direct control of the [workers]...employed in them. Anything else is not socialism, and has no right to sail under that name.”

That's all of it. Socialism is nothing more—and it's nothing less. There is more to this statement of De Leon's. I want to return to it; but, first, there's our third question to answer—the “how” of achieving socialism.

Socialists also have an answer to offer to this question—and, again, by Socialists, I mean the SLP. The answer we offer is the De Leonist program of political and economic action by the working class. We call that program Socialist Industrial Unionism.

It can be briefly summed up. Because the destiny of humanity is tied up with its ability to produce; because the means of production are not controlled by the majority, the workers who must sell their ability to work; because those means of production are owned and controlled by



Washington, D.C., police meting out capitalist justice.

Direct Action Media Network

the capitalist class—because of those facts, the “who” of our equation must be organized to take control of the industries and bring them under their own “direct control.”

Because of these things, workers also need a political party of their own—one that will serve a twofold purpose. First, to make the working class aware of its position in capitalist society, i.e., to educate the workers and stimulate their classconsciousness. Second, to challenge the ruling class' control of the state—an institution which socialism will abolish, but which today exists to enforce class rule.

These are the answers the SLP offers in response to the questions I raised.

Those questions were posed in reply to a common observation—that our society is riddled with contradictions; that they are dangerous and threaten our survival; and that the source of the contradictions, and the dangers they pose, is the system that gives rise to them.

The dangers are evident to many; but the answers the SLP offers are less evident—at least to the vast majority whom we seek to reach. But I must assume that the answers are evident to most of us here this evening, to the members and supporters of the SLP, because as important as the three first questions are, it is the fourth one I wish to address.

That fourth question is “When?” When will Socialists convince workers that capitalism is the source of the dangers that face us? That workers alone have the power to successfully contend with the problem? That the conscious exercise of their power implies socialism? And that the conscious organization of their power implies the SLP program?

The fourth question cannot be answered with the same precision as the three that preceded it. It cannot be answered by setting a date—urgent though the need for socialism is. Yet it requires an answer—and not a vague one.

The answer lies buried in two facts. The first fact is the increasingly commonplace observation that the world is not only in a mess, there is grave danger—and it threatens our very survival. As a result there is desire for change among many who could build a powerful movement to bring that change about.

It is this certainty about the danger of leaving things unchanged combined with the desire for change that provides a partial answer to the fourth question, i.e., “When will the working class come to understand the need for socialism?” “When will it come to understand its decisive role in effecting that change?” “When will it act on that necessary understanding, organize itself politically and economically, and consummate the change?”

But that desire for change is only a partial answer. There is another part needed to make it a complete answer, and a large part of that other part to the complete answer is right here in this room. It's you and what you do with the knowledge that you have or which is at your fingertips. It's you who have it within your power to determine if and when the fourth question can be answered—and answered with precision.

That answer to the question “when” may surprise you. But it shouldn't—and it shouldn't for one good and simple reason. What is that reason? It is that you are the classconscious element of your class! And it is your awareness of that fact—your willingness, or readiness, to act on it—that may well make the difference.

Let me shift gears for a moment. Let me pose one more question—one that has occurred to all of us at one time or another, but more often to workers skeptical about socialism. My question is this: “Why does socialism take so long to come?” Or to put it another way: “Aren't Socialists chasing moonbeams?” or “Isn't the working class hopeless?”

They are not unreasonable questions to ask. The questions are not unreasonable. Yet, they stem from a lack of knowledge—knowledge of history, but especially knowledge of working-class history.

There is a widespread, but false, impression that the working class has been inanimate; that it does not respond to the logic of the situation, much less to the urgings of classconscious Socialists—and to the SLP; or, at most, that it may have responded to a degree in the past, but no more—and that this is especially true in the United States.

The impression is false. It is also dangerous—because it can lead to unnecessary demoralization among those who are classconscious. For example, there is the idea that workers have rejected the idea of unions, or worse, that they have rejected the principle of unionism and, with it, the very ground on which the SLP stands.

But this idea is based on superficial evidence, evidence such as:

- The decline in the strength of the present unions—the AFL-CIO and so forth.
- An apparent lack of confidence in today's unions—a lack of confidence Socialists would agree is wholly justified.
- Workers' susceptibility to lures and deceptions—both by their unions and by antiunion elements of the ruling class.

All of this is true. No Socialist would deny it. Yet Socialists would deny that workers have rejected the principle of unionism or the instinct of working-class solidarity—and latent classconsciousness—that underlies it.

Why? Because the facts are the reverse of what they appear. It is not the workers who have rejected the principle of unionism and all that hangs thereby. It is actually the reverse, the other way around. It is the unions that have rejected the vast majority of the working class. For they have refused even to attempt the organization of the whole working class.

But most workers are not aware of this. They raise other questions about the unions, questions like: “Why can't the unions protect their members against wage cuts? Benefit losses? Dangerous working conditions? Factory closings?”

Every classconscious Socialist and worker knows the answers to these questions. It's because the unions are not organized for that purpose. They are organized instead to discipline workers—not as Socialists understand the term, but as understood by a class that needs and cannot survive without a docile workforce.

The AFL-CIO and the like are organized against the working class. This is a key point in understanding why socialism seems “slow to come.” And it is evidence of another fact that must always be kept clear in mind—the fact of what De Leon called “the in-class struggle.”

“The in-class struggle,” De Leon said, “is the struggle within the proletariat.” And what did he mean by that?

He meant, first, that capitalism itself had drawn the line between its own interests and the interests of the working class. He meant, second, that there are differences of opinion within the working class over how to resolve labor's problems and, hence, the problems of society as a whole.

That difference of opinion resolves itself into the difference between reform and revolution—between the conviction, which was once a legitimate one, that efforts to strive for improvements within the system are preferable to efforts to overthrow and replace it.

But, if there was once room to allow for the possibility of improving society through reform, that day is gone. And the nature of the problems that the contradictions of capitalism have led to are proof positive of that fact. Further, they prove another fact—and a third fact, which I will get to in a moment.

First, the other, or second, fact is this: Capitalism cannot be reformed or improved for the benefit of the vast majority. And, even if it could with direct regard to such problems as unemployment, poverty and the like, it cannot be reformed in regard to the threat it poses to the survival of the human race. It is this latter threat that it poses that underscores the socialist—the SLP—contention that every effort to deal with the effects of capitalism at this late date is pure folly.

Second, that third fact is this: While we as Socialists are sensitive to the crimes and outrages capitalism commits in its own interests; while we are conscious of, and deeply affected by what capitalism does, not only to our class brothers and sisters here in the United States, but everywhere capitalism and its WTO and IMF go in pursuit of ruling-class interests—while we are conscious of and deeply affected by all that, we have a duty and a responsibility, a duty and responsibility borne of our understanding of capitalism, borne of our classconsciousness, to place all those evil effects of capitalist-class rule into perspective and never to lose sight of that perspective and of the obligation it imposes upon us to do our utmost to make this clear to our fellow workers.

It is our obligation—borne of our awareness of what capitalism is and how it must operate to the detriment of all humankind, whether it is here or in some other place.

Earlier I said I would return to De Leon's definition of socialism. This is the place to do it, but not simply as a description of

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Thanks Due to Socialist Education Fund Contributors

We salute with thanks and appreciation all those who contributed to the Socialist Education Fund. As of April 14, the proceeds from the collection taken for the fund at the National Executive Committee Session Banquet on Saturday, April 1, when combined with the additional contributions received since then, totaled \$26,511.61.

Section Akron, Ohio, (In memory of Katherine Kapitz) \$10,495; Peter & Mickey Kapitz \$10,000; section treasury \$380; \$50 each Skorich & family, Robert & Patricia Burns; Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Osky \$15.

Section Cook County, Ill., \$1,519.64: includes Stanley Prorok \$100; \$50 each Al Bikar, Walter Leibfritz, D. Vollmer; section \$43.64.

Marie & Ray Simmons \$2,000; \$1,000 each John O'Neill, Section San Francisco Bay Area; \$500 each Nicholas Poluhoff, Gary Dion (In memory of my father, Harry Dion); \$400 each Daniel D. Deneff, Joan M. Davis; Robert P. Burns \$360; \$300 each Jim & Mary Buha, James G. McHugh, Jack Radov, Rachel and Bernard Bortnick, Bill Kelley; Nathan & Anne Karp \$313.70; \$250 each Marty Radov, John Walbridge (In memory of William Walbridge), Charmaine Beckman (In memory of Cord Beckman).

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...Web Site Producing Results

(Continued from page 2)

come in the future. Indeed, 7,700 hits were received during the first 12 weeks of the current year, for a weekly average of 700. If that rate holds for the rest of the year, the SLP Web site will receive 36,400 hits by December 31.

Without stopping to describe its organization and design, what visitors to the Web site found in 1999 were 10 SLP leaflets and statements, five SLP pamphlets and *Socialist Studies*, 27 De Leon editorials that have been reprinted in *The People* in recent years, information on the personal life and socialist career of Daniel Leon, "Socialism for Beginners," the New York Labor News catalogue and ordering form, a subscription form for *The People*, e-mail windows to the National Office and *The People*, the Party's local directory (which now includes seven hypertext links to the e-mail addresses of sections and national members-at-large), instructions

on how to receive *The People* by e-mail and links to other sites that feature the works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Each monthly issue of *The People* is uploaded to the site and every article printed in *The People* since November 1994 can be found there. All of the leaflets and

pamphlets are formatted to appear as they do in their printed versions, and the last four issues of *The People* have been formatted in the same way.

The SLP leaflets and statements that can be viewed and downloaded from the Web site to the visitor's personal computer are the following:

Facts About the Socialist Labor Party
Here Today and Gone Tomorrow: The Plight of America's Temporary Workers
National Platform
Resolution on Puerto Rico
Socialist Industrial Unionism: The Workers' Power
Stop the War on Yugoslavia!
What Is Socialism?
What's Behind the Attack on Public Education?
What's Wrong With the Labor Unions?
Who Are the Polluters? How Capitalism Is Destroying the Earth!

The SLP pamphlets and *Socialist Studies* that can be viewed and downloaded are the following:

Daniel De Leon on "Labor Parties"
Reform or Revolution
Socialist Reconstruction of Society
The Nature of Soviet Society
The SLP and the Unions

Much more could be said about the Web site, not the least significant being the work Comrade Boettcher does to keep it up and running and what Comrade Donna Bills does to supply him with things to add. The National Office wants to add much more to it—more pamphlets, works by Marx and Engels, etc.—but we are handicapped by the small size of the staff, which has too many other things to attend to to devote as much time and attention to the Web site as it deserves to receive.

activities

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

OREGON

Portland

Discussion Meetings—Section Portland holds discussion meetings every

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

...Protests

(Continued from page 1)

market forces to distribute resources and services and integrate poor countries into the global economy."

Opponents of the IMF and World Bank believe that if the indebtedness of developing countries were forgiven by the institutions of finance capital the benefits would redound to the impoverished masses of those countries. In truth, they would redound to the benefit of the ruling classes of those countries only. Debt relief would only enhance their ability to increase the exploitation of their own working classes.

That fact was underscored last December at the disrupted meeting of the World Trade Organization. As CNN reported on Dec. 3: "In a dispute over labor standards, a key issue for protesters in the streets, the United States agreed to an EU [European Union] proposal to set up a forum outside the WTO to discuss the issue. But that proposal was rejected by India and other developing countries, who see cheap labor as one of their few trading advantages."

A similar row broke out in Geneva, Switzerland, on Dec. 10, where the WTO regrouped for a special meeting following the debacle at Seattle. According to Fox News, "Developing countries were...angry at President Clinton's insistence that labor standards should be addressed in trade liberalizing negotiations."

The ruling classes of the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America today are in a position similar to that of the small farmer in America at the end of the 19th century. The small farmers who found themselves unable to compete with large, mechanized farms were forced to borrow extensively from banks and thousands were forced from the land. They turned to the working class for support when they started the so-called populist movement, but their struggle to survive and overcome their debts made them vicious exploiters of farm labor. They had no interest in abolishing capitalism, only in making it work better for themselves.

The ruling classes of the developing countries have no more interest in the welfare of their own emerging working classes than the ruling classes of the highly developed capitalist countries have in theirs. However, they are not above manipulating the suffering of their own populations to gain the sympathies of working-class Americans to wage their battles with the IMF and the World Bank for them. Small capital has always sought to enlist the sympathy and support of the working class in their struggle to compete and survive against large capital.

The policies of the IMF and World Bank have all the effects on the developing countries that the opponents of those institutions claim. Nonetheless, those institutions are not what causes capitalism to rape and plunder the countries of the developing world. Capitalism is the cause, its institutions are merely its facilitators.

Capitalism on a global scale is no different than capitalism on a national scale. It is no different today than it was 100 years ago. Wherever it settles it survives, and can only survive, by exploiting human labor. It can make no difference to the workers of Africa or Asia if they are exploited by a multinational corporation or by an African or Asian capitalist.

Human labor is the source of all social wealth, hence the source of profit. As long as the profit system is permitted to continue, workers everywhere will be its victims.

Bringing democracy to the economies of the developed and developing countries is a worthy aspiration. But it cannot be achieved within the framework of a system that is based on human exploitation. It can only be achieved by a system that is premised on the collective ownership and democratic administration of all the industries and services by the working class itself. In other words, it can only be achieved by establishing socialism.

A socialist America would not only bring an end to exploitation and poverty in our own country, it would not only bring democracy to our industries, it would kick the props from under capitalism in every nook and cranny of the world. Ending capitalism and establishing socialism here is the necessary first step to ending global capitalism and the human misery it creates everywhere.

...100 Years Ago

(Continued from page 4)

Gompers' union, whose fakers themselves schemed the injunction so as to keep their treasury from being bankrupted and thereby leaving them without the fund for salaries; the collective heart of that treasury and those fakers felt gripped; what would that daring Gompers do? What flight of expensive heroism was he to plunge in and drag both them and their salaries at his heels? And the climax came—

"I shall violate the injunction by making speeches to the strikers!!!"
 The fakers breathed again. Their salaries were safe.



directory

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...The Best That Capitalism Can Do

(Continued from page 5)

what socialism is, but also as a description of how to achieve it—of how we, as classconscious Socialists, must never fail to keep our priorities in order.

In reading that definition to you I would ask that you keep in mind that it was written in 1908—keep it in mind, not because of its age so much as because of the examples he cites.

“It cannot be too strongly insisted that socialism means but one thing, and that is the abolition of capital in private hands, and the turning over of the industries into the direct control of the [workers]...in them. Anything else is not socialism, and has no right to sail under that name.”

And here we pick up the thread that distinguishes socialism and its aims from those who believe they can improve capitalism:

“Socialism is not the establishment of an eight-hour day, not the abolition of child labor, not the enforcement of pure food laws, not the putting down of the Night Riders...None of these, nor all of them together, are socialism. They might all be done by the government tomorrow and still we would not have socialism. They are merely reforms of the present system...and no more socialism than the steam from a locomotive is the locomotive. Socialism is the collective ownership of the mechanical equipment of production which would bring in its wake all the other improvements in conditions....But they are only the wake—socialism is the vessel which must cast that wake, socialism is the locomotive from which these betterments are the trail of steam.”

There is a lesson in this definition of socialism. The lesson is in what it suggests about what socialism is not—and the strong hint of suggestion it contains regarding *methods*. It goes back and touches on what we called the “in-class struggle”—which is what? Why, nothing more than the conflict between reform and revolution. The conflict between the idea that you can reform the Al Capones and the King Richards of capitalism’s corporations and its political state.

Socialism entails more than its goal. It entails the means to achieve it. As De Leon said on another occasion, “Goals are reflected in the means adopted to reach them.” And you can learn a lot about what a movement wants by how it aims to get it.

The socialist movement is a revolutionary movement. As such, it must adopt certain fighting methods of its own. It can’t borrow the methods of any other movement. For no other movement has goals similar to its own.

Our strategy as a revolutionary movement is nothing more than the application of those meth-

ods—of the tactics—that will carry us to our goal. The SLP has always stressed the importance of correct strategy and tactics. For the success of our movement depends on it.

Other movements utilize other tactics—tactics which reflect their goals. But we must never confuse our methods with theirs, anymore than we would confuse our aim with their reform aims.

We are not organized to “improve” capitalism, but to abolish it. The SLP’s tactics, as a political party, are uncompromising revolutionary socialist action. We do not advocate reforms—methods to improve capitalism—because we know that it cannot be improved, that its contradictions and horrors run too deep for that.

Is that a wise course of action to take? We think history proves it is—because whenever the working class has shown signs of deep discontent capitalist social reform activities abound.

When will socialism come? We don’t know—not the day, month or year. But we know this much: It’s no later in coming than capitalism is in resolving its contradictions and the horrors it creates. And we know something else: We dare not fail to be prepared for it—the penalty will be too great.

We dare not lose sight of our goal, or to be anything less than crystal clear on the methods to gain it, because the answer to the question when will socialism come depends very much on our clarity as to goals and methods.

The socialist theory of capitalism proves that capitalism is the cause of all the economic and social problems that plague the world today. It proves that capitalism cannot be changed in a way that will eliminate those problems. It demonstrates that workers who believe that democracy is needed in the economy can achieve it. And it provides the means by which workers can organize to accomplish that goal.

Cutting through all the distractions, through all the political and economic nonsense that obscures the working class’ vision and blocks their path is not an easy thing to accomplish. But that is what has to be accomplished. It is up to us—to all of us gathered here this evening, and to all those who know enough to know that the SLP’s Socialist Industrial Union program is the only realistic way of getting rid of capitalism and all the problems it causes. It is up to us to ignore the difficulties and commit ourselves to redoubling our efforts. If we do not succeed we should give no one reason to say it was because we did not do our best. But if we do give it our best we will succeed. It is up to us—to you and to me—to all of us acting together.

... Report on De Leon’s Works

(Continued from page 8)

1887. Its appearance was related to a postelection struggle for control of the newly named ULP. That struggle came to a head in August 1887 when Henry George, the 1886 mayoral candidate, succeeded in having the SLP ousted from the ULP.

The two newspapers carried on a journalistic war of words while the struggle for control of the ULP went on inside the party’s general committee and in the state assembly election districts of Manhattan. De Leon was actively involved in those struggles. We know that he was on the committee charged with drafting a platform for the new party after the mayoral campaign. We know it was during this period that his disenchantment with George developed and grew. We know that he opposed and spoke out strongly against the general committee’s decision to expel the SLP from a rapidly disuniting United Labor Party. According to *The Leader’s* account of one district meeting held in August:

“...Prof. Daniel De Leon...moved the adoption of a resolution in which it was stated that the decision of the County General Committee, excluding the Socialists from membership in the United Labor Party was unjust and unconstitutional. De Leon declared that the action of the Central General Committee was shameful, hypocritical and dishonorable, and if redress was not immediately to follow, it would prove a death blow to the party of United Labor...” (*The Leader*, August 10, 1887. Quoted by P.A. Speek, “The Single Tax and the Labor Movement.” *Bulletin*

of the University of Wisconsin, October 1917)

There is much more we don’t know, or know too little about, of course, but we do know that De Leon did not move directly from the ULP into the SLP. His young wife died at about this time, and Grover, their one-year-old son, died the same year.

Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* was published in 1888 and Bellamy Clubs soon sprang up all over the country. In May of that year, the *Workmen’s Advocate*, which was the SLP’s English-language newspaper at the time, listed De Leon as having been one of several “recent lecturers” at “the Labor Lyceum which the American Section SLP is conducting.” However, more than two years would go by before the *Advocate* could list De Leon as a speaker for the SLP.

Although I have not succeeded in finding a source from which to buy microfilm of *The Leader*, film of *The Standard* was purchased just this week and has now been added to the National Office’s collection.

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Clinton Says U.S. Can Do Business With Russia's Putin

President Clinton has described him as "a man we can do business with." The man Clinton was referring to is Vladimir Putin, the ex-police spy whom Boris Yeltsin hand picked to succeed him as president of Russia. The "we," of course, is the American "business" class—the capitalists who see Russia as a land of new opportunities for investment, exploitation and despoliation.

American workers could be excused if they concluded from President Clinton's description of Putin that he is a man who meets the "democratic" criteria that some others, such as Yugoslavia's Slobodan Milosevic or Iraq's Saddam Hussein, do not measure up to. Well, perhaps not quite. As the *San Jose Mercury News* recently put it:

"Putin has proclaimed himself an adherent of democracy, but his presidency is expected to point Russia toward a more authoritarian course, as already manifested by his restrictions on the press, unrelenting pursuit of the war in the break-away republic of Chechnya, support for new powers for security services and pro-

posed reinstatement of military training in secondary schools." (March 27)

If Putin is something less than the world's leading peace-loving proponent of bourgeois democracy, what about him would lead President Clinton to say that he is someone American capitalism "can do business with"?

Putin himself supplied the answer in March when the Associated Press quoted him as saying that his government "must overcome its weakness in everything touching on the protection of private property, investors and creditors." It was also in March that Putin took steps to charm Western capitalists with his plans for the future of Russia. As the *Mercury News* explained it:

"Putin has ordered the Center for Strategic Development in Moscow to develop a four-year economic plan that, as the new president, he is expected to unveil in May. He has sent encouraging signs to investors, promising to reform and lower taxes, and remove legal restraints that discourage foreign investment, now a pal-

try \$11 billion a year, compared to \$43 billion in China."

Putin has promised to do even more. He has promised to push aside the indigenous class of "start-up capitalists" known to Russians as the "oligarchs" to make room for the Western capitalists he seeks to entice with the profit potential of what the AP described as "a huge country with an educated population, cheap labor and abundant natural resources such as oil, natural gas and timber." Apparently he is prepared to do what any police spy worth his salt is always prepared to do, namely to turn on his supposed friends to enhance his personal power and accomplish his goals. As the *San Jose Mercury News* reported:

"Though Putin is effectively a Yeltsin protégé and a product of the former president's much-reviled inner circle, his vast support among voters arms him with the political independence to chart his own course and—at least in theory—sever the Kremlin's corrupt alliance with the financial barons known as oligarchs.

"Despite widespread skepticism, Putin

has suggested that, vowing that the oligarchs will cease to exist 'as a class' after the election."

The election that elevated Putin from acting president to president-elect of Russia took place on March 26. He reportedly received more than 54 percent of the popular vote, and despite the admitted corruption that runs rampant in the Russian government there has been no outcry—at least none heard in the West—about falsified election returns as there has been in other instances when the winner was not someone American capitalism felt it could "do business with."

What Putin's administration will mean for the Russian working class remains to be seen. Russian workers could hardly be worse off than they are today. One conclusion that American workers can draw without waiting, however, is that the foreign policy of our own country is not governed by high-minded principles of peace and democracy. It is governed by the material interests of a ruling class bent on doing "business" wherever, whenever and with whoever will clear its path and safeguard its interests. Apart from that, there doesn't seem to be much to distinguish Vladimir Putin from Slobodan Milosevic and Saddam Hussein.

(Diane Secor contributed to this article.)

NEC Hears Progress Report On Works of Daniel De Leon

Thirteen years ago, SLP National Secretary Robert Bills informed the Party's 38th National Convention that he had undertaken a new effort to identify and collect the works of Daniel De Leon with a view to their eventual publication in book form. According to an article on the project printed in *The People* of Aug. 29, 1987, Bills informed the convention that an earlier effort "fizzled out when the Depression came along [in the 1930s] and money became even more scarce than it is for an organization like the SLP under the best of circumstances."

Bills also informed the 38th National Convention "that he intended to pursue this effort to a successful conclusion 'with the approval and support of the membership and all... admirers of Daniel De Leon.'" The same report noted that Bills' "presentation was met with an enthusiastic round of applause and expressions of approval and encouragement from the delegates."

With the aid of a microfilm reader-printer, the task of collecting De Leon's works from *The People* and *Daily People* was completed several years ago. Since 1992 most of what had been photocopied from microfilm has been typed and stored on computer disks.

When the SLP's National Executive Committee met in Regular Session last month, Bills devoted a portion of his report on "Party Press and Literature" to an update on where the project stands today. The following is taken from that portion of his report:

All of Daniel De Leon's works typed in 1999 are from the *Daily People* years 1906–1908 and 1912–1914. Those from the 1906–1908 period were typed professionally and those from the 1912–1914 period were typed at the National Office.

The first group comprises De Leon's works for July 1906 through March 1908. The second group covers January 1912 through March 1913 and January through February 1914. The total of editorials and other *Daily People* matter typed during the year is 1,270. Six hundred of those are from 1906–1908 and 670 are from 1912–1914.

These works by De Leon are stored on computer disks, together with 5,570 typed

earlier, i.e., between 1992 and 1998. Several copies of the entire collection of approximately 6,840 separate items, plus 85 more typed this year, are stored on large capacity Bernoulli disks. This year we also took the added precaution of storing two complete sets of what had been typed as of January 1 on compact disks, or CDs.

What was left for typing as of January 1 was the balance of 1908 (April–December), all of 1909 and 1910, and the balance of 1913 (also April–December). The 85 additional articles typed since the start of the year have been stored on Bernoulli disks and will be stored on CDs in due course.

* * * * *

In my report to the 43rd National Convention, I mentioned that the National Office hoped to increase the Party's collection of SLP and other newspapers that might be valuable sources of information on SLP history. I identified and described several already in the National Office library, and I reported on what were then three recent acquisitions. Those new acquisitions were a microfiche edition of Edward Bellamy's *Nationalist* magazine (1889–1891), and microfilmed editions of the original IWW's *Industrial Union Bulletin* (1907–1909) and the WIIU's *Industrial Union News* (1912–1924).

I also reported that I was looking for a complete edition of *The Socialist* (1902–1922), which was the official organ of the SLP of Great Britain. Eventually a British company was found on the Internet and arrangements were made by e-mail to buy the three reels of film. The film was received and added to the collection in June 1998.

My interest in these newspapers does not stem entirely from a historical bent of mind. It stems from a belief that the Party's history is a valuable but underused weapon in our arsenal for fighting the battles of today. Before we can make use of that history, however, we must know what it is and where to find it. Historic newspapers and magazines such as *The Socialist*, *The Nationalist* and, of course, *The People* are among the most valuable and complete resources available for gathering up that kind of information.

Among the interesting things that can be

found in *The Socialist*, for example, are detailed reports on the famous 1911 Clydebank strike at the huge Singer Sewing Machine factory in Scotland. That strike was led by the British SLP on industrial union lines, and at least two articles from *The Socialist* would make for a valuable SLP pamphlet or supplement to *The People* to mark the 90th anniversary of the strike next year.

The British SLP's role in the Clydebank strike, and similar struggles of our own from those years—such as the 1911 Paterson silk weavers' strike led by the Detroit IWW, or WIIU—would help show that SLP history is not only long, but rich in the lessons that could only be learned from firsthand experience in the class struggle. SLP history is brimming over with similar examples of the militancy that one would expect to find when coming into contact with a revolutionary organization, and we should be making better use of those examples than we have in recent years.

Similarly, not everything that De Leon ever wrote was for *The People* or for socialism. Apart from his academic works for Columbia University's *Political Science Quarterly*, De Leon wrote and spoke for a number of other movements during the 1880s. He may have considered himself a Republican before the presidential election campaign of 1884, but when the GOP nominated James G. Blaine for president he definitely worked closely with the "Independent Republicans," known to history as "mugwumps," who opposed Blaine's candidacy and backed the Democratic nominee, Grover Cleveland. Some idea of what De Leon's political thinking was like in those days may be surmised from the title of a mugwump tract that he wrote:

"TO BUSINESS MEN:

*A Specimen of Mr. Blaine's Diplomacy—
Is He a Safe Man to
Trust as President?"*

From being an active mugwump in 1884, De Leon passed through the United Labor Party led by Henry George (1886–1888) and the "Nationalist" movement led by Edward Bellamy (1888–1890) before finally joining the SLP in September 1890. The fact that

he and his first wife named their second-born son after Grover Cleveland suggests that he also passed through the Democratic Party itself before the New York mayoral campaign that was to draw him into the labor movement in the autumn of 1886.

A knowledge of De Leon's passage through these movements is important to the SLP. It is important because the experience he gained while passing through them did as much or more to mold his thinking on reform and revolution as his passage through the Knights of Labor did to clarify his thoughts on trade unionism and industrial unionism. It establishes that the conclusions he drew from those early experiences were those of a dynamic participant in the struggles of the day, and not those of a reclusive academic passing judgment on the world from behind the walls of some ivy-covered fortress.

De Leon, we know, wrote two important articles for Bellamy's *Nationalist*, "The Voice of Madison" in August 1889, which in later years would be incorporated into the SLP pamphlet *James Madison and Karl Marx*, and "The Eleventh Census Conspiracy" in February 1890, which prompted a lengthy editorial by the *Boston Herald* and a reply from De Leon in March. However, De Leon also may have written many more articles for two other newspapers several years before he joined up with the Bellamy movement. Although I have never seen one of these articles, or even a direct quotation from one of them, at least one would-be biographer of De Leon, L. Glen Seretan, has suggested that De Leon came close to losing his position as a lecturer at Columbia University because he had written them. The two newspapers I have in mind are *The Leader* and *The Standard*.

The Leader was set up by the New York Central Labor Union for purposes of the 1886 mayoral campaign in that city. It acted as the quasi-official organ of what was the unnamed and essentially unstructured United Labor Party. (The name was not adopted until after the election.) Its main purpose was to provide the ULP with a voice to counter the daily attacks on the ULP and its mayoral candidate by the New York City press. It was what he wrote for this paper during the mayoral campaign of 1886 that Seretan claims almost cost De Leon his job at Columbia.

The Standard came later, in January (Continued on page 7)