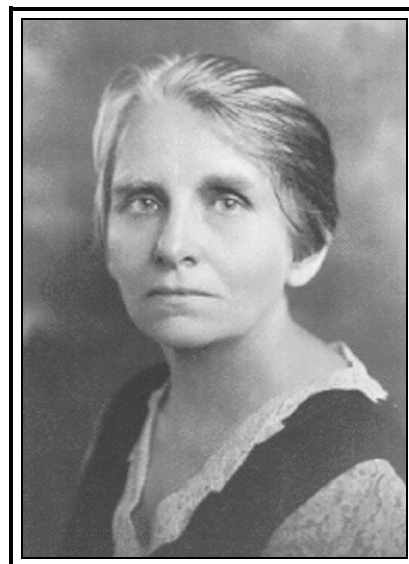


SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY: 1906–1930

A 40TH ANNIVERSARY SKETCH
OF ITS EARLY HISTORY

By **Olive M. Johnson**



OLIVE M. JOHNSON (1872–1954)

[EDITOR'S NOTE: For purposes of continuity, it is recommended that Henry Kuhn's sketch of SLP history from 1890 to 1906 be read first.]

NEITHER the grilling financial struggle nor even the conspiracies and treacheries tell the whole tale of the Party's history during the decade from 1895 to 1905. The really important thing is that in the crucible of struggle its principles and policies and with it the principles and policies of the revolutionary movement of America were cast and clarified. De Leon himself grew in stature and conception during these trying years. It is necessary here to review the situation.

Party Policy Clarified.

Long before 1905 De Leon, and with him the Socialist Labor Party, had perceived that the policy known as "boring from within" the labor unions would never accomplish its aim of turning the members of the "pure and simple" faker-led American Federation of Labor (A.F. of L.) into classconscious Socialists. The most active members in fact were "boring themselves out." At the same time it was becoming ever clearer to the S.L.P. that the political movement of the workers must have "an economic foundation." This foundation, of course, pointed directly to the shop and factory; but the shop and factory were either left entirely unorganized or in the hands of the A.F. of L., which, as was becoming increasingly clearer, while an organization of workers, was officered by "lieutenants" of the capitalists, hence just as much a capitalist organization as the German army was a ruling class

organization while officered by the Kaiser's hirelings though composed of German workers. Out of these convictions the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance (S. T. and L.A.) had been born. Its slogan was, "Organize the shop from top to bottom." "The Alliance is the necessary economic foundation of the political party of Socialism." Beyond this neither its methods nor tactics were clear. We had not yet reached the conception of the union actually being the scaffolding, or the outline, the organized nucleus, as it were, of the Socialist Industrial Republic. But De Leon was struggling with, and step by step developing, the idea, and a goodly portion of the membership was absorbing it thoroughly as it was fed to them through his masterly speeches and the editorials in THE PEOPLE.

There are certain punctuation marks in this development that cannot here be passed over. In 1902 De Leon had delivered his epoch-making double lecture, *Two Pages from Roman History*. In the first of these, *Plebs Leaders and Labor Leaders*, he had nailed the labor faker to the cross. The labor leader never stepped down again, and it is not presumptuous to say that some day when history falls into periods, the delivery of this lecture is going to mark the date of the actual decay and fall of the A.F. of L. The second lecture, *The Warning of the Gracchi*, clearly defined revolutionary tactics as they never had been defined before—not even excepting Marx's masterly brochures.

In the meantime, an opposition to A.F. of L. fakerdom—due as well to events within as the hammering of the S.L.P. and S.T. and L.A. from without—had developed in other quarters. Several large unions, notably the brewery workers and part of the machinists, were in open rebellion within the A.F. of L. The Western Federation of Miners, a large body, stood independent and had a reputation for "radicalism," mostly and unfortunately of the physical force anarchistic type however. There were also the remnants of Debs's American Railroad Employees Union which collapsed after the Pullman strike of 1894, and there was an American Labor Union growing in the West side by side of and fraternally with the Western Federation. The American Labor Union was considered "Socialistic." That all these elements were to a certain extent absorbing "De Leonism" is unquestionable.

De Leon himself was now developing rapidly toward the full fruition of his theory of Industrial Unionism and the Industrial Republic. In April, 1904, he delivered at Newark, N.J., *The Burning Question of Trade Unionism*. Here the necessary revolutionary character of the labor union is clearly developed and also its actual revolutionary driving force is made clear. For the rest this address is

historically remarkable for demonstrating how near De Leon had got to his theory in the spring of 1904 without actually as yet having been able to solve and demonstrate the problem.

The I.W.W. Brings the Solution.

While the presence of Frank Bohn at the “Chicago Conference” and his signing of the manifesto might have been accidental and incidental, the rapprochement to the S.L.P. and the S.T. and L.A. by the promoters of the movement was not. There was every sign of the leaders gathering their inspiration from the S.L.P. and its literature. More copies of *The Burning Question* were sold in a few months than had ever been the case of another S.L.P. pamphlet. At the time it was looked upon as epoch-making. It knocked the bottom from under both the pure and simple unionist and the pure and simple political Socialist at the same time. It proved the necessity of classconscious Socialist revolutionary unionism. “The Burning Question” was a truly pivotal work and at the time caused a veritable sensation. Unquestionably it projected the I.W.W.

No sooner had it been delivered than a sort of “flirtation” started between the hitherto abhorred and formidable De Leon and the union opponents of the A.F. of L. The fight of the brewery workers, led by Wm. E. Trautmann, editor of the *Brauer Zeitung*, was published in the DAILY PEOPLE. The terrific and deadly struggle of the Western Federation with the mine barons, Manufacturers’ Association and the Citizens’ Alliance of the West had received much and excellent publicity in the DAILY PEOPLE. THE PEOPLE was being quoted and its arguments employed by the organs of the American Labor Union and the Western Federation. When the outburst of “New Unionism” came it was not at all unprepared for, and it was almost self-evident that De Leon and the S.T. and L.A. should be looked to for unity—not to say leadership.

The S.P. and the I.W.W.

While a few isolated Socialist Party (S.P.) men—notably “A.M. Simons, Editor” (Chicago S.P. *Workers’ Call*)—appeared at the Chicago organizing convention as “personal delegates,” the S.P. naturally stood aloof. It was not the first time the Socialist party had ventured to sacrifice the Socialist movement in defense of the A.F. of L. Speaking of the Kangaroo split of 1899 the *New Yorker Volkszeitung* in its issue of September 2, 1909, more than ten years after the Kangaroo exodus, said:

“Yes, the *New Yorker Volkszeitung* went so far in its defense of the American Federation of Labor that it accepted the risk of a split in the Socialist movement of America in order to prevent a split in the trade union movement of the land, and to keep up the American Federation of Labor as the united body of American unionism.” Neither did the S.P. balk at another split if necessary to kill the new industrial organization and to safeguard the A.F. of L. The Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) movement, to start with, looked so formidable that many of the ardent A.F. of L. champions in the S.P. stood aghast, for fear of losing votes. Not so Victor L. Berger. He at once started a violent attack on the new union, shocked the S.P. in line and even unhinged Debs from activity in the I.W.W. in a short time—poor Debs after that, until his end, dangling between his conviction, Industrial Unionism, and his desire, S.P. votes, prestige and the presidential nomination.

The Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone Conspiracy.

No sooner had the I.W.W. got well under way than the country was startled by the arrest of Charles H. Moyer, president of the Western Federation of Miners, William D. Haywood, its secretary, and George A. Pettibone, a former member, charged with the murder, by a bomb, of ex-Governor Steunenberg of Idaho—governor during the Coeur d’Alene strike of “Bull Pen” fame. The three men were separately kidnapped in Denver, and rushed by special train on a cleared track to Idaho. The workers stood aghast with horror at the charge. The A.F. of L. leaders no doubt snickered up their sleeves; the S.P. trembled and its press blew hot and cold for hopes of votes and fears of losing them. De Leon hesitated not a moment. Vigorously and with all the powers of his legal and revolutionary training he took up the battle for the I.W.W. officials. The historian that will stick to facts will have to record that while the Western Federation organized the Western mining region for the defense, it was De Leon, the DAILY PEOPLE and the S.L.P. Sections, seconded by the I.W.W. locals, that aroused the country at large to the greatest and most general and only truly effective indignation and protest that the American labor movement has ever witnessed. The S.P., of course, came in with a shout after the case had become a sensation.

Haywood stood trial and was acquitted. By that time he was so sure of the S.P. nomination for President that he turned a cold shoulder on the S.L.P. and soon events were to shape themselves that were to prove the true caliber of the

fundamentally anarchistic W.D. Haywood.

Frank Bohn and the First “Unity” Movement.

But this is running considerably ahead of events within the S.L.P. itself.

We left the Party at the point where Henry Kuhn stepped out of the national secretaryship and Frank Bohn took his place. But before he took office Bohn had been sent on an extended tour through the West. The weaknesses which were soon to show themselves glaringly in the National Office already became apparent to many with whom he came in contact during his trip. But he was a master in writing glowing reports of his “successes” on the trip. And he was quite successful in attracting the “half-baked” and sentimental.

This was at the time the I.W.W. wave was shaping itself and was discernible for months in rebellions in the A.F. of L. and in anti pure and simple politics rebellions in the S.P. There were splits in nearly every town and state, particularly in the West. Mrs. Olive M. Johnson, going through the country from New York to the Pacific Coast, stopping at many places, in the late summer of 1904 noted these rebellions and the unmistakable trend toward the S.L.P. Harkening back to a discussion between a Bulgarian and an Italian delegate at the Amsterdam Congress, as reported by De Leon, Mrs. Johnson posed the question as to whether it was not time to make a definite drive to capture the elements “that belonged to us” in rebellion against the S.P. and in the unions. An open discussion followed in *THE PEOPLE*. Unfortunately, this ran usually to either extreme. Ignoring the conditions as described by Mrs. Johnson, a few writers seemed to want “unity,” but most stood “straight” for “no compromise”—though neither unity nor compromise had been proposed.

But events were crowding upon us. The “manifesto” and later the organization of the I.W.W. were creating rifts in the S.P. everywhere. Large groups, particularly of younger people, were declaring for the S.L.P. There were unquestionably expectations for a while of a complete split in the S.P. on straight union lines. To some of the then leading I.W.W. men—St. John, Heslewood, et al.—who were contemplating joining the S.L.P., De Leon actually advised upon their own hopes to take a large body with them, to bide the time. But the moment passed and never came again. Other events intervened.

Frank Bohn was now on the road for the Party going West. He had heartily endorsed Mrs. Johnson’s letter, and then turned “unity apostle” of quite another

order. Wherever he went he immediately fraternized—not with the elements in rebellion against the S.P.—but with the rottenest and most pure and simple politicians among the leaders. In many places groups of young “rebels,” who had awaited the arrival of Bohn to go over to the S.L.P. effectively in a body, recoiled angrily with the cry: “Is that the gang the S.L.P. is seeking unity with—then we want nothing of the S.L.P.” Then came 1905 and the I.W.W. and the rebels rushed into the mixed locals, carrying with them a blind prejudice against “all Socialist politicians”—and that was the nucleus of the “Anarchist” anti-political, “smash the ballot-box with an axe” and “Hallelujah I am a Bum” I.W.W., which blossomed fully in 1908 and came to full fruition later.

But Frank Bohn—in San Francisco called “Sankey and Moody” because of his revivalist preacher methods—continued to sing of his “unity” successes and sentimentalists of both sexes sang them with him. He was called to New York to fill the National Secretary’s office—over the protest of nearly every Section on the West coast he had recently visited—and with that started a chapter that perhaps came nearer than anything to wiping out the Socialist Labor Party.

Frank Bohn had no sooner arrived in the national office than every one in contact with the office realized that a gigantic blunder had been committed. As an executive he was—to use a slang expression—an excellent football player. And how he kicked that ball! To go into his inabilities and erratic performances would carry us too far afield. De Leon literally tore his hair in despair—and so did others. Yet no one probably as yet suspected that it was downright treason the Party had taken to its bosom. Before treating this point, a couple of other matters must be brought up to date.

The Connolly Affair.

At the 1900 International Congress one of the few European delegates who had stood with the S.L.P. against the “Kautsky resolution,” “ministerial Socialism” and the “cooperation of the classes” was James Connolly of the Socialist party of Ireland, editor of the Irish *Workers’ Republic*. A year or so later he proposed himself to make a tour of America for the Socialist Labor Party. The Party’s experience with foreign speakers in the past had not been particularly encouraging, but in spite of division of opinion Connolly was “invited,” came and made his tour. As a whole this was fairly successful and he departed for Ireland again under the best of relations. But the matter was not allowed to end there. One of Connolly’s strongest arguments for

wanting to tour America was to learn the American movement first hand so that he could better expose our fakers in Ireland. Deem then of our astonishment when soon afterward Connolly returned to the United States with his entire family.

No sooner had he settled than things commenced to happen. Early in 1904 he wrote a long letter to THE PEOPLE attacking the Party's—and incidentally Marx's, which he did not understand—position on “wages”—and more fiercely our “position” on marriage and the church. Connolly, whom we later found to be a devout Roman Catholic, declared that THE PEOPLE “attacked religion.” Bebel's *Woman* was called a “lewd book” and the Party's “position on marriage” was condemned as “opposed to monogamy.” De Leon answered and utterly withered him and then opened the columns of THE PEOPLE for discussion. The members finished Connolly, and the 1904 convention unanimously endorsed De Leon. But that did not stop Connolly's underground agitation. The Sue books—burnt at the stake by the Catholic Church in Dublin forty years earlier—being translated and run in the DAILY PEOPLE, and gradually published in book form, were added to Connolly's *Index Librorum Expurgandorum*—in fact it soon became clear that they were the principal object of attack. Connolly by this time was gathering a clan around him and was pretty openly proposing himself as the Editor of THE PEOPLE. Having failed in open attack, his underground methods were now in full swing. Whispering and innuendo against De Leon reached unbelievable proportions. The infection reached the State Committee, the N.E.C. Sub-Committee, yea, the N.E.C. itself. National Secretary Bohn nobly added to the confusion. Could it be that Connolly was here as an emissary to stop the publication of the Sue books at any price and to “reform” the S.L.P.?

Toward “Direct Action,” “Syndicalism” and Lastly Outright Anarchy.

In the meantime things were already popping from the I.W.W. side. The S.P. led by Berger, as we have already shown, again placed itself in the first-line trench of defense of the A.F. of L. It started to attack the I.W.W. furiously as a “dual” organization—as if the A.F. of L. actually had a patent right to the labor union field in the United States. Moreover, in the I.W.W. locals, S.T. and L.A. sound economics was constantly referred to as S.L.P.ism and where there were S.L.P. and S.P. members in the same local the fat inevitably spilled into the fire. This drove the “pure and simple I.W.W.'s” further and further away.

The first year of the I.W.W. was pretty lean—the president turning out a rather

“simple” unionist and a good deal of a faker. The I.W.W. nearly went under then and there—and probably would have, had not the S.L.P. saved it financially and by its propaganda and press. But this only aroused the anarchists the more. Why could the S.L.P. raise money? Why did it have a press? Away with it! Away with the political bunk! If the S.L.P. was sincere in that the “union was the substance and the political party the shadow,” was it not the S.L.P.’s duty to disband at once and hand all its resources over to the I.W.W.? This notion came to a head by the John Sandgren (then an S.L.P. man) letter in 1906. How far it had gone is seen by all those, mostly S.L.P. members too, who stood with him. How that folly was completely smashed by De Leon is now on record in *As to Politics*. But the anarchy that was at the bottom of it marched on and conquered in 1908 and later utterly destroyed the once so promising I.W.W.

In the meantime, in 1906–07, the capitalist reaction and the Political State was smashing furiously at the I.W.W. through the conspiracy against Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone, and in the White House, through the “Terrible Teddy” Roosevelt who was yelling “undesirable citizens” and threatening all and sundry.

Thus in short and without many of the grisly details that at the time seemed so insidious as to make our skins creep, we came to the N.E.C. meeting in 1907. There was one cheerful note. Haywood was acquitted and the reaction’s conspiracy collapsed. But the S.L.P.’s darkest hour had not yet passed.

The 1907 N.E.C.

When the N.E.C. met in June, the New York and New Jersey State Committees were in a state of anarchy due to Connolly’s underground work. The Subcommittee, graphically described by De Leon, “I never saw such a lot of wild goats led by such a wild ass,” was in an uproar. Only two members “stood by De Leon,” the rest were madly Bohn-Connolly-Ebert. This combination, personally as antagonistic as water and oil and each aspiring to replace De Leon, made a noble united front against the Party. Bohn wanted to be Editor to kill the paper and turn the Party over to the S.P. Ebert wanted to get THE PEOPLE and make it an anarchist I.W.W. organ, himself later going that way independently. Connolly, as far as we could make out at least, wanted the paper and the Party—for a job for himself—after both once had been purged of all that was obnoxious to the Church of Rome.

There were seven members present at the N.E.C. meeting. Three stood solidly

with Bohn; three with De Leon; while one wobbled here and there. Olive M. Johnson, member of the N.E.C. from California, who was attending the Boise trial, realizing the seriousness of the situation in the Party, packed her suitcase at the last minute and started for New York without order from her own State Committee, which, however, later endorsed her action. The fury of the Bohn-Connolly supporters knew no bounds when this unexpected “De Leonite” arrived, for they had previously expected easy sailing. There are few, perhaps, who have ever realized how serious the situation was. Had the conspirators won out in their condemnation of De Leon and the repudiation of his policies, even if they had not actually succeeded in ousting him, he would have been forced to resign. He could not have continued in office with the situation as it stood, and even if the country outside of New York had risen and changed any decisions made by the N.E.C. contrary to the best interests of the Party, the damage would have been irreparable. Bohn’s actions on some half a dozen disputed points were repudiated, a new Sub-Committee was elected, dual membership on Sub-Committee and State Committees was ended, and De Leon’s stand on church, marriage, wages and several other points complained of again endorsed. But the matter was not ended. Section New York was in a state of anarchy. It actually compelled De Leon to appear before it and defend himself against Connolly and others on matters in dispute. Two general meetings took place during the following week just before De Leon—and Bohn—left for the Stuttgart Congress. The last of these meetings broke up in complete disorder after the conspirators had been routed on all points. Never had this writer witnessed anything more disgraceful. Never had it been thought possible that De Leon and the Party should be submitted to such a grueling ordeal.

Neither Connolly nor Bohn need detain us much longer. The former, having failed in what was undoubtedly his “mission” in America, namely to capture the S.L.P., he returned after a while to Ireland. Frank Bohn, having also failed to use the national office for his purpose, soon found it an uncomfortable place to camp in, and so at the very next N.E.C. Session, in January, 1908, he handed in his resignation which was accepted with a genuine sigh of relief. He still lingered in the Party, however, and continued the pet of his coterie. In the fall of the same year he was sent as a delegate to the New York state convention. Here was made public a letter to Boris Reinstein in which he solicited his aid to prevent the S.L.P. from nominating a state ticket, so as to leave the field clear for the Socialist party. That was the finish. Once out of the S.L.P., he naturally steered directly for the S.P. and

via that to the *Times* and finally to the power lobby.

The “I’m a Bummary.”

As far as the S.L.P. was concerned the internal struggle was over. Bohn was out and utterly discredited; Connolly’s “shillelagh” had been smashed. *As to Politics* had cleared the S.L.P. attic of stray cobwebs. The Sandgrens and the Eberts were driven to their logical conclusions. The 1908 I.W.W. convention put a finish on the separation. This was known as the “I’m a bum” convention. A grafter of the cheapest order by the name of Walsh had appeared during the previous months in the West. His brag was that he could “bum” a meal out of any “joint” and “bluff” the bill in any hotel. A six-footer and well-proportioned, his brag was that he never worked and never would. Whether he was an outright stool-pigeon never was actually settled. He did damage enough to the labor movement, however, so that the capitalists could well have afforded to pay him a pension. In the months previous to the convention he moved eastward, picking up “delegates” from all the more than half defunct mixed locals of the West. These “delegates” he organized into an “overall brigade of coffee and doughnut bums,” who by alternately “sapping the tires” and “riding the bumpers” arrived in Chicago in time for the convention. There they bunked in headquarters or at bums’ lodging houses and got their coffee and doughnuts as best they could. Walsh at this time was known to “flash big bills.” The story of the “1908 convention” is history, and its details do not enter here. St. John, by this time the real field-marshal, maneuvered the packed convention. One former S.T. and L.A. man was slugged. De Leon’s credentials were protested, he was unseated, and probably saved from bodily injury only by the fact that a strong bodyguard surrounded him night and day during his stay in Chicago.

The I.W.W.’s short and eventful saga as a real labor organization was ended. It continued until the World War, however, as a sensational outbreak now here, now there, an army of footloose gentry swarming over the country with it to “the field of operations.” Now it was a “free speech fight” with the slogan “fill the jails”; now it was a strike of lumber workers, dock workers, steel workers, textile workers—legitimate as to purpose of a workers’ rebellion but shamefully exploited and always led toward final disaster and tragedy by the I.W.W. carrion crows and stool-pigeons who made a regular business of “following strikes.”

The W.I.I.U.

In the S.T. and L.A. and again the I.W.W. the groups of classconscious workers had presented a front against capital—a trial of strength, as it were. In both cases the movement had proved itself yet far too weak to withstand the onslaught of the enemy. The logical thing was therefore to retreat to gather new strength and greater force. A great general knows when to retreat as well as when to advance. De Leon and most of us were ready for the retreat and convinced of its strategic necessity. There were a few too stubborn to accept facts. These men, Herman Richter, Rudolph Katz and a few more, had become fetish worshipers—the I.W.W. was the fetish and they could not conceive of the propaganda for Industrial Unionism continuing without a name to attach it to. So over the protest of De Leon—who said the I.W.W. had strangled itself and should be allowed to die—a group gathered on the principles of the original I.W.W. and continued the organization. The headquarters were “removed” to Detroit and since the 1908 convention had ridden roughshod over organization, order and discipline, had debarred regularly elected delegates while seating farcical “delegates,” and had moreover cast aside the fundamental principles of the original I.W.W. and had become an outright syndicalist-anarchist body, the “Detroit I.W.W.” could legitimately claim that it was the only real I.W.W. But what does a claim amount to that cannot be heard?! The Chicago “bummery” made a big racket, got into the public eye and the press as a sensation, had some petty capitalists scared out of their wits here and there, off and on, and literally infested with spies and stool-pigeons, was unquestionably used by shrewd manipulators totally to discredit the name I.W.W. and “radical” labor organizations in general.

If the Detroit I.W.W. (later the Workers International Industrial Union) got a foothold anywhere it was immediately attacked both by the S.P. and the bummery. Strikes which it conducted were interfered with, sometimes actually broken up by the I.W.W., as was the case with the Paterson silk workers’ strike in 1912, into which Haywood himself threw his weight as a disorganizer and spreader of discontent.

Under such conditions it became more and more evident that they had been right who had held that the I.W.W. should have been allowed to write its closing chapter in 1908. The Detroit I.W.W. was becoming ever more an incubus pressing on the chest of the S.L.P., preventing it from breathing, interfering with a free, broad and general propaganda of Industrial Unionism and untrammelled Party

activity in general. So when Messrs. Richter, Katz and other ardent W.I.I.U. promoters made their silly attempts in 1916–1918 entirely to subordinate the Party to the W.I.I.U. under the blaring slogan of “Building up the Movement,” loyal Party members knew pretty generally that the thing had become a nuisance and that the Party had to get through with it. The W.I.I.U. lingered yet for some time, a group of sincere workers vainly attempting to blow life into it, and finally gave up the ghost in 1924.

Almost everybody gave a sigh of relief. The S.L.P. had passed through a harassing experience, had come out intact. New developments in the world called to new and larger duties.

The Interim and the Second Unity Movement.

But again we have been running ahead of Party events. We left off with Bohn decamping for the S.P. Henry Kuhn had to fill the breach in the National Secretary’s office until the new secretary, Paul Augustine, was elected. Augustine served the Party for six years until February 1914; he served loyally but perfunctorily. He was neither a strong executive nor an organizer. He merely attended to duties that fell in his lap, gave no trouble, led no conspiracies, and went out as he came in, a somewhat obscure S.L.P. man who was little heard of again. But the DAILY PEOPLE was still there—we are almost tempted to add, *for good and evil*. It still had the same brilliant editorial policy. In fact, De Leon seemed to have been in the very vigor of his writing life. The I.W.W. had come and had degenerated, but out of the seething caldron the theory of Industrial Unionism had come as a living and active principle. The idea could not be killed, in fact it marched on and was elaborated and interpreted during these hard years until it became soundly inculcated in the minds of an able and active group of propagandists. It was now a force that could never be killed.

But while the DAILY PEOPLE was disbursing this mental vigor to the S.L.P., it was physically bleeding its membership white. Many had turned against the Party in the late attack. Many more had fallen away discouraged when the once so bright and hopeful I.W.W. went wrong. The remaining loyal band was bearing a burden far beyond its strength, and yet year by year it seemed impossible to let the DAILY PEOPLE go. If the plant went, even the WEEKLY PEOPLE seemed in danger. And so the struggle went on until 1914. But before that tale is told, yet another story intervenes.

When “unity” was broached in 1904 it was never a question—except in the minds of Bohn and his cohorts—of unity with the S.P., officialdom, press and all. The hope was to interest those who were in rebellion against the officialdom and press and turn them toward the S.L.P. We have seen what happened. But now another unity wave came from another source. By this time in nearly every country in Europe also, the Socialist camp was divided into the opportunists and those opposed to “ministerial Socialism” and “the cooperation of classes.” These divisions had presented themselves as a problem to International Congresses since 1900 when the withdrawal of several groups, including the S.L.P. of America, was prevented only by giving each country two votes on the Bureau and in the Congress, one vote controlled by each of the main groups. But the International Congress still hoped to prevent complete separation and it did so at Amsterdam by urging that such national groups, divided on tactics, still present a united front to the capitalists on the political field. Some of the countries—notably France—were attempting to effect a working policy on the political field and so De Leon stood ready to abide by the mandate of the International Congress and the 1908 N.E.C. passed a resolution calling for a unity conference. There still lingered a hope perhaps of being able to inoculate with S.L.P.ism some of the better elements of the S.P. through a general comparison of tactics and principles. The move, however, was frustrated by the national committee of the S.P. which turned down the proposition without even submitting it to a general vote. The S.P. officialdom was as averse to facing De Leon as could possibly a fallen angel have been to face the Lord of Hosts. There were, however, a number of local “unity conferences,” notably that of New Jersey in 1905 and 1906, but they all came to naught.

This settled the matter for most of us and practically also for De Leon. He had obeyed the mandate of the International, was able to report this at Stuttgart and at the same time he could point to the S.P., the American pet of the International, as the one that had ignored its mandate. But by this time a few—notably Boris Reinstein of Buffalo—had become obsessed with the subject of unity. He approached it from every angle. He nagged De Leon in season and out of season. Aided by a small group of confidants and S.P. sympathizers and go-betweens in New York, Reinstein constantly brought messages from this and that “influential” S.P. member who was said to be more than anxious for “unity.” Many were becoming bored and disgusted, some said so frankly, but Reinstein hung on and the matter did not come to a head until much later and then in connection with another

onslaught on the S.L.P.

The DAILY PEOPLE was draining the Party at every possible source. Agitation was coming to a standstill. Twenty-eight City Hall Place had to be vacated and a large sum had to be raised in 1912 to move the plant. It had become clear to all that the bull had to be taken by the horns; the DAILY could continue no longer. The management under the financial strain had gone from bad to worse and then to the worst. Augustine, incapable of facing the situation, resigned; Arnold Petersen was prevailed upon to take the National Secretaryship. Whatever may be Petersen's ability, it is scarcely frenzied finance; debt and financial anarchy would probably drive him frenzied first. He took one look at the situation and pronounced it untenable. He talked it over with the Party's capable Auditing Committee, then as now composed of Comrades A.C. Kihn and A.L. Zimmerman, with other well-posted Party members and then with De Leon. Zimmerman, an expert accountant, a loyal "De Leonite" with a keen mind and exceptional analytical powers, had prepared a financial statement and balance sheet and conclusively demonstrated that it had become a physical impossibility to keep up the DAILY PEOPLE any longer. Reluctantly, the DAILY PEOPLE, after fourteen years of brilliant existence and struggle, was laid to sleep; its last issue was February 22, 1914. It was no easy operation; it hurt De Leon as few other things had.

But the sacrifice had been too great in men and treasure. Perhaps the DAILY PEOPLE even cost us De Leon. Great as were the sacrifices of the membership to bear the burden, it was on the workers at the office that it fell hardest—and perhaps on De Leon hardest of all. When there was no money for wages it was he who ever set the example and was the first to go short or without. But no man could live on nothing and De Leon had a growing family too. The situation by this time was such that in order to provide he had started to do outside work—the preparation of briefs on international law for a New York law firm. It was to a large extent strain, worry and overwork that hastened his death.

The Passing of De Leon.

The membership had almost come to look on this situation serenely; even perhaps making a virtue of necessity. De Leon himself had been so merciless on the faker who lived and grafted on the movement that many came to consider that the nearer a Party official stood to the line of starvation, the nearer he was to loyalty, never realizing that such penury might as easily work the other way, never

realizing actually that it was not even the lavish and foolishly high salaries that made the labor fakers fakers. High salaries might make them snobs, and part them from the working class, but it is graft, rewards and bounties that make them actually fakers. During the winter of 1913–1914 De Leon broke down repeatedly from “colds.” Toward spring he became steadily worse and eventually those nearest to him feared the worst. On May 11, 1914, he died. Few are the men in the world who leave their mark on history. De Leon will surely be one of these; the hundreds who pestered and annoyed him are buried and forgotten; those who glittered or blustered for a little while, the Debses, the Haywoods, have not left one solid accomplishment for history to tie a chapter to; those who hated him with the bitter hatred which a faker always feels toward the champion of justice, the Powderlys, the Sovereigns, the Gomperses are already covered with the green historic mold of the ignoble; those who used them and flattered them and bought them their diamonds in life, pass them by with a grimace of scorn after death. They can no longer deliver the goods!

De Leon not only perceived the goal and gave the command, “Sail on, ye workers, sail on,” but he also made the plan of the craft in which the sailing *must* and *can* be accomplished, the goal reached and victory won! Lenin{,} who knew De Leon only as a voice of protest against opportunism at the International Congresses, had the genius to recognize a fellow genius when he read his works after the Russian Revolution; Lenin at once saw in De Leon “the only man who had added something to international Socialism since Marx”—and Lenin knew what that *something* was, and how important and essential it was, for it was the very thing—the tactics of the revolution, the outline of the Socialist Industrial Republic, the reconstruction of society from capitalism to Socialism—with which Lenin himself was struggling in the last harassing days of his life, the very thing the lack of which came near defeating the Russian Revolution in its very infancy, the thing that is still building, as yet but partially understood and still far from accomplished, in Russia.

The genius of De Leon unquestionably writes his name with the few whose names will be written on the milestones of the Proletarian Revolution—Marx, Engels, De Leon.

The Valley of Distress.

When a personality like De Leon is suddenly removed from a group like the

Socialist Labor Party, the gap made is bound to be tremendous, the blow stunning. He had friends, he had co-workers, he had students, but the closer these stood to him the more gigantic his stature had been, and by comparison the more insignificant they felt themselves to be, the less they would think of aspiring to the place so untimely vacated. The blow was so hard that those to whom De Leon and his work were nearest and dearest, those who inevitably and eventually would have to take up the work and carry it on, those for the moment were utterly stunned. A new editor had to be provided at once. The Socialist Labor Party's horizon was carefully scanned, several capable writers were approached but none was willing to take the place. Well might they hesitate. It was no easy matter to step in after De Leon. The most capable ordinary writer, thinker and interpreter of Socialist theory was bound to appear as a pigmy in comparison.

However, if some one else at all capable had been willing to assume the responsibility, it is certain that Edmund Seidel would never have been elected editor—at least no longer than for a space of absolute emergency. No one could reasonably expect editorial ability from Seidel. He was a small mind, a “pinhead,” he never could be anything else. To him De Leon had lived and died in vain. In a strong, forward-marching Socialist Labor Party he would probably have held his step in the ranks and moved along; he was made to move with the flock; as a “leader” at the head of the column he was soon perceived to be the joke of the ages. And having once been at the head and felt the necessity of command, the poor fellow has found it impossible to disappear in the ranks again; every now and again he “feels the call” to “step out” and never fails to make a fool of himself. As long as life is in him no doubt we shall have to blush ever and anon that he once for four long years—and oh, how long and awful—was the Editor of THE PEOPLE.

Breakdown of the Editorial Office.

Seidel was neither a thinker nor a writer. He had come to the DAILY PEOPLE as a proofreader and “reporter”—mostly a scissors and paste artist. He did not shine in either capacity. The files of the DAILY PEOPLE bear ample witness of his poor ability and De Leon literally “tore his hair” in his last years over the inefficient help our poverty compelled him to put up with. And when De Leon died this man was handed his desk and his chair.

Disaster naturally was not slow in raising its head. World events came along pushing her toward us. We who were used to the most masterly interpretations of

world events got nothing but sloppiness and evasion. The Second International broke down; the leading Social Democrats turned Social Patriots. De Leon had long pointed out where ministerial Socialism and the “cooperation of classes” would lead when emergency raised its head. Here was the expected emergency; Seidel was incapable of facing it. Oh, how De Leon would have thundered! Seidel did not even dare to set off a firecracker and merely blithered that while they were in trouble we could not attack them, not even show them up—for traitors. The editorials in *THE PEOPLE*, formerly so full of meat and substance—were getting drier and more humdrum as the weeks and months passed.

But though the Editor fell down on the emergency, the Party did not. By this time the National Office was rapidly recuperating from the flabby, do-nothing policy which had characterized it under the two previous secretaries and every attempt was made to infuse new spirit into the membership. And it was the National Secretary who had to speak out on Party policy during all those trying first years of the war. Statement after statement, manifesto after manifesto, were issued, and thus the Party stand was made clear continually through the National Office. This could not fail to irritate Seidel, a truly small man. Incapable of doing the work himself, he still could not fail to feel the sting of its being done by some one else. It is self-evident, therefore, that with such a situation existing there could be neither harmony nor cooperation between the *WEEKLY PEOPLE* Editor and the National Secretary.

The Unity Conference.

But the “unity apostle” increased his activity and his aids their buzzing as soon as De Leon was out of the way. The S.P. evidently also considered that the time had come definitely to get the S.L.P. out of the way. So now—quite probably on the assurance of Reinstein and others that the S.L.P. was ready to vacate the political field—an invitation came from the S.P. for a unity conference.

This invitation came before the national convention of 1916. The invitation was accepted but at the same time a strong statement was adopted defining the Party’s position and the minimum and maximum conditions for unity. With this before them, the S.P. delegates arrived without enthusiasm, in a sneering mood. No doubt they felt they had been betrayed or tricked by their S.L.P. confreres. The unity conference took place on January 6 and 7, 1917, in New York City. James Oneal, George H. Goebel, Samuel Beardsley, Louis P. Boudin (one delegate absent)

represented the Socialist party, and Boris Reinstein, Rudolph Katz, Arnold Petersen, Caleb Harrison, Arthur E. Reimer represented the Socialist Labor Party. The S.P., true to its bourgeois nature, clung to its bourgeois reform program; demanded that the S.L.P. give up independent existence and more stubbornly than all else refused to recede an inch from its position as buffer for the A.F. of L. against classconscious Socialist unionism. The S.L.P., on the other hand, true to its inherent Socialist nature, insisted on a clear-cut revolutionary program, including an unqualified recognition of Industrial Unionism as the inevitable necessity for working class emancipation.

But once again the Party had a narrow escape from those who attempted to scuttle it. The conference was in a deadlock. Boudin of the S.P. proposed a unity resolution by which the Party would give up independent existence and become a mere agitational group within the S.P. But the S.L.P. had laid down the unqualified acceptance of Industrial Unionism as a basis for unity of any sort. This the S.P. delegation refused flatly. Reinstein sweated blood in the S.L.P. caucus to make the delegation recede from the position laid down by the convention. Harrison stood with Reinstein. Katz and Reimer were already wobbly, offered no resistance and would unquestionably have accepted the Boudin alternative if the caucus had done so. But the agreement had been that the delegation could only act as a unit on any recommendation to change the convention basis for proposed unity. National Secretary Petersen stood like a rock on the S.L.P. convention instructions for unity, that is, the unqualified acceptance of Industrial Unionism as a basis and refused to yield on that point, to the chagrin and disappointment of the wobbly part of the S.L.P. delegation and those who acted as go-betweens for that element and the S.P.

But we quite certainly had another narrow escape. In retrospect it is enough to send cold shudders down our spines. But thanks to such powers as be, and the indomitable character of the S.L.P., this marked the end of the unity nonsense. The Party was showing unmistakable signs of getting its “second wind.”

Outside of the unity definition, the 1916 convention was rather uneventful, except in so far as it already showed a marked divergence between the opinions on Party matters and policy of the National Secretary and the Editor of THE PEOPLE. Now it was the National Secretary who had to defend the Party’s position.

Treason Appears Again.

The 1916 campaign was conducted with vigor, but soon after this it became evident that the unity crowd had no intention of lying down. What they had not been able to accomplish by open agitation they now started to do by underground excavation. The position of the S.P. on unionism at the recent conference had again made clear that the Socialist party was a bulwark of the A.F. of L. against classconscious Socialist unionism. De Leon had throughout the years effectively stamped the S.P. as a “bourgeois outfit,” and the betrayal of the workers of Europe by their Social Patriotic Social Democratic leaders at the outbreak of the war had clearly demonstrated that reformism, opportunism and cooperation of classes were nothing short of treason to the working class.

It soon became evident that Seidel, aside from general weakness and inability, was letting down the bars on the S.P. The first onslaught came from Mr. Joseph Schlossberg of the Jewish Federation—the gentleman who is jointly responsible for making the Amalgamated Clothing Workers as nearly as it is possible to imagine a copy of the A.F. of L. from which it once rebelled. Mr. Schlossberg during the 1917 Hillquit campaign came as near to boosting Hillquit as he well could without mentioning names, and his letter was actually published in *THE PEOPLE*. After election he openly congratulated the S.P. on the near-victory for “Socialism.” The Jewish Federation was at once called upon to discipline Schlossberg, and when it refused to do so it was expelled from the Party. Next, through Rudolph Katz, the W.I.I.U. in Jamestown started a flirtation with the local S.P., and the necessary disciplining naturally enraged the guilty and drove the would-be industrial union elements and the S.P. pure and simple friends once more into each others’ arms.

Now we witness a sight we had never seen before—could never have seen before. The enemies of the Party under the guise of “Building Up the Movement” spread themselves over the columns of *THE PEOPLE*. The National Secretary and a few others attempted to answer, but this only brought redoubled counter-attacks. Then came the Russian Revolution and only added to the confusion. Sentimentalists of every order hailed the “establishment of Socialism” in Russia. When the National Secretary, in lieu of sound editorial interpretation, attempted to explain the Russian Revolution in accord with the materialist conception of history, it only brought a new and louder screech from the sentimentalists, and the Editor of *THE PEOPLE* joined in. The Editor of the Swedish *Arbetaren*, Anders Lyzell, a good follower but never an original thinker, had done good work while he had De

Leon for his leader; now as naturally he followed Seidel to confusion and disaster.

The Party had withstood many a battle, but never so degenerating and despairing a one as this. The situation of course was the result of an accumulation of circumstances. The Party had not yet wholly recuperated from the financial distress left by the DAILY PEOPLE. The many years of low activity in and lack of inspiration from the National Office had naturally had a deteriorating effect on the membership throughout the country. Add to this the degeneration and corroding influence of the under- and over-ground unity agitation which had been kept up for nearly a decade, and now on the top of all this there developed the bewildering situation that THE PEOPLE, which had ever been so strong and firm in its policy, either failed to speak up in the world's greatest crisis, or spoke with a different voice editorially from that of the Party itself, as represented by the National Office and the National Secretary. It was under the shadow of this confusion that the N.E.C. gathered in 1918.

Mr. Seidel Aided to Find His Level.

Seidel was a member of Section Bronx. It was his own Section that sent to the N.E.C. the motion for his removal. A long discussion took place, Seidel talked for hours and the more he talked the more he entangled himself in the meshes of his poor logic. And yet, so far had his corroding policy proceeded, the situation again hung on a hair, as it were. Seidel was removed only by one vote majority. Had Seidel won out Comrade Petersen would have had no alternative but to resign if the Party membership had sustained such an N.E.C. decision. In fact, the disrupters had already the new National Secretary picked out. Section Bronx later expelled Seidel and a few others, and rallied for the time being. It was only several years later that some dry rot left by the Seidel-Katz corruption was thoroughly cut out by amputation. Section New York was expelled and reorganized, and became a clean and staunch supporter of the Party from then on. Section Kings was but slightly ruffled by the disorder.

Katz and a few others who sailed out on the Seidel tidal wave have since hooked up more or less ardently with the Communists. One of them turned blood red "Bolshevist," set off for Russia to help that distressed nation to rehabilitate itself and has recently been expelled as a Nepman, profiteer and corrupter of Russians. Reinstein too went to Russia, where in the course of events he turned his coat once more—from Menshevik to Bolshevik. He has apparently served in Russia

as an “interpreter” and “illustrator” (God save the mark!) of the American labor movement, and has unquestionably added tremendously to the confusion in this country by his “adoption” of the American anarcho-communists or burlesque bolsheviki as the genuine revolutionary movement of America. Where and how his S.P.ism oozed out of him has never been told.

Seidel went directly from the editorial office of the WEEKLY PEOPLE to the S.P. He too turned his coat. Though he had ever pretended that it was the S.P. left wing he wanted to unite with, no sooner had he become a member of the S.P. in the Bronx than he allied himself with the ultra-reactionary right wing, which placed him on one side in the S.P. as against his former unity allies while a member of the S.L.P. As a reward, unquestionably, for his brilliant labors to scuttle the Socialist Labor Party he was awarded the New York State senatorial nomination in 1920. And then a funny thing happened; he was elected and seated. The regular S.P. politicians have probably never forgiven either themselves nor Mr. Seidel for this *faux pas*. He roosted in Albany for a term, and has never had a look-in since. “We love treason but hate the traitor” is a royal saying which no doubt Mr. Seidel has felt more than once. A year ago when the *New Leader* in a spell of curious eruption exposed Mr. Matthew Woll as a double-dyed servant of the capitalist class, it was Mr. Seidel who promptly called the *New Leader* to order, and again this year he exhibited himself in the same columns, proposing “Americanization” and revisionism of the Socialist party after the pattern of MacDonald, going too far even for such dyed-in-the-wool opportunists and Socialist politicians as Algernon Lee and others who felt obliged to take him to task.

New Breath.

After having dismissed Mr. Seidel, the 1918 N.E.C. asked Mrs. Olive M. Johnson to take hold of the editorship temporarily. Whether this meant for a week, a month or a year was not mentioned, and at any rate she could be removed without a “revolution” if she proved unfit or if a better candidate was found. Thus the matter stood open till the 1920 convention—when Mrs. Johnson was regularly elected.

Mrs. Johnson had been a member of the Party since 1895, had served for many years on the N.E.C., had been in intimate correspondence with De Leon on Party matters, had written for THE PEOPLE for nearly twenty years, had spoken for the Party and taught S.L.P.ism since Kangaroo days, and had lately completed a college

course in languages, literature and history. She took hold of the work with fear and trembling, nevertheless, and as she herself put it at the 1920 convention, got along only by keeping De Leon steadily at her elbow and consulting him at every step.

It soon became evident that the Party was ready to take new breath—second wind. The 1920 convention was vigorous and enthusiastic and presented a larger delegation than the two previous meetings. A truly vigorous campaign was conducted, with W.W. Cox and August Gillhaus as candidates, in spite of the war aftermath and one hundred per cent mania which was making agitation difficult and had the workers too intimidated to dare to show themselves at Socialist meetings.

The second class mailing permit was lost to us during the war, on one of the latest issues of Seidel's regime. The paper had to be mailed third class at high expense. Each copy was read and scrutinized by the post office before it was mailed, a twenty years' sentence hung over the Editor should any thing conflicting with the severe "espionage law" creep in, or the paper might be definitely stopped. We pulled through all these breakers, inexperienced as the Editor was, without in one single degree compromising our revolutionary principles. A few copies were held up in the mail—some for months—all were eventually sent through, and in "due time" the second class mailing privilege was restored.

It was during those trying years that we came to the full realization of how soundly the S.L.P. was constructed, how well De Leon had built and taught. Neither the war nor its aftermath, which killed the I.W.W. and split the S.P. from turret to foundation, even rocked the S.L.P.; the Russian Revolution carried off but a handful of sentimentalists from the Party, while it took more than half of the S.P. The Communist craze has scarcely blown a shingle from our roof.

And what is more, the S.L.P. has been able to press forward and advance while the I.W.W., the S.P. and the Communists have presented nothing but continued decay.

The Kangaroo split came on principle, it made possible a sound foundation in principles and tactics. The more recent rackets had been but aftermaths clearing off the rubbish, as it were.

The New Era.

THE PEOPLE was no sooner back in "De Leonite" hands than a new spirit manifested itself. In the first place the paper was read again with the old devotion

and eagerness. It was assuming the old leadership by virtue of the clearness and soundness of S.L.P. principles. Not only were the editorials sound and vigorous, but the articles started to liven up. New writers were beckoned to and they came—came in an ever larger procession, young men, young women, eager and alert and sound. That was the true beauty of the logic of events. Social evolution was commencing to catch up with S.L.P. theory and tactics, and the young people who were now being drawn toward us had a new vision. Moreover, the S.L.P. was prepared for them. They did not and will not have to pass through the agonizing torture of doubt and development that their older comrades had to go through. The day of argument and debate has passed, the day of understanding and action has arrived. The youngsters who get their S.L.P.ism straight from the beginning are not apt to stray from the path to pick daisies at the roadside. We sometimes wonder what would happen to a Connolly or a Bohn in the Party today. It is unthinkable they should be able to work havoc.

The Last Decade.

One of the young men who had taken his S.L.P.ism straight from the very beginning came to the convention in 1924, unknown and unheralded, from far-off Oregon. The “old-timers,” so eagerly on the lookout for “new blood,” could not fail to notice the earnest face, the clear eye of Frank T. Johns. But experience had been a hard master. There was no infatuation as had been the case with Frank Bohn just exactly twenty years earlier. Here was indeed our logical candidate for President, our logical cross-country agitator, IF—*if he was clear and sound on the principles and tactics of the Socialist Labor Party*. Without his knowledge he was put to the test at every opportunity day and evening till the day of the nomination. This was not a lightweight; it was an S.L.P. man. And then Comrade Lang of Baltimore, scrutinizing and exacting old-timer, proposed as running mate, Verne L. Reynolds. The campaign of 1924 truly heralded the new era of the true building period of the Socialist Labor Party. Johns was snatched from us by the tragedy at Bend, Oregon, just as he was starting his second, the 1928 campaign. Reynolds and Crowley held high the banner he had let fall. An equally vigorous campaign was conducted, and, what was even more encouraging, the workers flocked around, showing themselves eager to listen and capable of grasping the propaganda of the Party, its principles and tactics. New and vigorous elements are coming into the Party everywhere—elements capable of carrying it on to its final conclusion.

The Future.

Time and events have proved De Leon and justified the S.L.P. Industrial evolution in this country has brought us at the close of the second decade of the twentieth century to a point where gigantic industry, working almost automatically, controls the nation, economically, politically and militarily. If we are not going to evolve into automata and mere slaves of industry and a few industrial lords, this power will have to be overthrown, capitalism abolished and supplanted by the Workers' Industrial Republic. But the power of capital can naturally be overthrown only by a power greater than its own. The genius of De Leon lay in the fact that he was able to discover and demonstrate where that power resided and how it could be welded into an efficient revolutionary force to overthrow capitalism and at the same time furnish the order and organization to erect the Workers' Industrial Republic.

The anarchic structure of the Knights of Labor soon appalled him. It did not take him long to perceive that the A.F. of L. was an impossibility both in structure and principle, that it was capital's union, not labor's. Today we need no longer argue about that. Capital's spokesmen have long ago paid it the compliment of being "the strongest bulwark against Socialism," the leaders have accepted the title with pride, and today there is really nothing left of the organization but a helpless scarecrow in capitalism's cast-off rags. In 1895, the sound, progressing Socialist organization was ready for its first trial of strength, in 1905 for its second. Both failed. Perhaps a third one was nearly due when the World War upset the scales.

But though De Leon projected the economic organization and established the fact that this must furnish the foundation of the labor movement, he defended as vigorously the political organization, the Socialist Labor Party, as a necessity for the civilized method of procedure. Neither pure and simple politics nor pure and simple "bombism" and physical force would serve labor in its battle for emancipation.

The tactics formulated by De Leon and the Party are clear and simple. The political organization is the propaganda force which must take advantage of every grant that progress has wrested from tyranny throughout the struggle of the ages, in order to reach the workers and scatter the seeds of the Social Revolution. The weapons of civilization are speech and press with which to scatter knowledge and education. The ballot is the record of the progress made, an election campaign is civilization's invitation to the forces of light to meet and scatter the forces of darkness. The Socialist Labor Party must occupy the political field.

But the ballot is as "weak as women's tears" unless it is backed by the power to

enforce it. It is the lack of the understanding of that truth that has made the S.P. a hissing and a byword wherever it has taken political power. While capitalism holds economic power, there can be neither Socialism nor redress for the working class, and, moreover, Socialist reconstruction of society will remain an impossibility unless the party of Socialism has the organized industrial force of the working class behind it. This force can only be supplied by the Industrial Union organized on the lines of modern industry, with the industrial vote rising out of shop and factory, mill, mine, railroad and the land. Such an organization, controlling through the useful and necessary labor of the land all the sources of life, destruction as well as production, distribution and communication, is the only power that can possibly overpower the capitalist power of the land and the world.

In this understanding lies the power of the Socialist Labor Party, and to this understanding, hence to the S.L.P. and the Socialist Industrial Union, belongs the future.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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