

the People

Published by the Socialist Labor Party  Established in 1891

VOL. 117 NO. 5

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2008

\$1.00

Anna Quindlen— Newsweek Columnist Bewails Hunger & War

By Michael James

Two of Anna Quindlen's recent *Newsweek* editorials reveal the ideological bankruptcy of her "liberalism." In the Nov. 26 issue, she points to the reality of hunger in America: "A terrible shortage of food for the poor grips the country." She cites the gap between rich and poor: "The share of the nation's income going to the top one percent of its citizens is at its highest level since 1928." She describes slashes in federal antipoverty programs, with emergency food supplies to New York City cut in half, food supplies to Los Angeles nearly halved, and in the state of Oregon an annual federal supply of 13 million pounds of food now reduced to six million pounds. She condemns a society with "hunger amid affluence." She is perplexed by the obscene phenomenon of hunger because "America is so rich."

Ms. Quindlen's editorial view of hunger in America leaves readers hungry too—hungry for depth, hungry for solutions. She is careful to avoid a systemic view. In other words, she fails to identify capitalism as the root problem. She blames George W. Bush for his indifference: "Poverty is not a subject that's been discussed much by the current administration, who were wild to bring freedom to the Iraqis but not bread to the South Bronx." She admonishes capitalism's political leaders generally to "feed the hungry, comfort the weary, soothe the afflicted." She claims that politicians could resolve hunger in America "if they had the will," as if hunger was not a systemic problem, an unavoidable consequence of the private ownership of the means of life and the exploitation of wage labor to serve the profit needs of the owning class.

Capitalism creates poverty and hunger. No political "will" can abolish them except the classconscious "will" or determination of the working class to abolish capitalism and establish the democratic economy of socialism. Capitalism divides society by irreconcilable class interests. The ruling class dominates and controls society and always acts in its own interests. Eradicating hunger and poverty is simply not among the interests of this small but powerful class.

Thus Ms. Quindlen, in one editorial breath, chastises her society for enriching the ruling class while gutting federal food to the poor. Then, in another editorial breath (Nov. 12), she is offended that certain restrictions still limit women's role in combat! She wants those restrictions lifted so more women can die for capitalism—the same capitalism that abandons the poor and the hungry! She complains of how "regulations still decree that women, no matter how able, cannot serve in Special Operations forces, in infantry or tank units, or in other units that have an offensive mission." She concludes that "The military

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Survival Is the Issue—

Workers Must Respond to Global Warming Cataclysm

In November the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) submitted its fourth report on global warming (GW) to the United Nations. It reported unequivocal and dramatic evidence that global warming is a human-made effect that will drastically alter environments worldwide, and affect economic and political systems for the entire human race. The report documents the rates at which GW is taking place and the devastation it is causing, and offers scenarios for mitigation of GW based on future productions of greenhouse gases. The U.N. Climate Change Conference in Bali, Indonesia, used the IPCC report as a resource in working towards new accords on global warming. But still with the urgency of dealing with the potential catastrophic implications of this report, the process is painfully slow and retarded by the need to protect capitalist profits and economic growth.

A key conclusion of the report states: "Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global average sea level." It continues: "Eleven of the last 12 years (1995–2006) rank among the 12 warmest years in the instrumental record of global surface temper-

ature (since 1850)...The temperature increase is widespread over the globe, and is greater at higher northern latitudes. Land regions have warmed faster than the oceans....Rising sea level is consistent with warming....Observed decreases in snow and ice extent are also consistent with warming....average Arctic sea ice extent has shrunk....Mountain glaciers and snow cover on average have declined in both hemispheres."

The cause: "Changes in atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and aerosols, land-cover and solar radiation alter the energy balance of the climate system. Global GHG emissions due to human activities have grown since preindustrial times, with an increase of 70 percent between 1970 and 2004."

"Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is the most important anthropogenic GHG. Its annual emissions grew by about 80 percent between 1970 and 2004....Global atmospheric concentrations of CO₂, methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O) have increased markedly as a result of human activities since 1750 and now far exceed preindustrial values determined from ice cores spanning many thousands of years." [Note: From 1958 to 2005, CO₂ levels, as measured directly by the late Dr. Charles David Keeling, a world authority on greenhouse

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Paychecks Stretched Tight

While capitalism's economic prognosticators debate whether or not the next recession has started, life for increasing numbers of working-class families across the country is proving that it doesn't take a recession for life under capitalism to be depressingly and increasingly tough.

•In November the Agriculture Department reported that more than 35.5 million workers in 2006 "went hungry as they struggled to find jobs that can support them," according to an Associated Press account. That was up from 35.1 million who said they "did not have enough money or resources to get food for at least some period" during 2005.

•In October Associated Press observed, "Across the nation, Americans are increasingly unable to stretch their dollars to the next payday as they juggle higher rent, food and energy bills." "It's starting to affect middle-income working families as well as the poor, and has reached the point of affecting day-to-day calculations of merchants like Wal-Mart Stores Inc., 7-Eleven Inc. and Family Dollar Stores Inc." The stores are making adjustments in their product mix and pricing according to sales data that "show a marked and prolonged drop in spending in the days before shoppers get their paychecks, when

they buy only the barest essentials."

•Low-income workers are stretching their budgets by "buying more peanut butter and pasta," skipping "breakfast and lunch to make sure there's enough food for...children," and depending more upon food pantries.

•Food pantries across the country say they are "cutting the amount of groceries they give to needy families as demand for aid is outpacing supplies," according to an Associated Press account in November. "I've been doing this for 20 years," said a spokesperson for the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks, "and I can't believe how much worse it gets month after month." In December Second Harvest, the nation's leading hunger-relief provider, projected a shortage of 15 million pounds of food at its more than 200 food banks—enough food for 11.7 million meals.

•Also in November, a Gallup poll showed that "Nearly a third of Americans [read: American workers] have at one point worried about becoming homeless and many more are taking in friends and relatives needing a home," Associated Press reported.

Clearly, capitalism doesn't need a recession to produce plenty of misery for millions of workers.

—K.B.

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...Global Warming

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gases, went from 315 ppm (parts per million) to 378 ppm, an increase of 20 percent. (BBC News, Dec. 3) Further the report notes: "Most of the observed increase in globally averaged temperatures since the mid-20th century is *very likely* due to the observed increase in anthropogenic GHG concentrations."

Countering claims by antiglobal warming critics that solar radiance changes account for warming, the report notes that "During the past 50 years, the sum of solar and volcanic forcings would *likely* have produced cooling [rather than heating]. Observed patterns of warming and their changes are simulated only by models that include anthropogenic forcings."

But what about the future? Here the report offers predictions based on a variety of approaches. It appears likely that in the current political situation, greenhouse gas emissions will continue to grow for several decades. And the report declares, "Continued GHG emissions at or above current rates would cause further warming and induce many changes in the global climate system during the 21st century that would *very likely* be larger than those observed during the 20th century." A particularly ominous situation is one in which warming or increased ocean acidity decreases the solubility of CO₂ and releases it rather than taking it up.

The report delineated impacts of GW on water supplies, ecosystems, food, coasts and health, and broke down effects by geographic regions throughout the world. It also tabulated examples of expected extreme weather events along with their human impacts.

For the long term, the report notes that GW and sea level rise would continue for centuries, even after greenhouse gas levels are stabilized. And some impacts could be abrupt and irreversible.

Lastly, the report looked at mitigation of GW and its effects. These examined various strategies for reducing GHG emissions and mitigating the economic, political and social problems that are being caused by GW.

Not surprisingly, poor countries are most at risk. Andrew Revkin observes (*The New York Times*, Nov. 28) that the report "offers a more detailed view of how poverty, particularly in areas near the equator, creates zones of extreme vulnerability to water shortages, droughts, flooding, rains and severe storms—all of which are projected to be more frequent or intense if concentrations of greenhouse gases continue to build." It also "rebukes rich countries for failing to deliver on commitments for helping poor countries increase resilience to climate hazards under the Framework Convention on Climate Change, which dates from 1992 and has been ratified by nearly all the world's nations."

The IPCC report was intended as a resource for the U.N. Climate Change Conference that took place in Bali, Indonesia, in December. The conference was meant to start a two-year negotiation process working towards a treaty to replace the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012.

From the beginning, the Bush administration has done its best to undermine the talks—and show its contempt for the United Nations—by scheduling its own meetings, one in late September with 16 major carbon-emitting nations, and another in January in Hawaii.

At the Bali conference differences between richer and poorer nations were evident as "developing countries demanded the United States agree that the eventual pact not only measure poorer countries' steps, but also the effectiveness of financial aid and technological assistance from wealthier ones." (Thomas Fuller, Andrew C. Revkin, *The New York Times*, Dec. 15) U.S. recalcitrance on this issue led delegates to boo and hiss U.S. delegates. Eventually the United States capitulated on this issue. The United States, as had been the case with Kyoto, still refused to be held to fixed targets for emissions,

but allowed them to appear in a nonbinding preamble to the agreement, giving the appearance of compliance with the accord produced by the conference.

But for all the urgency represented by the report and the conference, rolling back greenhouse gas production will depend upon capitalist schemes like "cap and trade" that allow some companies to profit from reducing emissions while polluters pay for "carbon credits" and a variety of other reforms like limits on gas mileage. These merely slow the increase in greenhouse gas production.

However, there is no time to delay. Scientists estimate that to reverse the existing buildup of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the world will need to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 40 to 70 percent by the end of this century. Such changes will require restructuring the world's energy and transportation systems. They require massive investment and represent a threat to existing capitalist industries, their growth and profits. Capitalism requires profit and economic growth to survive. Capitalists want their profits now. The future has little meaning in a profit-driven society.

Environmental reforms are not the answer. Capitalism has eroded those feeble efforts of the past whenever it is expedient to do so. International agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol are not the answer, either. Similar agreements on disarmament, on peace, on torture litter history, as do the bleached bones and broken bodies of tens of millions whose fate proved just what such agreements are worth. If the future is not to be plagued with the floods, droughts and other catastrophes predicted related to global warming, the political and economic system of capitalism must end, not just in the United States but also throughout the world. The urgency expressed

in the Bali conference demonstrates the international nature of this crisis. And as workers throughout the world are exploited, so will they be the first victims of worldwide ecological collapse. In a socialist society of production for use rather than profit, we could divert the intellectual and productive capabilities of society toward seeking the technical solutions to global warming and producing them.

The Socialist Labor Party urges workers to organize to abolish capitalism and institute socialist production for use. Workers must realize their latent economic and political power as operators of the industries and services and begin forming industrywide unions integrated into one movement with the goal of building a new society with completely different motives for production—human needs and wants instead of profit—and to organize their own political party to challenge the political power of the capitalists, express their mandate for change at the ballot box and dismantle the state altogether. The new society they must aim for must be one in which society itself, not a wealthy few, would own the industries and services, and the workers themselves would control them democratically through their own organizations based in the workplaces. In such a society, the workers themselves would make decisions governing the economy, electing representatives to industrial councils and to a workers' congress representing all the industries that would administer the economy. Such a society—a socialist industrial democracy—is what is needed to solve the environmental crisis. By placing the economic decision-making power of the nation in the hands of the workers, by eliminating capitalist control and the profit motive in favor of a system in which workers produce to meet their own needs and wants, the necessary resources and labor could be devoted to halting global warming, employing the renewable resources we now have available and develop new ones, and clean up the damage already done.

—Bruce Cozzini

255075¹⁰⁰ years ago

The following is from a report on a debate between Daniel De Leon, editor of *The People*, and Edward Dobson, associate editor of the *Brooklyn Standard Union*, on Feb. 23, 1908. The complete report, including excerpts from Dobson's remarks, can be accessed in the Daniel De Leon Online section of the SLP's website.

The 'Impracticability' of Socialism

(Daily People, Feb. 24, 1908)

Hardly had De Leon been introduced to the audience, which greeted him warmly, when he opened up his powerful batteries on the flimsy breastworks thrown up by his opponent.

"I hope you followed well my colleague in debate, for then you will agree that he has ended by overthrowing his premises," he said. "If socialism is a fallacy, then it is out of all possibility that it should ever come about. Mr. Dobson began by showing that socialism was false, and wound up by saying that socialism may come about under certain conditions of abolition of state and national lines. Consequently, he has knocked out his own position.

"Mr. Dobson's first argument was that Marx and the Socialists claim that labor produces all wealth. This Mr. Dobson denies. Then idleness must be the producer of some wealth [laughter and applause]. He says that the machine is the thing that does the yield-

ing; it is the economic cow, so to speak. Who then should own the products—the workman, who does the milking, or the capitalist who does no milking? If the worker is not entitled to the increased wealth because he has no share in its production, then it must be thrown into the ocean, because the capitalist has no claim on it either, and we must remain where we were when that machine did not exist.

"But this argument is false. Labor is the sole producer of wealth. Nature was there just the same when Adam bit into the apple; but unless labor is performed to bring that nature under control, nature is not only not bountiful, but a cruel mistress.

"Mr. Dobson implies that the capitalist does some work. I wish he would tell me in his next period what work on earth the capitalist does besides the intense work of the pickpocket, who produces no wealth, but transfers what already exists from one person's pocket to another. They say Jay Gould worked 24 hours at a stretch at times. Many a green goods man works much longer than 24 hours together. The green goods business requires, besides a quick mind, light fingers. Yet the green goods man is called a robber.

"Labor we define as the effort to produce more wealth; and only that effort which materializes in value where none was before, only that is labor. And the capitalist does none of it."

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Mortgage Meltdown Fuels Recession—

Harder Times Ahead For U.S. Working Class

By Ken Boettcher

The so-called mortgage meltdown promises to worsen capitalism's next cyclical economic downturn, which for many is already under way.

The economic condition of much of the U.S. working class at the beginning of 2008 is grim indeed. (See "Paychecks Stretched Tight," p.1.) In fact, the whole working class today may stand at the precipice of another period of *much* greater suffering—with massive poverty and unemployment and all the social miseries they imply.

In November Irwin Kellner of MarketWatch, Dow Jones & Co.'s wholly-owned subsidiary on the web, in a commentary titled "Goodbye, Expansion; Hello Recession," wrote, "No matter where you look, signs of a recession are beginning to proliferate." One such sign "is the age of the expansion itself." According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, the average expansion since World War II was 20 months shorter than the six years marked by the present "upswing" in November.

Kellner notes that rising costs of food, energy and health care have helped slow "consumer" spending, which many economists credit as an engine of the expansion just past. "Consumer" spending is what capitalist propagandists call spending by workers, and it hit new levels in the years since the last recession ended circa 2002 because capitalist financial institutions self-servingly loosened requirements for credit and, especially, home loans. By the third quarter of 2007, those institutions had, often through illegal tactics highlighted in reports on the "mortgage meltdown," squeezed so much borrowing out of workers that household debt hit "a record 133 percent of disposable income," according to the Center for American Progress.

Millions of working-class families, hard pressed by falling real wages and benefit cutbacks over the past two decades, now owe more than they may ever be able to repay at the interest rates they are being charged.

The blood-sucking financial institutions that cajoled and sometimes tricked workers into burying themselves in debt are now hard up against the reality that many of their home loans may never be repaid. As an Associated Press (AP) report put it in November, "Soaring default rates this year have shaken major financial institutions and the fallout from more of them, some experts say, could spread into the general economy."

Since November we have had *many* "more of them," and U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson predicts that defaults will be more numerous in 2008 than in 2007.

The chief investment officer of PIMCO, "the world's biggest bond fund," said in the AP report, "We haven't faced a downturn like this since the Great Depression." The report hastened to assert

that PIMCO's CIO, Bill Gross, wasn't "suggesting anything like those terrible times." But it went on to observe, "Some of the nation's leading economic minds lay out a scenario that is frightening."

"The already severe housing slump would be exacerbated by even more empty homes on the market, causing prices to plunge by up to 40 percent in once-hot real estate spots such as California, Nevada and Florida."



China Daily

"Massive job losses" in housing-related and financial services industries would curtail "consumer" spending in many other areas of the economy. If such cutbacks brought economic growth to zero, about 3 million jobs would be wiped out, according to the Economic Policy Institute. But a severe recession could result in a significant *contraction* of economic activity—not merely a lack of growth. Many millions more could lose their jobs.

Massively increased poverty is never the only social cost involved when unemployment grows. Proven increases in crime, spousal, child and other forms of abuse, depression, suicide, hunger and health costs also result from unemployment.

At the edge of such an economic precipice as the U.S. working class appears to stand today, it falls upon Socialists to make plain to the working-class majority that a different road is possible for them.

It must be apparent to many that little materially changes in the possibilities for producing the necessities of life, including food, housing, education and health care, between capitalism's

so-called good times and its worse times for workers.

In the "good" times there are means of production—factories and facilities where the necessities of life can be produced. These exist no less when times are worse for workers.

In the so-called good times there are raw materials from which the necessities of life can be fashioned. These are every bit as available when times are worse for workers.

In the so-called good times there is more than ample human labor power to produce all that we need and want. Sufficient human labor power still exists to perform the needed labor when times are worse for workers.

So what is it that is missing when, under capitalism, capitalists pull the rug out from under workers, shut down production and throw all society into the throes of a social calamity like a recession or depression?

What is missing are *only* enough opportunities to produce and sell the things we need to live at rates of profit high enough to satisfy the desires of the capitalist class.

But profit is not needed for production and distribution to take place. It is needed *only* if we leave ownership and control of the means of life where it presently is—in the hands of the relatively tiny minority capitalist class that performs no useful work, living like a parasite on the back of the producing—the working—class that performs all useful labor. Continuing to allow this state of affairs clearly risks our survival not only in the face of economic calamities, but also from the wars and environmental disasters the system breeds.

We do not have to idly sit by while the capitalist owners of the means of production force us out of our factories and facilities of production, distribution and communication. The working class alone historically built and daily operates these facilities, and human society as a whole deserves to reap their benefits.

We can lock the capitalist class out of those facilities and begin to operate the industries and services in the interests of all society, collectively owned and democratically operated.

Read the article entitled "Build a New Economy" on page 5. If you agree that workers deserve a better world, subscribe to *The People* and help the SLP spread its socialist understanding of the present crisis to more workers!

Socialism and the Disabled

I am working to understand. I haven't found where and how disabled persons fit into the socialist philosophy. I am a disabled former United States Marine who is sick to death of the business as usual of the Amerikan government. I am seeking to promote and support an agenda that will bring about positive change. I haven't found how the socialist philosophy includes and maximizes the assets and resources of disabled persons. I believe that the majority of disabled persons still have a lot to offer society, yet these resources are squandered in poverty. Please point me toward the socialist view of the solution to this waste of talent.

Thanking you in advance...

A.S., via email

Dear Mr. S...

Thank you for your email of Nov. 7 and your question about socialism and the disabled.

From the tone of your email, it probably is unnecessary to spend much time on what happens to the physically and mentally disabled under capitalism. You undoubtedly are aware of

government programs and nonprofit agencies that ostensibly try to help the disabled get jobs with "decent" wages, etc. Undoubtedly there are many humane persons involved in their operation and support, but as *The Washington Post* recently reported the head of one federal agency as saying: "The unemployment rate of physically and mentally disabled is about 70 percent nationwide..." (Oct. 30)

This fact is enough to show that all efforts to persuade capitalists to employ the disabled on equal terms with other workers have failed. The reason for that failure is self-evident to Socialists. When capitalists hire workers they are in reality buying the workers' "labor power," i.e., the workers' ability to perform labor that serves the capitalists' purpose in some way. Like the buyers of any other commodity, capitalists want the best bargain they can get—so when the supply of workers on the labor market is ample they can pick and choose. When a capitalist does employ a disabled worker it is usually because that worker can do a particular job just as well as those

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the People

Founded April 5, 1891

The People (ISSN-0199-350X), continuing the *Weekly People*, is published bimonthly by the Socialist Labor Party of America, 661 Kings Row, San Jose, CA 95112-2724.

Periodicals postage paid at San Jose, CA 95101-7024. Postmaster: Send all address changes to *The People*, P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218. Communications: Business and editorial matters should be addressed to *The People*, P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218. Phone: (408) 280-7266. Fax: (408) 280-6964.

Access *The People* online at: www.slp.org. Send e-mail to: thepeople@slp.org.

Rates: (domestic and foreign): Single copy, \$1. Subscriptions: \$5 for one year; \$8 for two years; \$10 for three years. By first-class mail, add \$4 per year. Bundle orders: 5-100 copies, \$16 per 100; 101-500 copies, \$14 per 100; 501-1,000 copies, \$12 per 100; 1,001 or more copies, \$10 per 100. Foreign subscriptions: Payment by international money order in U.S. dollars.

the People

Published by the Socialist Labor Party Established in 1891

National Secretary: Robert Bills

VOL. 117 NO. 5 JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2008

A New Watershed

"Events are confirming with a vengeance that a union movement based on anything less than the ultimate call for...socialist transformation of society must prove increasingly incapable of promoting or defending the interests of workers."

—The People, July-August 2007

The United Auto Workers' sellout contracts with General Motors, Chrysler and Ford last year mark a grim watershed for the procapitalist United Auto Workers union and, unfortunately, for the U.S. working class in general.

The contracts establish a two-tier wage system throughout the industry. "The UAW agreed to let automakers hire a new class of workers at \$14 to \$16 an hour, depending on the kind of work. That's compared with [the older class of] assemblyline workers, who make about \$26 an hour," observed *USA Today* with keen interest in an article entitled "UAW Contracts May Have National Ripple Effect." These new hires, according to another report, will have "no regular pension" and "no regular medical coverage."

The contracts also establish a Voluntary Employees' Beneficiary Association through which the UAW or its designee will shift responsibility for funding health care for 600,000 to 700,000 retired autoworkers. Retirees will lose guaranteed medical coverage since the VEBA reportedly will be funded by less than 60 percent of what is needed to fully cover all retirees, and "company stock and IOUs, worthless in the case of a bankruptcy or sale," will make up much of the funding.

These provisions bode ill for the rest of the working class, for as *USA Today* observed, "The basic structure of the auto contracts is often copied" in contracts covering other workers, "including teachers, state workers, police and firefighters," and workers in "the airline and steel industries." Therefore, the terms of these new labor contracts may descend like a noose around the collective neck of much of the working class.

In return, the contract ostensibly commits the companies to invest in U.S. plants and not close any more plants than have already been earmarked for closure—and in the case of Ford, "to keep open a couple it originally had planned to close."

However, *USA Today* noted, "The automakers retained the right to alter the agreements if sales or market share fall below projections." As an industry analyst quoted in the article put it, "at the end of the day, they didn't really promise anything." "More and more," he said, "they're feeling like the union doesn't have the power to do anything about it anymore."

In truth, the labor unions have had no real power since they voluntarily walked into the noose of the Wagner Act in 1935 and had their necks broken completely by the Taft-Hartley Act 12 years later. The former elevated the straitjacket of "collective bargaining" and the labor contract from optional to mandatory and conceded the right of the state to intervene between capital and labor as a matter of principle. The Taft-Hartley Act merely tightened the noose of intervention on behalf of capital with regulations limiting the unions' ability to wield even the pathetically weak and essentially useless weapons of the strike and the secondary boycott. In short, the contractual "loopholes" alluded to by *USA Today* are of incidental importance in the larger scheme of things.

Acceptance of capitalism itself leads directly to a position of impotence. The only "strength" these unions ever had was in the permission to exist granted by their capitalist masters decades ago when U.S. capitalism had relative economic hegemony in the world market. Capitalists were then willing to concede enough to their procapitalist union collaborators to keep them in business—in exchange for labor peace.

But conditions changed. In 1981, President Reagan's busting of the union of air traffic controllers, the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization, marked another watershed—an acceleration of the ongoing attack by the capitalist class and its government on workers as a class.

The lap-dog unionism of PATCO and its AFL-CIO ilk was not ready for the attack. It lacked the industrywide organization and classconscious socialist basis that could offer real classwide solidarity to the air traffic controllers and effective resistance to Reagan's unionbusting.

The PATCO watershed marked the waning of worldwide U.S. economic hegemony in the post-World War II period and the ascendance of the "brave new world" of globalized capitalist competition that has replaced it.

By 1981, no longer did the capitalist class see much need for its old ally against workers, the procapitalist unions. To the contrary, it saw the increasing competitive necessity of throwing off that anachronism from better times in favor of a new push to further drive down wages and benefits to compete in the globalized market.

The auto contracts of 2007 mark yet another watershed for U.S. workers—a bold new acceleration of the attack on workers, this time to perhaps destroy the last vestiges of its lap-dog business unions and to drive wages and benefits for U.S. workers closer to the levels of workers exploited by U.S. capitalism's competitors in the developing world.

The only glint of promise this watershed event offers is in the likelihood that more workers may now see more clearly that procapitalist unions can do them absolutely no good, and that a new kind of unionism must be built if workers are to defend and advance their own interests.

The SLP alone has a program for building the strong, classconscious, industrywide revolutionary unions needed to abolish outmoded capitalism and the unemployment and poverty it increasingly breeds. They are our best hope for the strength and organization we need to build a collectively owned, democratically administered socialist society of peace, plenty and freedom.

—K.B.

A De Leon Editorial

Socialism and 'Dirty Work'

*"Who will do the dirty work under socialism?" is an old question answered many times in the past, as in this early Uncle Sam & Brother Jonathan dialogue from more than 100 years ago.**

Uncle Sam & Brother Jonathan

(The People, Nov. 10, 1895)

BROTHER JONATHAN—Your socialist theory sounds very pretty, but it won't work. Under a socialist system no one would care to do dirty work, street cleaning, for instance.

UNCLE SAM—Under a socialist system there would be no dirty work to do.

B.J. (with a sneer)—Your streets will be clean by magic, I suppose.

U.S.—No, by human labor.

B.J.—Then there will be dirty work to do.

U.S.—Ten to one you have no idea of what it is that constitutes "dirty" work.

B.J.—I am a plain, simple man. I have no fine-spun theories; I follow common sense. "Dirty" is dirty. Dirty work is degrading; no one cares to do it, yet it must be done; under your highfalutin socialism it would remain undone.

U.S.—Is an ulcer a clean and neat thing?

B.J. (with disgust)—Humph!

U.S.—Pretty dirty and disgusting?

B.J.—I should stutter!

U.S.—Is it degrading to a physician to handle it?

B.J. (after a long pause)—No!

U.S.—Does he attend to it with disgust?

B.J. (pauses again)—No; physicians seem to go at it with much pleasure.

U.S.—It follows that work is not degrading nor is it eschewed simply because it is "dirty"; if "dirty" work is ever degrading and is eschewed, it must be for some other reason. How will you get out of that, smarty?

B.J.—To be frank, I don't see how I can get out of it.

U.S.—The secret of what constitutes "dirty" work lies not in the work itself, but in the conditions under which the work is done.

B.J.—Well?

U.S.—If a certain work is poorly paid it will be degrading, and all the more degrading in proportion to the poorness of the pay. But work is always noble. "To work is to pray," so runs the old, old saw. When work is considered ignoble it must be through the contortion of the social vision.

B.J.—What of it?

U.S.—There is this to it: He who cleans the streets does valuable work, and therefore honorable work for the community. Under the socialist system "labor" and not "idleness" being the badge of nobility, the fines we see placed today on work by paying it poorly, working it long and otherwise treating it

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*More than 150 of De Leon's Uncle Sam and Brother Jonathan dialogues have been posted to the SLP's website at www.slp.org.

what is socialism?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To win the struggle for socialist freedom requires enormous efforts of organizational and educational work. It requires building a political party of socialism to contest the power of the capitalist class on the political field and to educate the majority of workers about the need for socialism. It requires building Socialist Industrial Union organizations to unite all workers in a 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, to end poverty, racism, sexism, environmental disaster and to avert the still potent threat of a catastrophic nuclear war. Find out more about the program and work of the Socialist Labor Party and join us to help make the promise of socialism a reality.



Only Workers Can Build A New and Democratic Economy

What follows is a slightly edited version of an article published in the February 2002 issue of *The People*, as capitalist propagandists began to proclaim the end of U.S. capitalism's last economic downturn. The effects of that recession never really ended for millions of workers. The "recovery" was aptly called a "jobless recovery" for its lack of significant change for all who lost their jobs and the working class as a whole.

Workers can expect little improvement in their collective lot even if an economic recovery does follow the present economic crisis. For even when a capitalist economy is relatively healthy, the needs of great masses of workers remain unmet.

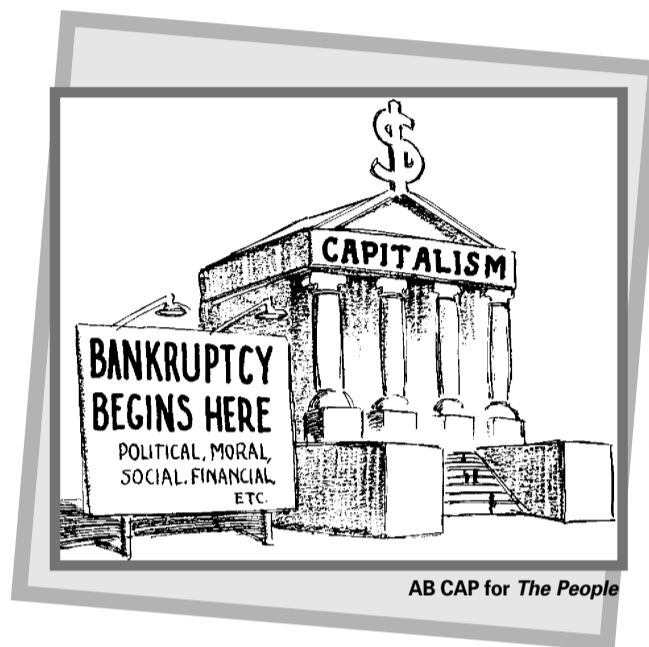
The problem is that capitalism simply doesn't operate to meet the social needs of the working-class majority that creates all goods and services. Instead, it operates to satisfy the profit interests of the minority capitalist class that owns the means of production.

Capitalist production is, accordingly, marked by grotesque social absurdities: extreme poverty in the shadow of obscene wealth, unemployment and idle productive capacity amid widespread social needs, and vast economic crises that periodically occur when the planless, profit-motivated production under the despotic control of the tiny capitalist minority that owns them churns out too many widgets that can't be sold at a profit.

This latter scenario is perhaps the most absurd contradiction with which capitalism plagues society. Under the economic dictatorship of the capitalist class, the "sacred" market ostensibly controls production. Capitalists supposedly produce only what the market will bear. But historically this has never been the case for long. Capitalism has been plagued since its inception

with periodic economic crises brought on by contradictions inherent in its basic laws of operation that subvert the theory of market control.

The market is limited by what the overwhelming majority—the great working class—is paid for its labor power. Wages are the price of labor power. The labor power of workers produces far more wealth than the wages workers are collectively paid. The working class is not



able to buy the great mass of products produced, a fact which periodically produces a buildup of products that cannot be sold at a profit. And the results of many individual capitalist concerns setting production levels at the quantities they hope to sell, despite their competitors' similar plans, compound these periodic crises.

In short, the great social calamities produced by capitalism's periodic economic convulsions can be traced almost exclusively to two of its

most central tenets: competition and the exploitation of wage labor.

As long as capitalism continues to exist, these contradictions can only grow worse. Capitalism, however, isn't the only possible social system.

For workers, the solution to capitalism's contradictions and crises is a social revolution that will sweep away the capitalist relations of production and establish working-class ownership and control of the means of life. Such a socialist transformation of society would eliminate private ownership of the industries and social services as well as profit-motivated production and set up in its place a socially owned economy in which production would be carried on for use—to serve society's collective needs and wants.

It is with the objective of creating such a society that the Socialist Labor Party commends its program of Socialist Industrial Unionism to workers. Socialist Industrial Unionism offers a program by which workers can organize to effect the needed social change and to establish the framework for operating a socialist economy.

Socialist Industrial Unionism calls on workers to organize politically to challenge, defeat and dismantle the state power that the capitalist class now wields in defense of its system. It also calls on workers to organize as a class into integrated unions that would set in motion the decisive social power workers are capable of exercising by virtue of their indispensable role in the factories and facilities of production and distribution.

With the revolutionary defeat of capitalism, Socialist Industrial Unions would become the administrative bodies of a society in which workers would cooperatively and democratically carry on production. Organized along the lines of the economy, they would unite all workers in each industry and then integrate all the industries at the local, regional and national levels.

The principles of workers' democracy—direct election and immediate recall of all representatives, abolition of bureaucratic privilege, etc.—would ensure that these bodies would remain under the control of the rank and file.

Socialist society would no longer be convulsed by the contradictions that are currently wracking capitalism because class divisions will have been eliminated. The motive force of production would be social use instead of private profit. The economy would be organized for the express purpose of determining what needs to be produced and how best to produce it.

The allocation of resources, including human resources, would be democratically planned by a society in full control of its productive forces. There would be neither exploitation nor the consequent "crises of overproduction" due to the accumulation by the ruling class of commodities that workers cannot afford to buy. Instead of the anarchy of the market, the economic decisions upon which we all depend for survival would be made democratically.

Consider what it would mean for the world and the U.S. working class if the "Recession of 2007–2009," or whatever it may be called, were ended by the collective action of an American working class determined to never again allow the absurdity of shutting down production and displacing millions solely for the sake of the profit interests of a tiny, despotic minority.

The SLP can use the help of all who understand its program in its work toward a successful revolutionary transformation of society. For those of us who are already committed to this struggle, there is no better time than now to renew our energies and forge ahead. And for those of you who have until now been standing on the sidelines, there is no better time to join the fight!

—K.B.

255075100 years ago

Who Destroys Freedom?

(*Weekly People*, Jan. 4, 1958)

At celebrations of the 166th anniversary of the ratification of the Bill of Rights, Dec. 15, various capitalist spokesmen expressed alarm and dismay over the degree to which these basic guarantees of personal and civil liberty have eroded in the hearts of the American people. The complaints they voiced were indeed alarming. For example, Dan Lacy, director of the American Book Publishers Council, said that interviews held with the support of the Fund for the Republic had shown that fewer than 60 percent of Americans believed that a Socialist should be allowed to make a public speech; little more than a third would give an atheist that right; more than a fifth thought that a man merely accused of communism should be denied free speech.

Mr. Lacy also revealed that a sampling of opinions at Purdue University had shown that 83 percent approved wiretapping, 60 percent favored censorship of books and newspapers, 50 percent were willing to dispense with freedom of the press, and one-quarter would grant police the right to search without a warrant.

These opinions agree with the findings of two sociologists, Dr. Robert McGinnis of the University of Wisconsin and Dr. Raymond W. Mack of Northwestern University, as revealed in the *Madison (Wis.) Capital Times*, Aug. 23, 1957. A "random sampling" at Northwestern and Wisconsin showed that students "overwhelmingly rejected the principles of the Bill of Rights."

Ironically, it is still standard procedure for capitalist apologists to charge that socialism will "destroy" freedom. But *capitalism* is the system that rules the country today. It is *capitalism* that encourages abuse of civil liberty. *Capitalism* generates the social atmosphere in which opinions

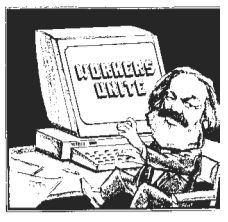
hostile to personal and civil freedom are formed. *Capitalism*, therefore, is wholly and completely responsible for the waning respect among students and others for the Bill of Rights.

One needn't be a prophet to foresee where this growing contempt for freedom will lead. It was in a social climate such as is being generated by capitalism in America today that tyrants came to ancient Greece and caesars to ancient Rome. For it should be everlastingly remembered that both the Greek tyrants and the Roman caesars were, in the beginning, *handed their despotic power* with the tacit, and even the active, consent of the confused and demoralized masses. A popular renunciation of civil freedom, very like that revealed in American colleges today, paved the way for despotism.

The capitalist champions of personal and civil liberty plead in vain for a restoration of respect for the Bill of Rights. The exigencies of their system, the fears that it generates, and its distrust of democratic methods, which seem slow and cumbersome in an age of intercontinental ballistic missiles—all combine to accelerate the process of erosion.

Only in the socialist camp are the freedoms wrested from the reluctant hands of tyranny truly treasured. And only Socialists fight effectively for their preservation. For the root cause of the erosion of freedom is not human perversity; it is the fact of economic despotism, of the prolongation of an outmoded system of class rule. The coexistence of capitalist economic despotism and civil freedom is a paradox that cannot long endure. Capitalism, and all who uphold it, ipso facto uphold the conditions that put the Bill of Rights in jeopardy. Socialism, and all who fight for it, struggle to abolish economic despotism and thereby to create a social climate of security and peace hospitable to freedom.

SLP on the Web



The SLP is engaged in an ongoing project to post all of its literature to the World Wide Web. Much of that literature is of a historic nature, of course, because the SLP's publishing department, the New York Labor News, has been printing and distributing books and pamphlets since 1887. In fact, the New York Labor News is the nation's oldest publisher of socialist literature and has printed thousands of books and pamphlets since its inception 120 years ago.

Although much of the literature being posted to the SLP's website is historic, many of these older titles explore the broad principles that continue to explain social problems and phenomena that are as contemporary as today's newspaper; the contents of which still account for the majority of postings to websites devoted to the dissemination of news.

War...Why?

One example of this is provided by Arnold Petersen's *War...Why?* Published a few years

before the outbreak of World War II and reprinted during Cold War era that followed, Petersen's pamphlet demonstrated how "The Second World War...proved once again that modern wars are inseparable results of capitalism."

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, even the terrible and bloody conflict now waging in the Congo over control of that country's enormous natural wealth, add new evidence to the overwhelming body of evidence that all modern wars are waged for purely material reasons, and that conflicting ideologies are merely guises under which to conceal the real motives at work. Petersen's pamphlet remains a valuable aid in understanding the motivation behind all modern wars and can be read and reread with profit even today.

Economic Basis of Education

Another subject of concern to workers and working class families in these days of capitalist "globalization" and an increasingly globalized labor market is education, supposedly the great panacea that will open the door to "good jobs with good pay," regardless of all other considerations. In his *Economic Basis of Education*, Aaron M. Orange, the SLP's vice presidential candidate in 1940, proved otherwise. In addition, he showed how thoroughly the educational systems and priorities of every age throughout history have reflect-

ed the rise or degeneration of the social system of that epoch, from primitive society to modern times. Citing a passage from Karl Marx's *Capital* as his thesis, Orange wrote:

"The view expressed by Marx that education is combined with, and integrally related to, productive labor follows from his previous conclusion in Socialist science: viz., institutions of society are reflections of the productive process; the immense superstructure of society finds its roots in the materio-economic conditions of life."

To read these pamphlets free of charge, log on to www.slp.org, click on "Other Marxist Literature Online" and follow the links to these and dozens of other SLP titles.

NOTICE

Word has reached *The People* that George S. Taylor of Philadelphia has died. No further information is available at this time. Taylor joined the SLP in the 1930s and for many years was organizer of Section Philadelphia, SLP. He also served on the SLP's National Executive Committee for many years and was the party's candidate for Vice President of the United States in 1968. A suitable tribute will appear in an early issue.

directory

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...the Disabled

(Continued from page 3)

who are not disabled, but also and mainly because the disabled worker's labor power can be bought at a bargain price.

How will socialism be different? First, socialism will put an end to the commodity status of labor. It will abolish the labor market, where human beings are bought and sold as surely as they were bought and sold on the slave markets of the "Old South." Workers will not have to go around begging capitalists to buy their labor power. They will be free human beings—free, among other things, to join any Socialist Industrial Union they please. Their membership will entitle them to work at any job in the industry for which they are qualified. Disabled workers will enjoy the same rights in this respect as all other workers. They, too, will be free human beings entitled to live useful and productive lives, and entitled also to the full social value of their labor. Furthermore, under socialism there will be no incentive to exclude the disabled or to discriminate against them in any way because socialism will produce goods and services for use rather than for profit. Accordingly, the incentive will be to draw in everyone who can contribute, thereby reducing the amount of time needed to produce the things needed to enjoy life and max-

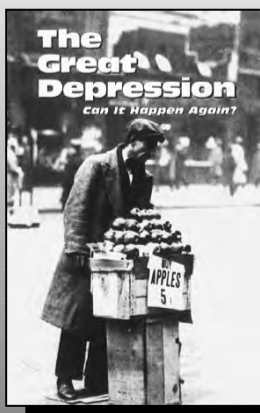
imizing the amount of time available for living rich and enjoyable lives.

We know, of course, that some people are so seriously disabled that they would be unable to provide for themselves under the best of circumstances, but that is no reason to deprive them of every other opportunity to live and enjoy life without having to live in poverty and insecurity. Socialist society will see to it that all who are simply unable to care for themselves will have that opportunity, not as a matter of charity, but as a matter of right. That right will be guaranteed by a truly civilized society.

There is another aspect to this. Socialism will create conditions in which the numbers of physically and mentally disabled will decline because socialism will put the security of life and limb above all other things. The workers themselves, by virtue of their democratic control over all of the industries and services, will exert every effort and utilize every resource to eliminate hazardous working conditions and the production of hazardous products because they will be in control and it will be in their enlightened self-interest to do so. That this is not true of capitalism, where the "cost" of safety is always influenced by the hunger for profits, is a matter of record.

Finally, by abolishing the cause of war, i.e., ruling-class disputes over markets, sources of raw materials, spheres of influence, access to cheap labor, etc., socialism will guarantee that no worker will ever again fall victim to imperialist ambition and greed.

Sincerely yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary



48 pp. - \$2.25 (postpaid)

- What Caused the Depression?
 - The Depression's Inflationary Legacy
 - Capitalism's Next Crash: The Socialist Legacy

NEW YORK LABOR NEWS
P.O. Box 218
Mtn. View, CA 94042 0218

SLP SENTINEL FUND



This is my contribution of \$ _____ for the SLP Sentinel Fund, which will help support the SLP's official journal. (Please make checks/money orders payable to the Socialist Labor Party or *The People* and mail to P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218.)

Name _____
Address _____ Apt. _____
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(Political contributions are not tax deductible.) Acknowledgments will be made in *The People*.
Please indicate if a receipt is desired: Yes No

...De Leon

(Continued from page 4)

with contumely would be transferred to the head of idleness.

B.J.—I begin to see.

U.S.—Relieved of the oppression that now weighs it down, do you imagine that street cleaning would be more disreputable than ulcer cleaning?

B.J. scratches his head.

U.S.—Nor could you claim that ulcer cleaning was scientific, while street cleaning is unskilled labor—

B.J.—I was just going to claim that.

U.S.—In the first place, whatever labor, skilled or unskilled, is needed to accomplish a desired result is worthy of decent respect. In the second place, just in proportion as a certain work is skilled and scientific it is all the more fascinating and the doors to it should be opened instead of shut. Plain or unskilled labor is needed by society. If it is made onerous, then those who perform it can never enjoy the pleasures of scientific labor; if it is made easy, affording it the pay and leisure that will enable it to develop intellectually, then it also will enable those who perform it to work upon higher planes. Socialism, being built upon actual common sense, treats all labor as noble, and leaves the door wide open for the workers to move into higher spheres after they have satisfied their lower and material needs. If you are fit for that improved state, join the Socialist Labor Party; if you are not fit, then—why, join either the Republicans or the Democrats, it matters not which, and your work will become even “dirtier.”

...Question Period

(Continued from page 8)

rule.” Socialist Industrial Union councils in the factories, stores, local transportation systems, etc., provide “local self-rule” for workers *where they work*. And a “commune” based on representation from the Socialist Industrial Unions will provide “local self-rule” in all matters of community interest.

Meanwhile, it is noteworthy that a host of municipal “services” that function under capitalism—and in which graft and corruption flourish—will simply have no reason for existence in a society based on collective interests. Municipal planning and administration, in other words, will be freed of problems arising from greed, corruption and private interest.

Reform or Revolution

An address by Daniel De Leon

De Leon makes clear why reform may be logical at one stage of social development, while at another it may be the worst of criminal nonsense.

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letters to the People

Shares With Friends

Enclosed is a very modest contribution for the Sentinel Fund that I promised to your extremely informed and articulate telephone worker.

The November-December issue had some excellent articles in it. I will be sending some of them to friends. I was impressed with B.B.’s article [“Looming Coastal Crises”] and his review of *Disaster Capitalism*.

You need to write a good, *detailed* article on the world economy and the U.S. economy. The world economy and the U.S. economy is not the same as in the 1800s or 1900s. It is in many ways worse. Only a Marxist can understand how it is different. Show the people what is happening in detail, with facts and figures.

Joe Johnson
Chippewa Falls, Wis.

Pertinent and Educational

The recent November–December issue of *The*

People exuded an energy and enthusiasm that will make it a joy to share with friends and others who are interested in creating a sane, safe and productive society. The articles were well written, pertinent and educational.

I was especially pleased to see the inclusion of Engels’ introduction to *Wage-Labor and Capital*. The working class needs to see the process of exploitation analyzed, as well as the fruits of capitalism’s antisocial nature. We are the producers and the majority. Our numbers and our essential role in the process of production and distribution is our power. But to exercise this revolutionary power we need the knowledge that is provided by *The People*. I invite all who read this to join with us in, what I sincerely believe is, the most important (and urgent) social movement of our time.

Onward.

AB-CAP
Santa Fe, N.M.

...Quindlen

(Continued from page 1)

can’t afford to exclude women—not from service, not from combat.” But Ms. Quindlen should realize that the capitalist masters of war are unlikely to fall short of soldiers. More and more women will probably sign up for military service just to get a hot meal.

The point is that *Newsweek* helps to mentally enslave the working class. With one stroke of her pen Anna Quindlen points to a society that enriches the rich while allowing the poor to go hungry. With another flourish of her pen she demands that women be given every chance to fight and die on foreign soil for ruling-class interests.

Capitalism exploits the working class. Capitalism appropriates the wealth created by the working class. Capitalism serves the interests of one class alone. Capitalism sends its working class off to criminal wars.

Marx wrote that “The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling *material* force of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of *mental* production.” Anna Quindlen and other corporate mystifiers are part of this mental production. By obscuring the need for revolution, she helps to keep food out of the mouths of the poor and she will be partly to blame as more and more women, denied their own classconsciousness and thereby blinded to their own working-class interests, die in combat for corporate, ruling-class interests. Quindlen’s feeble, crippled analyses help to perpetuate capitalism by suggesting that administration change and other reforms are real solutions and by suggesting that women combatants represent true social progress. *Newsweek*: reactionary voice of capitalism, guardian of bourgeois values and culture, friend of war, ally of hunger, enemy of working people everywhere.

Funds

(Oct. 13–Dec. 14)

Press Forward Fund

Anthony De Bella \$10.00 (Total)

Press Security Fund

Irene Schelin \$250; Barbara Graymont \$100; Otis Daniels \$90; George E. Gray \$26; Kosta Bagakis \$25; D.W. Hallinan \$20; \$15 each Gordon Bennett, TRL Associates; Berenice Perkis \$10; Ray Minnick \$9; Muchugia Mwasi \$5; Louis A. Modica \$1.
Total: \$566.00

Prisoner Subscription Fund

Ron Harner \$60; Richard F. Mack \$15.
Total: \$75.00

SLP Leaflet Fund

Kenneth Girard \$10; Nigel Nieva \$4; David L. Nagel \$2.
Total: \$16.00

SLP Sentinel Fund

James Plant \$611.59; Chris Dobreff \$600; James McHugh \$300; Richard E. Edgar \$200; \$100 each Donald Rogers, Roy K. Nelson, Reynold R. Elkins; Ron Cook \$88.41; Harvey K. Fuller \$75; T. McGregor \$58.89; \$50 each Bruce Gard, Robert Ormsby, John S. & Rosemary Gale, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Leibfritz, Mrs. G.J. Olman, John Houser, John S. & Rosemary Gale; Anonymous \$40; Kenneth Girard \$31; \$30 each Helena Stevens, Robert Jensen; Michael James \$28;

\$25 each Steve Kellerman, John & Mary Brlas, Sid Fink, Robert K. Hofem; \$20 each Curtis Raisig, Malcolm Clancy, Severino Majkus; Juliette Jackson \$15; \$10 each Donald Ruehl, Marotte, Paul D. Lawrence, Joe Randell, Jim Lehner; David W. Geier \$8; Joseph Bellon \$5; Joe Johnson \$2.
Total: \$2,982.89

SLP Sustainer Fund

Joan Davis \$1,000; Bernard Bortnick \$500; Frank Cline \$210; Robert P. Burns (In memory of John Madjarac) \$167; Robert P. Burns (In memory of Rose Vasiloff) \$167; \$100 each Lois Reynolds, Roy K. Nelson; \$50 each Michael Ogletree, Robert & Mandarsita Brothers; Richard A. Aiken (In memory of John W. Aiken) \$45; Jill Campbell & Steve Littleton \$40; \$30 each Alex Iwasa, Clayton Hewitt, Earl Prochaska, Richard F. Mack; \$25 each Country Health Store, Ross Schelin, Sid Fink; \$20 each Dagfinn Sjoen, George E. Gray, Ken McDouall, Kenneth E. McCartney, Marshall G. Soura, Paul Anthony McClung, Paul D. Lawrence; \$10 each Dawn Moore, Michael Preston; \$5 each David L. Nagel, Section Wayne Co., Mich.
Total: \$2,794.00

Socialist Labor Party

Financial Summary

Bank balance (Sept. 30) \$ 55,396.62
Expenses (Oct.-Nov.) 20,367.32
Income (Oct.-Nov.) 9,186.73
Bank balance (Nov. 30) \$ 44,216.03
Deficit for 2007 \$ 34,572.21

H1-B Visa Program Divides And Weakens Working Class

Every day capitalism becomes more completely international; every day the "world's market" is a robust truth; every day, consequently, the merchandise labor power has to sell itself more obviously in the world market.

—Daily People, Jan. 5, 1908

The whole matter may be summed up in the one statement that in order to capture the world's markets, the wage workers of the United States must come down to a level with the most poorly paid men in the world.

—Daily People, Sept. 15, 1900

By Diane Secor

Since the H-1B visa program was introduced in the 1990s, a number of groups have sprung up with demands that the U.S. government limit the number of H-1B visas issued to foreign workers, who are said to "take jobs away from American workers" with college degrees.

Bright Future Jobs, for example, argues that the "H-1B visa-hiring program takes opportunities away from Americans." It contends that plenty of American workers are available to fill jobs in the engineering, medical and other

fields. Moreover, workers on H-1B visas are paid lower wages and are totally dependent on their employers for their immigration status.

Many U.S. companies argue the opposite. They claim they must hire foreign workers on H-1B visas because there is a shortage of qualified American workers. However, even capitalist sources, such as David Rosenberg at Merrill Lynch, have refuted this. According to *Business Week* (Aug. 21), Rosenberg states that there is no real labor shortage, but that these firms cannot "get enough workers at the price they want to pay."

In truth, however, neither restrictions on H-1B visas nor any other legislation can change the basic nature of capitalism itself. The drive for cheap labor in the cutthroat competition of the market is inherent in capitalism itself. If cheaper labor cannot be found through workers on H-1B visas, companies will relocate overseas where cheaper labor may be available. Indeed, outsourcing has led to high-tech unemployment in many parts of the United States.

It is unlikely that groups like Bright Future Jobs will ever convince Congress to make any significant changes in the H-1B visa program. The state functions as the executive committee

of the capitalist class, mediating disputes within the ruling class and deciding what best serves the interests of the capitalist class as a whole. This is why some members of Congress will support quotas on H-1B visas and others will side with high-tech firms, who want more H-1B workers.

In any case, the capitalist class is very class-conscious and the capitalist state by its nature cannot represent American workers or any workers. No "patriotic" feeling can override the inherent capitalist drive for cheaper labor. Higher profits are all that matters under capitalism.

Only a united working class of men and women, of all nationalities and races, of skilled and unskilled workers, armed with class-consciousness, can throw off the shackles of wage slavery. As long as capitalism exists, the vast working-class majority will always be at the mercy of whatever is most profitable for the few capitalist owners of industry. Under socialism, every worker will have the opportunity to do useful work, using his or her own talents and skills, because workers will own and operate the tools of production and production will be for the benefit of all, not for the private profits of a few.

What Capitalist America Is All About

By Michael James

The December 2007 cover story of *Mother Jones* magazine is looking for something moral in America's military occupation of Iraq. The article examines "the moral dilemma of leaving Iraq." A Marine Corps colonel is quoted as bluntly saying, "Obviously we've got an enormous moral responsibility for making this mess with no plan to fix it." A representative of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) says, "The U.S. is a very bad occupier because while it prides itself on taking the moral high ground, it has failed to provide law and order, which is the first duty of an occupier." The CSIS apparently believes that the United States can be moral while being an occupier! An equally curious and troubling assessment in the same article comes from U.S. Maj. Daniel Morgan: "We can't just turn around and arbitrarily leave because the problem became too difficult. That's not what America is about."

It is his fundamental assumption regarding capitalist-dominated America that is curious and troubling. In other words, Maj. Morgan clearly believes that America is somehow "about" morality, decency, honesty, fair play or doing the right thing. In truth, America is waging an illegal war and occupation in Iraq. It is creating hundreds of thousands of refugees, coveting the oil wealth of that nation, destroying Iraqi culture and infrastructure, sending thousands of young U.S. men and women to their deaths, and killing hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians, none of which apparently has shaken Maj. Morgan's faith in what America is "about."

It is amazing, in the face of this international armed robbery, that the major can cling to some lofty notion of what America is about. Other observers are saying that what America is about in Iraq is a holocaust. A British polling firm in September 2007 estimated 1,220,580 violent Iraqi deaths since the American invasion and occupation. Moreover, this might be a conservative number since it does not include "those who have died because of public health problems created by the war, including breakdowns in sewerage systems and electricity, shortages of medi-

cine, etc." Is this what America is about?

America leads the world in certain deadly social ills, including military spending, arms exports, military bases and troops positioned around the globe. The U.S. Congressional Research Service confirms that America "is one of the most warlike societies on the planet." Is this what America is about? Yet, millions of Americans seem to cling to the belief that U.S. policies are well intentioned, moral or perhaps simply a reluctant but necessary response to a hostile and threatening world.

What is America about? The reality of capitalist-dominated America makes it about class struggle, inequality, pursuit of ruling-class profit and endless war. We must liberate ourselves from the false hope that our capitalist society can ever be decent, sane or moral. The huge gap between rich and poor is matched only by the immeasurable gap between U.S. mythology and U.S. deeds. Only socialism can lay the material foundation that will allow the true American aspirations of peace, equality and freedom come true.



Question Period

How will states, cities, towns and villages be governed under your conception of socialism based on Socialist Industrial Unions? There are many noneconomic issues in these areas. How will they be decided?

M.R.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Before taking up the question, a word of warning would be in order. The SLP has no detailed blueprint of the Socialist Industrial Republic. The mission of the SLP is to project the *idea* of Socialist Industrial Union (SIU) government and to explain why government based on industrial constituencies must supercede government based on geographical constituencies; why, in other words, an *administration of things* must replace *government over people*, i.e., the political state of class rule. Once the SIU government is organized, once the socialist revolution triumphs at the ballot box and the practical organization of socialist administration commences, questions that loom formidably today will shrink to their real dimensions as practical questions uncomplicated by conflicting class and economic interests.

There will, of course, be no states under socialism, except as areas of geographic reference. Their lands and resources will be administered by the Socialist Industrial Unions of forestry, agriculture, mining, etc.

Regarding problems of city administration, we can only suggest how they could be handled

and how they *may* be handled.

First, the workers engaged in all the necessary services now designated as municipal services—traffic, sanitation, fire protection, streets and parks, public health, education, etc.—will be organized in their respective Socialist Industrial Unions. Obviously, none of these unions of service workers can function independently of the rest. Moreover, all other Socialist Industrial Unions—manufacturing, transportation, distribution, communications, etc.—are vitally interested in city planning and administration. For example, the construction of a new manufacturing plant may also involve construction of streets, sewers, schools, parks, etc.

Because the community at large would have an interest in where such a new plant might be located, it is possible that such decisions will be reached through a city council of industrial unions, i.e., through a "commune" based on representation from the Socialist Industrial Unions. Daniel De Leon said: "...the industrial union aims at a democratically centralized government, accompanied by the requisite local self-

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