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The Lexis & The Obfuscator

Globalization! Did you know that Karl Marx saw it coming? Thomas L. Friedman didn't, but he does now. And what does the author of the new best seller, *The World Is Flat*, make of Marx's foresight? Who knows? He doesn't say. After all, it has been years since the one-time "chief economic correspondent in the Washington bureau" of *The New York Times* declared: "The historical debate is over. The answer is free-market capitalism." The answer to what? To poverty? To exploitation? To unemployment? To falling wages? To environmental destruction? Friedman didn't say back then, and he doesn't say now. The literary critics don't say, either. It doesn't matter, you see, because the book is "brilliant."

True, Friedman ignores the foundation of Marx's foresight. He has not a word to say about the law of value, about surplus value, about Marx's insights into the effects of technology on the working class. He has nothing to say about how Marx unlocked the secrets of capitalism, made them accessible to everyone and demonstrated where it was taking us. Yet, the *Times* and its literary "critics" assure us that *The World Is Flat* "demystifies the brave new world for readers, allowing them to make sense of the often bewildering global scene unfolding before their eyes." How does it do that? Well, the *Times* doesn't tell us that, either, and neither does Mr. Friedman. It's a...well, it's a mystery.

Still, Friedman gives Marx a nod. It comes near the middle of his book, where he tells how a college professor introduced him to the *Communist Manifesto*. Friedman quotes a passage or two, then stops short to declare: "It is hard to believe that Marx published that in 1848."

Now, do not think that this introduction to Marx and the *Communist Manifesto* goes back to Friedman's college days, or to his days as "chief economic correspondent in the Washington bureau" of the *Times*, or to when he declared that "free-market capitalism" is the answer. Do not even permit yourself to think it goes back just five years to when he published *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, his first book on globalization. All that would be a mistake. It goes back no farther than the writing of that newest book of his, *The World Is Flat*.

What seems hard to believe is that Friedman did not know what Marx had to say long before now. What seems harder to believe is that Friedman did not stop himself right then and there to ask: "How did Marx do it?" But he didn't. A brief anecdote, a few lines from the *Manifesto*—not even *Capital*, mind you—and that is all we hear about Karl Marx. Friedman tucked this bit of new-found knowledge away and cheer-

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Permanent Patriot Act Would Curtail Liberties

The Bush administration, backed by most Republicans and some Democrats in Congress, wants to convert certain of the supposedly temporary provisions of the "Patriot Act" into permanent laws. Congress put these authoritarian measures into the Patriot Act under the pretense that they were necessary to wage "war on terror." Now the administration and its congressional backers want to make certain of these police state type provisions permanent and to expand the police powers of the executive branch.

Opposition to the Patriot Act is widespread across the country. "Nationwide, nearly 400 communities and seven state legislatures have passed resolutions calling on Congress to bring the Patriot Act in line with the Constitution," according to the American Civil Liberties Union. This opposition is not organized, however, and in the absence of a mass movement that might force Congress to do otherwise, there seems to be nothing that can prevent it from making the repressive act permanent.

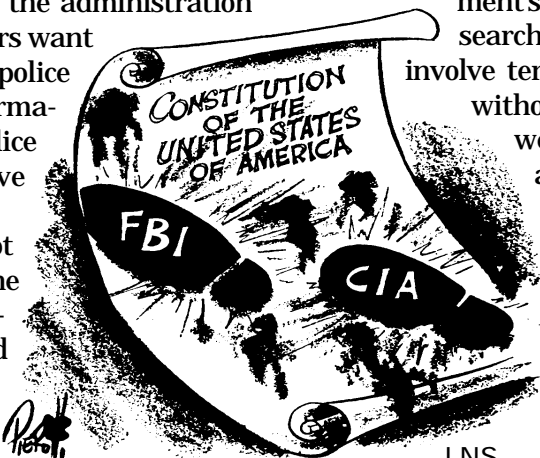
Many Americans do not know that much of the Patriot Act is unconstitutional even though,

as the ACLU puts it, "leading conservative, liberal and nonpartisan organizations have found common ground" in opposing some of its provisions. Sections of the act that the ACLU identifies as being particularly subversive of the Bill of Rights include:

•Section 213, which expands the government's ability to execute criminal search warrants (which need not involve terrorism) and seize property without telling the target for weeks or months." The authority for these "sneak and peek" search warrants was permanently granted under the Patriot Act, with no "sunset" provision.

•Section 215, which allows the FBI to seize a vast array of sensitive personal information and belongings—including medical, library and business records—using secret intelligence tools that do not require individual criminal activity. Although the records can only be seized pursuant to a court order, judges are compelled to issue these orders, making such judicial review nothing more than a rubber stamp." This section was to "sunset," i.e., automatically expire.

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Power Industry Shuns Cleaner Technology

By Bruce Cozzini

Power companies have long fought antipollution regulations that would lower their profits. Retrofitting old coal-burning power plants to remove heavy metals and reduce oxides of sulfur and nitrogen would be costly, they say, not to mention costs of reducing greenhouse gas carbon dioxide that contributes to global warming. Now, as natural gas has become more expensive, power companies are planning new coal-fired plants based on old polluting plant designs, rejecting, on the basis of initial cost, newer technologies that could reduce pollutants and greenhouse gases and increase efficiency of electric power production.

Tampa Electric has successfully operated a newer technology plant for almost a decade. In the time since its "integrated gasification, combined cycle" (IGCC) Polk Power Station started operating, no similar plants have been built, in part because cleaner, and until recently cheaper, natural gas was readily available. (*The New York Times*, May 22)

The IGCC process, as described at the Tampa

Electric website, starts "by treating domestic coal to remove its sulfur content prior to burning. In this process the coal is converted to gas. Air used in the combustion process is separated into nitrogen and oxygen: the nitrogen is used to cool the turbine and the oxygen is mixed with the gasified coal, then burned."

IGCC power production also requires 15 percent less fuel and achieves 10-12 percent more efficiency than normal generating stations. It produces additional electricity by reusing exhaust heat.

The gasification process can strip out sulfur, mercury, arsenic and other heavy metal pollutants at a small fraction of the cost of cleaning up the exhaust gases of a conventional plant. Because the gas burns with oxygen, not air, no oxides of nitrogen form (an advantage over even natural gas plants). Greenhouse gas carbon dioxide is then easy to strip out of the exhaust. IGCC requires about 40 percent less water than a conventional plant, a significant advantage in arid locations.

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Publisher Zuckerman's Crocodile Tears for Workers

By Michael James

Workers beware. We are under daily assault by the corporate, reactionary media. The intent is to lead intellectual and physical toilers, the producers of all wealth, into false consciousness and mental slavery.

Consider the example of Mortimer B. Zuckerman, publisher of the *New York Daily News* and publisher and editor-in-chief of *U.S. News & World Report*. Here is a sample from what he wrote for the May 30 issue of the magazine:

"Once upon a time, America's workers were protected by three good fairies. 'If you work all your life to build a new America and save when you can,' the fairies promised, 'we three will make your dreams of a secure and happy retirement come true.'"

The three "good fairies" that supposedly have protected workers in retirement are Social Security, pensions and inflation control. However, not all is well in Zuckerman's fairyland. "Today," he laments, "the fairies' promises are unraveling before our eyes."

Zuckerman would like to see "at least a semblance of equity" in pension distribution, whatever that may mean. He calls for congressional action to resuscitate his asphyxiating pixies, and he urges readers to regard proposed reforms as "giving the three fairies a new lease on life."

You might be tempted to acknowledge Zuckerman for expressing concern for the plight of the working class. Forget it. Do not be duped. Last year he editorialized about extravagant CEO pay and the threat that poses to capitalism. (*The People*, May-June 2004)

Now Zuckerman is worried about the assault on worker retirement plans because it too may pose a threat to the stability of capitalism. He wants this criminal system to continue, but with a wary eye on the working class and ever mindful of protecting capitalism's veneer of legitimacy.

We doubt he would argue the point for one

second. What may be in the back of his mind, however, is something Karl Marx wrote in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*: "The bourgeoisie, to be sure, is bound to fear the stupidity of the masses as long as they remain conservative, and the insight of the masses as soon as they become revolutionary." Keeping workers down and docile is what advertisers pay the Zuckermans to do. Deprive the working class of too much and working-class docility could soon turn into dangerousness.

What exactly makes Zuckerman's talk of "good fairies" and "magic guardians" so insulting to the working class? Partly it is because the language is what one uses when speaking to children, but workers are used to that. More important is that Zuckerman used such word-play to conceal the reality of the class struggle.

The truth is that American workers have had to organize, strike, fight and die for wages, benefits, safety, dignity and survival. American history reveals capitalism to be nothing less than an expression of contempt for the working class, from the Triangle Shirtwaist fire to the recent busting of pensions at "worker owned" United Airlines. Zuckerman's editorial is a deep insult to the working class and its struggle against its capitalist exploiters.

The tragedy of that struggle cannot be fully understood without understanding the ephemeral and deceptive nature of the reform goals striven after and the base betrayal of working-class aspirations by the labor merchants, their misnamed "unions," their "friend of labor" politician pals and, of course, professional propagandists such as Mortimer B. Zuckerman.

Indeed, these Zuckerman "fairies" are more akin to three cackling hyenas hideously squeezed into fairy costumes for some grotesque masquerade. Take the fairy who supposedly "guarded personal savings against the ogres of inflation" as Exhibit A.

Any worker who has been around for a while

remembers that the "inflation ogre" has a first name. Its first name is "wage," or "wages."

"Wage inflation" was and remains an ogre, all right—not to workers, but to capitalists. Whenever workers press for wage increases the Zuckermans of the media world cry out, "The wage inflation ogre is on the loose again!"

That the ogre has been safely locked away of late tells us just the opposite of what Zuckerman is trying to palm off on a gullible, or just plain forgetful, readership. Low inflation is media-speak for stagnant wages, and stagnant wages combined with rising prices are not likely to inspire workers to save. In short, the "fairy" guarding against "inflation" is not a sentinel that guards the workers' camp, but a scout sent out to reconnoiter from the capitalists' camp.

The most productive working class in history has never received enough of its product to provide for its own day-to-day security, much less for the uncertainties of later life. Forcing workers into the position of having to "save when you can" from wages that often are inadequate to meet their families' needs is one of the cruelest hoaxes ever perpetrated on American workers. Their savings have always been paltry and their prospects for secure retirements have always been precarious, which capitalism's need for Zuckerman's three "fairies" proves beyond the shadow of a doubt.

The fairy costumes of Zuckerman's three disguised hyenas all came from the same bolt of cloth. Indeed, it might be more accurate to say that those fairy-hyenas did not come out of workers' struggles at all. They came from the efforts of capitalist politicians, labor fakers, professors and professional propagandists of the Zuckerman stripe to distract workers long enough to prevent them from organizing a real struggle for what rightfully belongs to them—the nation, and all that is in it.

Workers, be on your guard! Bourgeois ideology lurks in every nook and cranny of corporate news and entertainment. The capitalist class controls material and mental production. The commentator mentioned in this article is only one example. Protect your minds. Read, support and spread *The People*.

Multiculturalism: An Academic Dead End

By Michael James

Academia has driven itself down a pedagogical dead-end street known as "multiculturalism."

Multiculturalism is essentially a "liberal" curricular effort to celebrate cultural diversity and to promote tolerance of others. A college text entitled *Multicultural Nonsexist Education* states that multiculturalism "emerged from the turmoil of the 1960s...in response to a need to placate pressure groups."

Diversity is a beautiful thing. Tolerance, respect and appreciation are highly desirable things. To that extent, the various "liberation" movements of the '60s were understandable as an appropriate response against "Eurocentric" curricula in public and higher education that marginalized women, people of color and other minorities.

So why is multiculturalism a dead end? Why is it impotent and essentially meaningless?

The problem is that multiculturalists refuse to acknowledge the material reality of the class struggle and are too timid even to use the word class!

An article in the spring 2005 multiculturalism magazine entitled *Teaching Tolerance* serves as a good example. The article praises Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: "If we are ever to truly realize King's dream, we must all—regardless of race, religion, creed, ability or background—make the

dream our own."

Notice how inclusive that sentence is! It includes nearly every possible human variable *except class*—unless, of course, one sees class lurking behind such murky terms as "ability and background." After all, to be "inclusive" one must not only ignore class, one must be prepared to counter "prejudiced" feelings against those whose "ability and background" consist of exploiting workers and rewarding themselves with opulence.

The article then asks readers to question

themselves regarding their sensitivity to others: "What knowledge do you lack about black history—or the history of Native Americans, the history of Islam, or histories of other races, religions, ethnicities and nationalities?" Missing is any mention of the history of the working class, the creators of all wealth.

Multiculturalism represents a complete abdication of classconsciousness. A Marxist has to wonder if the advocates of this philosophy are flesh and blood, material creatures that require food, shelter, clothing, health care, etc. Perhaps those advocates are just spirits or angels who subsist on mere pleasantries and good will. They totally flee from the reality of the class struggle in favor of a mindless and childlike plea for everyone to just be nice.

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Workers' 'Compensation': Whom Does It Protect?

By B.B.

"Basically, we treat injured workers as a disposable commodity.... There is no focus on getting that worker back to work. It's bye-bye, thank you for your services." Rick Levy, Texas AFL-CIO legal director. (Dallas Morning News, April 17)

The Texas state legislature recently passed a bill to overhaul the state's workers' compensation program. The existing system, claimed *The Dallas Morning News*, "has been plagued by overuse of medical care, difficulties in finding qualified doctors, soaring costs for businesses and other woes." (May 25)

Workers, however, had their own set of complaints.

"Workers' compensation refers to the system meant to protect employees hurt while on the job," the *Houston Chronicle* informed its readers, unwittingly suggesting perhaps that workers do not get much protection from being "hurt while on the job." Then it added something that gave its definition a slightly different twist: "The goal is to make sure that injured workers receive medical care, lost wages and, if necessary, retraining and rehabilitation so they can work again." (May 25)

Stripped down to bare essentials, "The goal is to make sure that injured workers...can work again."

Apparently it did not work that way in Texas, however, which, according to the *Morning News*, "is the only state where workers' compensation insurance is not mandatory for employers" and where coverage had declined from 84 percent of all workers in 2001 to only 76 percent last year. Then, as if to round out what the *Chronicle* had to say, the *Morning News* cited the Work Loss Data Institute as its source for the statement that "Texas ranks last among states when it comes to getting injured workers back to work...."

The overhaul measure, which the legislature adopted on May 26, was one of two that had been under consideration since last March. The one that finally received the legislature's nod of approval—the one which "met...with enthusiastic support by business groups and the insurance industry," according to the *Morning News*—originated with State Sen. Todd Staples, a Republican, and had the support of the state's Republican governor, Rick Perry. What have these undoubtedly "compassionate conservatives" done to help workers?

"The most significant changes," according to the *Morning News*, "include creating a man-

aged-care network of medical providers and abolishing the state agency that regulates the system." However, it added, the newly adopted measure "only slightly modifies the way medical disputes are handled. And it doesn't increase the weekly income benefit [!] by as

The Weeks and Staples cases may or may not be samples of the "overuse" that the *Morning News* dutifully reported, and we do not know how significant these or similar cases were to Texas legislators. Nonetheless, and regardless of all that was said about how the old system shortchanged workers as well as employers, it has been shortchanging workers for decades without much more notice than the occasional complaints about "overuse" and even "fraud."

The shortcomings that prompted the state legislature to overhaul the system have a different origin than working-class needs or dissatisfaction. The legislators acted because they were worried over their capitalist constituents' complaints about "soaring costs." They also were concerned about the old system's effect on the thinking of new corporations contemplating a move into the state, on corporate profits and on the growing number of employers who were exiting the state-sponsored system in favor of cheaper private insurers.

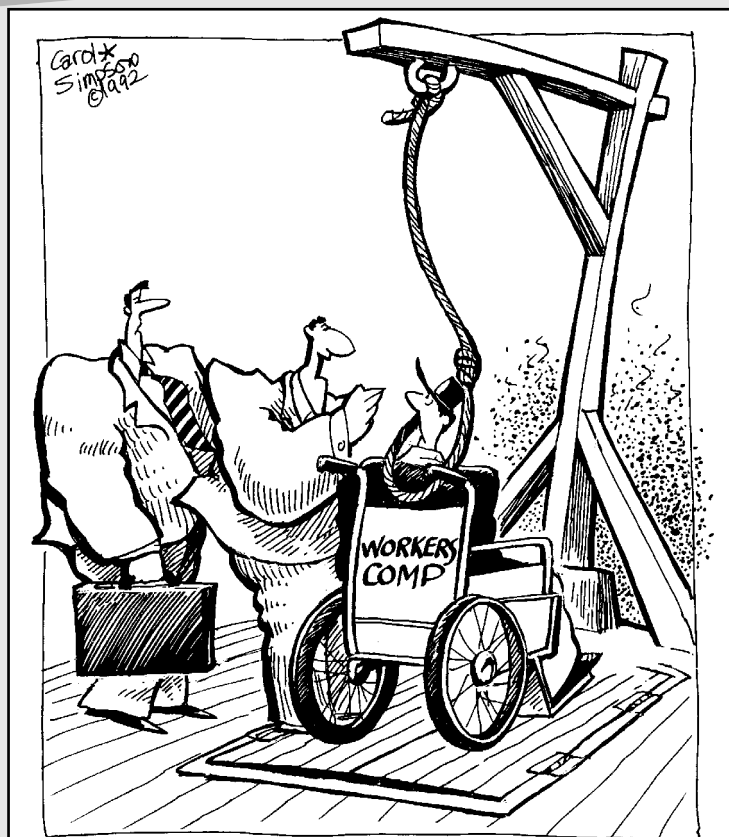
It's not that the state opposes private insurers. It's that failure by the state system will have an inevitable impact on larger Texas corporations and companies, many of which are the biggest exploiters in the nation. Such a failure could also flood the court system with injured workers' cases and property seizures in settlements favorable to workers.

Indeed, this in part is why the system was developed in the first place. According to Lloyd Harger, Division of Workers' Compensation in Florida, the workers' compensation system arose throughout the industrialized world immediately behind mounting industrial casualties. "Barristers, solicitors and others with legal knowledge and training came forward in increasingly large numbers from 1850 forward and represented the injured workers on a contingency or percentage of what they could collect basis. Although the burden of proof was on the worker as well as other legal expenses, the courts became backlogged and the general public [sic] suffered from this unfair and inefficient system as crowded dockets and few judges delayed other civil actions. *In the midst of this chaos and confusion, it was noticed that the worker was beginning to prevail in these actions and with the growing legal profession's assistance were tying up attaching machinery, buildings and property of the employers through liens and attachments.*" (Our emphasis.) Workers' compensation is a reform that protects capitalist property.

In the United States, 1908 saw a rising 15 percent of all court settlements favoring workers. This was the period when the federal government introduced a system that would save something for the capitalists by palliating injured workers with bare-bones medical relief and subsistence doles and by forestalling lawsuits against employers.

The entire system, even when it "works," presents a vicious, quarrelsome entanglement of vested interests: hospitals, doctors, chiropractors, pharmaceutical companies, suppliers and insurance companies all vying for a piece of the injured worker's hide. Within the general system of capitalist commodity production, industrial battlefield injuries and broken lives are staples that feed an extensive network of profitable enterprises.

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"We just want to tighten up a few loopholes."

Carol* Simpson

much as some workers had hoped"—just 12 percent, according to the *Chronicle*.

In short, the changes in the state's "workers' compensation" system may help capitalists reduce "costs" and make it a more lucrative source of patients for disenchanted doctors, but it is not likely to do much for workers like Ron Staples or Weldon Weeks.

Staples, 61, injured his back while wrestling a 200-pound compressor onto a forklift. He searched for a week trying to find a doctor who would accept workers' compensation cases. When he did and the treatment called for steroid shots, Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance said the treatments were unnecessary. So Mr. Staples hired a lawyer to challenge the denial, but to no avail. Having festered in pain for six months while waiting for authorization from the Texas Workers' Compensation Commission (TWCC), a doctor okayed the shots, but the cure failed. Fifty phone calls later he found another doctor who recommended a visit to an orthopedic surgeon, which Royal & Sun Alliance vetoed. Now he waits in agony for a letter he needs from the insurer to contest Alliance's refusal before the commission. Meanwhile his disability has all but impoverished him and his wife.

At 50, Weeks is camping on the edge of destitution. A fall from a forklift in 1999 injured his spine in several places, for which he has had spinal fusion surgery. He has difficulty sitting, walking and getting up, and is on a steady diet of six painkillers and four muscle relaxants. He is suing Fireman's Insurance Co. for the full amount of lost wages benefits owed him by the insurer. Looking back at the previous 1989 set of reforms that reduced lawsuits and moved disputes to the commission, Mr. Weeks stated, "TWCC was supposed to be for us. Instead, they hold you down and the insurance carrier just takes you to the cleaners."

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Freedom to Be Influenced

The capitalist news media may be "free," but it isn't cheap, or if cheap not always inexpensive.

When, for example, it was revealed early this year that the Bush administration paid at least two "conservative" columnists to feed some favorable commentary on administration policies to an unsuspecting public (working-class voters) during and after last year's election campaign, it caused some in the media to grow indignant.

President Bush tried to smooth ruffled feathers when he apologized after someone in the media discovered that columnist Armstrong Williams received \$241,000 to write approvingly of the administration's "No Child Left Behind" initiative. Bush insisted that the White House was in the dark about such practices by administration officials and that his staff had been instructed not to engage in them. Then it came out that a second columnist, Maggie Gallagher, received \$21,000 to help push the administration's \$300 million marriage initiative.

We do not know, of course, but we cannot help but suspect that these discoveries were by media people who did not receive \$241,000 or \$21,000 to keep their discoveries to themselves.

The New York Times got into the game last March with an "investigative" piece condemning the administration for distribution of unattributed "video news releases." "More than 20 federal agencies, including the State Department and the Defense Department, now create fake news clips," the *Times* railed in a subsequent editorial. "The Bush administration spent \$254 million in its first four years on contracts with public relations firms, more than double the amount spent by the Clinton administration."

The *Times* did not say if this 2-to-1 ratio was enough to speak the Clinton administration free of the taint. The video news releases that caught its attention aimed at bolstering support for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and for other Bush administration initiatives. Apparently the Clinton administration's wars in Somalia and the former Yugoslavia, its attack on the old "welfare" system and other of its policies were small and economical in comparison, as suggested by the 2-to-1 ratio.

The Government Accountability Office says that the problem with the Bush administration's video "news" releases is that they did not conform to its guidelines under which all such materials are supposed to identify their source. The GAO issued a finding after the revelations about the Bush administration's videos, declaring that these "prepackaged TV segments that fail to reveal they were produced by the government constitute illegal propaganda."

The GAO did not say if it meant "propaganda" in its secondary sense, meaning the deliberate dissemination of false and misleading information. If that was the impression it meant to create, then it would seem to follow that such propaganda would be okay if it only complied with the guidelines that make such propaganda lies legal. Either way, shortly after the GAO issued its finding, the Justice Department fired off a memo to federal agencies telling them to ignore it.

Anyone who knows even a little about how the media is used—and how it allows itself to be used—to spread propaganda of all kinds will smile at all the righteous indignation and all the apologies made when such things occasionally peep out and flash by a corner of the public eye before quickly moving out of sight again. The smiles turn to laughter when the extent of such goings on is better understood.

Government-sponsored video "news" releases barely scratch the surface. As a piece entitled "Video News Releases" by a project of the Center for Media and Democracy puts it, a recent survey of TV stations found that they have sought to bolster profits by accepting more clips produced by others—mostly by corporate interests. "From 1998 to 2002, a study of 33,911 television reports found, the percentage of 'feed' material from third-party sources rose to 23 percent of all reports from 14 percent." The bulk of such sources was corporate.

There is nothing new about corruption in government, of course, or about efforts to influence the media, or about media expressions of indignation over corruption in government. One problem with all these revelations is that there is no end to them, and the revelations themselves are forgotten almost as soon as they are made. Another is the false impression such "investigative reporting" creates. The impression it creates is that at least some in the media are watchdogs that can be counted on to expose the worst sores of capitalism and start the ball rolling toward their cure. In truth, however, it is only a variant of the old-fashioned yellow journalism pioneered by Joseph Pulitzer in the late 19th century. It was Pulitzer who claimed his *New York World* would "expose all fraud and sham, fight all public evils and abuses, and to battle for the people with earnest sincerity." Some think it is ironic that Pulitzer's Prize should symbolize excellence in the journalistic craft, but the only irony is that some people would take such a thing at face value.

Privately owned by and operated in the profit interests of capitalists, and supported primarily by the paid advertising of other capitalists, the major media under capitalism have a material interest in propagandizing workers to accept capitalism and ignore their own distinct interests as members of the working class. Even the reform-minded media do workers a disservice. Today's growing social, economic and environmental crises cry out for a *fundamental* transformation of society, while reformers seek to prune the worst fruits of a system long since gone to rot.

The People, in contrast, starts from the principle that there is a class struggle and that the interests of the exploiting and exploited classes cannot be reconciled. Openly taking the side of the working class in that struggle, and starting from the proposition that labor alone is the source of all social wealth, it follows where fact and social science lead, drawing workers' attention to the only logical resolution of that struggle: the abolition of capitalism and the creation of a socialist society, owned and *democratically* controlled by the producers themselves. —K.B.

letters to the People

Lynne Stewart

I was disappointed by your response to my letter re Lynne Stewart that appeared in the May-June issue of *The People*.

While condemning her conviction as unconstitutional you also castigate her for her "foolhardiness." You should know that you are entirely alone in the left-wing press in attacking her. Moreover, you ignore your argument where you write that violating a law in the course of defending a right is justified.

Ms. Stewart was vigorously defending the rights and interests of her client and did not believe she was violating any law or regulation. In fact, she was not even arrested until two years had passed since her alleged transgressions. Apparently, her indictment was an afterthought by Ashcroft as a way of intimidating progressive attorneys.

You should also recall that such notables of the socialist movement as Marx, Engels, Trotsky and Debs had all been put on trial by their respective governments in the course of their careers. Were they foolhardy too?

Martin Rosner
Brooklyn, N.Y.

[Engels was never arrested or tried for anything that we can recall. Stalin had Trotsky removed from office, sent into exile and murdered, but never put him on trial. Of the others, we fail to see any comparison, unless it is in the vague notion that their trials were unjust. As for being "alone in the left-wing press," it depends on what "left-wing press" means. *The People*, of course, is no part of the reformist "left press." It is the official journal of the revolutionary SLP. *The Nation*, however, would meet the criteria some people set when they say "left press." That magazine's David Cole thought "Stewart crossed the line from zealous advocacy to wrongful conduct." *The Nation's* argument differed from ours, but its criticism of Ms. Stewart's conduct is enough to show that *The People* is not entirely "alone."]

In Service of Thugs

Bruce Cozzini's brief, "New EPA Rule

Guts Goals on Mercury Reduction," is an effective attempt backed by published supportive data to expose the role of the EPA in service of the present ruling junta, the servants of capitalist thugs, and corporations owning outdated power plants. However, there is no surprising element in the manipulative tactics of the Bush administration and its pliable instrument.

The last head of the EPA was made to resign as she did not comply with the dictates of vested interests totally, and expressed her reservations on protecting corporate profits at the cost of the health and well-being of current generations and future generations.

All the forceful arguments and supportive documents are not likely to make those committed to serve the vested interests budge an inch as their slanted perspective will not enable them to see objective realities. All the same, calling a spade a spade is at least called for.

M. Saleem Chaudhry
Saratoga, Calif.

May Day

I am enclosing a small donation along for/with *The People* sub.

Just a word or two, though, about May Day. The capitalists long ago did whatever they could to cover up the worldwide workers' celebration of May Day. *The People* always had an inspiring editorial but last year it was strangely ignored, and this year it was ignored again.

It seems like there should be some editorial explanation about why we, along with the capitalists, should ignore this worldwide workers' demonstration.

Excuse this sloppy typing and spelling as I have been winding down for some time, being 94 years old.

Ralph Rieder
Schoolcraft, Mich.

[Understaffing and the pressure of other tasks occasionally lead to conspicuous oversights and mistakes. This was one of them, for which we apologize. We will try harder not to disappoint our friends in this regard in future.]

what is socialism?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Political Clause

How De Leon answered objections raised at the founding convention of the IWW in 1905.

One important debate at the IWW's first convention in June 1905 centered on the "political clause" proposed for the Preamble to the new organization's Constitution. Although that clause was consistent with a principle long held by the Socialist Labor Party and its union affiliate, the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, the necessity for it was developed independently by the November 1904 and January 1905 conferences that preceded the convention. Indeed, the recognition of that necessity in the Chicago Manifesto was instrumental in the ST&LA's decision to accept an invitation to attend the convention.

Most of the debate over the political clause did not occur on the floor of the convention, but in the Committee on Constitution. The original committee consisted of 15 men, one of whom was Thomas J. Powers of the ST&LA.

Daniel De Leon was not a member of the committee as originally composed, but when Powers was taken ill and stepped aside the chairman of the convention, William D. Haywood, asked the ST&LA delegation to propose a substitute. It chose De Leon.

After 1908, De Leon had frequent occasion to return to some of the events that occurred at the first four conventions of the IWW. In a "Letter Box" response to a Chicago correspondent printed in the *Daily People* of Oct. 24, 1909, for example, De Leon recalled the circumstances leading up to the debate on the "political clause" at the 1905 convention.

"E.P.J., CHICAGO, ILL.—Who the Anarchists were, and who the craft unionists, who, 'in committee and on



The ST&LA elected 10 delegates to the First IWW Convention and authorized the General Executive Board to appoint two additional delegates if the funds were available. The delegates elected are indicated by an asterisk and those appointed by a double asterisk. From left to right, back row: M.P. Haggerty, Philip Veal, Max Eisenburg, J.W. Johnson, Frank A. Wilke, Herman Richter, Gustave Harworth, T. Banks, John Kenney (or Kennedy). Second row: Theo. Bernine,* Joseph Scheidler,* Mark Postelwaite, Joseph Dillon, Boris Reinstein, Benjamin Frankford, Evan J. Dillon, J.T.H. Reinley (aka John T.L. Remley),** Daniel De Leon,* Walter Goss. Third row: Thomas H. Jackson,* Kate Eisenburg (wife of delegate), August Gillhaus,* H.J. Brimble,* Samuel J. French,* Mrs. M.P. Haggerty (wife of delegate), Thomas J. Powers.* Front row: Duncan McEachren,* Paul Dinger,* Octave M. Held,** Carl U. Starkenberg.

the floor of the first I.W.W. convention maneuvered hard against the word "political" getting into the Preamble? The Anarchist who did so in the Committee was the otherwise estimable and talented ex-Father [Thomas J.] Haggerty; the craft-Unionists who did so in the Committee were Chas. H. Moyer, and another member of the Western Federation of Miners, [John C.] Sullivan by name. On the floor of the convention, Haggerty, Moyer and Sullivan did not oppose the word 'political' in the

Secretary Haggerty then read the second clause of the Preamble, as follows: "Between these two classes a struggle must go on until all the toilers come together on the political as well as on the industrial field, and take and hold that which they produce by their labor, through an economic organization of the working class without affiliation with any political party."

A motion was made and seconded that the paragraph be adopted as read.

The Chairman: It has been regularly moved and seconded that paragraph two be adopted.

Del. Simons: It seems to me we are trying to adopt something that is almost ridiculous in statement. If you will analyze that as it stands, it says that we are in favor of political action without any political party. I am absolutely in favor of no endorsement whatever of any political party. At the same time the wording of that is contradictory and confusing, and there ought to be something done to straighten that out. It either ought to be split into two sentences, or else it ought to state more clearly what it does mean. As it stands now it practically says no political action, without a political party. I object to that. I have not a copy here, and so cannot make an intelligent amendment.

Del. De Leon: The paragraph, if you will let me read it over again, says: "Between these two classes a struggle must go on until all the toilers come together on the political as well as

the industrial field and take and hold that which they produce by their labor, through an economic organization of the working class without affiliation with any political party." That is the language as offered. I wish to speak for the clause as a member of that committee, and against the proposed substitute. The argument has been made by Delegate Simons that that is contradictory; that this clause proposes political action without a political party. Now, let me invite your attention to the Manifesto, to the promise and invitation under which this convention is gathered, and under the terms of which it is convened. You will find on page four of this issue of this form of the Manifesto (holding up a copy), this passage: "Craft divisions foster political ignorance among the workers, thus DIVIDING THAT CLASS AT THE BALLOT BOX as well as in shop, mine and factory"; and on the next page of the Manifesto you find this clause: "It (this organization) should be established as the economic organization of the working class WITHOUT AFFILIATION WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY." If to recognize the necessity of uniting the working people on the political field, and in the same breath to say that the taking and the holding of the things that the people produce can be done without affiliation with any political party—if that is a contradiction; if it can be said that these two clauses in this proposed paragraph are contradictory, then the contradiction was advocated by Delegate Simons himself, who was one of the signers of this

Preamble. Their arguments had been beaten to a standstill in the Committee. The Manifesto, which had called the Convention together, was produced before them, and the passage was pointed out which, in the enumeration of the evils to be redressed and which resulted from craft unionism, was the scattered forces of the proletariat on the political field. They were told that, to leave the word 'political' out of the platform as one of the fields on which the workers had to be united, would be to break faith with the men whom the Preamble invited; and they were told quite clearly that, in that case, the S.T.&L.A. delegation would be under the painful duty to leave the convention. The Preamble was finally adopted; it was demanded that all the members of the Committee sign it. Thus neither Moyer, nor Sullivan[,] nor Haggerty spoke against it in the Convention. In the Convention, the leading craft Unionist who raised objection to the being united 'on the political as well as on the economic field' was David C. Coates of the Typographical Union, and his voice was echoed by the Socialist Party man A.M. [Algie Martin] Simons."

Accordingly, when Haggerty, secretary of the Committee on Constitution, presented the proposed Preamble to the convention there was no need for De Leon or any other member of that committee to address the arguments that Haggerty, Moyer and Sullivan had raised against the political clause in committee. Coates took no part in the floor debate on that clause, but several other delegates raised questions about it.

Here we reproduce from the published proceedings of the convention the questions raised by two delegates, A.M. Simons and Clarence Smith, and the answers De Leon gave to both.

Manifesto. (Applause) Here you have his signature (holding up the page of the Manifesto with Simon's signature).

But, delegates, there is no contradiction, none whatever; and I consider that these two passages in the Manifesto, if any one thing was to be picked out more prominent than any other, are indeed significant of the stage of development, genuine capitalistic development in America. This Manifesto enumerates a series of evils that result from the present craft division:—it shatters the ranks of the workers and renders industrial and financial solidarity impossible; union men scab it upon one another; jealousy is created, and prohibitive initiation fees are adopted; "craft divisions foster political ignorance among the working class, thus dividing them at the ballot box."

If this, the division of the working class on the political field, is an evil, then it follows that unity of the working people on the political field is a thing to be desired. And so it is; and this clause in the Preamble correctly so states it. That being so, does this other sentence sound contradictory, the sentence that provides that the new organization shall be without affiliation with any political party?

The situation in America, as presented by the thousand and one causes that go to create present conditions, removes the seeming contradiction. That situation establishes the fact that the "taking and the holding" of the things that labor needs to be free can never depend

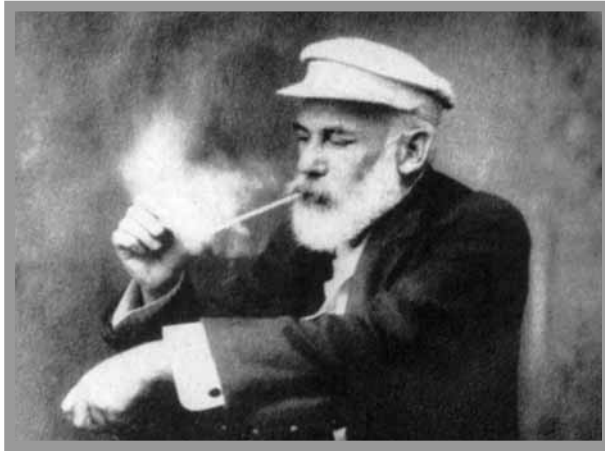
(Continued on page 6)

...Political Clause

(Continued from page 5)

upon a political party. (Applause) If anything is clear in the American situation it is this: That if any individual is elected to office upon a revolutionary ballot, that individual is a suspicious character. (Applause) Whoever is returned elected to office on a program of labor emancipation; whoever is allowed to be filtered through by the political election inspectors of the capitalistic class;—that man is a carefully selected tool, a traitor of the working people, selected by the capitalist class. (Applause)

It is out of the question that here in America—I am speaking of America and not Europe—that here in America a political party can accomplish that which this clause demands, the “taking and the holding.” I know not a single exception of any party candidate, ever elected upon a political platform of the emancipation of the working class, who did not sell them out as fast as elected. (Applause) Now, it may be asked, “that being so, why not abolish altogether the political movement? Why, at all, unite the workers on the political field?” The aspiration to unite the workers upon the political field is an aspiration in line and in step with civilization. Civilized man, when he argues with an adversary, does not start with clenching his fist and telling him, “smell this bunch of bones.” He does not start by telling him, “feel my biceps.” He begins with arguing; physical force by arms is the last resort. That is the method of the civilized man, and the method of civilized man is the method of civilized organization. The barbarian begins with physical force; the civilized man ends with that, when physical force is necessary. (Applause) Civilized man will always here in America give a chance to peace; he will, accordingly, proceed along the lines that make peace possible. But civilized man, unless he is a visionary, will know that unless there is Might behind your Right, your Right is something to laugh at. And the thing to do, consequently, is to gather behind that ballot, behind that united political movement, the Might which is alone able, when necessary, to “take and hold.” Without the working people are united on the political field; without the delusion has been removed from their minds that any of the issues of the capitalist class can do for them anything permanently, or even temporarily; without the working people have been removed altogether from the mental thralldom of the capitalist class, from its insidious influence, there is no possibility of your having those conditions under which they can really organize themselves economically in such a way as to “take and hold.” And after those mental conditions are generally established, there needs something more than the statement to “take and hold”; something more than a political declaration, something more than the permission of the capitalist political inspectors to allow this or that candidate to filter through. You then need the industrial organization of the working class, so that, if the capitalist should be foolish enough in America to defeat, to thwart the will of the workers expressed by the ballot—I do not say “the will of the workers, as returned by the capitalist election inspectors,” but the will of the people as expressed at the ballot box—then there will be a condition of things by which the working class can absolutely cease production, and thereby starve out the capitalist class, and render their present economic means and all their preparations for war absolutely useless. (Applause) Then, the clause “between these two classes a struggle must go on until all the toilers come together on the political as well as industrial field, and TAKE AND HOLD that which they produce by their labor”—through what? THROUGH AN



Daniel De Leon

ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION OF THE WORKING CLASS, “without affiliation with any political party,” stands out in all the clearness of its solid foundation and challenging soundness. That clause is a condensation, I should say, of hundreds of volumes now in the libraries of the country, and of many more volumes that have not yet been written, but the facts upon which they are based are coming forward. One of the facts, a fact of great importance is that curious apparition—the visionary politician, the man who imagines that by going to the ballot box, and taking a piece of paper, and looking about to see if anybody is watching, and throwing it in and then rubbing his hands and jollyng himself with the expectation that through that process, through some mystic alchemy, the ballot will terminate capitalism, and the Socialist Commonwealth will arise like a fairy out of the ballot box. That is not only visionary; it is the product of that cowardice which we find very generally in the politics of some men who claim to represent the working class (applause), on account of which we find that such politics in nine cases out of ten degenerate into what is called “possibilism.” It brings about a repetition of the methods of the Christian church, which raises a fine, magnificent ideal in the remote future, to be arrived at some time, sooner or later—rather later than sooner—eventually if not later—and in the meantime practices all “possible,” “practical” wrong. (Applause) I maintain that this clause, consequently, is not contradictory, but states the four-squared fact. (Applause)

Del. Clarence Smith: I confess frankly that I am unable to say whether I agree with the ideas of the Committee on Constitution or not, simply because the Preamble does not express clearly to me any idea or any principle. It seems to me that this paragraph of the Preamble particularly is intended, not to represent the principles and purposes of industrialism, but represents a toadyism to three different factions in this convention (applause), and I am opposed to this organization toadying to any man or any faction of men. Let this convention state the principles of industrialism, and if the factions see fit to fall in line and support then, well and good. It seems to me that this paragraph could not have been more involved or more confusing if it had been written by the platform committee of the Republican or Democratic party. It seems to me as if the paragraph is intended to be toadying to the man who does not believe in politics at all, the pure and simple trade unionist as we have come to call him; that it means a toadying to the Socialist, and also to the anarchist, if you please. It seems to me that this paragraph is intended to be such that the supporter of this movement can point to it when talking to a pure and simple unionist and say, “that is just what you want, and expresses what you believe in.” I believe it is intended to be such that a Socialist can be pointed to this platform with the statement that “this is Socialism.” I believe

it is intended to be such that an anarchist can be confronted with this platform and told that “this means anarchy as it is written right in this paragraph.” I believe that is what this paragraph is intended to be, and I am opposed to that sort of fad myself. I may be wrong, Mr. Chairman. This paragraph may be entirely clear to every other person in this convention, but I confess it is not clear to me. I expect to do some talking for this movement after this convention. I am going to talk to individuals wherever I find them for this movement, and I cannot afford to have Brother De Leon along with me every time I meet a man, to explain what this paragraph means. (Applause) I move you that this paragraph and the balance of this Preamble be referred back to the Committee on Constitution for a clearer paragraph and a Preamble that represents more clearly the principles and purposes of industrialism. (Seconded)

Del. De Leon: I am talking here to the motion of Delegate Smith. Delegate Smith's statement was that this paragraph is a toadying to three distinct ideas; the pure and simple idea, the Socialist political action idea, and the anarchist idea. Do I understand you correctly?

Del. Clarence Smith: Yes.

Del. De Leon: That was the substance. Now, he certainly is mistaken when he says that there is any toadying here to the pure and simple idea, because the pure and simpler states that politics are exactly like religion, and that a man can go his own way upon it. I do not know a single instance of a pure and simpler who will say that the working people must be united on the political field; so that so far as toadying to the pure and simpler is concerned, I fail to see it. There remains what is loosely called the Socialist political and the anarchist idea, understanding by the latter the recognition of the mission of physical force. Are they toadyed to? If it is believed that there is any toadying done towards either, it must proceed from the opinion that any one of them has, exclusive of the other, the whole truth; it must proceed from the idea that one or the other is absolutely wrong. The truth is that they are both but a fraction of the truth. I do not believe that when you state that two bones belong to a body you are toadying to either bone. If you scratch a political Socialist you will find a man who says that the trade union is going to die out and there is no use bothering about it. They don't want any economic organization; they don't want any industrial organization; hence they are mooncalves, ballot maniacs. On the other hand, if you look at the anarchist, he, disgusted at the political mooncalves, flies to the other extreme, and says: “political action is wholly useless,” and you think of physical force instantly and alone. The position of the Committee was accordingly one, not of toadying towards either of the two, but of recognizing the truth in both camps: the truth in the Socialist political camp, that political action and the means of civilization must be given an opportunity; and recognizing at the same time the fact that in this country, for one, it is out of the question to imagine that a political party can “take and hold.” Consequently there are two distinct ideas that run into each other, and the opinion of Delegate Smith upon the subject proceeds from the notion that the two camps, anarchist, so-called, and Socialist, are divided by an unbridgeable chasm; otherwise there cannot be any toadying. For if there is something that you hold is right, and something that I hold is right, and we join the two and eliminate what is wrong in both, that surely cannot be called “toadying.” This clause consequently is a constructive clause with the feature of toadying absolutely excluded. As far as the pure and simpler is concerned, he is knocked on the head—do you call that toadying? I guess he does not—because his attitude is that politics are simply like religion and should be excluded absolutely.

How One Opponent Fought De Leon

Readers who have followed our series of articles and reprints on events leading to the formation of the original Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in 1905 may wonder why the Socialist Labor Party's (SLP) trade union affiliate, the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance (ST&LA), was not invited to the January 1905 conference that issued the famous Chicago Manifesto.

Simply put, many of those who participated in making that decision were antagonistic toward the SLP, the ST&LA and Daniel De Leon, even though the Manifesto included many of the ideas for which the ST&LA had fought for 10 years before the IWW was formed.

Why this animosity existed is a more complex story than can be told here, but that it existed and was instrumental in the decision to exclude the ST&LA from the January 1905 conference is indisputable. On March 7, 1907, for example, William E. Trautmann, one of the principal organizers of the IWW and its first general financial secretary, wrote a letter to De Leon in which, among other things, he revealed that "Eugene Debs...demanded that Daniel De Leon's name be stricken from the list of those to be invited."

Debs was not the only Socialist Party (SP) leader who wanted De Leon and the ST&LA kept out. Another was Algie Martin Simons, editor of the *International Socialist Review*. In March 1905, Simons published an article by Robert Rives LaMonte, a young SP member who had just returned from France where he had been impressed by the two French socialist parties' decision to unite.

"The example of our French comrades should inspire us in America with a determination to put an end to the scandal of the continued existence of two Socialist parties in America," LaMonte wrote. "The separate existence of the S. L. P. in the past may have (in the opinion of the writer, it has) served a useful purpose, but the day has surely now come when, in the words of the Amsterdam resolution, 'it is indispensable that standing opposed to all bourgeois parties, there shall be only one Socialist party, as there is only one proletariat.'"

Simons was looked up to as one of the leading "intellectuals" of the SP, but when he responded to LaMonte with an untitled editorial that revealed his intellectual and moral bankruptcy, De Leon reprinted it in the *Daily People* under heading of "Eighth Explosion" and wrote a reply, both of which are reproduced here. Simons' true character eventually revealed itself when he came out in favor U.S. participation in World War I, an offense for which the SP expelled him. That was more than a decade in the future, however, by which time Simons and those who thought like him had done immeasurable damage to the socialist movement in America.

EIGHTH EXPLOSION

By A.M. Simons

(*Socialist International Review*, March 1905)

In the very excellent survey of French Socialist unity by Comrade La Monte which appears elsewhere in this issue, there is one sentiment expressed with which we wish most emphatically to disagree. This is the proposal for unity with the S.L.P. based on the supposed identity of the proposed industrial organization, the manifesto of which appeared last month [sic], and the Socialist Trades [sic] & Labor Alliance. We have no desire to enter into a detailed discussion of the demerits of the latter organization. We believe, however, that its unsavory name has been deserved and is not due to its socialistic character, but to the personal make-up of those in control and the methods which it has pursued. Nothing would more

thoroughly damn the work of the conference which meets in Chicago next June than the prevalence of the idea that it was an attempt to revive the S.T. & L.A. That conference is not called for the purpose of inviting labor men, either in or outside of existing unions, to unite with some already existing organization. It is for the purpose of founding a new industrial organization. Those who have issued the call will be nothing more or less than members of the conference once it has been called to order. The conference is not for the purpose of uniting the A.L.U. to the S.T. & L.A. and then asking the rest of the trade union world to accept the domination of these now in control of these organizations. If this were the purpose there would be no need of such a conference. The A.L.U. has certainly played a valuable part in the trade union movement, but it was because it was felt that it was inadequate for the work before it that the conference was proposed. The S.T. & L.A. has never proved itself anything but a nauseous nuisance in the labor movement. As a labor organization, it has never had any existence; as a convenient annex to De Leon's work in the S.L.P. it has played a part, and by no means an admirable one, in socialist and trade union discussion. Nothing shows the correctness of our position on this point more fully than the eagerness with which every enemy of the proposed industrial organization has circulated the statement, as evolved by the capitalist press, that the object of the Chicago conference was to organize a socialist trade union to fight the existing unions, and that it was to be simply another S.T. & L.A.

A DUTY OF UNIONISM

By Daniel De Leon

(*Daily People*, March 26, 1905)

The interesting features of the "Eighth Explosion—More to Come," published in this issue, are, like the features of the whole serial of Explosions, obvious enough to require no comment. Surely no comment is needed upon a performance that tells so well how like a strange cat in a garret Mr. "A.M. Simons, Editor," must have felt at the conference that was convoked to issue the Chicago Manifesto, or that reveals the seething condition of the Movement so perfectly that the gentleman, one of the signers of the Manifesto, is so quickly constrained to stultify his own signature, take backwater, expose the "Intellectual's" incapacity to grasp the question of Unionism, and seek to straddle. On all such matters the Explosion is clear enough—indeed, a delectable "Explosion."

But apart from all that, the document furnishes an instance of a certain category of duties that a bona fide and serious economic organization will have to buckle to, before progress can be safely made. Seeing that the approach of the convention called to meet in Chicago on the 27th of next June is bringing up for consideration the thousand and one questions connected with so important a matter as the economic organization of the Working Class, the document can be turned to even better use than an "Explosion."

The following passages occur in the document:

"We believe, however, that its [the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance] unsavory name has been deserved and is not due to its Socialistic character, but to the personal make-up of those in control and the methods which it has pursued."

Again:

"The Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance has never proved itself anything but a nauseous nuisance in the labor Movement. As a labor organization, it has never had any existence; as a convenient annex to De Leon's work in the S.L.P. it has played a part, and by no means

admirable one, in Socialist and trade union discussion."

Here are two bunches of nothing but conclusions. Whether they are scanned from above down, or from below up, or are held diagonally under the light—whichever way the document is handled, not a semblance, or vestige will be found of an allegation of fact upon which the conclusions are supposedly based. There is not an allegation of fact for the conclusion the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance has "an unsavory name," least of all are some of the persons mentioned to whom the name is "unsavory"; not an allegation of fact appears upon which to draw the conclusion that the "methods" pursued by the alliance were improper; vainly does one look for the remotest allegation of fact that the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance "has never been in existence" as an economic organization; look as one may, he will fail to detect the least allegation of fact for the alliterative conclusion that the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance was never anything but a "nauseous nuisance," or for the opinion that its part in the Socialist or trade union discussion was "by no means admirable," and least of all are the names of those mentioned upon whom the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance is claimed to have left this nauseating and disagreeable impression.—Not a single allegation of fact: all conclusions floating in the air.

Now, then, it is essential to the freedom of speech that a person be allowed full scope in the drawing of his conclusions: any retrenchment upon that is a retrenchment of free speech; but it is likewise essential to intelligent discussion that the drawer of conclusions furnish his audience with the facts, or allegations of fact, from which he draws his conclusions. By so doing the audience is enabled to do its own thinking; by neglecting that duty the audience is disabled from thinking. When allegations of fact are furnished, the audience can verify them for itself; if it finds them to be false, then it knows what kind of a hair-pin addressed it, and it has by so far been clarified: if it finds the allegations of fact to be true, then it is in a condition to judge for itself whether the conclusions are warranted. To fling about conclusions without first furnishing the allegations of fact on which the conclusions are based is to assume dictatorial functions, it is presumption of infallibility. No sane man if he is decent, no decent man if he is sane strikes such a posture. He who does insults his audience, and insults the Cause that he handles.

Whether an individual who indulges in such practices does so because of a mental and moral make-up that disqualifies him from the proprieties of civilized discussion; or whether it is the instinct of a Gompers, perchance, of an "Intellectual" that sway him—whatever the reason, one thing is certain, to wit, that no juncture can be imagined, least of all at critical periods of a Movement, when such practices can be conducive of anything but evil.

Serious questions are now up in the Socialist or Labor Movement; many more will arise; they will keep on arising up to the last moment; and along with them, there will be serious difference of opinion. A strict attention to allegations of fact in discussions is a guarantee of order; the neglect of the observance is an invitation to wrangling and confusion. It is to the interest of the exploiting class to keep the Labor Movement with its hands in its own hair. The recent ribald attitude of the capitalist press of this city, the *New York Volkszeitung* included, towards the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance in this body's dauntless endeavor to shield and save the striking workmen of the Interborough Company from absolute annihilation by their American Federation of Labor and other national officers,

(Continued on page 11)

The Right Wing and American Education

By B.G.

Far right-wing ideologues throughout the country have been bringing enormous pressure on educators and museum curators for a "patriotically correct" history of the United States to teach in the schools and present in museum exhibits. They strongly insist on suppressing any viewpoints but their own, no matter how historically erroneous or distorted their views may be.

One particularly sensitive area to many such ultraconservatives is the American Civil War. Many Southerners prefer calling it "The War Between the States" and insist that "states' rights" and *not* slavery was its cause.

A Texas middle school teacher who had for years been teaching American history in an urban school district and who emphasized slavery in the coming of the Civil War met with severe opposition to this presentation in the academic year just past when she transferred to a suburban school.irate parents insisted that she drop the slavery issue and concentrate on states' rights.

Alarmed, she sought help from the Organization of American Historians (OAH), a national group of professional historians. The president of the OAH sent her copies of several useful documents. One was the declaration of Texas secession. Another was the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, which allowed the capture of runaway slaves in free territory in the North and their return to their masters. He also sent a statement strongly supporting that law by Jefferson Davis, who later led the southern secession movement.

Although the Texas teacher's administrators have continued to support her, some local parents remain unconvinced by this historical evidence and continue to complain loudly about her method and course content, to the extent that she fears loss of her position.

The case is not an isolated one. In Alabama, George Ewert, director of the Museum of Mobile, angered some would-be latter-day Confederate "patriots" by writing "Whitewashing the Confederacy," a critical review of the strongly pro-Confederate film *Gods and Generals*. Immediately, modern "Confederate patriots" began pressing for his removal. Two history professors from the University of Southern Alabama, however, urged the mayor of Mobile to support Ewert as director in the interest of good history in the museum.

Nor is this campaign to "whitewash" history confined to southern institutions. When Dr. John Latschar, the National Park Service superintendent at Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania, mentioned slavery in a lecture as a cause of the Civil War 10 years ago, the Southern Heritage Coalition inundated the Office of the Secretary of the Interior with postcards demanding the dismissal of the Gettysburg superintendent. The Park Service still receives protests over Dr. Latschar's remarks on that occasion, but it is proceeding to improve on the "interpretive programs" it offers to visitors to the Gettysburg memorial. More recently, Dr. Latschar, who still supervises the park, said:

"In our efforts to honor both Union and Confederate forces on our battlefields, our interpretive programs had been avoiding discussions of what they were fighting about. For blacks...it has always been abundantly clear...[that] the sole purpose of the Confederate States of America was to protect the institution of slavery..."

The Park Service published a booklet a few years ago in which it underscored Dr. Latschar's remarks. "Many Confederates themselves, in sermons, pamphlets, public pronouncements, and secession documents, clearly voiced the centrality of slavery to southern society."

Although the booklet did not mention it, one need go no farther to prove the case than Confederate Vice President Alexander H. Stephens' famous "cornerstone" speech of 1861.

"Our new government," said "Little Aleck," as his admirers called the Confederate Veep, "is founded...its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the Negro is not equal to the white man, that slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and normal condition."

Stephens was wrong about African Americans and white "superiority," of course, but he certainly knew what the Southern ruling class was after and was honest enough to say what it was.

Northern states are not immune to dopey views of American history. Last year, Minnesota's Department of Education experienced a near takeover by far right-wing activists and Christian fundamentalists, encouraged by an equally right-wing state education commissioner. The state legislature had directed that a new and more adequate social studies curriculum for kindergarten through 12th grade be developed. The education commissioner picked a "citizens' committee" that worked fast to produce an inadequate and error-ridden proposed curriculum that appeared to be geared more to a political and cultural agenda than to actual history.

An analysis of the curriculum, pointing out errors and omissions and offering suggestions to the history portion of the curriculum, was submitted by historians from the University of Minnesota, only to have the commissioner accuse the professional historians of a "hate-America agenda."

Two examples of the original curriculum proposal will show the far-right agenda of the "citizens' committee" and the education commissioner. In the proposed kindergarten civics curriculum covering the "virtues of good citizens," the committee omitted "sharing and cooperation" as too "socialist." As for teaching middle school students anything about the buying and selling of slaves, this should be omitted because it might "prejudice the students against a free market economy."

After much public protest over such inanities, further revisions by professional teachers and academics accomplished a more accurate and acceptable K-12 curriculum, which was finally adopted.

What we appear to be facing is a new type of culture war. No longer is it the previous raging conflict of "multiculturalism" vs. "traditional values" but of promoting myth and icon over factual narrative and analysis, of presenting the "values" of current American capitalism as the basis for citizenship training. It is also obvious that some fervent Christians wish to present the United States as God's chosen nation and such founding documents as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution as divinely inspired. This is neither good history nor, we would suppose, good theology.

...Power

(Continued from page 1)

Currently 10 new coal-fired plants are being planned, nine using conventional technology in which pulverized coal is burned in air jets in giant boilers. The principal reason is economics. They cost about 20 percent less to build. That translates into lower immediate costs and higher profits in the short term for stockholders. Long-term costs are higher in that they are less efficient, and pollution controls are costly and relatively ineffective.

It is unlikely that Tampa Electric would have built its Polk Power Station at all, except that a federal grant of \$143 million covered about a quarter of the construction costs as a demonstration project. Moreover, it is most likely that the projected conventional plants will be built as planned unless the United States changes its environmental regulations, takes global warming seriously and subsidizes construction, most improbable options.

The new coal-fired plants will have a lifetime of about 50 years, during which time they will be spewing pollutants and contributing significantly to global warming over that time. The need for capitalist profit in the short term will override possible long-term economic and environmental benefits of a proven technology.

Just as scrapping polluting and wasteful technologies is necessary if we are to have a livable environment in the future, scrapping the capitalist system, which breeds the insatiable need for profit, is needed to stop the degradation of our environment.

...Patriot Act

(Continued from page 1)

"•Section 505, which lowers the evidentiary standard for 'national security letters,' or NSLs, which are issued at the sole discretion of the Justice Department, impose a blanket gag order on recipients and are not subject to judicial review. NSLs can be used to seize a wide variety of business and financial records, and in certain instances could be used to access the membership lists of organizations that provide even very limited Internet services (message boards on the ACLU's website for instance)." The section is permanent, with no provision to sunset.

For a complete list of the unconstitutional provisions of the Patriot Act—both those that are up for "sunset" and those that are permanent, point your web browser to <http://www.aclu.org/sunsets>.

The Bush administration is also pushing Congress to grant the executive branch new authority for "'administrative subpoenas,' which would allow the FBI to issue and sign its own search orders—without prior judicial approval." The administration reportedly also wants authority to compel the postal service to copy the outside of envelopes in its system upon demand.

The ruling-class drive to make the Patriot Act permanent and to further extend executive power takes us much further down the slippery slope toward a new form of totalitarianism. Fighting that drive is important for all who oppose tyranny.

However, those who simply urge workers to fight this drive, or to fight this or that repressive measure within the ruling-class drive, are missing the point—a point the Socialist Labor Party has been making for more than a century. The time is past for fighting the effects of capitalism.

To those who have for the past century continued to push for half-measures when all the evidence points to the need to abolish the source of the problem—the capitalist system of class rule—the SLP has said and says again: "Society has reached a point where capitalism is increasingly incompatible with freedom and democracy. To save capitalism, freedom and democracy must eventually be destroyed. To save freedom and democracy, capitalism must be destroyed." —K.B.

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'Subtle' Racism Has Not-So-Subtle Effects

By Paul D. Lawrence

Racism still motivates killings and other violent hate crimes in the United States. There are, however, more subtle forms of racism than those that emulate the nightriders of old.

An analysis by the Associated Press of 1,936 capital indictments in Ohio from 1981 through 2002 verified what had previously been known: Defendants are far more likely to be sentenced to death for killing a white victim than a black victim—more than twice as likely. “Death sentences were handed down in 18 percent of cases where the victims were white, compared with 8.5 percent of cases where victims were black,” AP reported.

When Ohio enacted its death penalty law in 1981, concerns were raised that race would affect sentences. “That has to be very disconcerting and alarming to all of us,” said State Supreme Court Justice Paul Pfeiffer, a cosponsor of the law.

It could be a surprise only to ruling-class minions like Pfeiffer. Racial disparities in capital sentences have long been known. They were one factor in the 1972 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that struck down as unconstitutional then existing death penalty laws.

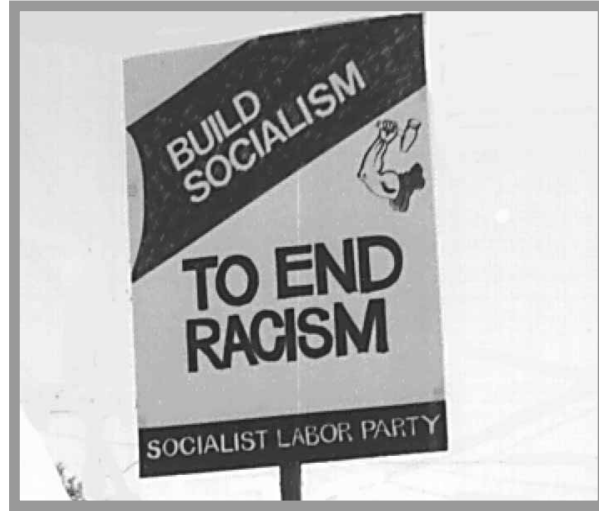
More troubling than the disparity itself is that it may be the result of *unconscious* racism. David Doughten, a Cleveland defense attorney who has handled capital cases, observed: “I’m not saying judges or prosecutors or anybody is overtly racist—I don’t think they are—but you see it happen.”

Taking Doughten’s observation at face value, as unaffected and sincere, the absence of overt racism is a more powerful indictment of capitalism than if it were intentional. Racism, unwittingly and ironically set loose upon the world with the birth of capitalism and the death of insular feudalism, still permeates society years after the seeming partial victories of the

Civil Rights Movement.

The second study shows subtle racism acting even more insidiously. Put simply, racism-induced stress is inordinately killing African Americans. Here’s how it works according to *The Washington Post*:

“When Sandi Stokes waits for lunch at the sandwich shop near her office in downtown Washington, she notices the counter worker often assumes the white person next to her was there first.



The People

“Brenda Person frequently finds that when she goes shopping near her home in Silver Spring, clerks seem to ignore her and instead help a white customer.

“Peggy Geigher, a District resident, says restaurant hostesses often seem to seat her near the bathroom, even when better tables are available.”

Such experiences occur every day all over the country for African Americans. A study by the Rush University Medical Center in Chicago indicates the result is excessive stress. The researchers studied 181 black women in Chicago and Pittsburgh between 1996 and 2001. They developed a questionnaire to meas-

ure such instances of subtle racism.

Here it gets complicated. The researchers used a CT scan to measure coronary artery calcification. The buildup of calcium in the arteries that supply blood to the heart is considered an early stage of heart disease.

The more discrimination reported, the more likely were the women to have calcification. Moreover, “[a]fter accounting for age, geographic location and education, the researchers found that for every unit of increase in perceived discrimination, the odds of having calcification nearly tripled,” *The Washington Post* reported. “The chances of having calcification remained 2-1/2 times higher even after the researchers took into consideration such factors as high blood pressure, cholesterol, smoking, age and body weight.”

“It’s a strong association,” Tene T. Lewis told the *Post*. Lewis, who headed the Rush University study, noted that other studies also show chronic stress increases the risk of heart disease by raising levels of stress hormones and boosting bodily inflammation levels.

David R. Williams, whom the *Post* described as “an expert on racial disparities in health at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor,” said: “I think the findings clearly indicate that racism matters a lot. A lot of people dismiss reports of discrimination as just something that’s in people’s minds. What these data suggest is these minor incivilities and minor incidents of discrimination are actually consequential for physiological function, and adversely affect health.”

The very existence of such experts speaks to the seriousness of the problem.

The *Post* noted that some researchers disagree, including an ideologue at the right-wing American Enterprise Institute. In any event, corroboration is needed, as in any scientific study. It is, however, difficult to imagine that

(Continued on page 11)

Brook No Opposition, Read Marx

By Bruce Cozzini

If there is one thing capitalist pundits are adept at, it is sowing confusion regarding class and the class struggle. David Brooks’ op-ed piece in *The New York Times* of May 30, offers a good example of the professional bamboozler’s craft.

Brooks almost certainly took his cue from the larger and more elaborate example set by the *Times*’ “Portrait of Class in America” series. To show what a clever and original practitioner of the bamboozler’s craft he is, however, he wrote his contribution as a parody on the *Communist Manifesto*.

“Karl’s New Manifesto,” as he called it, starts with Brooks placing himself in the reading room of a library, where an apparition of Karl Marx appears and hands him a “new manifesto” on modern America. This new manifesto of Brooks’ imagination begins with a paraphrase of the original: “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle. Freeman and slave, lord and serf, capitalist and proletariat, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stand in opposition to each other and carry on a constant fight.” Among the original expressions missing from the Brooks rendition is the phrase, “now hidden, now open fight,” which may be an inadvertent clue to Brooks’ intentions.

From this new beginning, Brooks leaps directly into his own strange fantasy of class

and power in modern America: “In the information age, in which knowledge is power and money, the class struggle is fought between the educated elite and the undereducated masses.” Thus, Brooks conjures up two “classes” locked in their own “class struggle.”

Brooks then posits the battleground: “The information age elite exercises artful dominion of the means of production, the education system.”

Designating the education system as *the* “means of production” makes no economic or social sense, of course, except as that system is used to produce certain specialized types of labor for capitalist consumption on the labor market. Brooks, however, wants to make it appear as the place where discrimination by this supposed “educated class” originates, thereby providing himself with a platform from which to attack the “information age elite” and the schools. His purpose is to suggest that discrimination in favor of the wealthy by Harvard (probably as symbolic of the “liberal elite”) and other posh universities is something new and is now under control of the “educated class.” Brooks blames the “educated class” for ruining the schools and using them “not only to dominate the working class, but to decimate it.” Hence, Brooks not only appears to sympathize with the deprived and oppressed, but to identify the source of their deprivation and oppression.

Brooks goes on to claim that this so-called

educated class “reaps the benefits of the modern economy—seizing for itself most of the income gains of the past decades.” While at it, he blames the “educated class” for destruction of the family and erosion of public morals.

The only hint of truth in this article is Brooks’ statement that members of the “oppressor class hold mock elections” between arbitrarily divided Democrats and Republicans, in which they “argue over everything except the source of their power.”

The reality of class is that the capitalist class owns the real means of production, and the working class must sell their labor power to survive in a labor market in which the capitalist class has the advantage. Of course, educated workers hold an advantage over uneducated workers. Their skills are more in demand, and therefore their labor power draws a higher price in the labor market. But they are still part of the working class and part of the class struggle whether they want to be or not.

The principal purpose of this absurd piece by Brooks is to confuse workers and to set one part of the working class against another. Another is to trivialize and ridicule Marx. Whether workers have more or less education in the capitalist educational system, their education is not complete until they have read Marx and can understand the task before them to end this criminal system.

... Workers' 'Compensation'

(Continued from page 3)

Where does the funding—those pesky “soaring costs”—used to treat injured workers come from? All of it comes from surplus value, the wealth that workers produce over and above their wages. Indeed, from this surplus value, or unpaid labor, come profits, the taxes that fund the TWCC bureaucracy, as well as amounts paid out to insurance companies, or health care benefits, political donations, rent, interest, etc., or all of which go to support various business establishments.

Every worker knows that many job-related illnesses and injuries are traceable to unsafe working conditions, overwork and badly maintained equipment. Those, in turn, are traceable to capitalist greed or to capitalist desper-

ation when the competition gets “hot.” Some are traceable to inexperience and lack of proper training. All are traceable to the capitalist system. Capitalists, greedy for profit or desperate to stay in business; workers, desperate to get or to keep a job, eager to please, etc.—all act in response to the conditions that capitalism creates. It is a struggle of each against all and all against each. “Industry leads two great armies into the field against each other,” as Karl Marx put it, “and each of these again is engaged in a battle among its own troops in its own ranks.”

Socialism will create much different conditions. There will be no need for desperate efforts to keep up with “the competition,” for jobs or anything else needed for our suste-

nance and well-being. The struggle for safe and decent jobs will end. All who can will participate, and all who cannot will be provided for. The industries and services will be owned collectively, and those who do the work will operate them democratically.

The industries will be used to produce the things and provide the services we need and want as safely and efficiently as all the advantages of modern technology will allow.

Job-related accidents may still happen, but not for the same reasons and certainly not with all the same consequences as today. They are certain to be rare, but even such rare occurrences will never result in the denial of medical care or plunge anyone into economic insecurity.

... Multiculturalism

(Continued from page 2)

Lies My Teacher Told Me, a critical, eye-opening book that examines bourgeois bias in education, confirms that even though “class is probably the single most important variable in society,” teachers and textbooks avoid class “as if it were a dirty little secret.” The author, a historian, finds pedagogical fear of the class struggle so profound that “formulating issues in terms of class is unacceptable, perhaps even un-American.”

The conclusion is that “education in America is rigged against the working class” so that “the working class usually forgets its own history.” A criticism specific to multiculturalism is that textbooks are “willing to credit racial discrimination as the cause of poverty among blacks and Indians and sex discrimination as the cause of women’s inequality but don’t see class discrimination as the cause of poverty in general.”

The book’s chilling conclusion is that “Publishers or those who influence them have evidently concluded that what American society needs to stay strong is citizens who assent to its social structure and economic system without thought. As a consequence, today’s textbooks defend our economic system mindlessly...”

A young African American man in a city ghetto, after hearing a detailed explanation of true Marxian socialism, insightfully replied, “There must be something good about it because ‘the man’ is always trying to convince us that it’s bad.” Indeed, Socialists in America have been beaten, jailed, blacklisted, deported and killed.

Multiculturalists need not worry, however, because multiculturalism poses absolutely no threat to the ruling class. It poses no threat to the profit motive, to private control over the means of production, to wage slavery, to capitalism itself. In other words, multiculturalism changes nothing. It does not cost the ruling class a nickel.

Multiculturalism offers cultural identity without classconsciousness, ethnic pride without economic empowerment and a call for appreciation of diversity without insight into racism as a tool of capitalism. It fails to challenge the material base of racism. It fails even to recognize that capitalism is not inherently racist, as shown by the readiness of capitalists and tyrants of all races and nationalities to exploit workers of their own race and nationality without the slightest compunction or concern for “cultural identity,” or “ethnic pride,” and certainly not for the “economic empowerment” of the workers whom they exploit.

Educators who wave the multicultural banner and call for tolerance, respect and mutual-ity ignore the fact that capitalism turns worker against worker in a bitter competition for survival. That intraclass struggle pitting worker against worker is guaranteed to pro-

mote racism in “multicultural” capitalist societies such as the United States, and exploitation, oppression and working-class *disunity* wherever capitalism prevails, regardless of cultural diversity or the lack of it.

Multiculturalism is one more form of mystification, leading the working class away from the loving brotherhood and sisterhood that can only emerge from classconsciousness and genuine comradeship.

Marxian Science and The Colleges

By Daniel De Leon

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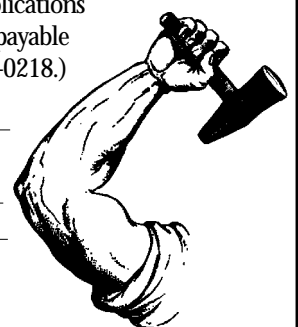
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...Lexis

(Continued from page 1)

ly—or was it obliviously?—wrote on to “demystify” global capitalism without a clue on how Marx was able to do it 157 years ago.

If that is not enough to persuade you that the SLP and its New Publications Fund deserve your generous support, perhaps a few more of Friedman’s “demystifying” thoughts will.

To Friedman, you see, the “world is flat” because modern technology is equalizing opportunity among nations, businesses and individuals. “Globalization” is creating a “level playing field” by spreading technology around. It is reducing the greatest source of “friction” in the world, the “friction” between nations.

Well, if Friedman had read the *Communist Manifesto* from the beginning he might have learned something about another source of “friction,” the *class struggle*. He might have learned that the class struggle is the poisoned well from which bubble up all other social “frictions.” He might have learned that as long as capital exists the class struggle also will exist. He might even have learned that a globalized labor market combined with a globalized class struggle will flatten the world, all right, but not quite in the way he has in mind. For as long as the means of life are privately or state owned, as long as the majority of people must sell their ability to work to live, as long as the wages system survives, the class struggle will continue—and the working class will be crushed flat under the weight of it all.

The Friedmans of global capitalism cannot and will not teach these things to the working class. The SLP’s struggle to bring sense to combat nonsense in the “world of ideas” is not being fought out on a “level playing field.” It is an uphill battle, but it is one that must be carried on. The SLP needs your help. So, please, do all you can to help by using the coupon in this issue to contribute to the SLP’s New Publications Fund. Better yet, if you live in Northern California join with us at the SLP’s 46th National Convention Banquet.

...De Leon ...Racism

(Continued from page 7)

is an instance in point. Individuals there will be plenty, as are to-day cropping up among the “Intellectuals” in the so-called Socialist, alias Social Democratic, alias Public Ownership party, who, no longer able to buckle their distempered cause within the belt of rule, will allow their thwarted private malevolence to lash them into seconding the capitalist’s interests in creating confusion. Accordingly, it falls within the category of the duties of a healthy and strong economic organization of the Working Class to hold discussers, above all those who presume to teach, to a strict account in the proprieties of discussion, and to take drastic measures against all those who, by slinging about conclusions without furnishing the allegations of fact upon which these

even subtle discrimination does its victims any good.

There was a time when the sight of a white face in an African village or a black face in a medieval European village was so rare that it was a source of wonder and amazement to the local inhabitants, but not of hatred, fear, revulsion, prejudice, or claims and counterclaims about racial superiorities and inferiorities. Capitalism destroyed all that by creating the world market, colonial conquest and otherwise tossing the world into a heap after millennia in which everything and everyone had what seemed to be their place. The transformation was as rapid as it was revolutionary, by historical standards, and it rushed minds that were still feudal and not quite bourgeois, still provincial and not yet cosmopolitan, into a new world for which the working classes were the least prepared. It was “culture shock” to end all culture shocks, and with mass ignorance, bourgeois greed, political manipulation and “religious” charlatanism thrown into the mix, modern racism was an inevitable result.

“Race” has long provided capitalism with an excellent tool for keeping workers divided and fighting amongst themselves for the limited opportunities capitalism offers. The development of classconsciousness amongst workers is the only antidote that can unite them against their exploiters and end once and for all the system that breeds racism.

...Fox

(Continued from page 12)

performed by American workers who had attained a higher standard of poverty than their Mexican comrades. The lower wages then “telegraph” through the entire wages system of the country, echelon after echelon, affecting every occupation.

Of course, all of this redounds to increased profits and greater competitiveness for various capitalists as wages sink. All the while, the media proclaims with great fanfare how opportunities are being created for impoverished Mexican workers.

The only sensible response to this insane system is its total abolition—including its wages system and the commodity status of labor power—and the establishment of socialism.

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By Nathan Karp

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Discussion Meetings—Section San Francisco Bay Area will hold the following discussion meetings:

Oakland: July 23, 3–5 p.m., Rockridge Public Library, Community Room, 5366 College St.

Santa Clara: July 16 & 1:30–4 p.m.; Santa Clara Public Library, Sycamore Room, 2635 Homestead Rd.

San Francisco: July 30, 1:30–4 p.m., San Francisco Public Library, Conference Room, Grove & Larkin streets.

For more information please call 408-280-7266 or email slpsfba@netscape.net.

OHIO

Independence: Discussion Meeting—Section Cleveland will hold a discussion meeting on Sunday, June 26, 1–3 p.m., Independence Days Inn, 5555 Brecksville Rd. For more information call 440-237-7933.

OREGON

Portland: Discussion Meetings—Section Portland will hold the following discussion meetings from 10 a.m.–12 noon at the Portland Main Library, SW Yamhill & 10th: Saturday, July 9, “Labor Unions in the 21st Century: The Coming Struggle for Power Between Labor & Capital,” and Saturday, Aug. 13, “The Stressed-Out American Family.” For more information call Sid at 503-226-2881 or visit the section’s website at <http://slp.pdx.home.mindspring.com>.

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(April 15–June 10, 2005)

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Nicholas Poluhoff \$500.00 (Total)

Socialist Labor Party

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Balance (March 31)	\$203,508.07
Expenses (April & May)	19,035.90
Income (April & May)	15,053.64
Balance (May 31)	199,525.81
Deficit for 2005	\$ 13,588.25

China's Changing 'Model Worker'

By Diane Secor

The ruling classes of the world create their own mythology to obscure the class struggle and to keep workers in their place. The People's Republic of China (PRC) is no exception and the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) institution of the "model worker" is one of these myths.

The profile of the "model worker" has changed according to the changing needs of the PRC's system of bureaucratic despotism. When China's ruling class was more isolated from the capitalist world, the "model worker" was one who simply obeyed the Communist Party line and toiled without question or complaint in a mine, on a farm or at a factory.

Since the 1980s, when China's ruling class incorporated "market reforms" and opened the door to foreign capitalist investment, the profile of the "model worker" has changed to include Communist Party officials, capitalists, migrant workers—and now a basketball celebrity, Yao Ming of the NBA's Houston Rockets.

The CCP has consistently kept a tight rein on the selection process, with around 80 percent of the candidates for this award coming from the ranks of the CCP. (*Los Angeles Times*, April 27)

Not surprisingly, the PRC regime was involved in Yao Ming's rise to stardom in the first place. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that Yao Ming could collect as much as \$70 million from his Western capitalist promoters, such as "McDonalds, Apple Computer, Visa International, Tag Heuer and Garmin," during the next several years. PRC officials are reportedly getting a cut from this revenue, in addition to collecting 50 percent of Yao's own salary from the NBA.

This selection of the new "model worker" from all classes tends to obscure class divisions in the PRC. The CCP appointed Yao Ming as the "model worker" to commemorate May Day,

International Labor Day. Millionaire Yao Ming calls himself "a special kind of migrant worker." The migrant workers are among the poorest in China's working class, and among the most vulnerable. Migrant workers have told Western reporters that sometimes their employers just leave town, without even paying the workers their meager wages.



China Daily

China's new "model worker," Yao Ming.

China's ruling class now faces a growing migrant worker population, which lives in a very different world from the world of the Yao Mings. Just as during the Industrial Revolution in the West, as China has developed more advanced tools of production, farms and other rural enterprises have collapsed. This has caused massive migrations from the rural regions to the urban areas.

Millions of these migrant workers end up unemployed. Others are subjected to the most ruthless exploitation. One example is conditions

at the plant of Yue Yuen Industrial Holdings Co. Ltd., a subcontractor for Nike and Reebok.

Thomas Fuller captured the environment of a Yue Yuen plant in an *International Herald Tribune* report. "A thick gray haze hangs in the air," he wrote "and the landscape is a Dickensian vision of factories, smokestacks and heavily polluted canals." (April 20)

Even so, these migrant workers in this factory in southern China live in constant fear that Yue Yuen will close the plant, in pursuit of even cheaper labor in Vietnam and Indonesia.

This same pattern of the search for cheaper labor is happening throughout the world, and has existed throughout the history of capitalist rule. A classconscious working class, united in defense of their class interests, is a real threat to the existence of this system. In attempts to preempt this, ruling classes will launch intense propaganda campaigns.

The "model worker" of China serves to obscure the class struggle in much the same way as capitalist America's Horatio Alger's "rags to riches" mythology. Generations of American workers have been instructed to work hard, to have a positive attitude, and to believe that poverty and unemployment is the worker's own fault.

To this day, the Horatio Alger Association gives awards to those who fit the American capitalist view of the "model worker." The particular characteristics of the "ideal worker" or the "model worker" will vary from culture to culture. However, the purpose remains the same. China's current "model worker" institution is another manifestation of what Marx and Engels wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*: The bourgeoisie "compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image."

Fox & Critics Missed the Point

By B.B.

Mexican President Vicente Fox's recent comment that Mexican workers were taking jobs that not even African Americans wanted, and which subsequently created a furor and a flurry of charges of racism, bears closer scrutiny than it received in the capitalist press.

Fox, speaking at Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, in May, said: "There's no doubt that Mexican men and women—full of dignity, will power and a capacity for work—are doing the work that not even blacks want to do in the United States."

Sure, there is a strong element of racism involved in his statement, which reveals the attitudes he has imbibed as a member of the privileged class and which is rife among the former Coca-Cola executive's ruling-class clique that runs affairs in Mexico. However, there is a powerful economic fact that underlies the statement that capitalists prefer to ignore.

Workers' wages are no more than the price of the commodity labor power. The price of this commodity, like all others under the capitalist system, fluctuates with variations in supply and demand. Price is the monetary expression of value. The value of the commodity labor power is determined by the amount of socially necessary labor time required for its reproduction, which varies with the skill and education levels of each worker engaged in a variety of occupations. Such subsistence in itself varies

widely. In the case of Mexican workers, most of whom come from an impoverished background, those minimal requirements for a subsistence living may be lower, but that does not explain why their wages are.

What does explain it is something else that exempts labor from the same up-and-down fluctuations that the supply-and-demand formula has on other commodities. The thing that makes human labor power different from other commodities is that its owner, the worker, has no control over its supply. Unlike the capitalist owner of other commodities, workers cannot withhold their commodity from the market until rising demand boosts its price. The worker's commodity is perishable, but the worker cannot put it on ice to wait until conditions are right. Workers must sell or starve, and that has nothing to do with the color of their skin but with their mortal weakness.

The capitalist class knows this and will always seize upon an opportunity to drive down the value of labor power. In the case of Mexican workers desperate for work in the United States that may mean living 10 and 15 to a room; ignoring educational requirements for children, and generally living at a lower level of poverty than American workers. The overall effect is to lower the value of menial labor with in all kinds of occupations that were previously

(Continued on page 11)

2005 SLP National Convention



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