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SUSTAINER FUND

SLP Is Calling on All of Its Friends

Everyone needs a friend, a good friend, a sustaining friend, for when times get rough. Organizations also can be like that, especially organizations not likely to attract many friends from among those who benefit from the things the organization opposes.

The SLP falls into that category. It does not attract many capitalists, certainly none from among those who qualify as superrich. The reason is plain: the SLP has nothing for them, at least nothing that they think would be of benefit to them. They are wrong, of course, not because the SLP can offer them new ways to increase their wealth, but because it offers the hope of a better world that would enrich their lives as much as the lives of all those oppressed and exploited by their system.

But that class of people is too involved with themselves to be of any real benefit to the rest of humanity. The SLP must look to a better class of people with broader horizons and higher aspirations when in search of friends, good friends, friends to sustain it in its work. It must look to the working class for the men and women who have the vision and the motivation to assist the SLP in conducting the agitation, providing the education and stimulating the organization needed to bring that better world about.

That is why the SLP has established a National Contact Committee—to use the telephone to call on all of the party's friends, to alert them to a serious situation and to enlist them in the fight to keep the SLP in fighting condition. It is one reason why the SLP established the *SLP Sustainer Fund* years ago. The fund enables all of the party's good friends to contribute financially on a regular basis—even those who, for whatever reason, feel that they cannot join the SLP. The *Sustainer Fund* provides a way in which they can make their presence felt.

The SLP needs more of its friends to sign onto the *SLP Sustainer Fund*, to set their own regular monthly contribution at whatever level is most comfortable for them. The SLP needs more of these good and sustaining friends to help it eliminate the monthly deficits that have corralled our energies and limited our ability to conduct the party's work with the vigor and effectiveness needed to ensure its success.

Good friends are hard to come by, especially in rough times. Times are tough for the SLP just now, but we know our friends can pull us through. You do not need to wait for the new contact committee to get in touch with you. By using the coupon on page 6 you can sign on today. Or, if you prefer, send a contribution by mail or by visiting our website, where you can do so electronically. Either way, you will be helping to sustain the SLP in its work and the SLP will know how good a friend it has in you—and we will do all we can to show our appreciation by working harder at the things our friends and supporters expect of us.

Foreclosures Mount as Mortgage Crisis Grows

By Ken Boettcher

Every year since 2002, President Bush has proclaimed June to be National Home-owners Month, normally accompanied by swaggering political speeches claiming a rising rate of "home ownership" in the United States.

June arrived this year alongside estimates of from 2 to 5 million more home foreclosures over the next few years in what is being called the "subprime mortgage meltdown"—a credit crisis that may threaten the capitalist economy as a whole and bring increased suffering to even more millions of working-class families.

In his 2007 proclamation, Bush callously repeated the claim he made last year that "nearly 70 percent of Americans own their own homes." He did so without even a nod of recognition that the "meltdown" had already brought foreclosure to over a million households since last year, or to the suffering it promises to bring to far more millions before it runs its course.

While the Bush administration acknowledges the existence of the crisis, there is no education on its real nature to be had from Bush or his administration's opposition in the major media or the halls of Congress.

It takes nothing away from a grim appreciation of the social calamity befalling so many amongst the working class to first note the falsity of not only the claims of the Bush administra-

tion, but the way the subject is dealt with in the major media and by procapitalist pundits and politicians.

Capitalism's defenders proceed from dishonest beginnings: They count as "owners" all who have taken out home loans. In the same way, digging in your pocket for the money to buy groceries is proof that you already "own" the groceries in your cart!

How far from the truth this puts any discussion on home ownership is shown even by the government's own figures. A 2001 study by the Census Bureau and the Department of Housing and Urban Development shows that only about 40 percent of all residential properties—owner-occupied *and* rental units—are owned free and clear. Distilling that data further, the U.S. Census Bureau's *2000 Census of Population and Housing* says only 66.2 percent of occupied housing units are owner-occupied (33.8 percent are *renter-occupied*). Rather than nearly 70 percent of Americans "owning" their homes, only about 27 percent of all *owner-occupied* housing units are actually mortgage-free.

The remaining 43 percent of home "owners" are figments of procapitalist imagination. That point is being viciously made today by mass evictions across the country as a result of the "subprime mortgage meltdown." Miss a few payments and "your" home is history, regardless of

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SLP Convention Reaffirms Fundamental Principles

The following is the text of an amended version of the SLP's fundamental principles as adopted by the party's recent National Convention.

The Socialist Labor Party of America, assembled at its 47th National Convention, reasserts the inalienable right of all human beings to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

We hold that the purpose of government must be to secure to every citizen the enjoyment of this right. Taught by experience we hold, furthermore, that this right is an illusion for the overwhelming majority of people—the working class—under the present system of economic despotism that is essentially destructive of *their* life, *their* liberty and *their* happiness.

We hold that humanity cannot exercise their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness without ownership of the land on and the tools of production with which to work. Deprived of these, the lives, liberty and fate of the workers are in the hands of the class that owns those essentials for work and production.

Ownership of the means of life is today held by

a tiny minority in society, the capitalist class, exercising through this ownership and control an economic tyranny without parallel in history.

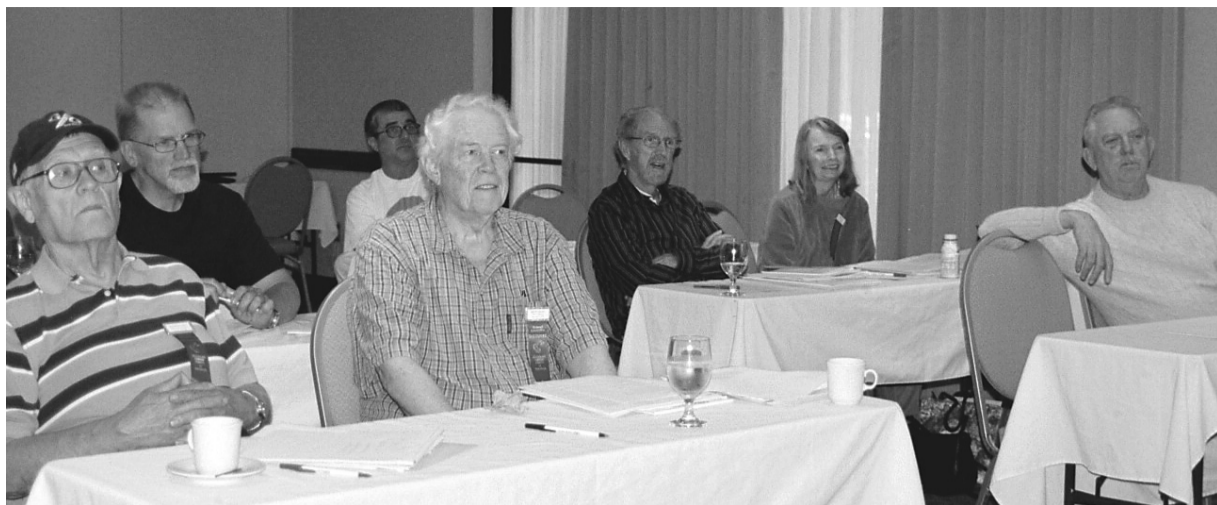
While that class owns the overwhelming majority of all wealth in our society, the overwhelming majority, the working class, owns a relatively insignificant fraction—usually no more than a home or a car in which a bank or finance company really has the largest interest. Put another way, most workers merely own the proverbial shirt on their back—and little else that helps them much in their struggle for existence.

The ownership of the bulk of the nation's wealth by the few is conclusive evidence that labor is robbed of the major portion of the product that labor alone produces. Thus the worker is denied the means of self-employment and, by compulsory idleness and poverty in wage slavery, is often deprived of even the necessities of life.

We hold that the existing contradiction between the theory of democratic government and the fact of a despotic economic system—the private ownership of the natural and social

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Visit our website at www.slp.org

D. Bills for *The People*

Seven of the delegates to the SLP's 47th National Convention.

SLP Holds 47th National Convention

By Donna Bills

Although the 47th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party will go down as one of the smallest on record, it also will be remembered as one of the hardest working, best disciplined and most determined to be successful conventions in party history.

The Party's Mission

National Secretary Robert Bills greeted the delegates with the following brief address before calling the convention to order shortly after 9 a.m. on Saturday, July 14:

"It is my honor and privilege to welcome you to this, the 47th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party, and to wish you all success in your deliberations over the next few days. What you decide here will be of great importance, not only as it affects the immediate interests of the organization you directly represent, but those of the working class in whose interests the SLP has struggled for the past 117 years.

"During that time, the SLP has never wavered in its determination to advance the interests of the working class in its struggle to break the bonds of wage slavery and to overcome the destructive and antisocial effects of the capitalist system. This is not to say that the SLP has not made mistakes over the years. Undoubtedly it has. There is, however, one mistake that the SLP has never made, and that is to compromise, sully or in any way betray the fundamental principles to which it dedicated itself and which it pursued with untiring determination across the entire span of the 20th century.

"The SLP still has a historic mission to fulfill. Its work is not done. It is our purpose here to ensure that it can continue to pursue that mission until the working class heeds the party's call to organize its political and economic might, to abolish class rule and establish the Socialist Republic.

"In that respect, the task that confronts you is large. It may be too large to complete during your deliberations of a few days. Nonetheless, I am supremely confident that you will dedicate yourselves to accomplishing as much as can be reasonably expected in so short a time and that the SLP can then get on with the work that must yet be done to accomplish its great mission."

The Convention's Work

The convention then undertook the task of organizing itself by seating 11 delegates and electing the officers needed to conduct its deliberations. Ken Boettcher, attending the convention as an NEC member, served as chairperson. Donna Bills, attending as organizer of the San Francisco Bay Area section, served as recording secretary.

The National Secretary presented a report containing sections on "National Headquarters," "Party Finances," "State of Organization," "General Activities," and "Party Press and Literature." He also submitted a proposed resolution on immigration on behalf of the National Office.

Following the national secretary's report, the delegates devoted several hours to discussing its various sections. The primary focus of those discussions, however, was the party's financial crisis and how the problem might be resolved. Those readers who follow the financial summaries printed in each issue of *The People* are no doubt aware of the SLP's declining revenue. As the National Secretary reported: "The fundamental question that confronts this convention, and against which all others pale into insignificance, is *what to do about this financial crisis?*" (Emphasis added.)

When discussion ended, the convention elected every delegate to one of the three committees established: Headquarters and Finance, State of Organization, and Party Press and Literature. The convention also assigned specific tasks to each committee, which included the sections of the national secretary's report, election of a National Executive Committee and national officers for the 2007-2009 term, and consideration of the proposed resolution on immigration.

The convention received two encouraging communications from SLP supporters in Europe. One came from Jim Plant of England and the other (read to the convention by Comrade Mary Brlas) was from Severino Majkus of Croatia.

Much of the convention was devoted to committee work, which entailed more deliberations, closer attention to details and writing reports. When the convention was in session, the committees presented their finished reports to the assembled delegates for consideration. The ensuing discussions either led to adoption of the reports or referral back to committee for modification and eventual adoption.

Free Immigration a Human Right

As a result of the delegates' long hours and hard work, the convention took a number of important actions. Among others, it adopted a resolution in which it reaffirmed the party's "commitment to the principle that unrestricted emigration of workers from one country to another is a human right" and "reiterated its demand for the abolition of all laws designed to restrict or manipulate the immigration of workers into the United States,

[and] rebukes recent attempts by the Bush administration and by Congress to overhaul rather than repeal those laws...." The convention also declared that the SLP "extends a fraternal hand of welcome to all immigrant workers to the United States, and invites them to join in our efforts to abolish capitalism and establish the free and democratic Socialist Industrial Republic of free and emancipated labor in this country, in their respective homelands, and throughout the world." (See page 3 for the complete text.)

The convention also amended the Party's Declaration of Fundamental Principles for purposes of "updating language, editing for clarity and removing outdated figures." (See page 1 for the text.)

In addition, the convention attended to its constitutional responsibilities of electing a National Executive Committee and a national secretary for the 2007-2009 term of office.

All of these actions are subject to approval by general vote by the entire membership of the SLP.

The convention also commended the SLP's national office's "ongoing efforts to expand the offerings on the [party's web]site."

Party Finances

"The SLP confronts a financial crisis that is even greater than the one that had arisen before the end of 2003," the national secretary informed the delegates in a no-nonsense summary of the party's current financial predicament. "As of June 30, the party's cash reserves were down to \$55,169.00...and the deficit for the year had climbed to \$23,619.00....At that rate of depletion, about \$3,937.00 a month, the SLP will be flat broke by the end of April 2008...."

At another point, the national secretary reported that while "the NEC approved text for a new pamphlet on the Iraq war earlier this year...lack of funds prevented its publication."

In response, the convention took important steps toward resolving the financial crisis. The convention directed that a credit card-enabled transaction function be added to the party's website to facilitate donations. (We are pleased to report that the party's website is now equipped to accept online financial contributions.)

The convention also directed that a vigorous fundraising effort begin immediately with the short-term target of cutting the SLP's deficit in half. It called upon all SLP members to become regular contributors to the SLP Sustainer Fund and to assess themselves the equivalent of one week's wages. In addition, the convention directed the newly elected NEC to appoint a National Contact Committee to work under the supervision of the SLP's national office for the initial purpose of raising funds. The NEC fulfilled this obligation shortly after the convention adjourned and the contact committee began its work in early August.

Composition of the Convention

This is the second SLP convention held since the party amended its Constitution so that members of the outgoing NEC and the organizers of the local sections would be seated with full voice and vote along side of delegates elected by a general vote of the party's entire membership. The purpose of the change was to com-

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47TH NATIONAL CONVENTION'S

Resolution on Immigration

The Socialist Labor Party of America reasserts that the international class struggle is a fact, that the working and ruling classes of the world have nothing in common, and that every attempt to prevent the working classes of the world from uniting in their own interests requires the unqualified condemnation of all those who profess to speak in the interests of labor, regardless of their assertions and pretenses to the contrary.

For that reason, the SLP reaffirms its commitment to the principle that unrestricted emigration of workers from one country to another is a human right, and that every attempt to limit, control or manipulate the working classes of the world in the free exercise of that right is meant to serve the interests of the ruling classes of the world and also requires the unqualified condemnation of all those who profess to speak in the interests of labor.

Accordingly, the SLP reiterates its demand for the abolition of all laws designed to restrict or manipulate the immigration of workers into the United States, rebukes recent attempts by the Bush administration and by Congress to overhaul rather than repeal those laws, and denounces every attempt to conceal the real motives behind these efforts under the guise of such false pretenses as "national security," protecting the wages and living standards of American workers against "unfair competition" from immigrant labor, or defending immigrant workers against ruthless exploitation by unscrupulous employers.

Recently, one such attempt at manipulating the nation's restrictions on free immigration failed

in the U.S. Senate. Republican Sen. Arlen Specter falsely asserted the purpose of that attempt when he said, "It is indispensable to have a guest worker program to take care of the needs of the economy."

Many others who supposedly support immigrants also have asserted that the U.S. economy would collapse if every undocumented worker were deported from our country because such industries as agriculture, hospitality, health care, manufacturing and construction rely on immigrants, and that they are working the jobs that native-born workers do not want. Regardless of the motivation behind such an argument, no capitalist who benefits from the exploitation of immigrant labor would disagree with it. Moreover, the argument is false—no matter who puts it forward—because there are millions of unemployed Americans who would willingly fill those jobs if they were not dirty, dangerous and so poorly paid—conditions fully within the control of those industries to change. However, if the argument were true it would only attest that capitalism cannot survive without the vicious exploitation of labor and the perpetuation of human misery. Such a system condemns itself out of hand and does not deserve to survive.

Still others having different motives and concerns mistakenly scapegoat immigrants as the source of stagnant or falling wages, declining living standards and unemployment, and call for punitive measures against them. In truth, however, unemployment, and whatever pressure immigrant labor places on wages, is a direct result of the competitive capitalist system itself. It is a byproduct of the system of wage labor, which forces workers to compete for their livelihoods on the basis of the conditions laid down by the capitalist system. Accordingly, efforts to scapegoat immigrants only serve to divide workers against one another, place greater hardships on immigrants and their families, and draw attention away from the capitalist source of these problems.

In addition, the SLP recognizes that millions of workers who have immigrated to the United

States in hopes of improving their lives have been bitterly disappointed and subjected to the most ruthless exploitation by the American ruling class. Indeed, the recently proposed but defeated "guest worker program" was similar to and in some respects indistinguishable from past efforts by America's capitalist class to control and import cheap labor to maximize profits, e.g., the infamous Bracero Program that brought in millions of poor, unskilled Mexican workers on a temporary basis from 1942 to 1964.

Moreover, the so-called unions that support the capitalist system of exploitation deserve special condemnation because they have sought to benefit from such conditions by ingratiating themselves with immigrant workers and opportunistically pretending to represent their interests.

From the preceding it is clear that capitalism with its private ownership of the economy and exploitation of wage labor is responsible for economic hardship and insecurity for all workers; that it compels workers for economic reasons to leave their home countries and seek employment elsewhere; that immigration laws, whether promoted by so-called liberals or conservatives, only serve to benefit the capitalist class. Accordingly, the critical issue facing America's workers today is the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of socialism. Therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Socialist Labor Party reiterates its unqualified opposition to all efforts to restrict the right to free immigration; and

Resolved, that the Socialist Labor Party condemns the capitalist exploiters of all workers, their labor lieutenants and the "unions" that seek to perpetuate the system of wage slavery; and

Resolved, that the Socialist Labor Party extends a fraternal hand of welcome to all immigrant workers to the United States, and invites them to join in our efforts to abolish capitalism and establish the free and democratic Socialist Industrial Republic of free and emancipated labor in this country, in their respective homelands and throughout the world.

... Convention

(Continued from page 2)

bine experience with inexperience and thereby encourage newer members to stand for election to "learn the ropes" without being overwhelmed by the responsibility being a delegate implies. The change already has proven to be advantageous and resulted in an exchange of ideas that have redounded to the benefit of the SLP in the short run. In the long run it will help ensure that those who lack experience now will have gained it when it comes their turn to integrate even newer members into the democratic processes that have always been a hallmark of the organization.

Indeed, despite the complex and exhausting nature of the work at the SLP's 47th National Convention, a spirit of determination, optimism and camaraderie prevailed. The delegates ended the convention on a high note of renewed dedication to the principles and program of the SLP and with the resolve to do all within their ability to overcome the current financial crisis and move the SLP forward.

'The Entire War Is an Atrocity'

By Jim Plant

An article in *The Nation*, July 30, reports interviews conducted over several months with Iraq war combat veterans, graphically demonstrating the brutalization and moral degradation of many in the U.S. military resulting from the invasion and continuing imperialist occupation of Iraq.

The Nation article does not concentrate on such widely reported U.S. military atrocities as the massacre in Haditha in 2005 or the rape and murder of a 14-year-old in Mahmudiya, but on "routine" and continuing human rights abuses. A series of killings, maimings and wanton destruction, which in total induced a sniper from the 263rd Armor Battalion, to comment: "It's not individual atrocity, it's the fact that the entire war is an atrocity."

The authors state, "Dozens of those interviewed witnessed Iraqi civilians, including children, dying from American firepower. Some participated in such killings; others treated or investigated civilian casualties....Many also heard such stories, in detail from members of their unit. The soldiers, sailors and marines emphasized that not all troops took part in indiscriminate killings....But they nevertheless described such acts as common and they said they often go unreported—and almost always unpunished."

From the interviews a picture emerges, through a combination of gung-ho recklessness and criminal behavior, of an army that frequently commits acts of cold-blooded violence. A

number of interviewees revealed that the military will attempt to frame innocent bystanders as insurgents, often after panicked U.S. troops have fired into groups of unarmed Iraqis. The veterans said that the troops involved would round up any survivors and accuse them of being the resistance while planting Kalashnikov AK47 rifles beside corpses to make it appear that they had died in combat. One of the interviewed soldiers revealed that the army also planted 9mm handguns and shovels to make it look like civilians were shot while digging a hole for a roadside bomb.

The worst abuses often occur during raids on private homes when soldiers are hunting for insurgents. Thousands of such raids have taken place, usually at dead of night. The veterans point out that most are futile and serve only to terrify civilians while generating sympathy for the resistance.

At the time of the invasion of Iraq the incessant propaganda emanating from Washington was that coalition forces were going to "liberate" Iraq from tyranny, to bring democracy, peace and prosperity to that country, and that the invading forces would do their utmost to avoid civilian casualties. At the top of the agenda, it was proclaimed, was the winning of the "hearts and minds" of the Iraqi people.

But the typical attitude of the invasion force becomes evident from the comments of many veterans: "I guess while I was there," stated an enlisted man with the 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry,

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Badge of Slavery

When the Department of Labor counts up the number of workers who will lose their lives in job-related "accidents" in 2007 it seems likely now that it will have to include the six coal miners trapped in a Utah coal mine since Aug. 6. Three construction workers who died in another coal mine in Indiana that same month certainly will be among those included in the gory statistic. Greg Jolstad, another construction worker who died at work in August, also is certain to be represented.

Jolstad had nothing to do with coal mines. He was working on the trans-Mississippi bridge that collapsed in Minnesota on Aug. 1. At least eight other people died and 100 or more were injured when the bridge's supports buckled and the structure plunged into the river.

More than 140,000 cars, trucks and other vehicles passed over that bridge on an average workday. The vast majority of those who occupied the vehicles that traversed it were commuters. Although Jolstad was working on and not driving over the bridge, and though he did not drive for a living, he had several things in common with many of those who were crossing the span when it fell.

The disaster occurred during the evening commute. Many of those who had crossed safely over the span, and at least some of those who were not so lucky, were working men and women headed home after a day's work or to night jobs in Minneapolis or St. Paul. How many who happened to be on the bridge at the moment it gave out, how many were driving themselves, and how many were carpooling, is hard to say. However, every day nearly 130 million Americans drive themselves or carpool from home to work and back again. Jolstad also had driven to work, some 90 miles from his home north of the Twin Cities.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health keeps track of the number of workers killed and injured while operating vehicles on the job. "From 1980 to 1992, motor vehicle crashes were the leading cause of work-related deaths in U.S. workers," according to one of its studies. "During this period, traffic-related motor vehicle crashes accounted for the deaths of 15,830 workers—or 20 percent of all fatal workplace injuries....The number of traffic-related deaths was eight times the number not related to traffic."

More than 42,000 people lost their lives on the nation's streets and highways last year alone. Many of those traffic "accidents" involved workers commuting to and from work. When the Department of Labor counts the number of workers injured or killed in relation to their jobs, however, those who sustain their injuries or lose their lives while commuting are not included.

According to Alan Pisarski, author of *Commuting in America III*, published last October by the Transportation Research Board, "Commuting is the major factor in determining peak travel demand and therefore serves to define the high cost peak capacity and service requirements of our transportation systems far more than other travel purposes."

"Workers are the major part of the population and their travel activities constitute the major part of all travel," he added. "Much of that travel is wrapped around, intertwined with, or otherwise affected by their work travel activities, whether the location, route, time or mode of travel."

Truth is, however, that neither Pisarski nor anyone else knows precisely how much of the nation's highway traffic is directly or indirectly connected with workers transporting themselves to work and home again. "Commuting exists in a continuum of transportation," Pisarski conceded. While commuting "is just one demand that we make on our transportation systems," sorting it out from those other demands is a difficulty that no one has overcome. As Pisarski put it: "It is not feasible to describe the share of this total activity represented by commuting because of the mix of freight, services, and passenger activities. There are no comprehensive data sources...from which such a picture could be constructed."

While that may be, it is understood that the vast majority of American workers are forced to commute to work. They have no other choice. Furthermore, the amount of time that workers spent traveling to and from work increased dramatically during the 1990s. According to one summary of Pisarski's report, "The number of workers with commutes lasting more than 60 minutes grew by more than 50 percent between 1990 and 2000," and there is every reason to believe that it has continued to increase in the years since.

To reach their jobs and return home after a day's work, workers not only travel longer but farther than ever before. Indeed, the proportion of "workers leaving their home county to work...has risen from under 24 percent to almost 27 percent in 10 years," according to Pisarski, and "of the new workers added during the decade [1990s], about 51 percent worked outside their home county, an extraordinary change."

Because commuting is a necessity for tens of millions of workers, it is clear that the vast number of automobiles in the country represents something different from the sign of prosperity and well-being it is said to be. "Actually, Americans aren't addicted to their cars any more than office workers are addicted to their computers," as Ted Balaker and Sam Staley wrote for *The Washington Post* last January. "Both items are merely tools that allow people to accomplish tasks faster and more conveniently."

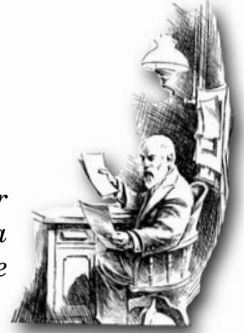
Paul Lafargue, son-in-law of Karl Marx, once observed that before capitalism "the laborer, slave or serf, was exploited...but the proprietor had at least certain obligations towards him; e.g., the slaveholder was bound to feed his human beast of burden whether he worked or not. The capitalist has been released from all charges, which now rest upon the free laborer."

Another of the obligations capitalists have freed themselves from is that of transporting their laborers to and from the workplaces where they are exploited. Today's "free workers" not only must bear the cost, but also run the risk that commuting implies. While the vast number of cars and trucks that workers use for the purpose may create the illusion of freedom and prosperity they are, in truth, merely another sign of modern-day slavery—*wage slavery*.

A De Leon Editorial

History's Lesson

Compromise and conciliation doom all aspirations for progress to failure. The struggle against slavery in America did not succeed until that lesson was learned. The struggle against capitalism and wage slavery demands no less.



No Compromise!

(Daily People, Oct. 28, 1904)

William Lloyd Garrison, in a recent statement on the cause of the failure of tariff reform in this country, makes this fine historical comparison:

"The explanation is not far to seek. So long as vested wrongs are treated in the manner of opera bouffe, the courteous assurance given that the attack will be extremely mild, the missiles gentle, the surrender of the fort a generation or two ahead perfectly satisfactory, nobody except the assaulters can be expected to tremble. The robber defenders go on comfortably with their stealing. Compact, defiant, determined, what danger can come to them from such restrained and scrupulous besiegers?"

"The fortress of American slavery once had a like expression. Its tenderhearted opponents protested their purpose to effect a very gradual abolition. Due regard to the rights of legal property and the slave owners' situation was to be observed. Consequently, an era of good feeling existed between the combatants, and antislavery talk of distant emancipation created no flutter in an oppressor's bosom. Benjamin Lundy was unmolested while preaching his indefinite abolition in the slave states. It was a different matter when the cry of 'immediate and unconditional emancipation' was raised, for a dangerous enemy had appeared.

"History records that the one effective movement ending in Negro emancipation began with the advent of the uncompromising Abolitionists."

To the Socialist this quotation is fraught with deep significance. Its historical insistence on uncompromising action as a necessary prerequisite to success, so admirably illustrated by the failure of tariff reform, is a bugle blast proclaiming the ultimate rout of any movement not based on a demand for the unconditional surrender of capitalism.

It points out plainly that the socialism which advocates palliative measures, "immediate demands" and opportunistic movements, is doomed to failure. Based on a desire for "gradual evolution," or a belief in the possibility of friendly cooperation between the classes, or a "due regard to the rights of private property," as shown in the proposed measures to buy out capitalists, this socialism corrupts and vitiates the instinct for working-class liberation, and promotes all sorts of opera bouffe performances, with the result that the power and existence of capitalism are strengthened and prolonged, while true socialism is weakened and retarded. To paraphrase the closing sentence of Garrison: Only with the advent of uncompromising Socialists will history be able to record the beginning of an effective movement for working-class emancipation. Happily, the uncompromising Socialists are here. They are enrolled in the Socialist Labor Party. History has already begun her record.

what is socialism?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

You are needed in the ranks of Socialists fighting for a better world, to end poverty, racism, sexism, environmental disaster and to avert the still potent threat of a catastrophic nuclear war. Find out more about the program and work of the Socialist Labor Party and join us to help make the promise of socialism a reality.

at large

'Sicko': U.S. Health Care Stinks Are We So Surprised?

By Bruce Cozzini

When the principal gateway institutions for health care in the United States are insurance companies, whose profits are directly related to the health services they deny to patients, it is no wonder that the quality of U.S. health care service is low and the cost high. Michael Moore's new film "Sicko" cleverly demonstrates the ethical bankruptcy of the insurance-driven health care system. But his only alternative is to show rosy versions of the Canadian, British, French and Cuban universal health systems. Moore falls far short of offering a solution to the health care problems of American capitalism.

With such a broad target to attack, Moore makes "Sicko" possibly his best film. Noting that as many as 50 million Americans are without insurance, he offers a few examples of these, including a carpenter who has cut off two fingers with a saw and must choose between surgery to reattach one for \$10,000 or the other for \$60,000. Also a poor woman, whom a hospital has put in a taxi to be dumped on the street in front of a homeless shelter, is filmed by a security camera as she wanders, bewildered, wearing nothing but a hospital gown until someone sees her and ushers her inside.

Most of Moore's attention, and gallows humor, is focused on the HMOs and other elements of the health insurance system. The insurer of a woman taken unconscious in an ambulance to an emergency room denies coverage because she did not get prior approval—perhaps she had not planned the accident in advance. Another insurer demanded repayment of money paid to a woman for an operation, because she had neglected to disclose a yeast infection she had treated years before as a "prior condition."

That these were not isolated instances was confirmed in interviews. The first was with a man who sleuthed out such "prior conditions" to deny payments. Eventually his conscience was bothered enough that he quit his highly lucrative practice. A second, before a congressional committee, was by a woman doctor employed by

an insurer to seek reasons to deny treatments to desperately ill patients. She saved the insurer around half a million dollars before she too succumbed to attacks of conscience.

Moore puts together a clever film montage on the origins of the current system. An AMA-distributed broadcast from the 1960s has Ronald



Sicko-themovie.com

Reagan warning that universal health care was a step toward communism. And as a prelude to the Health Maintenance Organization Act of 1973, Moore shows a conversation between John Ehrlichman and then-President Richard Nixon taped in 1971. Ehrlichman is heard telling Nixon with regard to the Kaiser Permanente HMO plan that "the less care they give them, the more money they make." "It's for profit," Nixon gloats.

In an interesting twist, Moore shows Hilary Clinton advocating the Clinton health care plan before Congress during the Clinton administration. Then, in noting the overwhelming dona-

tions by pharmaceutical and insurance businesses to politicians, he observes that presidential candidate Hilary Clinton is now listed as the second highest recipient of health care industry donations.

Much of the rest of the film is devoted to showcasing the universal health care systems of Canada, United Kingdom and France. Here Moore shows up for the first time as his usual on-screen persona asking disingenuous questions. For example, in a National Health Service hospital in the U.K., after being told there are no out-of-pocket costs for patients, he has an "Aha!" moment on seeing a "Cashier" window only to be told that is where low-income patients can come to be reimbursed for travel expenses. His attitude toward these health care systems is totally uncritical, and interviews are set up to highlight the best features of each of these plans. Clearly, this is the model he wants U.S. health care to follow.

In what feels like a diversion from the rest of the film, Moore takes up the issue of the volunteer workers in the World Trade Center rescue/cleanup efforts. Suffering from disabling lung and systemic illnesses from exposure to airborne debris, they have been unable to find medical care from the state and city of New York and federal governments. In a typical Michael Moore futile gesture, he tries to get treatment for a group of WTC workers at the Guantanamo prison camp, where he claims that prisoners are getting the best care possible. He then takes them to Cuba proper, where they are welcomed with open arms, as heroes, and treated in facilities of the national health system.

The images in the film are powerful and would suggest that some form of universal health care is the answer. Certainly, it would be better than what we have. But with Republicans and Democrats alike in the pockets of the insurance and pharmaceutical companies, the prospect of such change is unlikely, and, in the long run, such reforms would not be enough.

What is not mentioned at all is that health care is a class issue. Owners and executives of corporations do not need to sign up with Blue Cross. They can pay for any and all health care they need. For workers health care is a component of wages. A wage is supposed to sustain a worker and family so that the worker can perform his/her productive tasks. As wages in general have been driven down as capitalist competition intensifies, so has the amount that companies pay for health insurance. In a world of intensified global economic competition, it is unlikely that even existing universal health systems would be safe.

Moore has written a letter to people who have expressed their support for the film, suggesting various forms of political action to move toward some form of universal health care. He suggests that they organize and write to national and local politicians and candidates. His letter is entitled "See the Movie, Start the Revolution." But his view of revolution is not enough.

For workers to have full access to the best health care they need to organize to create a real revolution to get rid of the capitalist system that views health care as just another business to gain profit. In a socialist system workers would collectively own and democratically operate all of the means of production and distribution and would employ the full productive capacity of society to meet the needs of all, including health care. From research and training to the delivery of care, both in prevention and treatment of disease, it would be possible to provide a level of care for all beyond the imagination of current health care systems. So yes—start the revolution!

FEMA's Toxic Incompetence Still at Work for Gulf Victims

The Federal Emergency Management Agency had precious little to offer the victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita for weeks after the storms blew ashore in 2005. Delays in delivering 120,000 mobile homes to homeless Gulf Coast residents in the months that followed provided more evidence of FEMA's shortcomings.

Many, thankful for the cramped quarters of these tiny trailers, soon learned that FEMA had again failed them. They developed symptoms of formaldehyde poisoning, including bloody noses and, as *Time* magazine recently put it, "burning sensations in the eyes, nose and throat; nausea; coughing; chest tightness; wheezing; skin rashes and allergic reactions." FEMA failed to test the trailers—whose interiors were largely constructed of formaldehyde-bearing particle-board—before distributing them.

After one trailer tested well above federal standards for formaldehyde in 2006, FEMA's legal department advised that more testing "would imply FEMA's ownership of the issue," and advised against further testing. In July, almost a year and a half after the first com-

B.B. for *The People*

One of FEMA's trailers in a New Orleans neighborhood.

plaint, FEMA announced that it and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention would finally conduct testing of the air quality in the trailers.

President Bush promised in the fall of 2005 to rebuild the battered Gulf Coast with "one of the largest reconstruction efforts the world has ever seen." For now, it would be a step in the right direction just to get FEMA's toxic incompetence out of the picture.

—K.B.

...Mortgage Crisis

(Continued from page 1)

how much equity you have in it.

It is not in the interests of those who proselytize for capitalism to contribute to any real understanding of this crisis. Socialists, on the other hand, know that such a meltdown was virtually foreordained by the natural workings of capitalism.

Under capitalism there is a perpetual housing crisis for the working class as a whole. Workers in this economic system receive as wages only a fraction of the value of the products they produce, not for the satisfaction of human wants and needs, but for the profit of a tiny capitalist minority.

In such a system, riches flow to this socially idle handful while producing unrelenting pressure to drive down the wages of the productive working-class majority and reduce the amount of socially necessary human labor power needed in production. The system thus inevitably produces unemployment and poverty; as a result, many workers simply cannot afford the housing they need.

At the same time, it is simply not profitable enough for developers to produce low-cost housing—so they do not, unless enticed by subsidies, tax credits or other government incentives. They prefer building luxury housing, office buildings and other structures that cater to the needs of the capitalist class and thus bring more attractive profits.

This housing crisis is inherent in capitalism; it is in fact a major contributor to the ongoing rise of homelessness in capitalist countries everywhere, including the United States, where the most widely cited study estimates that more than 3.5 million people—1.35 million of them children—experience homelessness every year.

While the housing crisis under capitalism is permanent for workers, what prompted this particular exacerbation of the problem was a

“perfect storm” of working-class need and capitalist greed.

Banks and other capitalist institutions found opportunities for profitable investment and speculation severely depressed after the crash of the so-called dot-com boom in 2000–2001. To create new “investment opportunities” some simply changed their loan requirements, realizing that they could repackage risky loans and profit by selling them on secondary markets to large banks and other capitalist-class speculators at less than face value. Federal regulators obliged by looking the other way, and many lenders began to emerge outside traditional regulated institutions.

Working-class borrowers, often desperate for homes but unable to afford traditional loans, were sold on using variable-rate and other “nontraditional” loans to get into a home. Unscrupulous lenders convinced them that rising home prices would help them repay the loans. As long as speculators found buyers for repackaged loan “investments,” housing prices continued to rise.

U.S. finance capitalists in the secondary markets even did their own repackaging, selling to overseas institutions. But when top institutions here and abroad eventually had enough and stopped buying, the whole “boom”—a house of cards built largely on deceit—began crashing down.

As *The People* wrote of the roots of capitalism’s last big financial crisis, the huge savings and loan debacle of 1980s, “It has long been evident that if you poke your finger into the social, economic or political fabric of the capitalist system, you will find it rotten with moral decay and corruption. The corruption and the corrupters can be found everywhere. They are the logical and inescapable consequences of a society based on exploitation and greed. The very values capitalism places upon people and things—particularly its emphasis on

individual success in the accumulation of wealth—inevitably place a heavy strain on moral integrity and ethics.”

The present crisis already appears likely to bring on a credit crunch systemwide and set off the next of capitalism’s recurring economic busts—with more joblessness and poverty for workers.

The “meltdown” is also sure to produce reform proposals that might, if enacted, trim the worst offenders from the lending industry. That will be too late for millions of working-class families already affected by the crisis, and can bring no resolution to the permanent housing crisis for workers under capitalism.

What it comes down to is this: The only genuine solution for the housing problem for workers is to organize on a classwide basis to foreclose on capitalism itself. A socialist democracy in which the tools of production and the land are collectively owned by all and democratically operated will carry on production to satisfy human wants and needs rather than for the profit of a few.

Only in such a society can the producers receive the full social value of their labor. Socialism alone can end exploitation, unemployment and poverty. Together with them the housing problem will disappear, for the first time in history.

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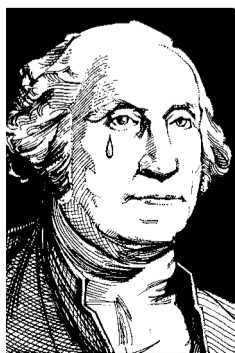
Freedom of Speech for Sale

Author A.J. Liebling, closely associated with *The New Yorker* from 1935 until his death in 1963, once wrote, “Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one.” Liebling should know; he was a star participant in the capitalist media apparatus of his day.

In capitalist America, freedom of speech is often equally circumscribed. Take the case of the Farmworkers Support Committee (FSC) in Bridgeton, N.J. In 2006, the city did not charge the group when it held a rally advocating human rights for migrant and immigrant workers. This year the city at first demanded \$2,000 up front to allow a rally, and then relented after negotiations with the FSC. Nevertheless, the group received a bill from the city for \$1,500 for “police expenses” a few weeks after its rally.

The FSC and the American Civil Liberties Union have filed suit, alleging that “this fee amounts to a user’s tax on free speech,” which, if allowed to stand, “will mean that only the wealthy will be afforded the right to speak out on issues.”

Because the city did not have an ordinance on the books that allows it to impose fees for marches and parades, the legal challenge reportedly may have a chance. That having such an ordinance can set up a better defense for the city is a sad commentary on the state of freedom of speech in the United States.



ABCAP for *The People*

—K.B.

directory

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hammer blows

Who Has the Funds?

An Associated Press report in July says, "Contractors hired to clean up after Hurricane Katrina are fuming over delays in getting paid by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and some fear the red tape will discourage companies from bidding on the rebuilding projects that lie ahead for New Orleans."

Some contractors have walked off the job; others have sued to be paid for demolition and

debris removal completed over the last year and a half. One company cited in the report says FEMA owes it about \$150 million; another has sued for \$1.7 million. The report says, "The situation is so bad...that bidders are tough to find for demolition and debris-removal work that remains nearly two years after [Katrina]."

Perhaps contractors in the Gulf should look among their fellow contractors in Iraq for the missing funds. There, according to CNN, con-

tractors are so awash in funds that "Nearly \$9 billion...spent on Iraqi reconstruction is unaccounted for."

Campaigning on Tragedy

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani has reportedly made millions from consulting and speeches, largely thanks to his media image as a post-9/11 hero.

Now, after years of profiteering on the tragedy, Giuliani's Republican Party boosters are helping him run for the party's presidential candidacy on the same image he has been selling. Giuliani obliges by rarely failing to mention the terrorist attacks in his campaign stops.

Some workers have objected to his campaigning as a hero. A video posted on the Internet in July by the International Association of Firefighters claims that as mayor of New York for eight years, Giuliani was ultimately responsible for the failure to upgrade important firefighting equipment that led to the deaths of 343 firefighters.

Their message may lend just a bit more of the tragedy to his image than Giuliani and his handlers would like.

Ethics Is Big Business

According to a recent article in *The Washington Post*, "Justice Department probes of congressional corruption continued to provide big business for Washington's white-collar criminal defense attorneys, who billed at least \$1 million in the second quarter to current and former House members involved in federal investigations" into the activities of 11 politicians.

Rest assured that little will come of the effort vis-à-vis permanently cleaning up Washington. The money will always go where the interests of the capitalist class lie, and the political state exists to serve those interests. In the meantime, as one commentator recently put it, "Lawyers rejoice." The average fee for a lawyer who specializes in defending against ethics investigations has reportedly grown to \$600 an hour.

—K.B.

...Principles

(Continued from page 1)

opportunities—divides the nation into two classes: the nonproducing, but owning, capitalist class, and the producing, but propertyless, working class; throws society into the convulsions of the class struggle and invariably perverts government to the uses and benefit of the capitalist class.

As the natural result of social evolution, the capitalist system now impels its own downfall. Having completed its normal development, this system and its political reflex, the state, are now outdated. No longer able to dispose readily of huge quantities of surplus commodities in foreign markets, each capitalist nation seeks desperately to crowd out its competitors, with the result that wars and conflicts convulse much of the world. In this mad struggle for survival, the working classes of all nations are the chief victims.

Against such a system the Socialist Labor Party raises the banner of revolution and demands the unconditional surrender of the capitalist class. In this crisis reform measures are irrelevant, and history teaches that where a social revolution is pending and, for whatever reason, is not accomplished, reaction—dictatorship—is the alternative.

Having outlived its social usefulness, capitalism must give way to a new social order—a social order wherein government shall rest on industry, on the basis of useful occupations, instead of resting on territorial, or political, representation.

This new social system must be the Socialist Industrial Union form of government if the needs of the vast majority are to be served, and if social progress is to be the law of the future as it has been in the past. Upon the workers rests the duty of effecting this revolutionary change in as peaceful, civilized manner as possible, using the ballot and industrial organization to effect the change.

We, therefore, call upon the wage-workers of

America to organize under the banner of the Socialist Labor Party into a classconscious body, aware of its rights and determined to secure them.

We further call upon the wage-workers of America to organize into integral Socialist Industrial Unions to enforce their ballot, and to fulfill the needs and purposes of the Socialist Industrial Union government. Industrial unionism is the Socialist Republic in the making; that goal reached, the industrial union is the Socialist Republic in operation.

Finally, we also call upon all thinking citizens to place themselves squarely upon the ground of working-class interests, and join with us in this noble work of human emancipation so that we may put summary end to the most onerous threat to human existence, the barbarous class conflict.

The land and all the means of production, transportation, communication and distribution must be placed in the hands of the useful producers as a collective body. Substituting the Socialist Industrial Republic of Labor for the present state of planless production, industrial and international wars and social disorder, a commonwealth can be built in which all workers shall have the free exercise and full benefit of their faculties, multiplied by all the benefits of modern civilization under a democratically controlled economy that is collectively owned by all.

Funds

(June 16–Aug. 10)

Agitation Fund

Charles Bateman \$10.00 (Total)

Press Security Fund

Yolanda Koptur \$100; Tony Marsella \$50; Randolph Petsche \$40; \$20 each Charles Saunders, Curt D. Walker, Daniel Goodsaid, Josephine Burdua; Albert C. Goldberg \$15; \$10 each Ali Ebrahimi, Gordon Bennett, Mark McGrath, Marotte, W.B. Shapira; Roberta Diamond \$8; David Bartle \$5.20; \$5 each Donald L. Ward, Gary Hamphill.

Total: \$358.20

Prisoner Subscription Fund

Raymond S. Solomon \$50; Richard Mack \$5.

Total: \$55.00

SLP Leaflet Fund

Jack Radov \$28; \$10 each Michael Preston, Chris Dobreff, John S. Gale; Richard E. Edgar \$8; Nigel Nieva \$5; \$2 each Roberta Diamond, Norm Kletecka, Michael G. Miller, Dave Bartle.

Total: \$79.00

SLP Sentinel Fund

Jack Radov \$2,972; Mary Brlas (In honor of John Brlas' 100th birthday) \$1,000; Mary Brlas (In memory of Lazar Petrovich) \$1,000; R. Simmons (In memory of Marie Simmons) \$1,000; \$500 each Bernard Bortnick, Bruce Cozzini; Section San Francisco Bay Area \$400; \$300 each Brian Blanchard, Richard E. Edgar; \$200 each Chris Dobreff, Earl Prochaska, Gerald Lucas, Irene Schelin, James McHugh, Joan M. Davis, Lois Reynolds, Section Wayne County, Mich.; \$150 each Henry Coretz, John Houser; \$100 each Al & Ada Bikar, Anonymous, Bessie Gabow, Dr. L. Miles Raisig, Gloria Grove Olman (In memory of Theos & Marie Grove), Jim Plant, John S. & Rosemary Gale, Keith Wood, Norman K. Smith, Phyllis Emerson, Reynold R. Elkins, Richard A. Aiken, Thad Harris, Tony Marsella, Walter Vojnov; Harvey Fuller \$75; Mike Kowalski \$60; T. McGregor \$58.10.

\$50 each Bob Bastian, Dimitre Eloff, Frank Cline, Lawrence Hackett, Lloyd Wright, Marge Mills, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Leibfritz, Paul Bakulski, Ross Schelin; \$40 each Anonymous, John Hagerty, Robert Ormsby; \$30 each Marshall G. Soura, Michael A. Ogletree, Olaf Mend; \$25 each "In memory of Edward T. Jasiewicz," Ben Kraft, Charles Lundquist, E. Nielsen, Harley Selkregg, Jean Lee, Jill Campbell & Steve Littleton, John Lambase, Joseph C. Massimino, Manuel Luevano, Margaret Kay, Matt Casick, Peter Teeuwisen, Robert K. Hofem, Scott M. Sullivan, Sid Fink, Steve Druk, Sydney B. Spiegel; \$20 each Alex Iwasa, Andrew Valladares, Dagfinn Sjoen, Daniel Goodsaid, Donald L.H. Sccott, Edward Killian, James H. Lohner, Joe Randell, Michael G. Miller, Richard Cassin, Severino Majkus, Robert F. Jensen; \$15 each J. Barabash, L. Lela, Roger Hudson, Thomas McEvoy; Bob Schmitz \$12; \$10 each Berenice S. Perkis, Bob & Donna Bills, Eugene J. Pacharis, Harry C. Segerest, Harry E. Gibson, John P. Pisaneschi, Keith O'Camb, Milton A. Poulos, Paul L. Wolf, Richard M. Shuldiner, Richard Mack; \$8 each Dave Bartle, Norm Kletecka; Joseph Bellon \$6; \$5 each Col. Don Shepherd, Morton Diskind, S. Colman, Steve & Nancy Kellerman, Todd M. Jordan; Harry & Blanche Billings \$2.

Total: \$13,146.10

SLP Sustainer Fund

Joan M. Davis \$800; Chris Dobreff \$400; Bernard Bortnick \$350; Robert P. Burns (In memory of George Norton) \$167; Robert P. Burns (In memory of Conrad Gutermuth) \$167; Lois Reynolds \$100; Clayton Hewitt \$60; Ken Boettcher \$50; Jill Campbell & Steve Littleton \$40; Section San Francisco Bay Area: William Kelley \$20; \$10 each Michael Preston, Helena Stevens.

Total: \$2,174.00

Socialist Labor Party

Financial Summary

Bank balance (May 31)	.....	\$61,356.95
Expenses (June-July)	.....	20,635.21
Income (June-July)	.....	18,029.22
Bank balance (July 31)	.....	\$58,750.96
Deficit for 2007	.....	\$2,037.28

ACTIVITIES

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco: Discussion Meetings—For information call 408-280-7266 or email slpsfba@net-scape.net.

OHIO

Columbus: Discussion Meetings—Section Cleveland will hold discussion meetings on Sept. 16 & Oct. 7, 1-3 p.m., at the Carnegie Library, Grant & Oak streets. For information call 440-237-7933.

Independence: Discussion Meetings—Section Cleveland will hold discussion meetings on Sept. 23 & Oct. 28, 1-3 p.m., at the Independence Public Library, 6361 Selig Dr. (off Rt. 21 [Brecksville Rd.], between Chestnut & Hillside). For information call 440-237-7933.

OREGON

Portland: Discussion Meeting—Section Portland will hold a discussion meeting on the Iraq war and the military-industrial complex on Saturday, Sept. 29, 10 a.m.–12 noon, at the Portland Main Library, SW Yamhill & 10th. For more information call Sid at 503-226-2881 or visit the section's website at <http://slp.pdx.home.mindspring.com>.

Unsafe Imports From 'Wild West' Capitalist China

By Diane Secor and Donna Bills

The Reagan administration's unregulated laissez faire version of capitalism is a legend among capitalist politicians and media commentators. Earlier this year, former Reagan economic advisor Lawrence Kudlow approvingly wrote that China is among those countries that have adopted the American model of capitalism, calling China's "imitation" the "sincerest form of flattery." Kudlow, however, unwittingly shot himself in the foot. Lately, one hears one report after another about toxic or defective commodities imported from China—from human and pet food to toothpaste, toys, automobile tires and more.

Many have commented on the reasons for the current problem with Chinese imports. Sally Greenberg of the U.S. Consumers Union, which publishes the popular *Consumer Reports*, observed, "China is the Wild West right now because their regulatory system lacks the strong food and drug and cosmetic standards that were developed in the last 100 years." (cnn.com, July 27) Peter Morici, University of Maryland business professor, provided another angle. He reasoned that the uneven balance of trade between the United States and China allows Chinese manufacturers to ignore safety concerns in favor of production. Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt noted that issues of safety and cost often conflict with one another. Peter Kovacs, a food-ingredient business consultant, named competition as the source of the problem.

The Lawrence Kudlows of this world aside, many agree on what to do about the problem: government regulation. Calls are being made for our government to increase inspections here and in China, raise overseas manufacturing standards, strengthen domestic food-safety programs and require detailed records.

The Chinese Communist Party may have thrown Karl Marx overboard, but they cannot escape the logic of what he had in mind when he wrote that "The executive of the modern state is

but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie." That does not simply mean that the state is there to protect the interests of the ruling class from the working class. It also means protecting the ruling class from mavericks within its own ranks, loose cannons whose conduct threatens the ruling class as a whole.



ABCAP for The People

The breath of capitalism.

China needs markets for its expanding industries, and it cannot afford to allow discipline within the ruling class to break down without taking steps to whip the overly zealous and greedy entrepreneurs back into line. Not surprisingly, then, China has taken steps it hopes will ensure an acceptable level of safety for its exports and thereby protect capitalist profits. That is why the Chinese government shut down some guilty businesses, banned an antifreeze chemical found in exported toothpaste and, by far the ultimate in government intervention, executed its top Food and Drug Administration official for corruption. (So much, incidentally, for

the idea that capitalism means the rule of law, of due process and the nonsensical assertion that capitalism and democracy cuddle each other in the same bed.)

Government regulation no doubt will have some eventual effect on the overall problem, at least as it affects exports to the United States and other foreign markets. (Heaven only knows what goes on inside China itself.) After all, the bothersome recalls and lawsuits resulting from tainted and defective Chinese commodities disrupt business and reduce U.S. capitalist profits.

To provide some idea of the scope of the problem, the *San Jose Mercury News* recently reported that less than one percent of all food imports are currently inspected by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), leaving it up to food makers to ensure food safety. Furthermore, CNN reported the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission found 60 percent of all recalled commodities this year were manufactured in China. (One wonders where the remaining 40 percent were manufactured.)

The history of our own country has proven the failure of government regulations and other reforms to rein in the drive for profit that motivates capitalists. Despite what Greenberg cited as our "strong food and drug and cosmetic standards" as evidence that government oversight works, the United States has not been problem free. Outbreaks of deadly mad cow disease and e. coli contamination are just two examples that come readily to mind. With the possibility of the FDA closing half of its laboratories to "streamline its operations," it's difficult to see how U.S. capitalism can be held up as a model much less how the government can provide the added oversight that so many see as the solution to China's uncontrolled capitalism.

The problem, of course, is with capitalism itself. The solution is not to regulate its inherent competition and profit-motivated production, but to replace it with a social system that puts the welfare and lives of its citizens first—socialism.

... 'Entire War Is an Atrocity'

(Continued from page 3)

"the general attitude was a dead Iraqi is just another dead Iraqi. You know, so what?"

Apart from actual killings, the sickening brutalization and moral corruption of the army personnel is demonstrated by the testimony of another enlisted man with the 320th Military Police Company about photographs taken by U.S. troops after nine Iraqi prisoners [at Abu Ghraib prison] were shot dead: "[One photo] was very graphic....They open the body bags of these prisoners that were shot in the head and [one soldier has] got an MRE spoon. He's reach-

ing in to scoop out some of his brain, looking at the camera and he's smiling."

Many soldiers are appalled and sickened by the brutal and criminal acts that they have witnessed. As *The Nation* article observes: "Many of these veterans returned home deeply disturbed by the disparity between the reality of the war and the way it is portrayed by the U.S. government and American media. The war the vets describe is a dark and even depraved enterprise, one that bears a powerful resemblance to other misguided and brutal colonial wars and occupations, from the French occupation of Algeria to the American war in Vietnam and the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory."

In 1903 the philosopher William James wrote: "The transformation of native friendliness to execration; the demoralization of our army, from the war office down—forgery decorated, torture whitewashed, massacre condoned; the creation of a chronic anarchy...the deliberate rekindling on our part of ancient tribal animosities....These things, I say, or things like them, were clearly foretold."

James was commenting on an earlier U.S. imperialist adventure, the invasion and subjugation of the Philippines. His words are equally valid, over 100 years later, in relation to Iraq.



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