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## America's Museum Of Exploitation

By John-Paul Catusco

At the time of this writing, roughly 150 workers at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City have been out on strike for over 12 weeks without a budge in the position of management.

The employees involved in the strike are those in the Professional and Administrative Staff Association (PASTA) of MoMA, which represents 250 administrative assistants, archivists, educators, curatorial staff, conservators, graphic designers, editors, writers, librarians, sales people, secretaries and visitor assistants. They are organized in Local 2110 of the United Auto Workers.

MoMA's management forced this strike when it left the bargaining table after seven months of negotiations. Management has refused to address the issue of a wage system that has kept 40 union employees beneath the U.S. Labor Department's official poverty level of \$17,100. The management refuses to insure the workers' future health care benefits past the life of their contract, and other benefits may be sacrificed to increase profits that none but a few will ever have access to. There is also no guarantee that MoMA will not lay off the current staff when it begins a \$650 million expansion project scheduled to begin next year.

Charges against MoMA are pending with the National Labor Relations Board because the museum has refused to bargain in good faith, threatened strikers with dismissal and illegally removed employees from the bargaining unit.

The *New York Times* company has consistently editorialized against the strikers in its Metro section. These editorials have appeared under the guise of news articles, but are clearly designed to turn public opinion against people who are fighting to improve their standard of living.

Both the museum and the strikers have acknowledged that around 117 of the 250 workers represented by PASTA have crossed the picket line and returned to work. The museum has also brought in temp workers on whom they have reportedly thrown lavish benefits, benefits that have included giving the scabs July 3 off, higher wages than the regular employees, free lunches and the possibility of free massages. There was also a "staff only" picnic held by management in the museum's

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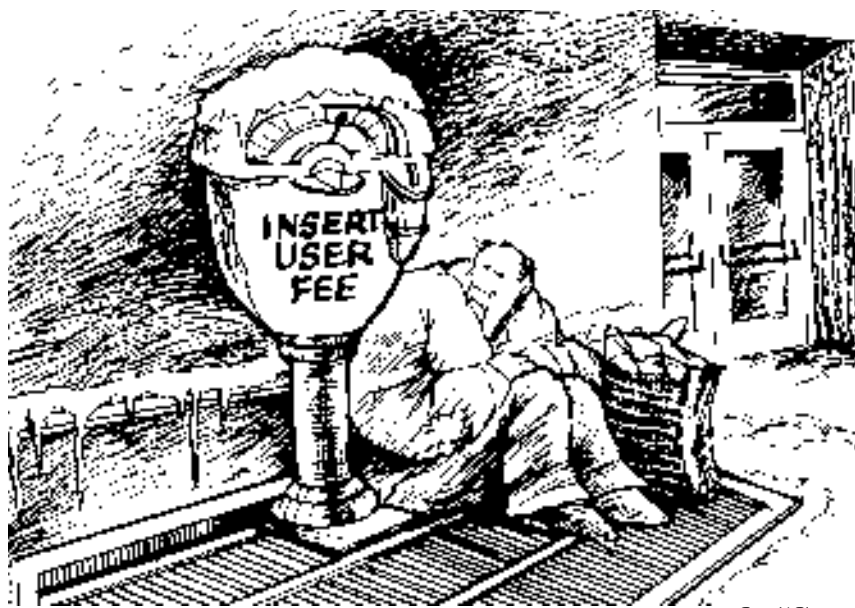
## SILICON VALLEY—

# 'Prosperity' Driving Workers Out of House and Home

A shortage of affordable working-class housing has existed in California's so-called Silicon Valley for years. Periodically the local media has seen fit to mention how it was becoming harder for workers to compete for housing with each new wave of "high tech" workers lured to San Jose, Santa Clara, Sunnyvale, Mountain View and other "Silicon Valley" communities.

Media attention to the worsening housing situation rose and fell with each succeeding wave of high-tech innovation, from the emergence of the desktop computer in the 1980s to the Internet explosion of the 1990s. According as local farmers and ranchers caved in to real estate speculators and developers offering bonanza prices to sell off much of the richest growing and grazing soil in the world to make way for industrial research and development "parks," "high density" apartment complexes and sprawling housing developments, the housing shortage has tightened or eased.

As capitalism has jumped onto the Internet as the next opportunity to generate profits, the number of companies and of workers needed to staff them has grown dramatically. Silicon Valley companies have scoured the country and the world for workers with high-tech training. Thousands upon thousands of programmers, hardware and software engineers, and other workers with the training and skills coveted by the high-tech industry have been lured from India, Taiwan and elsewhere around the globe by promises



Carol Simpson

of better salaries than they could expect at home and potentially lucrative stock options.

As this influx of "well paid" high-tech workers grew to overtax the local housing supply, landlords, real estate speculators and the building industry naturally took full advantage of the situation to cheat by jacking up rental, home purchasing and construction prices far above the real value of the housing commodity. Today, the rental vacancy rate in the valley is less than 3 percent, according to the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, but less than 2 percent according to the *San Jose Mercury News*. The median price of a single-family home has risen above \$577,000. Rent increases of 20, 30, even 50 percent are commonly reported in news stories.

"Bidding wars" erupt over home purchases, driving prices significantly above overbloomed asking prices. These efforts to cheat workers by pushing housing prices above the true value of the housing commodity have naturally undermined the real wages of "well paid" workers, and to that extent have nullified "high wages" and caused the purchasing power of all wages in the valley to plummet.

Silicon Valley workers, in search of more affordable housing, are moving into surrounding areas. Daily commutes of 30 to 80 miles and one to two hours each way from apartments and homes as far off as Los Banos and other "bedroom communities" in the San Joaquin Valley to their Silicon Valley jobs have

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## Sweatshops Still Flourish In U.S. Garment Industry

By B.G.

Despite labor unions, despite federal labor laws, despite the courts, sweatshops continue to flourish in America. When one such labor gouger is exposed, the company habitually closes up, goes bankrupt and reopens nearby under a new name. This process may be repeated many times. Big fashion houses that purchase goods from these sweatshops—goods that are made according to their specifications—always deny knowledge of any illegal activities on the part of their suppliers. When one of their suppliers is accused of cheating its employees, these fashion houses simply drop the accused factory and move on to the next sweatshop.

A class-action suit filed in June against one of New York City's best known fashion houses, Donna Karan, has taken a new approach. It accuses Donna Karan itself of running the sweatshops and cheating workers out of millions of dollars.

The lawsuit has been filed by the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund. It seeks to prevent

the usual tactic of sweatshop disappearance and reappearance under a new name when a lawsuit is filed by holding the contractor, Donna Karan, responsible for what its major subcontractors do.

A pattern of extortion is revealed, for instance, in Jen Chu Fashion, one of Donna Karan's several suppliers. Jen Chu forced its employees to work overtime, sometimes as long as 73 hours a week, and never paid them overtime wages. One worker said she regularly worked 11 hours a day Monday to Friday, 10 hours on Saturday and 8 hours on Sunday. Since she was paid piecework, she often received less than the \$5.15 an hour minimum wage. "I was too scared to miss a day because I was worried that if I did, I would lose my job," said the woman, Feng Jiang, a Chinese immigrant.

Jen Chu workers made overtime pay claims in May, and the factory abruptly closed up shortly thereafter. It then reopened under a new name, still doing business with Donna Karan.

Donna Karan International pro-

claimed its complete innocence. "We believe that the claims against the company are without merit, and plan to defend against them vigorously. We do not believe we should be held responsible for another company's business practices over which we have no control, particularly where we understand the workers are represented by a union."

A union? Really? Yes, the Jen Chu factory's 60 workers were represented by Local 89-22-1 of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE). A union spokesman expressed surprise and claimed no knowledge of work and wage violations because no grievances had been filed by the workers.

We do not know enough about UNITE to say for certain that its contracts include the "check off" system, in which the employer acts the part of a union official by deducting union dues from workers' wages and handing the proceeds over to the union. Whether or not it does, collecting those dues from

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# The 'Teacher Shortage'

By Bill Mahan

The capitalists manipulating the economy are in evidence in every sector as they exploit workers. No job is immune unless one is lucky enough to hold a skill that simply cannot be duplicated, and how many of those are there?

One area that is currently under pressure is that of education. To control the labor supply the press and the politicians are drawing attention to the "national teacher shortage."

The media and the Clinton administration are proclaiming that this is a critical problem with dire consequences. Teachers are impossible to find, signing bonuses are offered in hundreds of school districts, teacher retention is becoming impossible, etc.

Temporary teacher credentials are becoming the norm for desperate districts, and some districts are asking teachers to submit their own work schedules. This sounds too good to be true. It is.

There is no national teacher shortage. There exists a regional shortage of teachers in specific subjects. That has been the case since the late 1960s when the enormous numbers of baby boomers were leaving high school and the numbers of elementary and high school teachers finally leveled off. Since then no shortage has been seen.

A tour of school district Web sites, publications by personnel directors for districts and observations of local education organizations bear this out. If in doubt, one merely has to log on to the National Education Association (NEA) Web site or any state department of education's site to find that hiring is not a priority. At least one state education office offers its list of openings for \$19.95 via credit card. If they were so desperate to find teachers wouldn't they at least offer this list for free?

So what is happening?

The education profession is not immune from the same dirty tricks that owners (in this case state and local bean counters) pull on workers in every other field. How do you keep labor costs down? By keeping the number of job seekers up. Marx taught this over 150 years ago.

Our higher education industry must crank out graduates in order for the lucrative university industry to survive. The problem comes when these graduates find that their new degrees often land them in a mall job or an entry-level service job.

One way to give the illusion of a ready market for a graduate's skills is to nurture the myth that teaching, a respectable profession with a tradition of giving a lifetime of service to one's society, is eagerly searching for the "best and brightest" but, alas, cannot find them. The fantasy of gaining an education and having a choice of jobs waiting at graduation is compelling. Finding this to be a myth is the result.

Young teachers find the job market surprisingly tight and competition keen. Local administrators find that they have their pick of candidates. There are some exceptions. There is a shortage of teachers in the field of special education. The much-touted lack of teachers of science and math is false. These areas closed up within the last three years after a brief period of shortages.

One hint of how this teacher shortage is a fabrication is the reappearance of Teaching Job-Locator services. If jobs are so common why would teachers need to turn to such expensive vultures to find a job?

The NEA and the American Federation of Teachers have been dull-witted partners in this scam. They are only now beginning to take issue with "teacher shortage" stories and have yet to make any firm national statements on this exploitation.



In some states, Massachusetts for example, the NEA is rethinking its push to force local districts to pay a veteran teacher, upon joining another district, for every year the teacher has taught in another state rather than the customary five to nine years of service. Local districts, in no need of recruiting teachers, simply adopt a silent policy of not hiring veteran teachers. Why pay a veteran teacher \$35,000 when a first-year teacher can be bought for \$21,000?

No job is safe from this type of cynical circumvention of labor agreements. Teachers must realize that they are as vulnerable to the machinations of their bosses as any working person. Run properly our schools could absorb the large numbers of new and veteran teachers who are falling victim to this myth of a shortage.

255075100  
years ago

## Use of Scabs Fought

(Weekly People, Aug. 23, 1975)

Refugees from South Vietnam have been brought in to scab on agricultural workers in Egg City, Calif., the world's largest egg ranch.

The strike began last April when 350 workers, then under Teamster contract, walked off their jobs when one of their number was dismissed, apparently for pro-UFW [United Farm Workers] activities. The Teamsters refused to represent the striking workers and instead helped the growers recruit scabs. The strikers then contacted the UFW, which has been representing them since.

Recently the "Food for the Hungry" organization, which has been placing South Vietnamese refugees, began sending them to Egg City where the growers enthusiastically took them on. The growers obviously had not found enough scabs to replace the strikers.

This drew sharp protests from the UFW, which said the Vietnamese were being used as "pawns" in the dispute and had been hired because they would be easily coerced into supporting the Teamsters in upcoming representation elections.

John Rogers, vice president of the egg farm, says the government was the one who brought the refugees to the farm and, "We hired the Vietnamese because we needed people." For their part the Teamsters claim they're doing a "good deed" by helping the refugees find work—even though it means scabbing on employees once supposedly "protected" by Teamster contracts.

## Do You Belong?

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

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

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

# Mississippi Hanging Renews Lynching Fears

By Earl Ofari Hutchinson  
©Pacific News Service

The discovery of Raynard Johnson hanging from a pecan tree outside his Kokomo, Miss., home on June 16 stirred fears among many blacks that lynch law had again reared its ugly head.

Johnson's family openly disputed the coroner's ruling that their 17-year-old son was a suicide. They said he was murdered for dating a white girl.

Civil rights leaders quickly raised a clamor over his death. Jesse Jackson flatly said it had the earmarks of a lynching. The NAACP hired a private investigator, and the Southern Poverty Law Center noted that the Klan had long used white fears of black men raping white women to terrorize blacks. The U.S. Justice Department launched an investigation.

Older blacks still have vivid memories of the lynch murders of 14-year-old Emmett Till for allegedly whistling at a white woman in 1955 and Mack Charles Parker for the alleged rape of a white woman in 1959. No one was convicted for the killings.

There is no tangible evidence that Johnson was murdered. Indeed, many—blacks and whites—find the idea that he was lynched for dating a white girl absurd. They point to a sevenfold increase in black and white marriages since 1960. The number of interracial married cou-

ples today is about 1.5 million. However, these account for only a tiny fraction of total marriages, and the overwhelming majority of interracial couples live in multiracial urban areas.

Nonetheless, as late as the mid-1950s interracial marriage was a felony offense in 30 states punishable by heavy fines and prison terms. Six years after the Supreme Court struck down school desegregation in 1954, 29 states still outlawed black-white marriages. Maryland and Nevada—the latter despite its legalized prostitution in several counties—went further by banning all sexual contact between blacks and whites.

The civil rights movement and the political emergence of Asian and African nations made antimiscegenation laws a political liability, and in 1967 the Supreme Court finally dumped them. However, this did not sound the death knell for the taboo. Though legally unenforceable, bans on interracial marriages stayed on the books in 12 states until 1979, and a 1991 poll by the National Opinion Research Center found that one in five white Americans still believed that interracial marriage should be illegal. They frowned most severely on marriage between black men and white women, with two out of three opposed to a close relative marrying a black man.

One bizarre sidelight to all this is that many blacks also resent interracial marriage. That 1991 poll found two out of

three blacks neither "favored nor opposed" interracial marriage, and nearly one in 10 thought it should be illegal. As late as 1996, an informal survey in *Ebony* magazine found 40 percent of black women and 25 percent of black men saying they would not date a person of another race.

In *Soul on Ice*, Eldridge Cleaver fed the dangerous myth that black men would abandon family and community in a re-

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# Maquiladoras Exploit Mexican Child Labor

By B.B.

The Mexican side of the U.S.-Mexican border, from Tijuana to Matamoros, has become an industrial zone accommodating the so-called *maquiladoras*. Over 3,400 *maquiladoras* employing in excess of a million workers, tens of thousands of whom are children, grind out exceptional profits for their corporate overlords.

The *maquiladoras* manufacture components for innumerable foreign and U.S. corporations. "More than 100 of the Fortune 500 companies have manufacturing plants in Mexico," according to a *Dallas Morning News* report printed earlier this year. Whirlpool, Amana, Ford, Johnson Controls Inc., Sears, J.C. Penney and Delphi Automotive Systems Corp., among others, feast on plentiful supplies of cheap wage labor. They generally employ mostly women, reputedly between the ages of 16 and 25. Although the minimum age in Mexico is 16, children as young as 12 and 13 are to be found on the production lines on day, night and graveyard shifts.

Working conditions at *maquiladoras* are documented in a 1994 report to Congress entitled "By the Sweat and Toil of Children." Among other things, the report said that "serious problems remain with the employment of early teens."



"Look at the bright side, kid... you're solving the overcrowded schools problem."

Carol Simpson

Those problems include the total disruption of families by forcing the employment of all their members, little or no formal education, unhealthy conditions within *maquiladoras*, no benefits, overwork and the whole litany of abuses capitalism is famous for.

The *Morning News* related the sad sto-

ries of several young workers. Dolores Cardenas, for example, is 15 and one of three working members of a family of five. Her introduction to wage slavery started at 14, working for less than \$4 a day. While waiting at a Matamoros union hiring hall in hopes of getting a job making automotive components, she assert-

ed: "I really need this job to help my mother...we all have to help pay for the light, water, gas, groceries. It is barely enough."

Antonia Medina, a 14-year-old, stands all day making wooden furniture in a factory in Tijuana. "Poverty drives young people to work," her father simplistically observed, while her mom noted, "Young people should be studying, but they can't because their families need the money."

When confronted with the pervasive child labor in the *maquiladoras*, the over 100 U.S. corporations getting in on the kill have all manner of evasive replies and rationalizations handy for nosy investigators. For example, Karen Stuart, speaking for Lear Corp. in Southfield, Mich., asserted, "As a matter of policy, we steadfastly refuse to employ anyone under 16 years of age...we only hire someone who we believe [!] is 16."

General Electric's Gary Sheffer insisted, "We rigorously enforce the age requirement."

J.C. Penney refers to its policy prohibiting underage employment, while General Motors referred the question to its subsidiary, GM de Mexico, which in turn declined to comment on personnel issues.

DaimlerChrysler asserted that they only hire employees 18 and older and they expect their "suppliers to follow the labor laws, and above and beyond, we expect them to be good corporate citizens," a phrase that under the conditions of capitalist competition can only mean maximizing exploitation of the working class.

## The View From West 43rd Street

By Richard Rodriguez  
©Pacific News Service

According to *The New York Times*—this nation's "newspaper of record," as we are encouraged to call it—a discussion of U.S. race relations, even at this date, can only mean a discussion of the tensions between descendants of Europe and descendants of Africa.

Most Americans do not read *The New York Times*. There may be other tensions. But the *Times* is the newspaper that reflects and shapes elite liberal thinking, especially on the East Coast. So it is worth noting that, for the last two months, the *Times* has been running a series called "How Race is Lived in America," concerned exclusively with how

"whites" and "blacks" perceive one another.

How should we expect the omniscient *New York Times* to settle all scores? Time and space forbid! But here we are in the new century and it is clear to just about everyone that our country has become increasingly Latin and Asian—and miscegenation among races is increasing. With citizens from every corner, America is creating a global society, the first in the world.

The brown future is also our past. Americans, particularly African Americans—from Colin Powell to Tiger Woods—are speaking candidly about their mixed blood and a colonial America the history books never bothered to de-

scribe, meaning the marriage of the Indian and the African and the black-and-white goings-on at Monticello.

Curiously, even while the *Times* was publishing front-page pieces on black-and-white separations in America, in its Arts and Leisure section one morning the *Times* noticed that London is racially mixing—the city alive with Hindu Cockney.

But then New York is crazy about London this season. Gotham is crawling with Brit Twits who know eversomuch about eversomuch. *The New York Times* will condescend to consider brown, as long as it posed in a British accent.

## SLP Field Reports

### Mumia Abu-Jamal Rally West

Comrades Mary and Frank Prince, William Kelley and Rick Seger set up the SLP booth, distributed SLP leaflets and *The People* and sold SLP literature at the Mumia Abu-Jamal Rally in San Francisco's Justin Herman Plaza on May 13. The comrades reported a distribution of more than 940 leaflets and papers at the rally and that \$55 in SLP literature was sold from the booth.

Donna Bills, Organizer  
Section San Francisco Bay Area

### Mumia Abu-Jamal Rally East

Comrades Jack Blessington and Frances Taylor participated in the demonstration for Mumia Abu-Jamal on May 13. They reported that about 500 demonstrators participated in the rally and march. They were able to distribute about 350 leaflets among the participants. Another 800 were distributed later by Comrade Blessington.

Luis Figueroa, Organizer  
Section Philadelphia

### Puerto Rican Day Parade

The distribution of the Vieques leaflets

during the Puerto Rican Parade in New York City on June 11 was a very difficult one. Most of the public attending this event did not cooperate by accepting the leaflets. We were only able to distribute about 700. I don't know if it was because it was a very hot day. Temperatures were in the 90s and estimates of the public attending the parade were of well over 1 million. People there were shoulder to shoulder. There were other organizations (including underground movements) distributing literature concerning the struggle for independence of Puerto Rico and the struggle for Vieques. Comrades John-Paul Catusco and Frank Ufert assisted in the distribution of our leaflets. They kept a good number of leaflets for later distribution. We also kept some for other demonstrations that will be taking place in Philadelphia in the near future.

Luis Figueroa, Organizer  
Section Philadelphia

### Houston Discussion Group Planned

We continue to have good success distributing *The People*. Everywhere I leave copies they are gone by the first of the

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Then, on July 4, *The New York Times* proclaimed that California will soon become the first "big state in the nation in which non-Hispanic whites will no longer be the majority." To tell its readers what that might mean, the *Times* solicited the opinion of three white guys and one nervous gray. Gov. Gray Davis was steadfast and refused to panic. After all, "leadership requires one to look on the bright side..."

These two brown sightings from London and California quickly dissipated. And the *Times* turned again to serious concerns.

In article after article, whites were portrayed as at the very center of contemporary American life. Nice people. Persons of liberal disposition and politics. Rather like the readers of the *Times*.

So with every article, white readers were reassured that they remain at the center of our national life—which is exactly where they expect to be.

Accordingly, nothing was said in the *Times* about Korean/Mexican relations in L.A. or how (East Asian) Indians are faring in high-tech North Dallas, or Haitian-American/African-American relations in Tampa. Any drama where whites are absent can be of no interest to *The New York Times*.

Hillary Clinton, who surely reads *The New York Times*, spoke of a vast rightwing conspiracy in America. The vast liberal conspiracy in America, by contrast, is a benign and relatively harmless business: Each spring, liberals love to give each other brotherhood awards and statuettes.

Surely the *Times* is in line for something for such breathtaking fatuousness: the *Times* found a majority of black and white Americans regard race relations to be "generally good."

The only question that *The New York Times* did not ask African Americans is how much longer they will be seduced by liberal white flatteries. A dangerous seduction indeed, especially now, at a time of increasing tension and competition between African Americans and Hispanics for jobs and position.

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# the People

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## Capitalist 'Progress'

"The surest way to enforce a factory wrong is to appoint a factory inspector. Before his appointment only the employer profits by the wrong; after his appointment both he and the employer find their account therein. Factory inspectors will ever see to it that factory wrongs are not abolished. If abolished the factory inspector's occupation would be gone. That's the long and short of 'labor legislation' appointing factory inspectors."

—Daily People, Aug. 8, 1909

The last time Phillips Petroleum's Plant 5 in Pasadena, Tex., blew up it destroyed more than half of the 800-acre facility. It threw metal and concrete debris as far as six miles. It shook skyscrapers 12 miles away. More important, it snuffed out the lives of 22 workers and left 124 maimed and injured.

That was in 1989. Last March, the plant went up again, killing at least one worker and injuring 69 others, some very badly.

The ostensible cause of this year's explosion was the same as in 1989—"human error."

Eleven years ago, media reports presumed the cause to be a gas line uncapped by an inadequately trained and equipped worker that was ignited by a nearby spark or flame.

This year, an inadequately cleaned 12,000-gallon storage tank with volatile chemicals inside spontaneously combusted.

However, neither explosion was caused by human error. They were caused by a system—the capitalist system. Even if it is true that an inadequately trained and equipped worker ignited a nearby spark or flame, it was the profit motive that provided the incentive to place that unfortunate worker where he or she did not belong.

How can it be that this time bomb was left ticking despite the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and other governmental agencies that are ostensibly supposed to ensure plant safety and health on the job? An article in *U.S. News & World Report* last month clarifies the matter.

"In 1990," says the article, "Congress set up a system designed to curb the toll of chemical accidents. But it's not working." That year, Congress created the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB), adding a layer of bureaucracy on top of those of the Environmental Protection Agency and OSHA, both of which have legal mandates to monitor chemical plants, among other facilities.

Trouble is, Congress treated the CSB the same way it has always treated OSHA and the EPA—as the window dressing they are, with never enough funding or investigators, nor enough teeth in their enforcement options, to seriously slow the profit-motivated corner-cutting on safety that capitalist industry routinely engages in. The CSB has been such a monument to bureaucratic infighting and inefficiency that many in Congress think it should be abandoned rather than feed it any more money, according to the *U.S. News* article.

In short, all the governmental "safeguards" have worked so well that even the CSB's incomplete data show that, "Since 1998, an average of five plant workers have been killed every month in the United States by explosions or leaks of

chemicals....The industry's own reports... which vastly understate such mishaps, show there is at least one chemical accident somewhere in the nation every day ...[F]rom 1994 through 1999, these accidents injured nearly 2,000 people—mostly workers—and forced more than 200,000 nearby residents to evacuate their homes ....The injuries in the chemical and petroleum industries fell by more than a third from 1989 to 1998, but total fatalities hit a five-year peak in 1998—the most recent year for which data are available. Nearly 70 percent...of the 49,000 companies required to submit detailed five-year accident reports to the [EPA] last year never bothered."

As Daniel De Leon once wrote, "Capitalist 'progress' is built upon the skulls and crossbones of its working-class victims."

Speaking with the forked tongue of a true spokesperson for capitalist interests, a Phillips spokeswoman said the company is "fully cooperating" with an OSHA probe of the causes of this year's "accident"—just as they no doubt announced after the 1989 "accident." "We remain absolutely committed to making certain we operate this facility safely," she said. "That's why we've intensified our efforts to review our equipment, procedures and processes, working closely with third-party experts and government authorities to thoroughly scrutinize our operations."

But as the head of Texas A&M's Mary K. O'Connor Process Safety Center, Sam Mannan, told *U.S. News*, "Most of safety is not rocket science." "We don't have to research another 100 years," he said, "or even 20 years, to figure out the right way to do things. Why accidents keep happening is because we don't do the things that we know how to do."

The plain fact of the matter is that refiners don't want to stop the equipment when there are big profits to be made. They invest in a lot of relatively cheap insurance and as little maintenance as possible.

Production under the terms and conditions laid down by capitalism cuts against safety at every turn. This case against capitalism is no mere allegation, but a fact well established by both history and the daily experiences of workers on the job.

Most workers know that, if they were in charge, workplaces could be made safe. For they know they are pressured to take shortcuts, ignore supposed safety procedures, neglect repairs, put off maintenance and so on.

Many workers know that agencies like OSHA are worthless because they are in league with the capitalists. And many also know their union leaders are prone to compromise and collaborate with the capitalists.

All too many workers, however, are resigned to accepting all of this. For all too few realize that things need not be this way. In their collective hands is the power to change things.

Properly organized, workers can take, hold and operate all the industries and services of the land—the entire economy—in their own behalf. With those doing the work in charge of safety, safety will no longer come second. For, with the abolition of capitalism, production won't be carried on for the benefit of a class of vampires that profits from its reckless disregard of workers' lives and public health and safety. —K.B.

### A De Leon Editorial

## 'Communism Of Losses'

Private property under capitalism creates the illusion of safety and security for the individual, but it is only an illusion. Socialism will guarantee the safety and security of all in the possession of the wealth that they produce.

### The 'Best of All Possible Systems'

(Daily People, July 16, 1907)

The petition in bankruptcy brought by Waterbury and others against Coolidge and Stowe of the suspended stock exchange house of W.L. Stowe & Co., calls attention to, and illuminates one of the false claims often made in support of the capitalist system. The claim is that this social system is beautiful in its guarantee of safety and security to the individual citizen. In exemplification of this claim, the defenders of capitalism point to the fortunes, the pinnacles of success, accumulated by their model citizens. The inference is drawn that capitalism affords complete protection to the individual in his possession of the accumulated fruits of his effort and ability, and that thereby is guaranteed to the individual the greatest possible safety and security.

The Stowe & Co. bankruptcy proceedings and the results that will follow in their wake serve to illustrate the utter insecurity that obtains under capitalism. Whether Coolidge and Stowe, the members composing the firm, have actually gone bankrupt in the dealings of Stowe & Co., or whether they have committed fraud, we do not know; and, if they are bankrupt, whether that condition is due to acts of their own, or resulted from the failure of some of their debtors, is a matter we cannot inquire into. Beginning, however, with the knowledge of Stowe & Co. going into bankruptcy, we may watch from this point a wave of property losses sweeping over those who are not responsible for, and who could not by any possible movement of theirs have protected themselves from those losses. Waterbury's claim against Stowe & Co. is \$125,839. He,

and each of the other depositors, loses and loses heavily, all through no fault of their own. As a result of these losses many of these claimants, no doubt, will themselves become insolvent, involving, in turn, their creditors in losses and failures. Thus the capitalist system leaves every individual property owner broadly exposed to losses he cannot possibly ward off. Under capitalism we have "communism of loss."

Due to its very largeness, modern property cannot be personally possessed and taken care of by the owner, as the Indian possessed and took care of his bow and arrows, nor even possessed as the civilized wealth producer possessed his small shop a few decades ago. Modern property is possessed by the possession of a title to it, in the shape of stocks, bonds, certificates of bank deposit, bills receivable, etc. Out of this system of ownership (a system unavoidable if modern institutions are to be owned at all in private), there arises an insecurity that is inescapable. The failure of any considerable business concern sets in motion a succession of losses and failures; creditors, and the creditors of creditors, tier after tier, they fall like bricks in a row. A system under which one's possessions would be more exposed can hardly be imagined. And this situation, precarious as it is, is aggravated and its evils increased a hundredfold by the fact that when one is despoiled of his property under capitalism he is thereby thrown into wage slavery, with hardly a possibility of ever again being possessed of more than a meager living, though bound to incessant toil. So far from guaranteeing security to the individual, it is seen that capitalism menaces all with constant danger, and is continuously

(Continued on page 7)

## 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 Class Struggle And Tort 'Reform'

By B.B.

A Florida jury's decision last month in an antitobacco suit is almost certain to accelerate capitalist pressures on the political state for tort "reform" aimed at undermining the prerogatives of juries impaneled in civil action suits, or at completely eliminating them from the process. It is also likely to excite liberal-minded reformers into making more unwarranted claims about how the capitalist system of "law and order" can be made to work for the benefit of society at large and to stimulate their resistance to corporate-inspired efforts to remove or restrict juries in such cases.

In the Florida case, a six-member jury awarded nearly \$154 billion to plaintiffs in a civil action suit that charged tobacco companies with responsibility for tobacco-related illnesses and deaths affecting more than 500,000 people. It was the largest jury award ever in a civil action case.

However, no sooner did the jury render its verdict than the tobacco industry lawyers labeled it as "absurd" and began to boast that, in the end, no damages would ever be distributed. Whether or not the appeals process, which is expected to take many years to complete, sustains this view or results in at least a portion of the award finally being distributed remains to be seen. What is certain is that large compensatory decisions by juries in cases involving faulty products or corporate practices resulting in environmental degradation, human endangerment and death upset the corporate gentry, and they would like to see it changed.

Despite the harm certain products and practices may cause, neither their manufacture nor their application is necessarily considered criminal under bourgeois law. This is so even when a corporation deliberately attempts to conceal the facts from potential buyers or engage in what

are generally conceded to be antisocial acts.

In the Florida case, for instance, the jury found that the tobacco industry knowingly attempted to conceal the cancer-causing effects of their product. Yet the deception was not criminal, in part because it is not illegal to sell cigarettes and other tobacco products. This is not because "the law is a ass, a idiot," as Dickens' Mr. Bumble put it, but because bourgeois law is class law designed to protect capitalist-class interests.

At issue, according to *Dallas Morning News* legal affairs writer Mark Curriden, is the inclination of the typical "12 people in the American jury box" to use "civil and criminal verdicts to reach well beyond the cases in front of them and demand that institutions such as government, and businesses or private organizations change their ways." Juries, he said, "may defy a judge's orders and secretly conduct investigations of crimes or events. Or violate court rules by seeking outside advice during trial. And a few intentionally disregard evidence and the law to advance a social or political agenda."

The frustration of capitalists is that jury tampering is a felony. Unlike the "people's representatives" of the political state, juries composed of civic-minded citizens sometimes are beyond corrupting influences and bribery. This is what accusing juries of being proxy legislative bodies and arrogating the prerogatives of government to themselves is all about.

Indicative of their influence is the emphatic assertion by Stephen Daniels of the American Bar Foundation, who said: "Don't tell me that juries don't make a difference, because the...anecdotal evidence is pretty overwhelming."

A raft of law professors opined variously that, "People are frustrated by the inaction of the other branches of government and realize that as jurors they hold



E. Gentry for The People

incredible powers of change. They are ready and willing to wield that power." Another stated that jury verdicts are "a lousy way of governing" and determining social and public issues. A third asserted that, "Today's jurors come to court angry and full of biases, and they are exacting revenge. I don't like it and don't think it's healthy..."

Yet another offered the thought that, "Our Founding Fathers would be stunned and dismayed to learn of the issues that today's juries are deciding." What he failed to point out is that they would be equally appalled at the enormous concentration of wealth in the hands of a few corporate entities, and they would be utterly mortified to see the rapacious character of these "institutions" as opposed to the impoverishment and economic disenfranchisement of the vast numbers of Americans. That is the rub.

## Abolish the Wages System!

Years ago I was a party member. I've lost track. But reading your union pamphlet on your Web site, I found myself wondering...isn't the De Leonist plan pretty much the same as the Britain's Labor Party in the beginning? It had some turns at governing and it was the party, not the society, that was changed. Labor unions and labor politicians were often selfish, insular bad actors, but even if they hadn't been, it's hard to see how they could have built the huge movement to revolutionize a society democratically. (The horrors and failures of communist states show us that "undemocratically" is not an option).

Wish I knew the answer as the De Leonist mantras are nevertheless the least implausible of all socialist ideals.

David Vaprin  
Indianapolis, Ind.

Dear Mr. Vaprin:

I do not believe that any comparison can be drawn between the policies and aims of the early British Labor Party and what you call the "De Leonist plan," by which I assume you mean the Socialist Industrial Union program. The BLP dates from the 1890s, as does the SLP, but the SIU program that is synonymous with De Leonism and the SLP does not come into mature existence until 1904-1905.

Although my knowledge of the early history of the BLP (and Britain's Independent Labor Party) is limited, I would have to say that there were major differences even

in the 1890s. Before there was Socialist Industrial Unionism, the idea of "state socialism" was abhorrent to most Socialists, even to those elements of the international socialist movement that eventually embraced state ownership as their ultimate goal. That was so because no clearly defined alternative to state ownership had been developed before 1904-1905. The SLP, for example, always called for the abolition of the wages system and took the position (as did most other socialist parties that, at a minimum, identified themselves with such Marxist tenets as the class struggle and the law of value) that state ownership without the abolition of the wages system would only mean a change of masters from the private capitalist to the state bureaucrat and would leave in place the system by which the working class is exploited.

De Leon drew this particular distinction as early as 1895 in his address on *Reform or Revolution*, which, as a former member of the SLP, you may still have in your personal library. Although he was not speaking of the BLP in the following passage from that address, but of the farmers' Populist Party in the United States, the principle involved is the same:

"The socialist revolution demands, among other things, the public ownership of all the means of transportation. But, in itself, the question of ownership affects only external forms: The post office is the common property of the people, and yet the

real workers in that department are mere wage slaves. In the mouth of the Socialist, of the revolutionist, the internal fact, the cardinal truth, that for which alone we fight, and which alone is entitled to all we can give to it—that is the abolition of the system of wage slavery under which the proletariat is working. Now, up step the Populists—the dupers, not the duped among them—with a plan to nationalize the railroads. The standpoint from which they proceed is that of middle-class interests as against the interests of the upper capitalists or monopolists. The railroad monopolists are now fleecing the middle class; these want to turn the tables upon their exploiters; they want to abolish them, wipe them out, and appropriate unto themselves the fleecings of the working class which the railroad monopolists now monopolize. With this reactionary class interest in mind the dupe—Populist—steps forward and holds this plausible language:

"We, too, want the nationalization of the roads; we are going your way; join us!"

"The reform straws are regularly taken in by this seeming truth; they are carried off their feet; and they are drawn heels over head into the vortex of capitalist conflicts. Not so the revolutionist. His answer follows sharp and clear:

"Excuse me! Guess you do want to nationalize the railroads, but only as a reform; we want nationalization as a revolution. You do not propose, while we are fixedly

(Continued on page 6)

Jury decisions in a number of tort cases have exposed many antisocial corporate practices to public scrutiny. Some examples of decisions and pending cases are the hundreds of millions of dollars being sought in a suit against HMOs in Mississippi; an upcoming suit against gun manufacturers in New Orleans and Chicago for reimbursement of millions of dollars; a \$1 million judgment against Dayton Hudson, a children's pajamas outfit; a \$10 million judgment against Playtex; an \$8.8 million judgment against Johnson & Johnson; \$127 million against the Ford Motor Co.; \$6 million against Eli Lilly; \$7.5 million against A.H. Robins, manufacturer of the Dalkon Shield; \$475,000 against the Bassett Furniture Co.; \$3.3 million against the Kubota farm tractor company; and \$550,000 against the Ryobi tool company.

These and similar civil action suits are perceived as a threat, not only because they expose antisocial corporate practices to public view, but because they funnel off corporate profits.

While jury awards may seem to strike a blow for social justice, it must be remembered that capitalists do not care what they produce or sell as long as it yields a profit. When the U.S. surgeon general first required cigarette manufacturers to print health warnings on cigarette packages, rather than move directly to outlaw them as a public health hazard, tobacco companies began to divert their assets into other fields. Philip Morris, the country's largest tobacco company, for instance, "diversified" by buying up the Miller Brewing Co. and Kraft Foods. While tobacco sales remain a major component of this conglomerate's assets, its capitalist stockholders have long since moved to protect their interests against any threat to the tobacco end of their business. That is one reason why capitalist class interests are essentially immune to any social backlash against a specific company or product.

Accordingly, however irritating the decisions of juries are to the capitalist class they are neither a tool of class struggle nor a venue for expressing the class demands of workers, and certainly they are not a fundamental challenge to capitalist interests. Verdicts in such cases not only leave property relations as they are, they also send a message of validation to the capitalist class, i.e., that it is their right to exploit the working class as long as the consequences are humane and socially beneficial, an impossibility under this system.

Tort reform that aims to eliminate or undermine the authority of juries in civil cases, such as those involving the tobacco industry, obviously is meant to protect capitalist interests. But capitalist law cannot protect the working class against the effects of capitalist rule. The principle that again emerges in this, as in all other aspects of capitalist society, is that only the classconscious economic organization, the integrally organized Socialist Industrial Union, is capable of challenging the political and economic power of capital.

### Reform or Revolution

An address by Daniel De Leon

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

48 pages—\$1.25 postpaid

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

## letters to the People

### Wants His Own

I would like to inquire about taking a sub for your newspaper. A friend of mine has it sent to him and I have read some of his copies. I think it is an interesting paper which gives the true position of the situation of the American worker. We are not told the truth in this country about ordinary working people in the U.S. Everyone thinks it is some kind of workers' paradise. This we get from our media.

Barney Richards  
National Secretary  
Peace Council of Aotearoa  
Wellington, N.Z.

### Radio Talking Book Network

I received a notice today that our complimentary subscription to *The People* is expiring. Can

we please keep it going?

The Minnesota Radio Talking Book Network is a nonprofit radio reading service for people who can't read the printed page. We serve over 15,000 listeners in our own state via closed circuit radio and provide programming supplements for dozens of other radio reading services across the country via satellite, serving communities from Honolulu and Los Angeles to Washington, D.C. We use *The People* for our program Monday Commentary, a program that covers a variety of political bases; we consider it an important publication for our purposes. Could you please keep our complimentary subscription going? I hope you will be able to continue helping us provide this

alternate reading method for the blind and visually handicapped communities.

Mark Vidas,  
Acting Program Coordinator  
Radio Talking Book Network  
St. Paul, Minn.

### Looking for a Model

I am really interested in getting *The People* journal after reading your leaflet "What is Socialism?" I live in Jakarta, Indonesia, and work for a U.S. mining business. I need to know more about the concepts and activities of SLP since we, the Indonesian people, are just waking up after a long sleep under the Suharto era. We are looking for suitable model for labor unions.

Anang SK  
Jakarta, Indonesia

## ...Sweatshops Still Flourish

(Continued from page 1)

the employer or from the workers themselves would seem to be the extent of the union's concern with the workers it was supposed to be representing—and protecting.

It is not clear, either, if UNITE's agreements with these sweatshops enable it to follow them from place to place as they drop one identity and take on another when they feign bankruptcy or shut down and reopen when they get into trouble with the state. Either way it is clear that UNITE, which is loud in its denunciation of sweatshops and low wages in Asia and Latin America, is an accomplice in victimizing one of the most ruthlessly exploited

sections of the working class in capitalist America.

Workers are frequently afraid of being fired if they make complaints. They obviously also had no confidence in their union to help them.

The Chinese Staff and Workers Association, an advocacy group that worked closely with the employees in their protest and lawsuit, has often accused the union leaders of reluctance to represent workers strongly.

The current lawsuit represents about 300 workers from several factories that supplied Donna Karan. The estimate is that each worker is owed at least \$10,000 for overtime work, but that only scratch-

es the surface of the extent of their exploitation by the company.

It should be obvious that workers are on the capitalist merry-go-round, going nowhere. Capitalism exploits them. Their procapitalist unions have failed them.

The working-class struggle for betterment must be a collective struggle with workers joining as a class to transform society into a cooperative commonwealth, where the majority own and democratically administer the means of production for the benefit of all, not for just a tiny exploiting class. The struggle for full democracy is the struggle for socialism.

## ... Museum of Exploitation

(Continued from page 1)

outdoor sculpture garden, which was surrounded by WW-II style barricades to dim the voices of the striking workers who represent the true museum.

Efforts at solidarity have been broken because the museum's other employees (maintenance, projectors and janitors) are represented by three other unions that have clauses against sympathy strikes.

The picket line at MoMA is breached by public indifference almost every minute. Visitors are fond of the excuse that they "have just come to see the art," a statement that sounds even colder when one has spent even a small amount of time talking with the strikers and understanding the nature of their struggle.

Occasionally there is a ray of light and a few people will turn back and not cross the line. What is more amazing is that more often than not these people are tourists from far-off homes. Of the several couples I witnessed, one was from Colorado, the other Australian. Both had but one day left in New York City. Both had traveled thousands of miles to see the Museum of Modern Art. And both turned back amid a wash of handshakes, smiles and raised fists, knowing that they had indeed seen the real museum when they saw the people who make it

what it is out on the sun-drenched street.

We in the Socialist Labor Party have seen this whole scene before, for it is the nature of the wolf to drop the skin of the sheep when it is told to give back a little more of what it has taken. It is an ironic fact that *The New York Times* refers to the management as "the Museum," for by the same logic the president is the country and the "T" is the team.

We in the SLP know and have always known that the workers are the museum, just as the working class are the country.

The SLP seeks to show all workers that management today is a useless and bloated appendage that saps the majority of the strength and talent from the rest of the body.

Whatever one may think of the current union and its tactics in attempting to secure a better standard of living for the workers, those efforts are at best incomplete and able to achieve only temporary gains, for they fight the effects of a corrupt system and not the cause. Management, whether of state-run institutions or private corporations, is notorious for breaking contracts and creating loopholes and other tricks of law to bypass a binding article.

The SLP has always fought the cause and it has been nearly

alone in doing so. That cause is the capitalist system, which takes and holds so much of what the working majority have produced.

How can anyone say that they live in a democracy when they spend the most productive hours of their lives working in what amounts to a dictatorship?

We urge the strikers at the Museum of Modern Art, and all workers, to see beyond their own strife and become conscious as a class moving towards its emancipation, to become educated and organized towards the higher causes of industrial democracy.

SLP members in New York City are personally interacting with and supporting the striking workers at MoMA. If you would like to lend your support to the working class, contact the Socialist Labor Party.

In New York City call (516) 829-5325;

At Hunter College e-mail HunterSLP@aol.com;

On Long Island e-mail Long-IslandSLP@aol.com.

Become an active supporter of the SLP. Study its literature and prepare yourself for SLP membership. For as Henry David Thoreau wrote:

"There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root."

We need to flip that equation.

## ...Wages System!

(Continued from page 5)

determined, to relieve the railroad workers of the yoke of wage slavery under which they now grunt and sweat. By your scheme of nationalization, you do not propose, on the contrary, you oppose all relief to the workers, and you have set dogs at the heels of our propagandists in Chautauqua County, N.Y., whenever it was

proposed to reduce the hours of work of the employees."

Of course, you speak too broadly and without sufficient specificity for me to know if this approach was really aiming at. Nonetheless, I hope you will find it helpful.

Sincerely yours,  
ROBERT BILLS  
National Secretary

## activities

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

### OHIO

#### North Royalton

**Social**—Sections Akron and Cleveland will hold a social on Sunday, Aug. 27, beginning at 1 p.m., at the Burns' residence, 9626 York Rd., North Royalton. Refreshments will be served. For more information call 440-237-7933.

### OREGON

#### Portland

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

## Steps You Can Take...

You can help provide for the long-term financial security of *The People* by including a properly worded provision in your Will or by making some other financial arrangement through your bank. Write to the Socialist Labor Party, publisher of *The People*, for a free copy of the booklet, *Steps You Can Take*. Use this coupon.

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E-mail: DarrellHKnight@aol.com

### AUSTRALIA

Brian Blanchard, 58 Forest Rd., Trevallyn, Launceston, Tasmania 7250, Australia. Call or fax 0363-341952.

### CANADA NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

SLP, 1550 Laperriere Ave., Ottawa, Ont., K1Z 7T2. Call Doug Irving at (613) 728-5877 (hdqtrs.); (613) 226-6682 (home); or (613) 725-1949 (fax).

### VANCOUVER

SLP, Suite 141, 6200 McKay Ave., Box 824, Burnaby, BC, V5H 4M9. Call J. Minal at (604) 526-3140.

# ...Out of House and Home

(Continued from page 1)

become commonplace. Another area affected in this way is Santa Cruz, situated across the San Cruz Mountains on the Pacific Coast about 30 miles south of San Jose.

A series of articles in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* last month reported that the impact of the influx on housing prices has been great. The median price for a single family home has jumped to \$337,000 in Santa Cruz County, and to over \$400,000 in the city of Santa Cruz. The median home is well beyond the reach of a family with an annual income of \$61,700. Availability of rentals is almost nonexistent and rates have greatly increased.

"Affordable housing" appears to be a thing of the past, at least until the "high tech" boom goes bust and turns Silicon Valley into a high-tech rendition of the Old West ghost towns scattered through California's "gold country." As a *Sentinel* article points out, the rule of thumb for affordability used to be about 30 percent of family income, but that has become wishful thinking. A United Way survey notes that 47 percent of families with incomes between \$35,000 and \$65,000 spend at least half of their income on housing, and 57 percent of families with incomes between \$15,000 and \$35,000 spend more than half of that on shelter. Stuck with exorbitant rentals, workers have little hope of saving for a down payment. Some find themselves on the street or in danger of being there.

Several stories in the *Sentinel* articles illustrate their plight. One, a 46-year-old single mother, a county employee earning \$35,000 a year, saw her rent for a two-bedroom apartment increased from \$900 to \$1,400 when the apartment building was sold. Finding no place less expensive to move with her two sons, she stayed, but only with help from her parents. "Thank God I have a family," she commented. Her situation is common as property owners are taking advantage of the real estate market and selling their rental units to the highest bidder. Another example, a single father with two children and a \$2,800-a-month job, but poor credit,

finds himself homeless and living on couches in the homes of friends.

These are examples of those who can marginally afford housing. Many workers, as noted by an organizer for the Service Employees International Union Local 415, which represents county workers, are being driven out of the county by the high cost of living. Despite a hard-fought contract last year, wages still are not keeping up with the housing market.

These examples don't include the workers who are driven out of the real estate market altogether: those living out of their cars (the target of a "camping" ban in Santa Cruz), or the Mexican immigrant farmworkers and day laborers who often are forced to live whole families in a single room—or multiple families or groups of single men living in garages, and who are often thrown out of even those squalid accommodations because they don't conform to housing codes.

At best, capitalists and local government have come up with only minor attempts at reform to ease the crisis. And, as the *Sentinel* articles indicate, most of the subsidies and the "affordable housing" developments are aimed at groups of workers who would normally expect to be able to afford housing, people like teachers, police, government workers.

These are people whose labor is considered essential to the social infrastructure. In addition, they often think of themselves as "middle class" and are politically active.

Subsidies such as first-time home buyer programs are available for "low" and "moderate" income families. In Santa Cruz "low" income goes up to \$49,350 for a family of four, and "moderate" up to \$74,640.

For low-income workers who earn even less, subsidies do no good, and subsidized rental housing units are too few to serve those needing them.

Of course, to expect reforms to solve the problem is foolish. The tide of high-tech prosperity has lifted high-tech capitalists to dizzying heights fueled by the labor of workers with the right skills for that marketplace.

The wages and such nontradi-

tional income as stock options of some high-tech workers reflect the specialized training and, hence, their relative scarcity in the labor market. That situation is temporary and is bound to change as capitalism's colleges and universities churn out more of the same to satisfy the demand.

In the meantime, workers in the "traditional economy" have remained anchored to the bottom. An Associated Press article published in the *Sentinel* on July 9 points out that California's per capita income has dropped relative to the rest of the country since 1981 despite the wealth generated by the Internet boom since 1995. Since the upper end of the economy has prospered greatly, the only way that can be true is if the lower end has dropped precipitously.

Under capitalism workers have few choices. They can strike for higher wages as nurses at Stanford Hospital have done and as 4,000 workers at 10 San Francisco Bay Area hospitals did for a day recently. Or they can leave this area for places where living costs may be lower and the competition for decent and affordable housing may be less intense, but where wages may also be lower, unemployment may be higher and the competition for jobs may be more severe.

But whatever they do under this system, they will still be at the losing end of the class struggle. The basis of that struggle is the battle between capital and labor over the share of the value produced by workers that they will receive in wages. The lower the proportion received by workers, the greater the capitalist profit. And, since capitalists both own the industries and control the political state, they have the upper hand.

While capitalism may offer reforms like rent controls, purchase subsidies or "affordable housing," these are a pale substitute for a living wage, and in effect subsidize the capitalist class by decreasing the wages they must pay to provide workers with a minimum subsistence.

—Bruce Cozzini

## ...De Leon Editorial

(Continued from page 4)

putting many upon the rack.

One may have great wealth. That cannot make his condition secure. He may lose it, and to lose it under capitalism is irrecoverable disaster. Socialism only can afford security to the

individual, for security rests not mainly upon the protection afforded the individual in the possession of what he has. Security can flow only from the establishment of a social system under which work will produce wealth for the worker.

## Nathan Karp Memorial Fund

Total: \$25,700

Anonymous \$25,000; \$100 each Stan & Mary Jane Karp, Harvey K. Fuller, Albert C. Goldberg; Clifton O. Field \$67; \$50 each Russell Lane, Bill Bigelow, Bessie Gabow; Nicholas York

\$28; Guy Marsh \$25; \$20 each Patrick E. McSweeney, Monroe Prussack, Brian Blanchard; Anonymous \$16; Lloyd A. Wright \$15; \$10 each Harold Madsen, Emilia Grombala; Chet Hensley \$7; Milton Poulos \$6; Frank Rudolph \$5; Anonymous \$1.

## ... Hanging

(Continued from page 2)

lentless hunt for white female flesh. He called the white woman the "reincarnation of the Virgin Mary." He seemed proud of his sexual conquests, even rapes of white women.

If Cleaver specialized in raping white women, he was the exception. Black men who rape rarely rape white women, and white rapists rarely victimize black women. Rape, like most crime in America, is intraracial—black-on-black, white-on-white, Latino-on-Latino and Asian-on-Asian. In many cases, the rape victim knows her assailant.

The idea of black men and white women in intimate relationships has inflamed passions, stirred fears and ignited violence for much of the past century. An-

timiscegenation laws may be buried and Americans may be more tolerant toward interracial sex, so the notion that someone can be murdered for dating someone of a different race can seem far-fetched. That many blacks are instantly willing to think the worst about Johnson's death—and so many Americans, black and white, still express fears about white women and black men dating and marrying—should remind us that this ancient taboo is still alive.

**Get Subs!**

## ...Field Reports

(Continued from page 3)

month. Comrade Villarreal is also distributing his copies with good success.

I contacted the Frank branch of the Houston Public Library concerning the use of their meeting room. We should make use of it on a regular basis for our discussion meetings, which have been irregular. I plan to change that starting this month, probably around July 22, and on a regular schedule from now on.

Carl Miller

National Member-at-Large

### SLP at Hunter College

I am trying to make the SLP's presence felt at Hunter College in New York City as well as on Long Island. This effort includes the posting of SLP leaflets on student billboards on every floor and in most classrooms at Hunter. I

am also undertaking a letter-writing campaign in order to make *The People* available in the public libraries on Long Island. This effort includes sending sample issues of *The People* to the periodicals librarians of the major libraries in Nassau and Suffolk counties. I will also be attempting this same effort with as many CUNY, state and private universities as my finances will allow. I have sold a couple of books (*Socialist Landmarks*, etc.) through the mail to interested students. I recently activated an e-mail address, HunterSLP@aol.com, to receive contacts from Hunter and Long Island. Since the middle of May this e-mail address has been placed on nearly all of the SLP leaflets which I distribute.

John-Paul Catusco

National Member-at-Large

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## THE INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY OF SOCIALISM

### Revolutionary Program

The Socialist Labor Party has a twofold program for building a socialist society. What follows is a brief summary of its main points.

#### POLITICAL ACTION

To establish socialism, political unity under the banner of a mass political party of labor is needed. The role of the party is to educate workers to the need to abolish capitalism, to agitate for the formation of classconscious industrial unions, and to express the revolutionary mandate of the working class at the ballot box. The party must also aim to capture and dismantle the political state—the present territorial form of government—and thus pave the way for a new form of government, a participatory democracy based on *industry*.

#### ECONOMIC ACTION

To establish socialism, workers must unite *as a class*, by organizing new unions. These democratic, rank-and-file-controlled unions, built along the lines of industry, would not only fight day-to-day battles for better wages and conditions. Based on the principle that the working class is involved in a *class struggle* with the employing, capitalist class, a struggle that cannot be ended under the capitalist system, a Socialist Industrial Union movement would be motivated by a higher goal: replacing capitalist ownership of the industries and services with social ownership and democratic workers' control.

Thus, while fighting day-to-day battles, these unions would move toward that goal, mobilizing workers' real strength as the sole productive class in society by building the greatest possible unity and solidarity. When the majority of society is in favor of socialism, the Socialist Industrial Union would back up the decision made at the ballot box by taking, holding and operating the industries and services of the land in the social interest.

Socialist Industrial Unions would then become the governing bodies of socialist society. We would have a truly democratic government in which society's useful producers would be in control of their own economic security and well-being.

#### NOT A BLUEPRINT

The chart below is not a blueprint. Rather, it is intended to illustrate graphically the principle upon which Socialist Industrial Unionism and the future socialist industrial democracy rest, using the auto industry as an example. A similar chart could be used for any socially necessary industry or service. A chart at the upper right depicts the flow of representation in socialist society.

The Socialist Industrial Union unites workers for the establishment of socialism. And it provides the governmental framework through which to organize and administer social production for the benefit of all the people. Council members at every level of government will be elected from industrial constituencies which coincide with the subdivisions of the integral industrial union of all the useful producers. This industrial self-government of the producers provides a viable means for society to operate the economy collectively and democratically, without social classes or any form of state oppression.

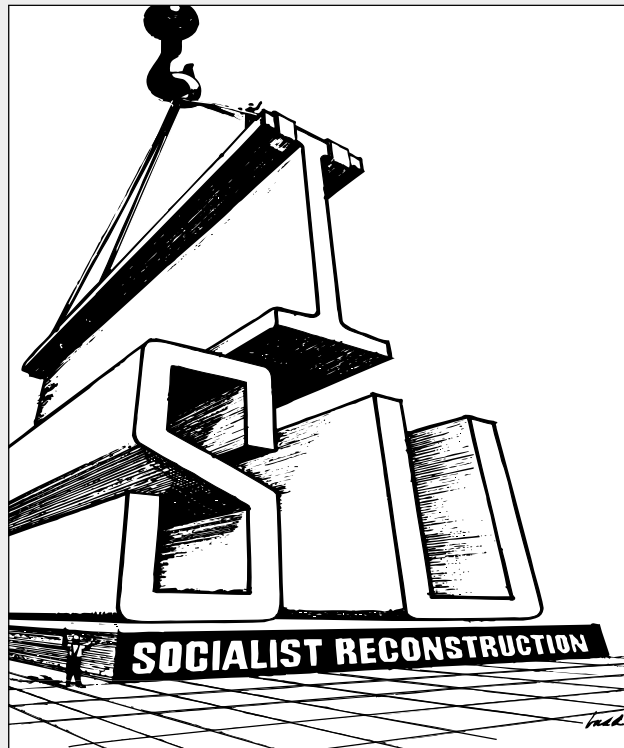
### Revolutionary Act

The revolutionary ballot will establish the *right of the people to establish socialist society.*

The Socialist Industrial Union will create the power to *back up that right.*



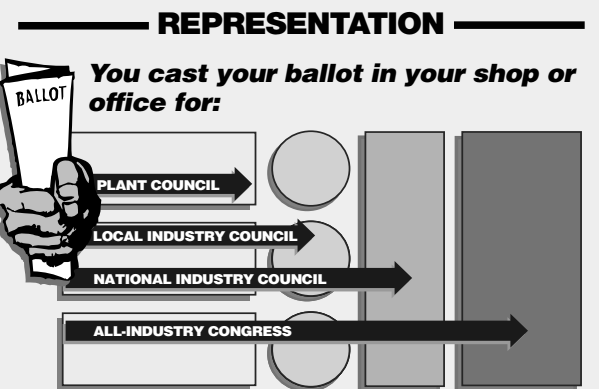
**"Industrial unionism is the Socialist Republic in the making; and the goal once reached, the industrial union is the Socialist Republic in operation."**  
— Daniel De Leon



### New Society

After the revolution, the administration of all production and distribution will be the function of the democratically elected Socialist Industrial Union government.

As industry is organized for production, so will be the administration of the new socialist society:



Socialist Industrial Unionism is the only certain safeguard against bureaucratic usurpation. In socialist society final authority will rest with the rank and file of useful producers.

The useful producers will elect administrators and representatives to all levels of government, and they will have the easily and immediately exercisable power to recall and remove any administrator or representative who, in their judgment, fails to serve their interests in office.

The Socialist Industrial Union, in firm possession of the industries and services of the land, will insure that all power remains in the only safe place for power to be—with the rank and file of society's useful producers.

Today, in the procapitalist unions, union bureaucrats are almighty, and union members are virtual subjects. But in the Socialist Industrial Union each individual worker will have an effective voice as well as a vote in everything from the operation of the workplace to the administration of society.

This will be a social organization in which the people who do the work will have complete democratic control of their tools and products—thus production will at long last be for use and the benefit of all.

#### THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIALIST INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

