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Our Fate Is In Your Hands

With this issue *The People* enters its 112th year of publication. It has led a stormy existence. Through thick and thin, however, *The People* has survived every difficulty that came its way and every assault made upon it.

The People has survived because it has held fast to a body of principles and a goal that represent the best hope humanity has of overcoming the depredations of our country's ruling class and to establish a new society that is truly democratic, truly prosperous and truly at peace with the world and all that is in it.

Yet, *The People* is not in pursuit of a utopia. Its aim is as realistic and practical as anything could be. And it is necessary. For unless that goal is achieved it is a veritable certainty that the human race will be condemned to a future in which war, famine, exploitation and environmental catastrophe—to name just a few of the evils that the capitalist system has brought or threatens to bring down upon us—will make life unbearable, if not impossible.

There is no hyperbole in this. Look around you. The signs of the times are everywhere.

They are written across our polluted skies.

They are etched on the faces of the millions—tens of millions—who go hungry every day.

They peek out from behind the curtains of secrecy that shroud the victimization of our children, millions of whom are turned into soldiers, slaves, prostitutes and worse.

They are chiseled into our consciousness by the spread of mental illness and unthinkable crimes by people who are as much victims as they are perpetrators.

They are too numerous to mention. But they are there—not merely as threats, but as present afflictions—and only those who care not to see them will deny it. Those who do are beyond redemption, at least useless in the struggle for a better world.

The world seems to be out of control, but *The People* maintains that it is not beyond control. The world is out of control, not because people are in it, but because the vast majority of people are deprived of the power and the right to decide how it will operate.

For 111 years *The People* and the Socialist Labor Party have proclaimed the right of the

(Continued on page 6)

Talk of 'Recovery' Ignores Grim State of Working Class

The capitalist media are declaring an economic "recovery" based on "indicators" that have little or nothing to do with concrete improvements for workers.

Indeed, some, such as the *Los Angeles Times*, even reject the idea that there ever was a recession. According to the official organ of tinsel town, it may have been "A Recession in Name Only."

While the media dutifully proclaimed recovery, however, K-Mart momentarily stole the show by collapsing center stage and announcing plans to drop 20,000 of its workers.

That may not be the only show-stopping performance waiting to step out from behind the curtain. The latest unemployment figures—for February—placed the official rate at 5.5 percent, which translated to almost 7.9 million unemployed workers. And even that may not be the half of it, as the following numbers from the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics suggest:

- 4.4 million workers counted either as "discouraged" workers who want jobs but have given up looking for them, or otherwise as persons who currently want a job but for a variety of often economic reasons (e.g. can't look for work because of the costs of day care or transportation) the government has tossed off the official jobless count;

- 4.4 million more workers who work only part time but who wanted and needed full-time jobs; and

- 9.2 million officially "self-employed" workers who are often employed only sporadically, often as "consultants" in the industries from which they were tossed as workers.



Carol * Simpson

Apart from all this there is the increase in multiple jobholders as a result of this "recession in name only." A total of 7.3 million workers were working more than one job in February; less than 4 million were doing so a year earlier.

While the major media trumpeted the recent extension of unemployment "benefits" few noticed a recent report by the Economic Policy Institute. "Nationally," the EPI observed, "only 43 percent of unemployed workers received benefits in 2001"—a figure that won't change much when the results are in for 2002.

Meanwhile, the existence of an "oversupply" in the labor market shown by millions of unemployed and underemployed continues to exert a downward pressure on wages and "benefits."

The contrast between the capitalist media's aloof, class-biased proclamations of "recovery" and unrelenting massive human suffering from unem-

ployment and its effects is glaring. It betrays the true class orientation of the mainstream media when they begin celebrating "recovery" before any statistically significant drop in unemployment is registered, and when they regard the level of such massive suffering as merely one of many "economic indicators."

These declarations betray a callous disregard for the plight of the working class; especially so because there is no proof that any "sign" of "recovery" will mean anything for workers.

What the facts about capitalism show is that there can be no true recovery for the working class until it unites to get rid of capitalism itself by building the worker-controlled industrial democracy of socialism.

For the capitalist wealthy it may have been "A Recession in Name Only." But for workers it is the "recovery" that is only make-believe. —K.B.

Companies Exporting Toxic Trash

By B.G.

What happens to all the electronic waste that our modern American society generates? What is done with worn-out computer monitors, circuit boards and toner cartridges?

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a huge amount of this waste is buried in landfills in the United States. An estimate last year by the EPA put the 1997 amount at 3.2 million tons, and this total will only increase over the years.

In a report issued on March 4, however, a group of five international environmental organizations says that 50 to 80 percent of U.S. electronic wastes designated for recycling is shipped abroad to various developing nations, but largely to India, Pakistan and China. These five groups—Silicon Valley Toxic Coalition, Toxics Link India, Basel Action Network, Greenpeace China and the Pakistani group Society for the Conservation and Protection of the Environment—have noted how the hazards of recycling and disposing of these wastes are especially damaging in the Third

World countries. Their report, "Exporting Harm: The Techno-Trashing of Asia," deals with electronic recycling abroad but gives special attention to conditions in the Guangdong province of China, just northeast of Hong Kong.

This investigative group found that much of the recycling is parceled out to local work groups in small villages, often involving child labor as well as adults, but all without being warned of the hazards of the materials they are handling. The recycling methods used are primitive and harmful to both the workers and the environment.

These methods include burning of plastics and wires; melting and burning of soldered computer circuit boards; acid works along river banks to extract gold from the trash; and breaking open and dumping of cathode ray tubes full of lead. Computer printers are also dismantled and toner cartridges are broken open and recycled by hand, without any protective equipment such as rubber gloves or face masks to guard against breathing in the toxic toner dust.

Groundwater pollution in this area of China has become so bad that drinking water has to be trucked in from as far as 20 miles away. The five environmental groups took samples of river water and had it tested in Hong Kong. The resulting report indicated that the water had high levels of the heavy metals that are common in computers.

In one area where circuit boards were recycled and burned, the water revealed toxic materials in the water 190 times the level recommended by the World Health Organization for safe drinking water.

The report also records similar disastrous results in Pakistan and India relating to unregulated recycling of such hazardous materials.

The 1989 Basel Convention is a treaty of the United Nations to limit the export of hazardous waste materials, and these environmental groups are trying to encourage its enforcement. It is doubtful that they will succeed with one of the most flagrant exporters of these materials, however,

(Continued on page 3)

Closing the Book on The Clinton Investigation

By B.G.

The rabid right-wing Republicans who had made a cottage industry out of baiting and investigating Bill and Hillary Clinton in the 1990s are now winding down that investigation by issuing a report that few people now care about in the wake of the Sept. 11 disaster.

Independent Counsel Robert Ray, who succeeded Kenneth W. Starr, issued in early March a "Final Report of the Independent Counsel In Re: Madison Guaranty Savings & Loan Association." This failing financial institution owned a real estate corporation known as Whitewater, and the Clintons lost a \$45,000 investment in this real estate venture. If you search this March "report" for anything about the so-called "Whitewater scandal" that was much-touted by Republicans in Congress a few years ago, you will find nothing, and a very sparse mention of even Madison Guaranty Savings & Loan. Instead, there are details about the former president's dalliance with a certain White House intern and his

inept attempts to cover up the event.

Counsel Ray promises to issue another report on the Whitewater inquiry shortly, and perhaps there we shall learn that the "scandal" was that the Clintons were dummies when it came to investing their money.

The real scandal can more realistically be seen in the \$68.3 million the investigation cost from 1994 through September 2001. The honest-to-goodness breakdown included the following major expenditures:

•Cost of investigating whether President Clinton lied about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky: \$12.5 million;

•Cost of protective services for Independent Counsel Kenneth W. Starr after he received 'many serious threats': \$2.3 million;

•Cost of initial Whitewater probe examining the Clintons' real estate deals: \$42 million;

•Cost to investigate death of White House deputy counsel Vincent Foster: \$1.8 million;

•Cost of probing the firing of White

House travel office employees: \$2.1 million;

•Cost of investigating White House use of FBI files \$1.8 million."

This amounts to a whopping \$62.5 million out of the total \$68.3 million.

From the total cost of the whole investigation, the government collected \$9.1 million in fines and restitutions for a net cost to the government of \$59.2 million.

The investigation titillated the whole country for a while. Moreover, it revealed that a number of the holier-than-thou Republican members of Congress and of the House Judiciary Committee investigating the president were also guilty of their own naughty sexual dalliances. (Remember Rep. Henry Hyde's "youthful indiscretions" when he was in his 40s, and Rep. Robert Livingston's embarrassed resignation as speaker of the house when his recent escapades became public one day after his elevation to the speakership?)

There are always ongoing economic and social problems in the country that



should claim the earnest attention of Congress. This past costly investigation and skewering of a sitting president who was roundly envied and disliked by the opposite political party indicates that opportunism and self-promotion of capitalist politicians often take precedence over the country's real needs.

Enron in India: The Giant's First Fall

By Sandip Roy

©Pacific News Service

Enron's collapse may have begun with the kind of misadventures it engaged in half a world away among the quiet coastal villages of Dabhol, India.

In 1992, the Enron Corp. announced it would build a \$3 billion natural-gas power plant in Dabhol in the western state of Maharashtra. The project was to be the poster child of economic liberalization in the country—the single largest direct foreign investment in India's history.

Instead, Enron in India has been an economic disaster and a human rights nightmare.

From the get-go, the Dabhol project was mired in controversy. Enron worked hand in hand with corrupt Indian politicians and bureaucrats in rushing the project through. Charges filed by an Indian public interest group allege Enron and the Indian company Reliance bribed the Indian petroleum minister in 1992–93 to secure the contract to produce and sell oil and gas from the nearby Panna and Mukta fields to supply the plant.

A Human Rights Watch report recounted incidents of farmers' land stolen, water sources damaged, officials bribed and opponents of the project arrested on trumped-up charges. In 1997, the state police attacked a fishing village where many residents opposed the plant. The pregnant wife of one protest leader was dragged naked from her home and beaten with batons.

The state forces accused of abuses provided security to the Dabhol Power Corp. (DPC), a joint venture of Enron, the Bechtel Corp. and General Electric, overseen by Enron.

The U.S. State Department issued the DPC a human rights clean bill of health. Charged with the assessment was U.S. Ambassador Frank Wisner, who had also helped Enron get a contract to manage a power plant in Subic Bay in the Philippines in 1993. Shortly after leaving his post in India in 1997, Wisner took up an appointment to the board of directors of Enron Oil and Gas, a subsidiary of Enron.

Thanks in part to Wisner's positive rights review, Washington extended

some \$300 million in loan guarantees to Enron for its investment in Dabhol—even though the World Bank had refused to finance the project, calling it unviable.

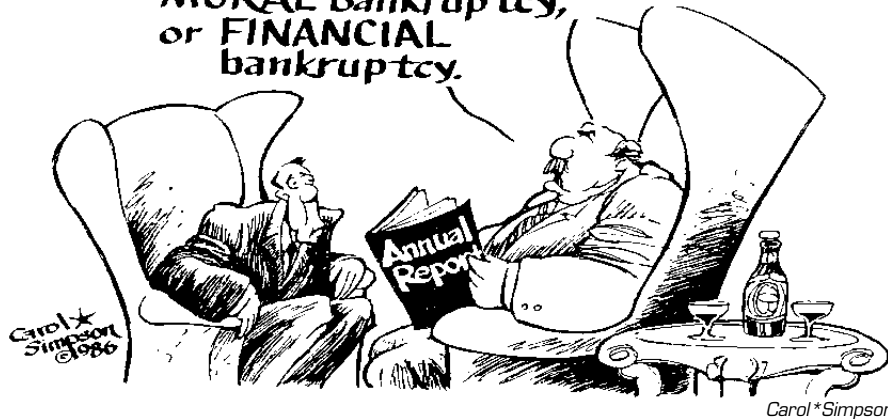
A recent Indian investigative committee report exposed an "utter failure of governance"—bribery, lack of competitive bidding, secrecy, etc.—by both the Indian federal government and two successive state governments as they rushed the Enron project through.

By June 2001, the Maharashtra state government had already broken off its agreement with DPC because its power cost too much. That was the plant's one and only customer.

By December, news of Enron's collapse was in newspapers across the world. But the company still filed a \$200 million claim with the U.S. government's Overseas Private Investment Corp., a U.S. tax-funded insurance fund for American companies abroad, in an attempt to recoup losses from the DPC. Indian newspapers reported that Vice President Dick Cheney, Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neil and Commerce Secretary Don Evans tried to twist the Indian government's arm into coughing up the money. Otherwise, U.S. officials warned, other investment projects would be jeopardized. International media reported in January that U.S. government documents showed Cheney tried to help collect the debt.

Today in Dabhol, the power plant is considered polluting and undependable. Spring water has become undrinkable, the mango crop is blighted and the fish catch is dwindling. Often at nightfall,

Face it, Johnson,
your company has a CHOICE—
MORAL bankruptcy,
or **FINANCIAL**
bankruptcy.



Carol Simpson

the electricity fails.

How did Enron manage to push the project through? By using a time-tested strategy. Centuries ago, the East India Co. went to India to trade and stayed on to rule. Before long, Indian money and goods were feeding coffers in London, and the products were sold back to the colony. The DPC was in India, but the money went to Enron's offshore tax shelters. And just like the East India Co., Enron appeared to apply a strategy of divide and conquer. It offered groups of villagers money, hospitals and labor contracts, with the result that families sometimes became divided against each other.

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.

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By Robert Bills

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Money Lenders Prey on The Poor and the Young

Workers are deeper in debt than ever before. Indeed, much of the so-called prosperity of the 1990s was premised on soaring productivity and lagging wages. There is more than irony in this. It hints at the extent to which workers are robbed as producers. Unprecedented leaps in productivity have been more than matched by unprecedented rates of exploitation. Hence millions of workers have been forced into debt.

As if that was not enough, the capitalist woods are crawling with leeches who "earn" their way by sucking up as much of what workers manage to take home as the market will bear, and sometimes more. They are the purveyors of "easy credit" who traffic on the vulnerability and speculate on the innate honesty of "ordinary folks."

The most vulnerable of the vulnerable are those impoverished workers who were duped by the prosperity propaganda into accepting the "easy credit" that came their way. The young and inexperienced, whose high hopes are carefully nurtured by the propaganda mills of capitalism, also rank high among those most susceptible to the lures that capitalism dangles to beguile the unwary and the innocent.

Indeed, according to Associated Press (AP) writer Anne D'Innocenzio (appropriately enough), young adults rank high among those whose indebtedness has climbed beyond their means, and as seems increasingly probable, beyond their prospects. D'Innocenzio reported being told by the chairman of something called "America's Research Group" that it "estimates that the under-30 age group has an average credit card debt of \$10,000 to \$12,000, up 50 percent from five years ago."



"We can afford groceries if we take up hibernation in the winter months."

Carol *Simpson

When the "prosperity" that made capitalists even richer than they were began to sag, many low-paid workers whose jobs and meager wages were threatened or lost not only found themselves out in the economic cold but saddled with debts that they either cannot pay off or must maneuver around just to keep body and soul together.

Many of these victims of capitalism's latest economic convulsion are seeing interest rates on their credit card debt approaching 30 percent. It is all part of what Michael Liedtke, another AP writer, called a deliberate "strategy" by the money lenders.

One such lender is Providian Financial, which recently boosted its interest rate from 23.9 percent to 29.9 percent. The company, according to Liedtke, said its "29.9 percent rate will apply to 3.3 million

of the 18.5 million account holders on its books as of Sept. 30."

"The strategy is part of the credit card industry's attempt to boost profits in a sagging economy," Liedtke wrote in an article distributed in February. "Lenders believe they can offset some losses by collecting more from borrowers who have been flagged as the most likely to miss payments."

Some workers are so far in debt that they may never be able to crawl out from under it. As Liedtke put it:

"A customer making minimum payments of 3 percent on a \$12,500 balance with a 23.9 percent rate would need 17 years to repay the debt and incur a total of \$2,524 in finance charges. The same balance with a 29.9 percent [rate] would take more than 30 years to repay and incur a total of \$6,107 in finance charges,

Tip Skimming Common In Boston Restaurants

By Carl C. Miller Jr.

Anyone who has eaten at any of the various restaurants and eateries available to the consumer these days knows how hard the employees of these establishments work for their money. Not only do they work hard for their money, but they need every penny they get from the tips left by patrons to augment their often low wages.

According to an article in *The Boston Globe*, however, restaurants generate

additional income by "skimming" tips that patrons leave for food servers. "It's the industry's dirty little secret," says Samantha Smith, an employee of Locke-Ober, an upscale restaurant near Downtown Crossing in Boston. "People think they are leaving money for their server and we're not seeing half of it."

The *Globe* article says that at the end of the night's work, all the tips, both those left in cash and on credit cards, are collected by management. As much as 25 percent of tips are "skimmed" before the remainder is returned to be divided among the servers and bus help.

Restaurant executives deny that workers are compelled to share tips with management. "All tipping and tip sharing, if any, is fully voluntary," says Thomas Baldwin, an executive vice president of the Morton's Restaurant Group. But the president of Local 26 of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union told the *Globe* that skimming is a common practice in the Boston area.

A Massachusetts labor law apparently prohibits tip skimming by restaurants. As with most labor laws, however, this one has more holes than the sieves in Boston restaurant kitchens.

A representative of The Bay Tower Room, for example, said that it simply interprets the state statute differently than its employees do. Peter Christie, president of the Massachusetts Restaurant Association, echoed this self-serving sentiment when he said: "You can't be taking money to pay the chefs in the back, but there are gray areas about who is part of the waitstaff. We would never try to protect people who are knowingly trying to

break the law, but we live in a litigious society. These are probably just disgruntled employees."

In spite of what restaurant executives say, the workers, as always, know better than anyone else what goes on when it comes to their jobs. According to Sue Anne Foti, a waitress for 25 years who worked at Morton's restaurant for two years before she was fired in November: "They forced us to pay the management's salary. I'm a single mother and I've got two kids. They were taking food out of my kids' mouths."

Foti's statement is backed up by Dan Field, head of the Fair Labor and Business Practices division of the Boston attorney general's office. "Skimming tips allows restaurant owners to pay management less out of their own pockets." George Peterson, former waiter and later manager at Morton's for over a decade, said his \$22,000-a-year salary more than doubled after receiving his cut of the tips skimmed from the waitstaff. "There's a lot of money on the table here and everybody's doing it [skimming]." Joe Lichtblau, an attorney representing workers in one of the suits, said, "They [restaurant owners] do it because they can get away with it."

"Getting away with it" is not limited to the restaurant business. Capitalists break their own laws as often as their politicians prate about the "rule of law" being the trademark of bourgeois society. As the *Globe* reported:

"The [Massachusetts] attorney general's office, which receives 80,000 calls a year about wage violations, said many of them are from restaurant workers. Despite the scope of the problem, investigations are rare because the language of the law

assuming only minimum monthly payments are made."

Critics object that lending institutions are taking undue advantage of the poor, and the institutions respond by saying that they don't mind if they do. They saw their opportunity and they took it: Isn't that what capitalism is all about?

Of course it is. Capitalism is about amassing fortunes drawn from the marrow of the working class. The basic robbery occurs at the point of production, where workers are separated from the larger portion of the wealth they produce. This leaves millions of workers vulnerable to another set of capitalist parasites who sit on the fence between honest labor and on-the-job exploitation, much as vultures wait for their opportunity to swoop down on the victims of some predator's kill.

In nature vultures serve a useful purpose by scavenging carrion. In society, however, they serve only to dash the hopes and sap the life out of the living. (Mary Prince contributed to this article.)

...Trash

(Continued from page 1)

because the United States is the only developed country that has refused to sign the treaty. It has been obvious during its entire existence that capitalism will always put profits before people.

NATIONALISM: Working-Class Nemesis

Discusses the origins, development and dangers of nationalism, and what the working class must do to resist and counter nationalist rhetoric.

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makes prosecution difficult and time consuming. Civil lawsuits filed by waiters are unusual because few know the law Field said. The attorney general's office is backing legislation that would make it easier to penalize offending restaurants.

"And the reality, say food servers—who earn as little as \$2.63 an hour before tips—is that those who do speak up fear recrimination ranging from lousy shifts to blackballing."

Sure enough, when five Locke-Ober servers complained about the unfair practices they were promptly fired. This led them to file a lawsuit against their former employers. Several other Boston area restaurants are being sued by former employees who suffered a similar fate.

Daniel De Leon called capitalism a "robberburg," and with the treatment of workers depicted in this article who can doubt that it is an accurate description of the system we live under. Workers in socialist society would receive the full social value of what they produce. There will be no more exploitation of workers by useless parasitic bosses. Isn't it time to do the sensible thing and build a society where all are entitled to enjoy the fruits of their labor? Join the SLP and help us make a society of peace and plenty for all a reality.

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A Renewed Arms Race

The Bush administration's release of elements of its partially classified Nuclear Posture Review last month makes it clear that the arms race is undergoing a dangerous escalation even in this post-Cold War era. In so doing, it gives the lie to ruling-class propaganda which for decades maintained that it was the Cold War struggle between "good" and "evil" that lay behind—and served to justify—the arms race.

As *The New York Times* reported last month, the 56-page Pentagon report on the Nuclear Posture Review stressed a need to develop new nuclear weapons, called "for improving the intelligence and targeting systems needed for nuclear strikes" and argued "that the United States may need to resume nuclear testing."

The report set off a minor political firestorm upon its release because implementing its recommendations could shred the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and threaten nuclear arms reduction treaties as well. For those who put any stock in such meaningless agreements in a world in which the technology exists to develop nuclear weapons within a few days of their expressed "need" by one of the world's ruling classes, this was heresy.

The review names as potential nuclear targets several signatories of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty—including Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya and North Korea. But, says the *Times* article, "Washington has promised that it will not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon

states that have signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty unless those countries attack the United States or its allies "in alliance with a nuclear weapon state."

It contends that a resumption of nuclear tests may be needed to improve existing nukes and develop new ones, and proposes stockpiling decommissioned weapons and updating instead of destroying them, with the desired result of decreasing the time needed to put them back on active status should a crisis arise.

All told, the Bush administration's Nuclear Posture Review is an incendiary document that indicates its willingness to toss all previous arms control efforts to the wind (including some it has not yet signed). As one critic quoted by the *Times* article put it, it seeks to reinvigorate "the nuclear weapons forces and the vast research and industrial complex that support [them]."

So-called rogue states that support terrorism provide the rationale for the administration's proposals, taking the place of the "evil" Soviet bloc in post Cold War rhetoric. But the Persian Gulf War and the war in Afghanistan both show nuclear weapons are not necessary for victory over "rogue states."

The truth is that today, like yesterday, the United States is engaged in an unending effort to maintain military hegemony in a world more full of military competitors and nuclear upstarts than ever. It wants this hegemony because it is essential to maintaining and defending its economic domination over the rest of the world. —K.B.

Cheney's Odyssey

Although he denied it while in Israel last month, there was no secret about the purpose of Vice President Dick Cheney's 12-nation "diplomatic" tour of the Middle East. His mission was to find support for a new war on Iraq among the ruling classes of the Arab states. His odyssey was the diplomatic equivalent of a feasibility study.

The U.S. is powerful, but it is not all powerful, and it's starting to spread itself thin. It needs backers and allies in strategic places to pursue its goal of securing control of the Middle Eastern oil fields, including those that once fell within the former Soviet Union's sphere of influence.

During the Gulf War, the United States used Saudi Arabia as the staging area for its aerial bombardment of Baghdad and land invasion of Iraq. That may not be necessary today. "This time," according to the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*, "the United States doesn't need an Arab coalition—only support and a logistic base." But where to find it?

The princes and sheiks whose sandy domains line the coast of the Persian Gulf were not receptive. They care nothing for Saddam Hussein, and to a man they would prefer to be rid of him.

But Saddam Hussein is more of a nuisance than a threat. The threat is the United States and its readiness to use its military strength to topple any regime that gets in its way.

American capitalism has relied on "gunboat diplomacy" since it decided to join the oceans at Panama nearly a century ago. What happened with Afghan-

istan and its Taliban served to remind those princes and sheiks that any one of them could suffer the same fate if they fall into disfavor with the American behemoth.

If there is any safety for them it is in their numbers, or so they believe. By standing together, even at the risk of annoying Washington now, they believe they can defend themselves against something the U.S. would see as more than a nuisance, but as a threat to its interests in the Gulf region.

Hence Cheney's palace-hopping odyssey in search of a weak link in the Arab chain.

Hence the sudden interest in a Saudi Arabian peace plan that would guarantee Arab acceptance of Israel in exchange for creation of a Palestinian state.

Hence Secretary of State Colin Powell's no nonsense telephone call to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Israel's rampage through Palestinian "controlled" areas was rocking the boat and making Cheney's task more difficult.

Hence Iraqi officials sent "shuttling between Mideast capitals in a bid to galvanize regional opposition to possible U.S. military action against Iraq," as reported by the Associated Press.

Hence a multitude of actions and reactions in the Middle East.

The old adage that capitalism is always at war or preparing for war was underscored anew by Vice President Cheney's quest for support.

That old adage may need modification. Today it seems that capitalism is prone to do both at once.



A De Leon Editorial

Capitalist Swagger

The arrogance with which American capitalism struts on the world stage is a reflection of its deep-seated insecurity.

Class Insanity

(Daily People, July 28, 1908)

Dr. Allan McLane Hamilton, an alienist whose home is in Eldorado, Kan., is reported by the *Republican* of his town to say:

"The people of this country have no idea of the widespread lack of confidence the Old World has in this more or less happy land. Well, who in thunder cares what they think about us and ours? Were it not for this country thousands of people in the old country would die of starvation daily. Europe cannot raise a crop of peanuts without American ploughs; and they would not have a shirt to their backs without American cotton, while half of them would go barefooted but for American shoes. And if the impudent lobsters think we won't fight they had better try us. America can turn all Europe hatless, coatless, shirtless, barefooted and barelegged in six months, while starving them to death; and it would not take us many months to whale the daylights out of them just to restore confidence."

Whether there is more sense than nonsense in this boast, or more nonsense than sense, fact is the element of truth is so large in the doctor's words that their very brutality renders them useful.

The doctor epitomizes the mental posture of the American capitalist—a genuine sample of paranoia.

There is no capitalist like the American—bumptious, ignorant, conceited, brutal. Many things combine in Europe to keep the brute in some degree of decency; everything combines in America to promote the brute's utter unutterableness. As he deals with the proletariat at home, so does he deal, or is ready to deal, with his fellow capitalists abroad.

At home the capitalist has created a condition of things, through the pover-

ty of the masses and the disorganized state that his police spies keep the masses in, when he can say:

"The American workingmen cannot buy a 5-cent package of peanuts without I am willing to furnish them wages; and they would not have a shirt to their backs without I opened my cotton mills, while half of them would go barefooted but for my willingness to operate my shoe factories. And if the impudent lobsters think I won't fight they had better try me. I can turn the whole working class hatless, coatless, shirtless, barefooted and barelegged in six months, while starving them to death; and it would not take me many months to whale the daylights out of them just to restore confidence."

There is no capitalist like the American—bumptious, ignorant, conceited, brutal.

As to Europe, or rather, the European capitalist, the American capitalist does not hold quite the power that he holds over the demoralized American wage slaves. Nevertheless, it is true that America is the pivot upon which international capitalism revolves. To a great extent the American capitalist is a "fly on the wheel" to the pivot; to an appreciable extent he has a good deal to say on the subject. What with both reasons, and especially with the despotic power he exercises here, the American capitalist swaggers over creation as *the* thing, a victim of paranoia.

Not frequently is the exhibition of the American capitalist's mental irresponsibility exhibited as glaringly as it is in the instance of Dr. Allan McLane Hamilton of Eldorado, Kan. The usefulness of the exhibition lies in the glaringness of its manifestation.

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.

A PAGE FROM WORKING-CLASS HISTORY

The Paterson Silk Workers' Strikes of 1911-1912

The following article from the *Industrial Union News* of April 1912 is the third in a series of reports on the Paterson silk workers' strikes of 1911-1912. The *Industrial Union News* was the official newspaper of the "Detroit IWW." Its reports from the scene were written by Russell H. Palmer. This report, however, was written by Robert McClure of the Detroit IWW's General Executive Board. An introduction giving background to the strikes and their causes appeared in our February issue. The series will conclude with an epilogue on the significance of the strike and the organization that conducted it.

—Editor

VICTORIOUS IWW

SCORES IN PATERSON ALL ALONG THE LINE.—WAGE SLAVES OF THE EASTERN STATES ARISE FROM THEIR KNEES.—6,000 SILK WORKERS OF HUDSON COUNTY CO. ON STRIKE AND ORGANIZE INTO THE IWW.

1,300 SILK WORKERS MARCH INTO LINE IN LODI, N.J.—POLISH WORKERS IN PASSAIC, N.J., SHOW THAT THEY WILL NOT LAG BEHIND.—THE MOST INSPIRING SIGHT IN THE HISTORY OF LABOR MOVEMENT OF AMERICA.—THE INTERNATIONALITY OF THE WORKING CLASS DEMONSTRATED.

[The *Industrial Union News*, April 1912]

The Paterson silk workers strike is almost over, 100 out of 110 silk manufacturers having conceded all the

demands of the IWW Local 25. Over 4,500 strikers returned to work, those firms who so far have refused to grant the union's demands, having branches in Oneonta, N.Y., Reading, Erie and

Lebanon, Pa. Organizers are in these districts and will soon have the workers in line, thus putting an end to the unconscious scabbing.

Through fear of their silk dyers organizing in the IWW the National Silk Co., American Silk Co. and other firms gave a voluntary increase of \$1.00 per week to their thousands of workers.

This scheme will not avail, there men will be organized into the IWW very shortly.

Eternal vigilance is necessary for the maintenance of our improved conditions, and several firms, the Empire Silk Co. and Siff and Cohen Co., on trying to cut the wages after agreeing to pay the increase wages, had another strike on their hands, these bosses being shown, and the lesson was also for the rest of the manufacturers, that the IWW is no union to trifle with.

The Baker and Schofield Co. tried the same game and every time the workers struck, pulling the bosses back

with a jerk. The bosses are beginning to wonder "What in H— is this kind of organization, this IWW?"

They have been shown! The IWW is no organization to monkey with.

The "Bummery" have been trying to disrupt the strike in Paterson, importing Haywood who started to slander Rudolph Katz, but the audience hissed him, and he dropped his vitriol, getting severely burned for handling it. He shut off on Katz, and then spoke on the Lawrence Strike. The workers of Paterson are thoroughly disgusted with the fakir's tactics.

Thompson held a meeting and said the IWW was raising money under false pretenses, but Frank Campbell made Thompson collapse like a punctured balloon by saying, "Will you make that statement in writing, and sign it?" That finished Thompson and the meeting.

In Passaic, N.J., the cotton and worsted weavers are requesting, even demanding, that they be organized into the IWW. One thousand weavers in the Botany worsted mills had their wages raised voluntarily 2 cents per thousand picks, but these concessions only whet the appetite for more. When the boss will give 2 cents without being asked, more can be forced by IWW organization.

GEB member Rudolph Katz has a strike on hand in Allentown, Pa., the weavers immediately demanding higher wages, equal to Paterson scale.

At Astoria, L.I., the employees of the Star Ribbon Co. attended a meeting of the IWW which was addressed by Organizer Goldberg, and after his address, tore up their cards in Golden's United Textile Workers and joined the IWW. Old man flim-flam Flynn tried to burst up the meeting, and the weavers wanted him expelled from the meeting. Flynn got the privilege of the platform, and when through with his attack on Katz, got red hot questions from Goldberg, which settled Flynn's flim-flam game.

On Friday, March 22 at 8 a.m. the silk workers of Hudson County to the number of 6,000 went on strike, and organized into the IWW. The strike in Paterson got the IWW organizing staff into working order, is now running like a well-oiled piece of machinery, and their organization will be accomplished in short order.

From Lodi, N.Y., comes the joyful news that 1,300 silk dyers will join the IWW before the week is out. Frank Young from Detroit is now in Paterson, and will be of great value to us.

Send on immediately 1,000 *Industrial Union News* and 5,000 leaflets, "Industrial Unionism versus Anarchy and Reform."

More later from all over the strike zone.

R. McClure,
Member GEB

Paterson, N.J., March 22, 1912

One of De Leon's Best

Two Pages From Roman History Delivered 100 Years Ago

Daniel De Leon's *Two Pages From Roman History* ranks with the greatest of socialist books and pamphlets. It has been compared to Karl Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* as an application of the materialist conception of history. It is said to have inspired striking coal miners in Wales in the 1920s. Lenin thought so highly of it that he urged its translation into Russian, and Leon Trotsky is said to have kept a copy on his desk in Mexico.

De Leon delivered the lectures that comprise *Two Pages From Roman History* 100 years ago this month, on April 2 and 16, 1902, at two public meetings sponsored by Section New York, SLP. (See "100 Years Ago") Space considerations prevent us from doing justice to this important work, but the occasion

makes it mandatory that it be introduced to those who may not be familiar with it.

The first of De Leon's *Two Pages From Roman History*, entitled "Plebs Leaders and Labor Leaders," is a comparative examination of the modern labor leader and role of the rich and powerful segment of the ancient plebeian class in fooling the poverty-stricken and struggling plebeians. The "second page," entitled "The Warning of the Gracchi," is an example from history of the mistake the exploited class makes when it relies upon "saviors," however well intentioned, and of the fatal mistakes that occur when the exploited class and its "saviors" lack a full understanding of class forces.

In short, *Two Pages* deals with history while applying certain of its lessons to the present day. The application concentrates on this era's problem of the labor leader, but in doing so it analyzes ancient slavery and modern capitalism, demonstrates the essential likeness of the ancient beneficiary of chattel slavery to the modern beneficiary of capitalist wage slavery, proves that reforms were concealed measures of reaction in the ancient world of class society as they are in the present form of class society, and outlines a code of conduct for Socialists that makes them immune to the temptations and corrupting influences of capitalism.

While *Two Pages From Roman History* is a title that may not seem to apply to modern society and to the role of today's labor leaders, no other title could apply so well to this close study of class society, of capitalism's labor lieutenants, and of the socialist moral contrast to the corruption of capitalism.

The separate lessons of *Two Pages* are of tremendous importance. They do more than most other socialist works to give the student an understanding of social forces. De Leon handles each subject discussed in *Two Pages* with that singular power of analysis that characterized his gift for reducing the most complex and potentially confusing subjects to their essence.

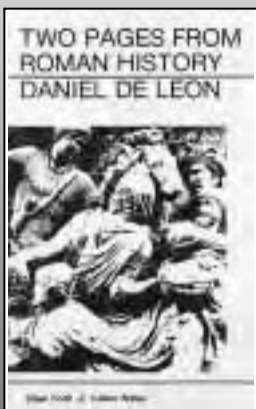


As noted, the work concentrates on the role of the labor leader—and upon the illusion, delusion and snare that reforms can substitute for the social changes required by the workers.

The reading of *Two Pages From Roman History* is a unique experience for both the Socialist novice and the Socialist veteran. To the Socialist novice it opens doors to an understanding of ancient history and current events; of old and "new" forms of class rule; of slavery, capitalism and socialism; of tactics that have entrapped the exploited through the ages; of the futility and danger of reforms; of the role of the plebes leader and the labor leader; of the rulers' use of "religion" as a weapon of class rule; and among other things of the code of conduct—what De Leon referred to as "ten canons of the proletarian revolution"—today's workers must accept if they are to win freedom, for all humanity, from the horrors and injustices of class rule. To the Socialist veteran a rereading of *Two Pages* amounts to a postgraduate course that provides a still greater understanding of the things that must be thoroughly understood if there is to be a better world.

Two Pages From Roman History is a masterpiece of social portraiture. Basic though other socialist works are, no Socialist is thoroughly grounded without having absorbed the lessons of this truly great work.

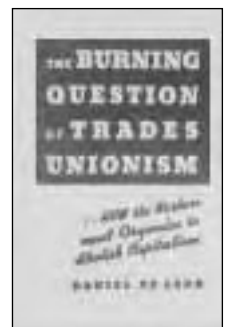
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The Death of Savimbi

By B.B.

Nicholas D. Kristof, an editorial commentator for *The New York Times*, took the death of Jonas Savimbi as occasion to drive home some "lessons," but not before chiding the United States for its hypocrisy in condemning regimes that support terrorists. Indeed, the United States had a long love affair with arch terrorist Jonas Savimbi, who died when ambushed by Angolan troops on Feb. 22.

As may be recalled, this notorious torturer, butcher and head of the guerrilla army UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) was responsible for the deaths of over 500,000 people and fought a decades-long civil war against the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola). They comprised the legally constituted government in Angola presided over by Jose Eduardo Dos Santos. While tagging Dos Santos as a "red" for his tilt to Russia, Dr. Savimbi was the CIA's proxy for U.S. capitalism's imperialist ambitions while countering Soviet and Cuban influence in that hapless country.

Jeane Kirkpatrick, U.N. ambassador under Ronald Reagan, once described Savimbi as "one of the few authentic heroes of our time," and Reagan did her one better by calling him "Angola's Abraham Lincoln." Among the "hero's" revered deeds, Savimbi personally murdered the wife and children of a rival. He was also an amputee who sowed mayhem and anti-personnel mines throughout Angola and bombed a Red Cross-run factory for the production of artificial limbs.

One African scholar referred to Savimbi as "Africa's classical terrorist...he's unique because of the degree of suffering he caused without showing any remorse." Another, in referring to American involvement in Africa stated: "In all cases, the results have been disastrous, creating decades of regionwide conflicts."

The lessons Mr. Kristof would

like to drive home relative to "our" mistakes are:

(1) Avoid fawning opportunists and warlord types who have only their own personal aggrandizement in mind.

(2) "Support democracy as a whole, not simply elections." Comprehensive programs that promote freedom of speech and the disarmament of combatants will lay the foundation for stability.

(3) Oppose land mines, because they "often last longer than our alliances."

Kristof followed this with a pious homily advising the capitalist political state "...rather than just anointing a winner, let's promote institutional changes—like schools, liberties and free markets—that are the Third World's real freedom fighters and 'authentic heroes.'"

Balderdash! Such errant nonsense is what passes for wisdom in the capitalist media, reminding one of Marx's observation that "on the level plain simple mounds look like hills and the imbecile flatness of the bourgeois mind is measured by the height of its great intellects."

Flowery euphemisms fail to conceal what history lays bare. Angola is the story of the insatiable greed of capitalist imperialism and colonialism that is alone responsible for having turned the land into a human and ecological disaster. Since the early 16th century European and Portuguese adventurers and slave traders pillaged the country. Four centuries of this abominable trade impoverished the country as millions of indigenous people found themselves enslaved on plantations in Brazil and the Americas.

After England ended the slave trade in the 1850s, the final years of the century were given over to the "tender mercies" of Portuguese capitalism during the imperialist division of Africa. It wasn't until 1902 and the Bailundo War that Portugal and the Boers finally subdued the last fierce indigenous

resistance and introduced "free markets" and wage slavery as "the best of all possible systems." That set the stage for pillaging on a grand scale, for the country had oil reserves equal to one-fifth of Saudi Arabia's plus major deposits of diamonds, copper, manganese, iron and uranium, not to mention an abundant agricultural potential.

The ensuing impoverishment of the people and the country led directly to the insurgencies and nationalist uprisings of the 1960s. After Angola cast off Portuguese colonial rule in 1975, it became essential to Anglo-American and European capitalists that they find partners in pillage to continue their exploitation of the country. UNITA was Jonas Savimbi's vehicle for acquiring dominion, wealth and power on behalf of whatever imperialist power offered the best deal. After having tried "Marxism" and Maoism, he found the "joys" of free-market babble to his liking and fell under the sway of the CIA and Johannesburg.

The real lesson of Savimbi's death—and there is only one—is that capitalism long ago ceased to be an agent of social progress. It can only function as an engine of oppression and exploitation of both its own domestic working class and that of subject countries since profits emanate from the extraction of the wealth wage labor alone produces. As such, it is bound to generate social conflict, civil war, destruction and resentment. Hence, in foreign lands it can only operate through the cooperation of corrupt and oppressive satraps. Despotism can deliver is the credo of the corporate investor. Those who oppose suffer the fate of Lumumba.

This is why the terrorist phenomenon goes on replicating itself repeatedly and why Mr. Ashcroft can safely predict that the fight against terrorism is interminable. Yes, until the establishment of socialist society overthrows the basis of terrorism, the capitalist system, we can expect to see the rise of more Savimbis.

activities

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

OHIO

North Royalton

Social & Discussion—Section Cleveland will hold a social and discussion on Sunday, April 28, at 9626 York Rd., North Royalton. Begins at 1:30 p.m. Refreshments served. For more information please 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.

TEXAS

Houston

Discussion Meetings—The SLP group in Houston holds discussion meetings the last Saturday of the month at the Houston Public Library, Franklin Branch, 6440 W. Bellfort, southwest Houston.

The time of the meetings varies. Those interested please call 713-721-9296, e-mail houstonslp@lycos.com or visit the group's Web site at <http://houstonslp.tripod.com>.

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...SLP Emergency Fund

(Continued from page 1)

people to democratically decide their own fate. But it has ceaselessly pointed out that no such right can be established and ensured against usurpation unless the people collectively own and democratically control the nation's economy. That's why *The People* has relentlessly persisted in its efforts to bring the message of the SLP's Socialist Industrial Union program to the American working class.

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been set up for precisely those reasons. There is too much at stake to allow the fund to fall short of its \$125,000 goal. The fate of *The People*, and perhaps the SLP itself, is in your hands. This is one corner of the world over which our readers exercise complete control. Please use the SLP Emergency Fund coupon in this issue to contribute as generously as you can.

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Religious Hucksters Misleading Their Followers

By B.G.

The Christian far right is at it again. After the Sept. 11 disaster, fundamentalist preachers Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson agreed that the attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., happened because of such American insults to God as abortion, feminism, pornography and the American Civil Liberties Union. After several days of national criticism and ridicule of Falwell and Robertson for this idiocy, Falwell apologized and Robertson weaseled out of the dilemma by saying that he had not fully understood Falwell's remarks.

Self-Anointed Authorities

Last fall also, Franklin Graham, son of noted evangelist and recently exposed anti-Semite Billy Graham, told NBC broadcasters that Islam "is a very evil and wicked religion," without giving any specifics from the Koran.

Then, on his Feb. 20 "700 Club" television program, Robertson informed the world that Islam is a violent religion that seeks "to dominate and then, if need be, destroy." It is not "a peaceful religion that wants to coexist," he emphasized. "They want to coexist until they can control, dominate and then, if need be, destroy."

It is a marvel that certain Christian evangelists have suddenly become self-anointed authorities on a religion to which they were total strangers until Sept. 11, and of which they still have little or no knowledge. Even more amazing is their complete oblivion to the numerous violent acts perpetrated by many followers of their own religion throughout history.

Religions may be made in heaven, but they are organized and perpetrated by earthly mortals who often have less than angelic motives.

Church and State

When religions become organized and institutionalized, they become a part of the economic, social and political structure of society. As such, they respond to

material interests and can become instruments of the government, or can become independent and powerful entities rivaling the state for political control of society. These developments were certainly manifest in Europe during the Middle Ages, when there was an ongoing struggle in Western Europe between the secular rulers and the papacy over such issues as whether the pope or the king or emperor should appoint and officially invest bishops and abbots with their offices. Under the feudal system, these high-ranking clergy ruled extensive geographic areas that included significant populations and wealth. It was therefore important for kings or emperors to have clerical rulers in their domains who would be loyal to them.

Christian Violence

Violence was no stranger to Christians who had a cause, whether religious or economic, that they wished to advance. From 1096 to 1229, Christian Europe conducted seven crusades against the Muslim East, not counting the pathetic and failed Children's Crusade of 1212. The Third Crusade (1189-1192) was a botched affair that never even reached Muslim lands but instead occupied itself with sacking and terrorizing the Christian city of Constantinople.

By the end of the 10th century, the Muslim Turks from Asia had begun advances into non-Turkish territory in the Middle East and Asia Minor, and by the 11th century had conquered much of the Christian territory of the Byzantine empire. By 1079, the Turks controlled Jerusalem and religious pilgrimages to the holy sites in the area by Western Christians became next to impossible.

In 1095, the Byzantine Emperor Alexius I appealed to Pope Urban II at Rome for military assistance from Christian Europe to reconquer his territory. The pope readily agreed, but expanded the request and turned it into a call for a religious crusade to redeem the Holy Land from the infidel. All who responded to this cause were promised

remission of all sins. The pope thus cleverly combined the old practice of religious pilgrimage with the new concept of holy war against the infidel.

The feudal nobility of Europe readily responded to what would become the First Crusade (1096-1099), eager not only for the salvation of their souls but for plunder and acquisition of new territories. The westerners were successful in brutally reconquering Muslim-ruled cities along the way to Jerusalem, and when they finally reached that city they slaughtered thousands of Muslims and Jews without mercy—men, women and children. According to contemporary testimony, these fierce Christian warriors waded in blood up to their knees, and then went into the Church of the Holy Sepulcher to sing the *Te Deum*, giving thanks to God for their glorious victory. The leading nobles also achieved their goal of acquiring control of vast land holdings in the conquered territories.

One of the enduring results of this and subsequent crusades is the ongoing memory and horror of the Muslims even today at not only the conquest itself but the utter ferocity of the Christian slaughter of the populace.

Christian Versus Christian

The medieval Christian church also used violence against variant forms of Christianity and against heresies. Pope Innocent III, in 1209, proclaimed a crusade against the heretical group in southern France known as the Albigenses. The nobles in the north of France responded enthusiastically to this opportunity to confiscate for themselves the lands of the southerners. This brutal crusade resulted in 20 years of devastating warfare that destroyed cities, lands and lives.

It was the attempt to stamp out heresy and theologies not approved by the church orthodoxy that gave rise to the papal Inquisition, or Holy Office. Pope Gregory IX, in 1233, turned the searching out of heretics over to the mendicant orders of friars, particularly the Dominicans. Pope Innocent IV, in 1252, permitted the accused to be tortured to elicit

confessions from them. Conviction of the accused meant burning at the stake.

In 1492, Spanish Christians completed the reconquest of Spain from the Muslims who had governed the country for centuries. The Muslim rulers, with rare exceptions, had allowed complete freedom to "people of the book," i.e., Jews and Christians. The victorious Christian monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, however, had another philosophy. They forced non-Christians who wished to remain in Spain to convert to Christianity. All others had to leave. Many thousands of Jews were then expelled from Spain and fled to North Africa and Portugal. When the Inquisition was subsequently introduced into Portugal, the Jews again faced persecution.

When Martin Luther issued his opposition to papal indulgences in 1517, he had in mind a reform of the Catholic Church, but instead caused a permanent split of Western Christendom into Catholic and Protestant divisions. Protestantism spread rapidly, primarily in northern and western Europe, and continued to split into various denominations, each one believing it had the divine truth.

Protestant Versus Protestant

Protestantism was no more tolerant of variant sects of Protestantism than Catholics were of Protestants and heretics. The Anabaptists, the extreme left wing of the Protestant Reformation, were persecuted by both Catholics and Protestants, and probably more so by the state-church Protestants. In England, where Anglicanism was the established religion, Baptists, Congregationalists, Quakers and many other religious groups were harassed and their members thrown into prison. In Boston, where Puritanism was the state church, Quakers who had the temerity to show up in the colony were jailed, expelled, and four were finally hanged.

Religious Hucksters and Misleaders

Even a very brief survey of Christian history reveals the appalling ignorance of certain popular and influential religious hucksters such as Falwell and Robertson concerning the very human sins and shortcomings of many of those who led, or misled, Christianity in the past. It appears that both Falwell and Robertson might qualify as misleaders of the present. Anyone who has watched their television programs knows how adept they are at selling their version of religion and peddling for sale by mail their taped sermons and booklets, using the same slick advertising methods that are employed to sell commercial products. They rake in tons of money from these products and have assumed the status of Protestant popes who can speak authoritatively on all issues whatsoever to their faithful and adoring followers.

Religious ideologies, Christian and non-Christian, can be and often are hijacked and distorted by those who wish to promote personal, political or economic agendas, whether it is Muslim extremists or Christian extremists, elected officials, business leaders or church officials intent on maintaining their personal power by whatever means.

Socialists consider religion to be a private and personal matter. We do not interfere. We can hope that any person who holds religious views might be impelled thereby to care about the welfare of society at large. But we must vigorously protest and publicize the dangers when a person or persons claiming to be religious will use that ideology to harm any innocent human being or to mislead the trusting public.

SLP of Ukraine Organizes New Branch at Mykolayiv

22 Feb 2002

Dear Comrade Bills:

The SLP is continuing its work in Ukraine. Last week we held an open meeting of the Kiev branch, where I continued to report on materials and resolutions of your 45th National Convention. All the Kiev SLP branch comrades grieve over the 16 comrades who died since the 44th National Convention. In particular, we noticed the death of Comrade Nathan Karp, who played such an outstanding role in the development of Marxism-De Leonism. His loss is a great deprivation for all the movement. However, we consider that the best tribute for our fallen comrades will be our successful development in USA, Ukraine and the entire globe. New young fighters join us here in Ukraine.

The best success since my last report is the establishment of a new branch in Mykolayiv (South Ukraine). Six young comrades (four workers and two students) founded this branch. Before this

important for us event our position in South Ukraine was quite weak.

On 13 Feb. we distributed a considerable number of leaflets at the checkpoint of the arsenal plant in Kiev. We received new perspective contacts among the workers of the enterprise. In particular, it's interesting that now we have good contacts with two workers who had illusions concerning the so-called NUPU.

We also have some objective problems as we increase the area of our work. In particular, we are now working at 12 enterprises and four universities in Kiev. The Kiev branch also helps the other branch and other supporters in the printing of leaflets for their agitation. Unfortunately, our printing capacities are not enough to keep up with our development. In this connection we have an entreaty: is it not possible to provide us in some ways with any second hand computer and printer? It would make our work much easier and more effective by increasing many times the number of

copies of our materials for distribution.

We know that December 2002 will be the 150 anniversary of Daniel De Leon's birthday. We are planning to organize an open conference in connection with that. What would your advice be concerning the form and methods of conducting such a conference?

Fraternally yours,
SERGIY SKUBENKO
National Secretary
SLP of Ukraine

(A motion to grant the few hundred dollars requested is currently before the National Executive Committee. Planning for the De Leon Sesquicentennial will start soon.—Editor)

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