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### SLP SUSTANIER FUND

## A Socially Responsible Investment

The Federal Reserve has lowered interest rates for the fifth time this year. A press release posted on the "Fed's" Web site on May 15 explained its decision in the following words:

"A significant reduction in excess inventories seems well advanced. Consumption and housing expenditures have held up reasonably well, though activity in these areas has flattened recently. Investment in capital equipment, however, has continued to decline. The erosion in current and prospective profitability, in combination with considerable uncertainty about the business outlook, seems likely to hold down capital spending going forward. This potential restraint, together with the possible effects of earlier reductions in equity wealth on consumption and the risk of slower growth abroad, continues to weigh on the economy."

*The New York Times* immediately came to the rescue of mere mortals who like their English plain. "The central bank said its decision was driven primarily by the deteriorating outlook for businesses, which are slashing their investments in new plants and equipment in the face of declining profits," it explained.

It would have been plainer still if the *Times* had simply said that the economic outlook is lousy, and when things get lousy for "business" you can bet they aren't looking too good for workers, either.

No one, least of all the Socialist Labor Party, wants to see things get tougher for workers. But that's beyond our control. For that matter, it's beyond anyone's control. Capitalist crises are sure to come, and when they do they are sure to stimulate more workers' interest in the SLP.

But the SLP cannot simply decree an increase in the funds it needs to carry on its work as the "Fed" decrees increases and decreases in interest rates. The SLP depends upon the intelligence and the generosity of its members and supporters to stimulate its "business."

There is no better investment a worker can make than in a future that will rid the world of all the social problems that capitalism creates. That means supporting the work of the SLP—and that means contributing as generously as you can to the SLP's 45th National Convention Banquet Fund.

Please use the coupon on page 6 to lend your support to the SLP and its work. Your contribution is the most socially responsible investment you could possibly make.

# Unemployment Much Worse Than the Government Says

April's unemployment figures took the optimism out of many a business editor's sails last month before they were puffed up again by the small breeze provided by two numbers reported in early May.

The two numbers that breathed at least nervous optimism back into their sails were a decline in the number of workers applying for unemployment insurance during the week ending May 5 and a reported increase in retail sales in April.

"Everyone" from Wall Street to the White House was worried about the economy at the end of April, and "everyone" seemed to find some relief from their anxiety from the dip in unemployment claims and higher sales. The "health" of the economy was on "everyone's" minds, as if it were a living and breathing monarch and they were its fawning supplicants. Almost no one in a position to make their opinions known to the country at large seemed concerned over the plight of the really living and really breathing workers whose services are no long needed by Her-His Highness, The Economy.

Indeed, for all the discussion and speculation on what the immediate future holds, few had words to spare for the toll that already has been taken on the human beings who have been adversely affected by the "slow down" of recent months.

Some indication of what that toll has been came in the form of cold statistics issued on May 4 by the Department of Labor. According to the DOL's monthly

statement on "The Employment Situation," 314,000 workers lost their jobs in April to join the 6.1 million workers who were jobless when the DOL issued its report for March on April 6.

The increase from 6.1 million to 6.4 million pushed the official rate of unemployment up from 4.3 percent to 4.5 percent, the highest for any month since February 1998.

Although the April unemployment figures were front-page news for many newspapers and received prominent mention from the electronic media, few took any notice of the additional 4,451,000 workers who the DOL says are not a part of the "civilian labor force." These people don't count when it comes to counting the unemployed, even though the DOL also identifies this large number as "persons who currently want a job."

Of the 4.4 million jobless workers who do not meet the DOL's criteria for being included in its monthly unemployment statistic, more than 1.1 million were identified as having looked for work during the last year and as being "available to work now." Less than half of that number—346,000—were described as "discouraged workers" who have abandoned their efforts to find work in the belief that there was none to find. However, all but "a small number" or those 346,000 workers were "discouraged" because they were the victims of different "types of discrimination" by potential employers.

Most of the remaining 778,000 workers who fell into the DOL's category of

not being a part of the "labor force" were ruled off the unemployment rolls "for such reasons as child-care and transportation problems...." In short, they were too poor to have their children looked after while they looked for work, could not find work that would pay enough for them to cover child care and other living expenses, do not own a car or cannot afford the fare for public transportation.

Obviously these working-class men and women are not without work because they are living off the fat of the land. That "job" is reserved for another class of people. If they were taken into account when the DOL got up its unemployment figures for April, as they should have been, these additional 4.4 million working-class men and women would have brought the number of unemployed up to 10.8 million. Their addition would also have increased the "civilian labor force" from 118.1 million to 122.6 million and shot the unemployment rate up from the 4.5 percent reported to 8.8 percent.

The health and vitality of the country cannot be measured by the profit margins of the ruling class. Even when the economy is "healthy" millions of workers are dismissed as too insignificant to be bothered with.

Nonetheless, the health and vitality of the country can only be measured by the well-being of its people, the vast majority of which belong to its working class. By that measure the country

*(Continued on page 7)*

# High Court Broadens Search-and-Seizure Power

By Ken Boettcher

Last month, in what many media accounts treated as a relatively innocuous decision, the Supreme Court moved the U.S. political state another long step in its ongoing march rightward toward a police state.

In its decision in *Atwater v. City of Lago Vista*, the court in one fell swoop further curtailed both the Fourth and Eighth Amendment rights of U.S. citizens.

As *The New York Times* described the court's action, "The 5-to-4 decision rejected a lawsuit against a Texas city [Lago Vista] that was brought by a woman who was stopped for driving without a seat belt. The woman, Gail Atwater, was placed under arrest, taken in handcuffs to the police station and held in a jail cell until she had posted \$310 bond. The maximum fine for the offense, a misdemeanor under Texas law, was \$50." Her truck was searched and then towed to a police impoundment lot. The search turned up "two tricycles, a bicycle, an Igloo cooler, a bag of charcoal, toys, food and two pairs of children's shoes."

Further, the *Times* observed, the

cop who ordered Atwater out of her truck "refused to let her take her crying children to a neighbor's house and said he would take them into custody as well, but a neighbor came along in time to take the children."

One would think the outrageous actions of the police would make this an "open and shut" case in favor of Ms. Atwater.

After all, the Fourth Amendment plainly upholds the "right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures." It allows for searches and seizures only under authority of a warrant, issued "upon probable cause" and "supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized." By "effects" is meant "movable property"—and that clearly brings automobiles under Fourth Amendment protection.

Moreover, the Eighth Amendment promises that, "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted." Surely dragging a woman off to jail for not wearing her

seat belt and threatening to take her children into custody constitutes unusual punishment, and requiring \$310 bond for a \$50 offense is excessive.

But to Justice David Souter, writing for the majority, it did not matter that Ms. Atwater had been subjected to "gratuitous humiliations" and "pointless indignity." What happened to her did not violate the Fourth Amendment, he said, worrying that "to 'mint a new rule of constitutional law' would be to turn many ordinary arrests into occasions for constitutional litigation."

Following this line, which puts the interests of the state and its agents above the civil rights and liberties of U.S. citizens, the high court has made the automobile an increasingly Fourth Amendment-free zone since 1925. That year, in *Carroll v. United States*, it first ruled that the police could except cars from the protections of the Fourth Amendment.

Decision after decision since then has whittled away at those protections. An About.com report entitled "Cops in the Driver's Seat" mentions, for example, the 1997 case, *Maryland*

*(Continued on page 6)*

# Capitalist Interests May Bring End to Cuban Embargo

By Diane Secor

While the Bush administration and the Cuban government continue to exchange barbs over who is democratic and who is imperialist, some cracks appear to be developing within U.S. ruling-class circles—and apparently within the Bush administration itself—over prolonging the decades-old trade embargo against Cuba.

On April 26, for example, Secretary of State Colin Powell caused a minor stir with his statement that Castro has “done some good things for his people.” Yet, President Bush seemed to rule out any possibility of bringing Cuba into any new “free trade” agreement for the Western Hemisphere at the “Summit of the Americas” in Quebec in April.

For his part, in May, Fidel Castro, Cuba’s “Communist” leader, headed for a meeting of his own to expand the foreign trade possibilities for his isolated regime with, of all places, theocratic Iran. While there he gave a speech in which he described the United States as the “imperialist king” and—something to give pause to those who think of him as a “Socialist”—heaped praise on Iran’s “Islamic Revolution” and its reactionary theocratic state.

Ultimately, of course, any U.S. decision to lift, retain or modify the embargo will hinge on what the U.S. capitalist state deems is in the interest of the capitalist system as a whole.

According to Agustin Blazquez, (NewsMax.com, April 30), some U.S. capitalists would like to turn Cuba into another China on a smaller scale, where a police state is at the beck and call of



Secretary of State Colin Powell caused a minor stir with his statement that Castro has “done some good things for his people.”

foreign capitalists to keep the workers in line. Cuba would offer U.S. capitalists the advantages of access to a pool of cheap labor close to home without the risks of strengthening a rival.

Despite the lure of cheap labor, China’s growing military power has made doing business with it a double-edged sword for American capitalists. Making a Cuban regime dependent on U.S. investment could prevent China and/or Russia from gaining a foothold in the Caribbean by reviving Cold War alliances.

For several years, Castro has been supplying Canadian, European and Asian capitalists with cheap labor. Lifting the embargo would give U.S. capitalists a piece of the action by allowing direct U.S. investment in Cuba.

However, not all U.S. capitalists would profit from removing this embargo. According to the *Tampa Tribune* of last Nov. 20, any trade agreement with Cuba would put smaller Florida agricultural capitalists out of business, but would be a bonanza to larger U.S. agricultural firms.

This controversy is similar to the one that involved competing U.S. capitalist interests over the NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) several years ago. Smaller U.S. farming enterprises cannot compete with large multinational corporations, which can afford the most advanced technology, which have the capital and which have access to a plentiful supply of the cheapest labor.

Thus as David Neill, a small tomato

farmer, put it, “hand-picked crops traditionally grown in Florida may ultimately move to Mexico, Cuba and South America where labor is cheap. Florida farmers, paying pickers 10 times as much as growers in other countries, can’t compete.”

Among the multinational agriculturalists who are lobbying for an end to the embargo are Cargill and Monsanto. Their competitors, Grupo BM of Israel and “companies from Great Britain, Chile, Italy and Spain are also wedging themselves into Cuban agriculture.”

There was a time when Cuba had close and important economic ties to the United States. The *Tampa Tribune* article cited offered a succinct summary:

“In the 1950s, before Fidel Castro seized power, Cuba was a huge agricultural player in the U.S. vegetable and sugar market. The Caribbean island possesses many characteristics that make it a growing utopia for winter crops: fertile soil, generous rainfall patterns and a tropical climate. Nearly 70 percent of Cuba’s 43,000 square miles are arable. And Cuba shares the same growing season with many Florida crops, most notably citrus, sugar and tomatoes, which combined generate more than \$1.6 billion annually for Florida farmers.”

These factors make Cuba a big prize for large U.S. agricultural firms. The more that Castro can accommodate these U.S. capitalist interests, the more likely that the U.S. trade embargo on Cuba will be lifted.

If and when U.S. capitalism decides it has more to gain than to lose by extending its greedy hand to Castro, we suspect that Castro will have no more trouble returning the clasp than he did laying a wreath at the grave of the Ayatollah Khomeini.

## 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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# Texas Capitalists Eye State’s Water Resources

By B.B.

It seems that Texas currently has an abundance of water that underlies rural areas, ranches and farms. Twenty-nine major and minor aquifers exist with billions of gallons more that percolate through sand and gravel. Combine this with periodic droughts that have plagued the state and a surging population, anticipated to grow to 40 million by 2050, and a “market” makes its debut and greed its entrée.

These prospects have set off a “debate” among various material and political interests within the state over water rights. This has led to, among other things, the creation of 13 new underground water conservation areas; a lawsuit against Great Springs Waters of America, the bottlers of Ozarka spring water; and resistance against Metropolitan Water Co. that wants to build a 55-mile-long pipeline from Burleson County north of Austin to pump water to an upscale development area north of the city.

However, reluctant ranchers, looking for assurances that the groundwater that lies below their lands will not be exhausted, are equivocal. While they eye the prospects of a steady income that could supplement lean years of farming or ranching they are holding out for a bigger piece of the “action.”

Ultimately, the profit mongers see a network of pipelines lacing the state that will bring water to wherever it is needed. As state Sen. J.E. “Buster” Brown noted, “Without that ability, the economy will be hammered.”

Meanwhile, rancher Brett Hall, summarizing the spirit of capitalism regarding water, noted: “We’re talking about a commodity that costs nothing to store and that is not perishable. There’s no telling what the price might be in five years.”

The price of the commodity water derives its exchange value from the process of delivery and hygiene. The workers engaged in those activities, from the engineering and planning, to the manufacture and laying of pipes, installation of pumps, fueling, maintenance, etc., are the only ones that give value to that commodity, its inherent use value notwithstanding. The hoards of interlopers that exploit those useful producers, the brokers, speculators, bankers, insurers, are all basically parasites.

Commodity production and the exploitation of labor by capital, that is inherently a part of that mode of production, carries with it contradictions and antisocial consequences that bode ill for society.

Indeed, the mismanagement of North America’s water resources, just as the mismanagement of all of nature’s resources, has been a disaster under the capitalist system. Agricapitalism, chemical and industrial pollution, suburban sprawl and the Army Corps of Engineers have all contributed to the crisis of America’s water resources as a part of the system of commodity production.

This crisis was broadly outlined in a *National Geographic* special edition of November 1993, entitled “Water: The Power, Promise, and Turmoil of North America’s Fresh Water.” This crisis is no less than the general crisis of capitalism

in its general inability to function in the interests of human well-being and habitation and its sole preoccupation with the enrichment of the capitalist class.

It stands to reason that the social agglomeration of useful producers should own and control the water resources as the duly constituted legitimate representatives of society itself. It stands to reason that the basic sustenance of human life should be owned and democratically controlled by society through a form of productive organization that produces for use and not profit. It stands to reason that the Socialist Commonwealth, the Socialist Industrial Union as advocated in these pages, is the logical agent of society.

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# China, American Business And Forced Labor

By B.G.

Long-standing complaints voiced against the People's Republic of China for human rights abuses and for using prison labor to produce goods for the export trade have not always been vigorously pursued by U.S. officials. When these officials have on occasion attempted to follow through with investigations of such activities, they have been met by a stonewall of Chinese resistance.

An example of the latter is a 1992 memorandum of understanding that China signed with the United States to facilitate American inspection of Chinese prisons suspected of producing goods for export. As a follow-up on this agreement, the U.S. Customs Service opened a special office in Beijing in 1994 with two agents designated primarily to inspect Chinese prisons suspected of producing export goods. Their repeated requests for inspections, however, were habitually ignored.

One particularly notorious case was that of the Nanjing firm, Allied International Manufacturing Stationery Company Ltd. (Aimco), which was giving pay-offs to Nanjing prison officials to have



Laogai Research Foundation

According to the Laogai Research Foundation, food rations for forced labor camp prisoners in China are determined by the amount of work they do.

more than 60 women inmates assemble binder clips whose parts were made at a nearby factory and sent to the prison for assembling. The prisoners received nothing in return for their labor.

These spring clips were then imported into the United States by an Edison, N.J., company, Officemate International Corp. The owner of the company, Peter

Chen, was a Taiwanese who had become a U.S. citizen. He, with his wife and brother-in-law, also owned and controlled the Nanjing plant, Aimco. With the use of what amounted to slave labor, they were able to undersell their competitors.

The clips, widely used in American business offices, consist of a black clip into which two silver "wing like" clip

handles are inserted. The women prisoners were compelled to work long hours each day at their task, and each woman was able to assemble 3,600 clips a day.

The entire operation was exposed by a competing U.S. company businessman who also has his clips made in China, but pays his workers, although far less than American workers would receive. The competitor, who owns Gem Office Products, traveled to Nanjing with a video camera, photographed the boxes of clips coming out of the Nanjing prison loaded onto trucks, climbed into the back of one of the trucks when it stopped in traffic, and surveyed its contents. His video was shown on the American TV program, "Nightline." He also took his complaints to Congress.

U.S. Customs agents then proceeded to seize and destroy 24 million of the errant company's clips in various U.S. cities, such as Newark, N.J., and Los Angeles, and a number of others. This put the Aimco plant in Nanjing out of business. The company pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in Trenton, N.J., in February to violating a 1932 law against importing goods made with prison or forced labor and paid a \$50,000 fine.

Owner Peter Chen also pleaded guilty to tax evasion and financial hanky-panky. He had evaded paying taxes on more than \$480,000 in company profits by transferring that sum to Hong Kong to escape government scrutiny.

The People's Republic of China and American capitalists have had a cozy relationship for years. As long as the mutual profits keep rolling in, differences in political ideology are proving to be secondary.

But the recent incident between the U.S. surveillance plane and the Chinese fighter jet has impelled Congress to put pressure on the Army to cease and desist ordering black berets for its troops from China. The Army chief of staff, General Eric Shinseki, accordingly has issued a recall of hundreds of thousands of China-made black berets that had already been issued to the troops. And what will happen to the recalls once in hand? They will be disposed of. It will be interesting to learn whether this headgear was also made with forced labor. Patriotism seldom gets in the way of business interests.

## Colombia's Dirty War Against Unions

By David Bacon

©Pacific News Service

SAN FRANCISCO—Working with a labor union often means taking the chance of losing a job, being blacklisted and, in some places, spending time in prison.

But holding union office carries greater danger in Colombia, where labor activism is often punished with death.

In the first three months of this year, 25 Colombian trade union leaders were violently murdered. Last year 129 were assassinated. By most estimates, at least 150 are killed on average each year.

The situation has provoked a wave of protest from unions everywhere, including U.S. unions, which are increasingly vocal not only in challenging human rights violations in Colombia, but U.S. government policies that, unions say, make the carnage possible.

In mid-March, gunmen in military uniforms stopped a company bus carrying miners to their jobs at the Loma coal mine in northern Colombia. Valmore

Locarno Rodriguez and Victor Hugo Orcasita were pulled off the bus and pumped full of bullets in the dirt at the side of the road as their fellow workers watched.

The two were chairman and vice chairman of the union at the mine, which is owned by Drummond Co. Inc., a multinational based in Birmingham, Ala. Last year, Drummond closed most of its U.S. operations and relocated coal production to the Loma mine, although they knew "that country's hostile political climate and egregious human rights violations," says Jerry Jones, vice president of the United Mine Workers of America.

Colombia is the world's fourth-largest coal exporter. It shipped \$794 million worth in 2000, making coal the country's third largest source of export earnings.

Just days after the mineworkers' murders, two leaders of the Colombian electrical workers union were gunned down. A few days before, a union activist in an oil town was dragged from his home and shot in the street. And on March 31, the leader of a cement workers union was kidnapped by armed gunmen.

Colombia's rightist paramilitary army, the United Defense Groups (AUC), have been charged with responsibility for this and the coal miners' murders. The country's main guerrilla group, the FARC (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) allegedly "taxes" coal moving out of the Loma mine, and the region has been the scene of intense conflict between the FARC and the AUC.

Unionists hold the AUC and the Colombian military responsible for almost all of the trade union assassinations. The Colombian government views union activity as a challenge to its basic economic policies.

For example, in March, the General Confederation of Democratic Workers organized a 24-hour strike of 700,000 workers, including 300,000 teachers and education employees, to protest mass layoffs among public workers—layoffs made in response to pressure from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank to cut the public sector budget.

Both Colombian and U.S. unions say the wave of death and violence is made

possible by growing U.S. aid to the Colombian armed forces in its war against all critics of the Colombian social and economic order, including unionists.

Last year, the AFL-CIO called for ending U.S. military aid to Colombia. That position, which puts labor at odds with the Bush administration on a key foreign policy issue, is a strong contrast to its relative silence on Latin America during the late 1970s and early 1980s. In that era, AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland suppressed criticism of U.S. foreign policy in union ranks, and stopped grassroots efforts to organize support for Salvadoran trade unionists facing the kind of wave of death now evident in Colombia.

This spring, the United Steel Workers (USW) sent a formal delegation to Colombia and met with leaders of the CUT—a group Kirkland and others once accused of being too left-wing, while the CUT, like many third world labor federations, accused the AFL-CIO of supporting only those unions that defended U.S. foreign policy.

Today, U.S. unions want relations with all sectors of Colombian labor, and use a single standard in calling for the defense of unions under attack. "Trade union rights are human rights and our union will fight to protect them everywhere," said newly elected USW president Leo Gerard. "We demand that the Colombian government protect all trade unionists in their country and do everything in its power to bring these assassins to justice."

### UKRAINE SLP

## May Day In Kiev

KIEV, Ukraine, May 1—Today the Socialist Labor Party of Ukraine (SLPU) took part in the May Day demonstration. The main slogans of the action were "Smash bourgeois system!" "Long live the proletarian revolution!" "Workers of all lands, unite!" Our banner was "For Marxism-De Leonism!" About 5,000 persons took part in the demonstration and the meeting. We distributed our leaflet where we explain our positions, who we are, what is U.S. SLP and what is Marxism-De Leonism. Also we described the program of Socialist Industrial Unionism and the Ukrainian language material, which U.S. SLP sent to us. As a result, we won some new perspective contacts amongst workers, students and left activists.

Ukrainian fascists of Stepan Bander's Trident again tried to make some provocation by an attack on the meeting. Police did nothing. However, these attacks were beaten off by some activists, including the members of our organization.

We may estimate the action as rather successful action of SLPU for propaganda of Marxism-De Leonist ideas. We are planning to continue our Marxist-De Leonist propaganda in the Kiev universities and enterprises.

—Sergiy Skubenko

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## Human Rights Farce

The vote in the United Nations which effectively threw the United States off the U.N. Human Rights Commission and substituted the likes of despotic Sudan in its place has generated much "moral outrage" among defenders of the U.S. capitalist system, well represented by that perennial sycophant of the U.S. capitalist class, *The New York Times'* own William Safire.

The shrill tenor of Safire's "outrage" at the U.N. vote masks a hypocritical stance on human rights that fails to consider the material basis of U.S. foreign policy and of the conflicts that have rendered the United Nations virtually impotent to protect or advance world peace since its inception.

Let it be noted, however, that any who backed the vote are no less hypocritical. For the distinction between the United States and Sudan is hardly one without a difference.

Despite similar vast "body counts," there can be no real comparison between a country like Sudan and the United States.

It is true that, while blatantly genocidal policies in Sudan caused the death of up to 2 million innocent people and the displacement of millions over the past two decades, far more lost their lives in wars fought for U.S. capital in Vietnam, Korea and the Persian Gulf behind the veil of ideological "justifications"—and under military dictatorships the United States supported on the same pretexts in Iran, Indonesia, Chile, the Philippines, Iraq, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and many other countries.

But the two countries nonetheless have qualitatively different standards of human rights—at least on the domestic scene. As Safire noted in the *Times* last month under the headline "Slavery Triumphs," Sudan is a country "where human beings are bought and sold and torture is a way of life." So far, at least, the United States has in the last century generally avoided both those disgraces, and civil rights and liberties exist which—despite continual encroachments enacted to bolster capitalist-class rule—would make it difficult for them to become "a way of life."

Countries that voted against the United States, Safire contended, sold out "the fundamental rights of human beings"—as though the United States was a real guarantor of those rights. The U.S. capitalist class, like capitalist classes everywhere, is a guarantor only of those rights needed to promote production and realize profits—a "way of life" that has resulted in support for democracy in some countries and for despotism in others, as profits dictate.

Safire demanded, with a perhaps accidental candor, to know "for what commercial or political advantage" the "faithless" nations that voted against the United States "swapped their votes." In his one-sided rant, it never occurred to him to ask "for what commercial or political advantage" those nations who voted to retain the United States on the commission may have swapped their votes.

Safire danced around the real nature of the controversy. He contended that the "real reasons" for the vote were "to punish the United States for daring to ask [the United Nations] to criticize China's record of repression" and "to humiliate the United States for oppos-

ing the commission's...vote blaming Israel" for the violence between Palestinians and Israel.

"The enraged Communists [read: the bureaucratic statist despots of China] and their fellow U.N. travelers [read: those who wished to curry their favor in trade] seized their chance to show who decides how freedom is to be restricted and morality is to be measured," Safire contended. Clearly, he—like his U.S. capitalist-class masters—prefers it when the U.S. capitalist ruling class decides how freedom is to be restricted and morality is to be measured.

In fact, any representative of any country in the United Nations worth their salt would know that U.S. invective in the political arena against China has a long history of being merely window-dressing intended to stave off criticism at home that the United States is chumming with "communists." China, with its tremendous markets to capture and plenty of \$2-a-day wage labor to exploit, figures too importantly into U.S. capitalism's economic future for anyone, including China's ruling class, to take the blather of ideology and doubletalk that often emanates from the mouths of U.S. politicians too seriously. The real threat to peace derives from economic competition between China's ruling class, the U.S. ruling class and all the world's other ruling classes.

Safire alluded to the economic and strategic underpinnings of the controversy when he chided Secretary of State Colin Powell for "being caught napping." After all, he contended, "Powell's job is to know which nations will stab us in the back in return for some Chinese trade or Arab oil preferences or Security Council vote." Unstated—but needed to void the nationalistic response Safire seeks—is the obvious other side of that coin: that other ruling classes want to know if the U.S. delegation will stab them in the back for the same reasons.

Workers should not be led astray by the linguistic fireworks of the likes of Safire, who stand perennially ready to whip up resentment against other nations and the United Nations because of such "slaps in the face" to U.S. capital as the vote on the U.N. Human Rights Commission. Workers have no stake in whether the U.N. Human Rights Commission exists or does not exist—indeed, they have no stake in whether the United Nations itself exists or not.

The United Nations was born in the post-World War II jungle of competing ruling classes, and was given the impossible mission of keeping the peace. It rapidly became a verbal battleground for the great powers, an arena for devious maneuvers by both sides in a new competitive alignment. Its commission on human rights is as powerless to insure human rights as the United Nations itself has been to insure world peace—regardless of which delegates sit in its chairs.

The United Nations remains an idle, wishful dream in a world torn by capitalist and imperialist economic rivalry and class rule. It seeks to enthrone a principle the foundation for which awaits the awakening of the workers of the world. They alone can—by building a classless, stateless, democratic collectivist and cooperative socialist world, provide the basis for universal peace and prosperity, and thereby permanently insure human rights. —K.B.



A De Leon Editorial

## What Our Freedom Means

The United States' material development and tradition of political democracy prepare the way for socialism.

### The Measure of Freedom

(Daily People, Nov. 30, 1910)

On the occasion of the farewell banquet given to Dr. Karl Liebknecht last Monday night in Brooklyn, the distinguished visitor to America is reported by *The Call* of Nov. 29, under the caption "What 'Our' Freedom Means," to have said:

"Does not freedom in America mean freedom to rob and to exploit—freedom on the part of capitalism to crush out the lives of the workers mercilessly, ruthlessly?"

Obedient to the principle that a half-truth is the worst of untruths, the above passage, surely true as far as it goes, embodies a harmful sociologic half-truth. That all there is of "Our' Freedom" is not the bourgeois freedom to rob and exploit and to crush out the lives of the workers mercilessly and ruthlessly, happens to be exemplified, in this instance, in the very person of the German comrade who uttered the words. He is at the close of a two months' tour throughout the land, in the course of which he freely castigated the ruling class of America in language, the truthfulness and the emphasis of which the words just quoted from him are a sample. And yet he was left alone, unmolested. Never a policeman ordered his meetings to disband; never an order from the authorities commanded him to leave the country. Would the same privilege have been enjoyed by an American Socialist in the German Empire, or even by a native? To ask the question is to answer it—and thereby to point to a vast domain of freedom that is "ours," and, thereby, to guard against a serious error in social development.

There is an error, shared even in quarters from which better things should be

expected, that raises suffering to the dignity of a social gauge. According to the error, social progress, including freedom, is to be measured by the volume of suffering extant. According to the error, a diminishing volume of suffering goes in even tread and step with progress and freedom. According to the error, the scale in which two countries are to be measured is the scale of the suffering experienced in each—the one that has less suffering being freer than the one that has more—a colossal blunder, fruitful of many and serious others.

The measure of a country's freedom is not the volume of suffering to its credit; it is the *opportunity* that country affords for final freedom. There is, in point of fact, less suffering among the Hottentots than there is in the German Empire, this notwithstanding, the German Empire is immeasurably in advance of Hottentotia in point of freedom. Why? Because the social institutions of the empire are just so much nearer the point where the Socialist Republic can be reached than are the primitive conditions of Hottentotia.

Similarly, there is in all probability less suffering in the German Empire than there is in the United States, this notwithstanding the United States is visibly in advance of the German Empire in point of freedom—as the untrammelled free speech enjoyed by Liebknecht demonstrates. Why? Just because conditions in totally nonfeudal and absolutely capitalist United States are so much nearer the point where the opportunity exists for reaching the final freedom of the Socialist Republic than are conditions in still semifeudal and only semicapitalist German Empire.

The sufferings of a ruled class change,

(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.

at large

# Imperialism's Legacy In Afghanistan

TALIBAN—MILITANT ISLAM, OIL & FUNDAMENTALISM IN CENTRAL ASIA by Ahmed Rashid. Yale Nota Bene, Yale University Press, publishers, 2001; 280 pages. Please order from bookseller or publisher.

By B.B.

Ahmed Rashid, a Pakistani journalist, has written what may be the definitive work on the Taliban, that peculiar Islamic fundamentalist group that now dominates Afghanistan.

Rashid brought to the task an extensive familiarity with Afghanistan and Central Asia. His story revolves around the metamorphosis of the Taliban, their unrelenting grip on the country and the threat they now pose to the extranational, multinational and imperialist interests that initially promoted them.

Rashid's principal contention is that U.S. foreign policy objectives were narrowly framed during the period of the U.S.-Soviet struggle over Afghanistan. Those objectives, he believes, failed to take into account the consequences of having poured hundreds of millions of dollars into supporting the Mujaheddin, or Islamic holy warriors, who fought against the Soviet occupation of the 1970s and 1980s, and then against the Soviet-sponsored regime of Mohammad Najibullah, which lingered on for three years after the Soviets completed their military withdrawal in February 1989.

Ronald Reagan had euphemistically anointed the Mujaheddin Afghanistan's "freedom fighters"! While serving U.S. capitalism's propaganda purposes in this respect, their real use was as a proxy army to defeat the Soviets with U.S.-supplied weapons in what proved to be a long, bloody, debilitating war.

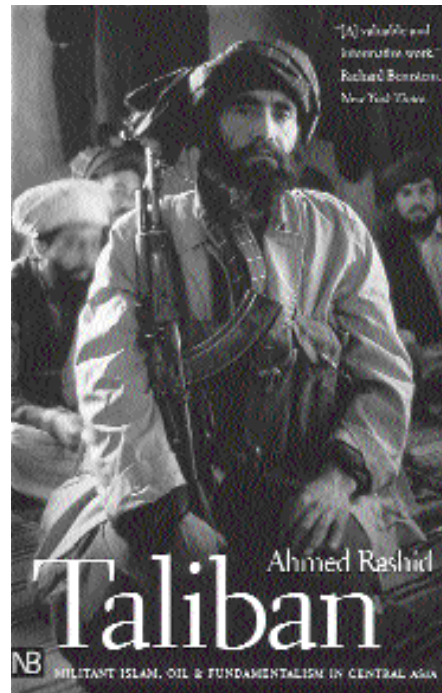
U.S. goals were to defeat its Soviet rival and to isolate Iran to pave the way for extracting Central Asian gas and oil by means of pipelines from the Caspian Sea through Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan to the Arabian Sea. The latter's ruling class relished trade with the Central Asian republics and

therefore promoted its interests in coordination with U.S. policy. As the author noted:

"The scramble for oil and influence by the big powers in the Caspian has been likened to the Middle East in the 1920s. But Central Asia today is an even larger complex quagmire of competing interests. Big powers such as Russia, China and the USA; the neighbors Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkey; the Central Asian states themselves and the most powerful players of all, the oil companies, compete in what I called in a 1997 seminal magazine article, 'The New Great Game.'" (The "Great Game" refers to the conflict between czarist Russia and British imperialism over Afghanistan and India in the late 19th century.)

Soon after the Soviet Union completed its military withdrawal in February 1989, the Moscow-backed regime of Mohammad Najibullah in Kabul was overthrown by the Mujaheddin. However, corruption and infighting over the spoils of war among the victorious Mujaheddin guerrilla factions or sects, now turned warlords, negated their victory and their ability to form a unified government. U.S. corporations, frustrated by their inability to find a stable government to negotiate with, were forced to wait on the sidelines.

The Taliban were a marginal force in the guerrilla war against the Soviets. They rose to state power with a quixotic vision of bringing true Islam to Afghanistan and punishing the criminal warlords whose debilitating internecine quarrels paved the road to Taliban success. Despite the Taliban's indiscriminate killing rampages, destruction of educational institutions, and of every vestige of culture and behavior that contradicted their view of Islam, the United States had no problem in shifting its support from the post-Najibullah Mujaheddin regime to the Taliban—not, that is, until Osama bin Laden was offered asylum.



Rashid traces the political maneuvering of the United States in great detail. His account includes attempts to revive an effort by the CIA and the ISI (Pakistan's secret police) to work with the Taliban as the recognized state authority in Afghanistan.

As the title of Rashid's book suggests, the political objectives of the various states involved in the Afghan quagmire are the base material interests of their respective ruling classes. Major oil corporations supported the U.S.-based Unocal and Saudi Arabia's Delta for pipeline construction, while Bidas of Argentina, Ningarcho of Saudi Arabia, Gasprom of Russia, Pakistan and others were all in heated contest to woo the Taliban for pipeline routes through Afghanistan.

This goal has been constantly frustrated by the interminable civil war between the Taliban and its opponents within Afghanistan, the so-called Northern Alliance of Tajik and Uzbek warlords. This alliance of anti-Taliban warlords has resisted every Taliban effort to seize the north and declare a unified country. It has succeeded so far, in part,

rest continued to picket. The sheriff, admitting that he could not cope with the women, offered to release the jailed women if they promised to go home. The jailed women refused, "and settled down to tend their children in jail." Later, the women were released in the hope that they would return home. Instead, they returned to the picket line.

On June 18, 45 of the jailed women were brought to court and arraigned on charges of blocking a highway. According to the United Press, a "fiesta" spirit prevailed—among the women. They pleaded innocent, and returned to the picket lines with some 300 other women. Scabs were forced to use "devious routes" in order to reach the property of the Empire Zinc Co. One of the women expressed the general sentiment of the strikers' wives. "We'll stay here until this thing is settled."

That's the story. It will remain one of the great stories of the class struggle even if the workers are forced to give in to their exploiters.

## 255075100 years ago

### Strikers' Wives Face Gas Bombs!

(Weekly People, June 30, 1951)

Strikers' wives are among the chief targets of the direct and indirect capitalist propaganda, and other pressure, designed to force the workers to accept their exploiters' terms of employment.

Thus, in Detroit on June 18, the striking city transit workers, who were fighting for an eight and one-half cent wage rise, ended a 59-day strike, partly, many of them confessed, because "their wives had been urging them to end the strike."

The wives are, of course, forced to face worse missiles than capitalist propaganda. In the Detroit case, the strikers' wives were forced to face the threat that their husbands would lose their jobs under Michigan's Hutchinson Act, which provides that state and municipal workers who strike shall be dismissed automatically and, if reinstated, shall be denied wage increases for one year and be treated as probationary employees for two years. And, generally, the wives of strikers are faced with the problem of feeding families, paying rent, taking care of medical bills, etc. Indeed, in view of the pressures under

which strikers' wives exist, it is remarkable, in a truly working-class sense, that they are able to reconcile themselves to strike hardships and, more often than not, even to cheer their men on.

An example of outstanding wifely cooperation with striking husbands was offered, beginning on June 16, by the wives (and mothers!) of striking zinc miners in Silver City, N.M.

The women (and children) of the Silver City strikers faced more than capitalist propaganda and economic threats. They faced tear-gas bombs and imprisonment. And they came back for more!

United Press dispatches told the story. Four hundred zinc miners struck seven months ago. On June 11, the Empire Zinc Co. offered to settle the strike with a wage rise of 15 cents an hour. The strikers refused the offer. The company secured a court order to ban picketing. "The women then took over."

On June 16, "sheriff's deputies slung tear-gas bombs" at between 350 and 400 women, many of them with breast-fed babies in their arms. Fortunately, a strong wind dispersed the fumes. The women refused to stop their picketing. Fifty were arrested and lodged in jail. The

because Iran and four of the Central Asian states have supported it.

The Taliban hierarchy has also been oblivious to the need to establish a traditional state apparatus and administration. Islamic canonical law, or *Shari*, suffices for this government of "hay-seeds." Indeed, a small village mentality, illiteracy and the absence of educated professionals, coupled with its own sectarian brand of fanatical Islam, pervades the Taliban hierarchy and alienates them from the formalities of bureaucratic formation required of a modern state. The Taliban's supreme leader, the secretive one-eyed mullah, Mohammed Omar, dispenses state funds from a box he keeps under his bed at his residence in Kandahar.

The Taliban, we learn, arose largely from the Pashtun tribes of southeastern Afghanistan and northwestern Pakistan whose occupations were pastoral. They were sheep and goat herders ruled by centuries-old tribal superstitions and a narrow interpretation of Islam. Mr. Rashid refers to the Taliban as, "Untrained for anything, even the traditional occupations of their forefathers such as farming, herding or the making of handicrafts, they were what Karl Marx would have termed Afghanistan's lumpen proletariat."

Unlike the offal of industrial society described by Marx, however, these were the castoffs of a disintegrating feudal agricultural backwater brought on by decades of civil strife engendered by the goals of conflicting imperialist powers. The Taliban resemble the denizens of *Lord of the Flies* or, perhaps more appropriately, the minions of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge. The Taliban gestation took place in the *madrassas* of Pakistan. Drafts of boys and young men, schooled in the Koran and the Kalishnikov, were periodically summoned as cannon fodder for the civil war raging in Afghanistan.

Rashid's commentary on the harsh virtual enslavement of women pervasive in Afghanistan is especially germane to the socialist viewpoint. He noted that the Taliban "recruits—the orphans, the rootless, the lumpen proletariat from the war and the refugee camps—had been brought up in a totally male society. In the *madrassas* milieu, control over women and their virtual exclusion [from extrafamilial social intercourse] was a powerful symbol of manhood and a reaffirmation of the student's commitment to *jihad* ....The Taliban are a new generation of Muslim males who are products of a war culture, who have spent much of their male lives in complete segregation from their own communities."

The rise of the Taliban bears similarities to the social breakdown taking place in other countries where tribal societies have not developed into political nation states but have had the powers of state conferred upon them, either as a legacy of direct colonial rule or simply because they find themselves in a world whose institutions have evolved far beyond the experience of herdsmen whose horizons until now have stretched no farther abroad than the walls of some mountain valley or higher than a head can go when bent in prayer. Their rule has given rise to what Rashid terms a "failed state."

The process of acquiring rule has frequently involved purging the country of other ethnic minorities, religious sects or denominations, and often a harsh despoiling of the traditional social connections that held those societies together.

The rise of the Taliban is not unlike the Khmer Rouge, or the child armies of Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, the Congo, Indonesia, etc., all examples of the devastation wreaked by imperialism's forays and exploitation. This book is especially relevant when viewed through the perspective of Frederick Engels' *Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*.

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# ...Search and Seizure

(Continued from page 1)

*v. Wilson*. In that case, the court "decided that police can roust passengers from a car during a routine traffic stop, based on no suspicion of wrongdoing on the part of those passengers." Now the nation's highest court has put its stamp of approval on the cops whisking a mother away to jail in handcuffs because of a seat belt infraction.

Justice Souter wrote in the majority's opinion that "there is simply no evidence of widespread abuse of minor-offense arrest authority," and that, as the *Times* observed, "the 'good sense' and 'political accountability' of local and state officials should take care of any problem." The lack of such abuse is hardly an excuse for refusing to censure abuse when it occurs.

Furthermore, according to the *Times*, the author of a brief filed in the case for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) wrote that "the assumption that a substantial problem did not exist was naive." The number of actual cases far exceeds reported cases, the brief contended, because police often let the person go after arresting them, conducting a search and finding nothing incriminating. According to the brief, abusive arrests for minor offenses are often intended to authorize the "search incident to arrest"—in short, they are fishing expeditions.

A spokesperson for the ACLU's New York office told the *Times* that the decision raised concerns about its consequences on minorities. "There is a real fear," she

said, "that this new authority will be used by the police in a racially discriminatory fashion."

But all workers, of every color, should be wary of decisions which contribute to the already vast powers of the police. With this decision, police anywhere in the United States have a legal precedent to jail anyone before trial even if they cannot—because of the minor nature of the offense—jail them after conviction.

Giving the police wider latitude to invade a person's privacy is a basic characteristic of a police state, not a democracy. It is not the rights of criminals only, or of people of color only, but the rights of all working people, that are falling before the Supreme Court's onslaught.

## Question Period

**Does the program of the SLP have anything in common with syndicalism?**

What is syndicalism? Daniel De Leon in a *Daily People* editorial, Aug. 3, 1909, defined the term thus:

"Syndicat' is the French word for the English 'union.' From that it would seem that 'syndicalism' must mean 'unionism.' It does not. Due to one of those unaccountable freaks of language, 'syndicalism' has come to be understood everywhere as meaning a particular sort of 'unionism,' to wit, a theory of economic organization with the revolutionary purpose of overthrowing capitalism by the specialized means of physical force."

The words we have italicized are the definitive ones. The syndi-

calists, ignoring both the country's traditions and political conditions, reject political action. They are anarchists and are described with more accuracy as anarcho-syndicalists.

Marxian Socialists, on the other hand, although energetic advocates of industrial unions with which to take, hold and operate the industries now in the capitalists' hands, plant themselves upon the principle that recognizes the civilized method of peaceful trial of strength—the political ballot. Their approach is political, hence civilized and within constitutional requirements.

As there is a sharp difference between the SLP and the syndicalists over tactics, so is there a difference over goal.

The goal of the syndicalists is a society in which the individual

plants, mills, mines, etc., are operated by independent groups of workers. That is, the workers in Plant A would form one independent union, those in Plant B a second, and those in Plant C a third; and so forth and so on. There would be no higher body to correlate and harmonize the operation of the three plants because, in the view of syndicalism, such a higher body would conflict with syndicalist "freedom." Such an organization is without social integration, hence without a central government or, to use De Leon's term, a central directing authority. In practice such a social organization would mean no government, hence anarchy.

Marxian Socialists, on the other hand, reject the "no government" theories of anarchism, and insist on the necessity for a central government to direct and coordinate social production. Their organizational goal is an administration based on an integral Socialist Industrial Union.

The differences here are fundamental. The SLP has nothing in common with syndicalism.

that it did play a role is not disputed.

Sincerely yours,  
Donna Bills

for the Socialist Labor Party

Dear Ms. Bills,

Thank you so much for your prompt and insightful response. Yes, absolutely, that one passage you cited also raised my red flag (pun intended?) as well. Regarding your commentary:

"And the good businessman that he was, he opted to protect his stealings by cultivating good relations with the Nazis. In our view, that alone condemns the man's actions. Hayes' argument is one of confession and avoidance. No decent man compromises with so blatant an evil as the Nazis were known to be to protect his assets."

It certainly is a shame that this one simple fact is not shocking and horrifying enough to make people see how inherently evil capitalism is. I guess stuff like that just doesn't sell books. If there are exaggerated claims in the book (and there very well may be it seems), I feel that this only hurts the cause, because then capitalist pundits can quickly turn around as "defenders of the truth" and discredit the entire book and its underlying premise to the seemingly gullible public. It's a good thing that there are enlightening publications out there such as yours that are trying to change that.

Peace, Jim

## letters to the People

### IBM and the Holocaust

Hi. I just got the latest [May] edition of *The People* and noticed the article that mentions the book *IBM and the Holocaust*.

I thought you'd be interested in reading a review of the book in the March 19 edition of *Business Week*.

The reviewer is supposedly a professor of Holocaust studies and attempts to shoot some holes into some of the arguments. Some of the points sound credible enough, but I don't know anything about the author of the review. Is there anything to his statements, or is it just more capitalist apologism?

Of course, capitalism and fascism are inextricably linked, but I was just wondering what your insights would be regarding the *Business Week* review of the book.

—J.W.

Dear Mr. W:

Thank you for your bringing the *Business Week* review of *IBM and the Holocaust* to our attention. Regrettably, time doesn't allow our small staff to offer a definitive analysis, but one passage in the review caught our eye.

The reviewer, Peter Hayes, wrote, "Unless Watson was prepared to write off his assets in Germany—in which case his operation would

remain there for Hitler to exploit—he had little choice but to put the best face on happenings there, or to bite his tongue, and cultivate good relations with German leaders." In other words, to save what he could of his assets it was okay for Watson to "cultivate good relations with German leaders." Watson got his assets in the first place by exploiting wage labor. And the good businessman that he was, he opted to protect his stealings by cultivating good relations with the Nazis. In our view, that alone condemns the man's actions. Hayes' argument is one of confession and avoidance. No decent man compromises with so blatant an evil as the Nazis were known to be to protect his assets.

As to Hayes' reference to Watson's "pacific remarks," even Hitler professed he wanted peace to the world outside Germany and sought to convince Germans that they were the victims of aggression. The professions of the one are worthy of the other. Hayes cannot blame Hitler for what Watson chose to do without shattering the image of Watson as a model capitalist. Watson is damned either way, and deservedly so.

We do not know if Hayes' criticism that the Hollerith machine did not play as instrumental a role as Black claims is correct. However, the fact

## activities

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

is invited.

### 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.mind-spring.com>. The general public

### 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](mailto:houstonslp@lycos.com) or visit the group's Web site at <http://houstonslp.tripod.com>.

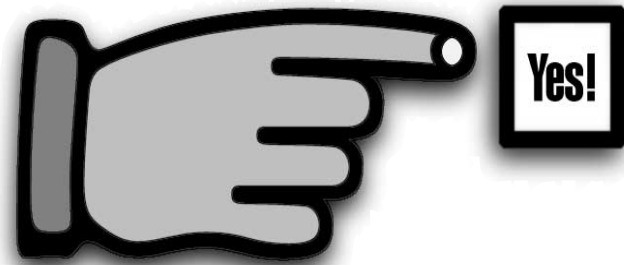
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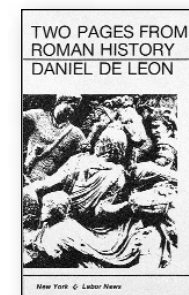
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# Mexican High-Tech Workers Invisible in Silicon Valley

By Elizabeth Gonzales  
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Immigrant workers from Mexico are still struggling to make a living, but today they face exploitation not only in the fields, but on assembly lines of high-tech corporations in Silicon Valley such as Hewlett-Packard.

This growing workforce remains invisible to most of the outside world. Unlike farmworkers, who toil under the sun for all to see, assembly workers are inside, behind closed doors.

Of course, in terms of numbers there is no comparison. An estimated 4 million people in the United States are farmworkers and at least two-thirds are immigrants—80 percent from Mexico.

High-tech manufacturing employs 97,000 people in Santa Clara County. Its entry-level labor force is drawn largely from Silicon Valley's huge immigrant pool. Most assembly line workers are Mexican and Vietnamese, the majority of those women.

As the daughter of immigrants who began working in the fields and later moved into assembly work, I have seen a pattern of exploitation. That pattern is now

well on its way into Mexico and will no doubt continue to grow under Mexican President Vicente Fox, who is pushing to expand the country's economy by increasing high-tech industry and becoming an essential Silicon Valley partner.

Assembly work pays an average of \$9 an hour. No union represents the workers, who are usually hired under contract through one of the 250 temporary agencies in the area. High-tech companies use contract workers to increase profits because they do not have to pay benefits that come with permanent employment.

More than 82,000 chemicals are used in the high-tech industry every day. Less than 2 percent of these are regulated by the Occupational Safety and Health Agency. Cancer, diabetes and miscarriages have all been linked to this supposedly "clean" industry, which has an occupational illness rate three times that of any other U.S. manufacturing industry, according to studies by the Santa Clara Center for Occupational Safety and Health.

As one of the workers making modems on the assembly line at the PemStar Co. in San Jose, I often worked from before sunrise

into the evening because of mandatory overtime. We stood in a fixed position for hours at a time with only short breaks.

Inside the factory, something irritating in the air caused us to blow our noses several times a day. We walked past a small sign—placed at foot level—warning of chemicals in use that have been linked to miscarriages and illnesses.

The invisibility of Mexican Americans in Silicon Valley has dangerous implications for workers in Mexico, where lack of regulation means conditions can only be worse. Already 15 major high-tech manufacturing companies—including IBM, Flextronics and Hewlett Packard—have plants in Mexico, where high-tech accounts for close to a quarter of the country's manufacturing jobs, mainly in Guadalajara and along the U.S.-Mexico border.

As high-tech industry grows in Mexico, I hope that workers in Silicon Valley and Mexico can fight to improve labor standards. High-tech contract workers can learn from farmworkers. They must pull together and realize that their struggle is now an international one.

## ...Jobs

(Continued from page 1)

is in a deplorable state.

Indeed, a decade of capitalist "prosperity" that has been marked by stagnant wages, vulgar increases in profits and a repulsive widening of the gap that divides the opulent from the poor has left the working class as economically insecure and even more dependent on a tiny ruling class than at any time in the country's history.

A socialist economy, in which the natural and social wealth of the country would be collectively owned and democratically operated to provide for the needs of all of its people would rapidly restore the health and vitality of the nation.

## ...De Leon

(Continued from page 4)

they are not abolished by a change of rulers, even tho' the change of rulers be a step forward toward the possibility of the abolition of class rule. Under each advancing social order of class rule there are different modes of sufferings, each social order of class rule having its own brand of iniquity, some of which may be more galling even than the brand of some lower order of class rule. For all this, the measure of freedom increases, as exemplified in Liebknecht's experience, in the measure that a country's opportunities are ripe for achieving the Socialist Commonwealth.

And well it is to keep the fact in mind—lest socialist efforts be turned away from the practical to the sentimental channels—lest socialist standards, fit for one place, be wasted in other places for which they are unfit.

## on the Web

Several important additions have been made to the SLP's Web site (www.slp.org) since our last report.

One is Gustav Bang's *Crises in European History*, as translated from the Danish by Arnold Petersen. Bang's pamphlet is one of the best introductions to the materialist conception of history and its application. The opening essay, "Historical Materialism," is followed by chapters on "The Rise of Christianity," "The Reformation," "The French Revolution" and "Socialism Foreshadowed." Also included is a chapter from the first of what Bang planned as a three-volume study of *The Age of Capitalism*, but which his untimely death prevented him from completing.

Also added is a collection of 10 editorials by Daniel De Leon grouped under a heading of *Workers, Wages and Wall Street*. The collection includes "National Prosperity," "The Delusion of Property," "Confiscation," "Prosperity," "Wages—Share—Earnings," "And This Is a Profes-

or," "Real Prosperity: January Dividends," "Wall Street Preachers of Socialism," "Wealth Diffusion Through Stocks," "The Time to Buy."

A separate article and two additional editorials reprinted in *The People* have also been added to the De Leon Online section of the Web site. The article is "Another Instance of Old Trade Union Incapacity." The two editorials are "Human Nature" and "Not Morals, But Systems."

Other additions to the Web site include the SLP's Declaration of Fundamental Principles, the party's Constitution, its Handbook on Intervention and Union Work, its Organizational Norms and Procedures and the text of the booklet, *To the Prospective Member of the Socialist Labor Party*.

Plans to add a questions-and-answers section, and De Leon's *As to Politics and Two Pages from Roman History*, have been postponed until after this month's National Convention.

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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.

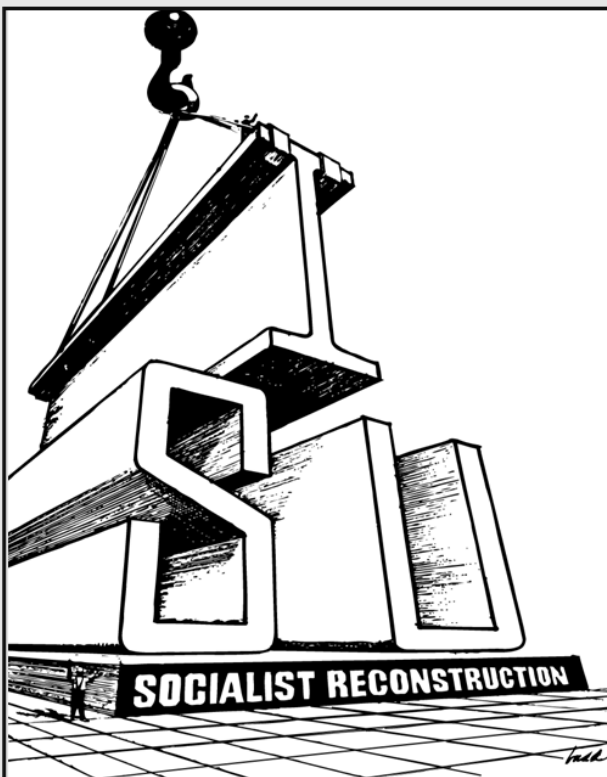
### Revolutionary Act

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."**

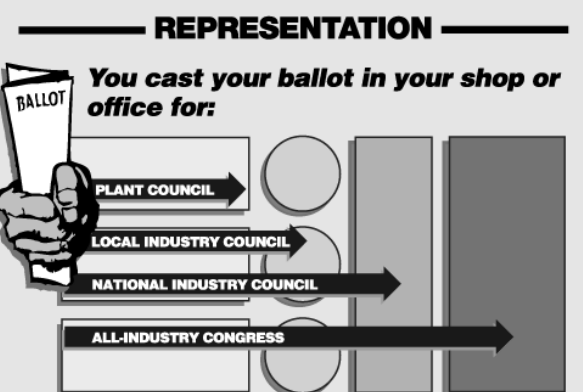
— Daniel De Leon



### 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

