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# the People

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## NEW PUBLICATIONS FUND

### Millions for Carly, Pittance for Millions

The Socialist Labor Party will hold its 46th National Convention in July. By then, the party hopes to raise a substantial fund for the publication of new leaflets and other literature to educate workers on what capitalism holds in store for them and the promise of genuine socialism.

Millions of workers are unemployed today and the situation promises to get worse. We almost added "before it gets better," but there are too many indications that it will not get better. As noted elsewhere in this issue, the Bureau of Labor Statistics recently reported that the proportion of American workers in the labor market is at its lowest point since 1988. There are no jobs for them, not even bad ones. Moreover, because they have "dropped out" of the labor market they are not eligible for unemployment "benefits."

In February, the BLS reported that the Labor Department had given states "\$18.6 million to continue unemployment insurance improvements." Whatever "improvements" means, it does not mean jobs. At best, it means temporary unemployment checks or a temporary extension of "benefits."

We do not know how many workers are supposed to share that \$18.6 million, but we suppose the number is somewhat higher than the number of CEOs that got the boot from the Hewlett-Packard Corp. That number is one, and what that one received to share with herself has been estimated at between \$14 million and \$21.4 million.

The disparity attests to the vulgarity of the capitalist system in more ways than one. Most of the workers who lost their jobs worked hard, but not hard enough or for wages low enough to satisfy their former employers. Out they went. Their jobs were to produce or to distribute what other workers had produced. Carly Fiorina's job was to make sure that Hewlett-Packard workers produced enough profits to satisfy the corporation's owners. As *The New York Times* put it, "she was unable to build Hewlett into a reliable profit machine...." (Feb. 10) She did not measure up, though we do not doubt that she tried. She failed where *USA Today* says others are succeeding. "Although the pace of growth in productivity, or worker output per hour slowed in 2004," the paper reported on Feb. 7, "firms have still successfully found ways to squeeze more production out of their existing workforce."

The SLP does not expect to raise millions of dollars for its New Publications Fund, and it does not have to. Truth goes a long way, and the truth about capitalism and socialism can be spread for much less and with far better effect than Carly's reward for failing her masters. Nevertheless, the SLP will need thousands, tens of thousands, of dollars to spread the truth about capitalism and socialism as far and as wide as it needs to be spread. Use the coupon on page 6 to contribute your share and the SLP will succeed.

## Socialism Is the True 'Ownership Society'

When President Bush introduced his idea of an "ownership society" at last year's Republican convention, Socialists naturally pricked up their ears. When he added that he wanted "to build an ownership society, because ownership brings security and dignity and independence," Socialists naturally braced themselves for another bombardment of propaganda to deceive the working class into accepting some new scheme designed to benefit the capitalist class.

Socialists, of course, have been calling for an "ownership society" right along, and knew immediately that what President Bush had in mind and what the Socialist Labor Party is aiming for are poles apart.

Socialists want a society in which the means of life are collectively owned and democratically operated to insure full, prosperous and healthful lives to all. President Bush's plan for an "ownership society" is less ambitious. Indeed, it bears all the hallmarks of a swindle that would simply allow high-stakes speculators to raid the federal treasury.

The central feature of Mr. Bush's "ownership society" plan to provide "security and dignity and independence" to the American working class is to overhaul the Social Security system. He claims a crisis in Social Security is imminent. His critics disagree. They claim that with minor alterations the system will remain "solvent" and

serve its purposes for decades to come.

"The system's trustees estimate the Social Security trust fund is in good shape for another four decades," as Kevin Drum of the *Christian Science Monitor* put it. "The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office figures five decades. Many independent economists think Social Security is healthy for more like six or seven decades."

President Bush's proposal has not reached the legislative stage yet: his administration is still "testing the political waters" to see how it might be received. For now, at least, understanding the differences in formula between the state-run system created by Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal during capitalism's Great Depression and the partially privatized system being pushed today may be less important than understanding the purposes Social Security was initially meant to serve. There will be time enough to explore how those original purposes have changed or expanded over the years, and what the new Bush proposals suggest about changed conditions, when and if those proposals are introduced in Congress.

Social Security and kindred measures (unemployment insurance, Medicare, etc.) were never intended to provide security for workers. They were intended to provide security for capitalism. They were intended to tie the working class to

(Continued on page 6)

## Train Crashes & Terrorism

By Paul D. Lawrence

In 2002, the FBI warned that al Qaeda might attack U.S. railroads. Attacks could cause derailments or release toxic chemicals.

In January, two train crashes killed 20 people, injured hundreds and caused the evacuation of thousands. The crashes were not the work of al Qaeda. A different kind of terrorism—the profit motive—caused them.

On Jan. 6, in Graniteville, S.C., a train carrying pressurized chlorine gas ran into a parked train. Chlorine was used in gas warfare in World War I. The results in Graniteville were deadly. Railroad workers were blamed for leaving a switch open.

On Jan. 27, a would-be suicide drove his SUV onto a track in Glendale, Calif. A commuter train struck it. The lead car derailed and struck a parked freight train. The commuter train then jackknifed into a second.

Human beings make mistakes. Some attempt suicide. A sane society, however, would do everything possible to protect against such acts. Capitalism is not a sane society. The profit motive drives it, not concern for health and safety.

As to the Graniteville "accident," the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) admits that in the first nine months of 2004 there were 23 "accidents" caused by improperly aligned switches. Sixty percent of train tracks in the United States have electronic signals to indicate switch positions. The switch in Graniteville was among those without such signals. The FRA "urged" railroads to have crews report to dispatchers that they had restored switches to the normal position. It also asked railroads to require conductors to fill out forms about switch positions. A few pieces of paper are much cheaper than electronic signals.

Then there is the problem of tank cars. *The New York Times* reported that last year "government safety officials warned that more than half the nation's 60,000 pressurized rail tank cars did not meet industry standards, and they raised questions about the safety of the rest of the fleet as well." (Jan. 9) That suggests stronger cars might have averted the Graniteville tragedy. *The Times* did not report that the FRA "urged" or ordered that anything

(Continued on page 6)

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# Iraq's History of War, Profit and Conflict

**BANKING ON BAGHDAD: INSIDE IRAQ'S 7,000-YEAR HISTORY OF WAR, PROFIT, AND CONFLICT**, by Edwin Black. John Wiley & Sons, publishers, September 2004; 496 pages. Please order from bookseller or publisher.

By B.B.

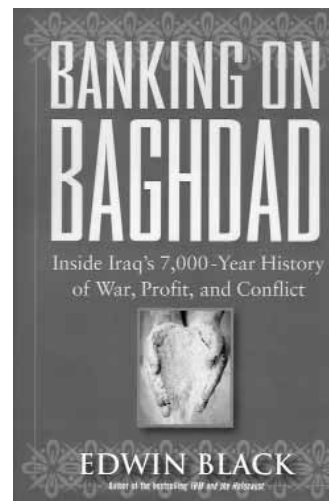
*"O people of Baghdad...I am commanded to invite you, through your nobles and elders and representatives, to participate in the management of your own civil affairs in collaboration with the political representatives of Great Britain who accompany the British Army, so that you may be united with your kinsmen in North, East, South and West in realizing the aspirations of your Race."*

Stanley Maude, a British general, made this public proclamation on March 18, 1918, after the defeat of Ottoman Turkey and Britain's triumphant entry into Baghdad. The turmoil that erupted soon after the occupation melds almost seamlessly into the current catastrophic events blighting Iraq. These events can be better understood as the continuation of a decades-long struggle among the capitalist powers to control and profit from the oil resources of the Middle East. Edwin Black summarizes the convoluted, turbulent and troubling history of Iraq in his recent book, *Banking on Baghdad*.

Black begins his narrative with an abbreviated history of Iraq that provides a useful review of the vicissitudes that have wracked this ancient land. Useful, too, is Black's discussion of the bitter divisions that developed between the Sunni and Shiite factions in Islam which continue to this day.

Mr. Black's account offers dizzying detail in the imperialist machinations leading up to World War I and its aftermath. After the victors surveyed the spoils of the Middle East, they arbitrarily divided the lands of the Ottoman Empire into "nations."

The connivance of all of the major capitalist victors in World War I produced the so-called Red Line Agreement that "created a closely held oil monopoly within the circumscribed area." This agreement included Standard Oil, British Petroleum, Royal Dutch Shell, Turkish Petroleum Co., Atlantic Refining and Gulf. It eventually formed the basis for the next round of capitalist conflict that emerged as World War II. In the interim, constant conflict and revolts against British and French occupation forces in Syria,



Palestine and Iraq occurred.

The next phase of the author's account takes us to the eve of World War II. He reviews Hitler's attempt to undermine Allied domination of the Middle East through support of Arab nationalism, including his cozy alliance with the mufti of Jerusalem, who propagandized for Nazi capitalism from Berlin. As a characteristic example of capitalist "patriotism," we learn of British ownership of Olex, a "subsidiary of Britain's Anglo-Iranian Oil Company" and a major supplier of petroleum products for the Nazi Wehrmacht.

After World War II, American capitalism seized the initiative and bestowed the status of junior partners upon all other Western imperialist countries in exploitation of the Middle East.

Although very informative on many counts, Black's narrative ends with the dismal invasion of Iraq and leaves us hanging with the melancholy thought: "...Neither average Americans nor earnest Washington policymakers understood that those who are banking on Baghdad have, for multiple millennia, only reaped the dividends of grief." Like a man lost in a sandstorm who cannot quite read the signs that fill his narrative of capitalist connivance, destruction and immense human carnage, Black is lost in the folly of "the best of all possible systems" instead of demanding to rid the world of the blight of capitalism.

## Bankruptcy and Health

By Ken Boettcher

Personal bankruptcies in the United States have risen from under 300,000 in 1980 to 1.6 million in 2003 and 2004. In short, a growing proportion of the working class has insufficient income to pay their bills.

The most callous of politicians claim that workers "abuse" bankruptcy laws and harm business interests, and they nearly succeeded in passing bankruptcy "reform" legislation last year. New bills already introduced into Congress this year would sharply curtail the options available to workers facing financial ruin.

A new study by researchers at Harvard University's law and medical schools shows that the politicians have it wrong and that, according to a Reuters report, "Half of all U.S. [personal] bankruptcies are caused by soaring medical bills." The study also found that "most people sent into debt by illness are...workers with health insurance" and "estimated that medical bankruptcies affect about 2 million Americans every year, if both debtors and their dependents, including about 700,000 children, are counted."

Associate professor of medicine Dr. David Himmelstein led the Harvard study. "Our study is frightening," he said. "Unless you're Bill Gates you're just one serious illness away from bankruptcy."

"Most of the medically bankrupt were average Americans who happened to get sick. Health insurance offered little protection," Himmelstein added.

A legal specialist who reviewed every bankruptcy petition filed in South Carolina from 1982 to 1989 reported that there were two major causes of bankruptcy in the state during that period: "medical bills and divorce." "Each accounted, roughly, for about a third of all individual filings in South Carolina" during the same period, he said, while credit card debt accounted for "fewer than one percent of all bankruptcy filings."

Further, an Associated Press article on the Harvard study reported that a "resident scholar at the American Bankruptcy Institute, founded

by Congress in 1982 to analyze bankruptcy trends, said the Harvard findings roughly mirror those of a 1996 ABI study in which 57 percent of bankruptcy filers cited medical problems as a primary bankruptcy cause."

The Harvard researchers argue that their study shows the need for a national health care system that might bring some improvement over the present situation, but the political atmosphere in our society today makes any such system extremely unlikely anytime soon. However, even if a national health care system should come to pass it would still be under the undemocratic control of the minority class that presently owns and controls the economy and makes all meaningful political and economic decisions, including cutbacks in the current for-profit "health care" system.

What the new Harvard study really shows is that the working class must organize to abolish capitalism and build a new society based on ownership and democratic control of the means of life—including the health care industry—by the workers themselves. The only reasonable expectation for a truly effective health care system rests in the establishment of the economic democracy of socialism.

### Help Them Out!

To Whom It "Does" Concern—

I love *The People*. Can you image the controversy it causes when it shows up and/or is left on a table after I read it?

Anyway, I am in prison. I make 55¢ an hour. I have not worked the past 60 days.

Thirty-nine out of those 60 were assigned working days but due to low production the crew of 70 was reduced to nine. Sunday, Dec. 12 and Monday, Dec. 13 I did work, eight hours per day times 55¢. Whopping, huh?

If I could afford *The People* I would subscribe. I cannot afford it.

Thank you.

D. MURTHA

Soledad, Calif.

P.S. I can send postage stamps if need be.



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# 'Intelligent Design' vs. Evolution in the Schools

By B.G

The battle between science and religion, which many believed was settled by the Scopes "monkey trial" in 1925, has been making a vigorous comeback across the country as religious fundamentalists pressure biology teachers to teach "intelligent design" by an "intelligent designer" together with Darwin's views on evolution and natural selection.

Oklahoma passed the first state law forbidding the teaching of evolution in public schools in 1923. When Tennessee followed with a similar law in 1925, civil libertarians decided to challenge it. John T. Scopes, a public school teacher in Dayton, Tenn., agreed to participate in a test case and he was subsequently arrested for teaching evolution to his biology class.

The trial was held July 10–21, 1925. It was a national sensation that attracted a small army of newspaper reporters and newsreel photographers from around the country. The fact that the country's leading defense lawyer, Clarence Darrow, was assisting in the defense and the noted orator, long-time Democratic political figure and devout Christian layman, William Jennings Bryan, was assisting in the prosecution enhanced the excitement.

After a melodramatic trial, a jury convicted Scopes of disobeying the law, but he later saw his conviction overturned on a technicality.

Anti-evolution crusaders, boosted by ultra-right-wing political gains in local, state and national elections, are again on the march. They operate on both local and state levels, forc-

ing both local and state school boards to require science teachers to give equal time to religious, particularly biblical, views on the origin of life. More subtly, they require the teaching of "intelligent design" in science classes, emphasizing that both creation and any changes that might have occurred in life over time were brought about by an all-seeing and all-powerful creator.

Five states (Kansas, Georgia, Missouri, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania) are presently under severe pressure from anti-evolutionists to modify their science courses by introducing the concept of "intelligent design." Opponents of this religious-based theory have entered both protests and legal action to halt the progress of the pseudoscience proponents.

The 2004 election in Kansas brought a strong anti-evolutionist group into the Kansas Board of Education. Already they are fussing over the fact that a new draft of science standards for the schools ignores their views on teaching both creation and intelligent design as a counterweight to the discussion of evolution in the science curriculum.

In Georgia, stickers announcing "evolution is a theory not a fact" had been required on science textbooks in Cobb County. On Jan. 13, a federal judge ruled that this was an unconstitutional endorsement of religion and demanded that the stickers be removed.

Legislation introduced into the Missouri House of Representatives in December would require all biology textbooks used in that state's public schools to have a chapter or more of mate-

rial that would comprise a critical analysis of human origins and present evolution as controversial.

In Wisconsin, the Grantsburg school board, after two failed attempts to devise a science curriculum that allowed the teaching of creationism and intelligent design, finally passed a version that states: "This policy *does not call for* the teaching of creationism or intelligent design." Critics, however, fear that this new proposed curriculum will allow the introduction of pseudoscientific views of human origins and development.

In Pennsylvania, the Dover school board had approved the teaching of intelligent design. Parents who were opposed filed a lawsuit on Dec. 14, 2004, claiming that such a curriculum is government establishment of religion taught as science.

Local pressure in many other areas of the country from biblical literalists has been demoralizing to many science teachers. Rather than face nasty confrontations from anti-evolution parents and a variety of religious protesters, many teachers simply either avoid teaching the topic of evolution at all, or else merely assign the chapter and do not bother to discuss it.

The problem does not stop with the topic of evolution. Emboldened by their assault on the teaching of evolution, many of these biblical literalists are now beginning to challenge geology, physics and carbon-dating techniques when these sciences disagree with religious teaching on the age of Earth or the origin of the universe.

Where will it all end? Stay tuned.

# 'Asylums of the Street'

By Paul D. Lawrence

The snake pits are largely gone. In their place are the "asylums of the street." People obviously mentally ill are all over America. Mistreatment of mentally people is one of the great crimes of capitalism.

The answer to the question of nature or nurture is "both." It depends on the illness and the social environment. Illnesses such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia are likely rooted in biology. The social environment may awaken latent tendencies. It can certainly increase suffering.

Maltreatment of mentally ill youth is especially despicable. California ranks high on the dishonor roll. The "first ever" study of government-funded mental health care for California's neediest children showed horrible problems.

"Quality of Publicly-Funded Outpatient Specialty Mental Health Care for Common Childhood Psychiatric Disorders in California," published in the February issue of the *Journal*

of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, included the following among its findings:

- Less than one-third of children given psychiatric drugs are checked for ill effects. Some drugs may cause permanent damage or even death.

- Prescriptions of psychotropic drugs for children increased two- to three-fold over a decade. (Psychotropic drugs affect brain functions called "mind.") Many children receive several drugs although no one understands the safety or effectiveness of doing that.

- Abuse, neglect and parental drug abuse—the social factors—played large roles, affecting about one-third of those studied.

These facts are chilling enough. Worse, they are from medical records from August 1998 to June 1999! That is how important children's mental health is.

The Democratic staff of the U.S. House Government Reform Committee did a second study. It found that hundreds of mentally ill children in California spend weeks in juvenile jails. Capitalists, their politicians and their media shun that term. The reason? Treatment facilities cannot meet the need. Juvenile jails seldom can treat mental illness. The report noted this "is a major problem in California." Indeed!

Socialist society itself will democratically determine what it does. Yet, the treatment of people suffering mental illnesses would obviously improve. Compassion, production for use, social ownership of productive property and social planning will replace callousness, production for profit, private ownership and the anarchy of competition in the "free" market.

These changes would themselves reduce mental illness caused by the social environment. Put bluntly, few people would crack. The

changed environment under socialism would also reduce the triggering of latent biological disorders.

When those disorders do occur, people afflicted will be treated humanely. They will receive the best possible care.

Moreover, research into the causes of and treatment for mental illness would increase. Mechanisms of illnesses are still poorly understood despite considerable progress in the past half-century. Under socialism, research would discover causes and treatments to the maximum extent humanly possible. New medications would be found—and thoroughly tested for safety before being used.

Not every problem will disappear. Socialism, however, will constantly make things better, not worse as under capitalism. No Socialist would promise heaven on earth. Eliminating the hell of capitalism is more than enough.

## 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 write to: SLP, P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218. Ask for the SLP Membership Packet.

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# the People

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## Mass Layoffs

Capitalists dropped workers in lots of 50 or more on fewer occasions last year than the year before according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, but that may not be a sign of better days ahead—at least not for workers.

Last year, capitalists purged their workplaces of 50 or more unwanted workers at one swipe on nearly 16,000 occasions, compared to nearly 19,000 occasions the year before. Nonetheless, stripping workers of their livelihoods in wholesale-sized lots went on at a “healthy pace” in 2004 and missed matching the head-lobbing total from 2003 by less than 300,000. As the bureau put it in its final monthly report on “mass layoffs” for 2004:

“In December 2004, employers took 1,614 mass layoff actions, as measured by new filings for unemployment insurance benefits during the month,” the bureau reported. “Each action involved at least 50 persons from a single establishment, and the number of workers involved totaled 161,271. The number of events was the lowest for any December since 1999, and the number of initial claims was the lowest for any December since 1995 when data became available.

“The layoff events in December bring the total for all of 2004 to 15,980 and the total number of initial claimants from such events to 1,607,158. The annual totals were lower than in 2003 (18,963 events and 1,888,926 initial claims) and were the lowest annual totals for events since 2000 and for initial claims since 1999.”

Workplace purges of overly productive labor may be down a bit, but the two-year total of nearly 35,000 such incidents chopping close to 3.5 million workers and their wages from capitalist payrolls goes to prove that dumping “surplus” labor in a “stagnant economy” is still “good business.”

It also does something to show that the harder you work the more likely you are to be out of work when the “brains” at the top can’t figure out how to sell the things you make as fast as you are made to make them.

Don’t get your hopes up about them figuring out that problem any time soon. In spite of all the layoffs, and in spite of increased sales during the holiday season, wholesale inventories rose by 1.2 percent in November and by four-tenths of one percent in December. Although the December figure was less than anticipated, it was not a decline, and until there is a decline workers can expect even more layoffs in the months to come.

## Arthur Miller

When Arthur Miller died in February at age 89, *The New York Times* referred to him as the “Moral Voice of the American Stage.” The *Times*, however, did not mean the stage—it meant capitalism. Referring to Miller’s best-known play, *Death of a Salesman*, *Times* eulogist Marilyn Berger put it this way:

“Lines from the play became hallmarks of the postwar era. ‘You can’t eat the orange and throw the peel away,’ Willy [Loman, the play’s central character] belted, coming to grips with the fact that he was no longer the hotshot salesman he once was and finding himself pleading with his young boss to keep his job, saying, ‘A man is not a piece of fruit.’ More eloquently, Willy’s careworn wife spoke for the inherent dignity of her husband’s life, providing a stirring refutation of the cruelties of America’s capitalist culture: ‘Attention must be paid.’”

Pointing out the evils produced by a social system is not the same as appealing to that system to change its ways. Systems are insensate and no more responsive to cries of pain than flames from a fire or bullets from a gun.

People may change their moral values and their outlook on life. They may change their course and head off in different directions. Social systems, however, cannot. They are not conscious of their own characteristics or inner dynamics. They are products of history. They develop and evolve, to be sure, but the features of their nature are indelible for the reason that they are rooted in the social relations that distinguish them from their predecessors. They are the product of material circumstances and possibilities, above which humanity can never rise, but through which humanity can, has and will continue to step onto higher social ground where new social values can take root and flourish. As social systems develop, they lay the foundation and create the atmosphere in which human consciousness takes shape and in which human beings either aspire to move on to the higher ground or to acquiesce and find a niche in which quietly to live out their lives within the terms and under the conditions dealt to them.

We don’t know if Arthur Miller’s insight into what capitalism does with and to human beings grew from any real knowledge of its nature or simply from his personal observations and experience. We doubt that he viewed himself as the “moral voice” of a social system, any more than he viewed himself as the moral voice of the paper on which he wrote or the theaters in which artists performed his plays. However, we do know from his refusal to cooperate with the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1956, with all the personal risk that such refusal implied, that he was a man who had moral values and the moral courage to stand by them. We know that he had insight into the pain that capitalism can inflict, the dehumanizing qualities of the social arrangements that grow from it and the callous indifference to human suffering it not only creates but empowers and motivates some human beings to inflict on others. He showed a moral appreciation of how worthless capitalism’s moral values and its vulgar materialism really are, and he possessed the talent to give eloquent expression to that moral appreciation.

When *Death of a Salesman* made its way from the stage to the book market, *The People* and its editor, Eric Hass, were quick to show their appreciation with a review printed in our issue of July 30, 1949, which we will reprint in our next issue in final tribute to a great American playwright, Arthur Miller.

## A De Leon Editorial

# Callous Capitalism

In February, THE NEW YORK TIMES reported that many workers who retired or were forced to retire in their 50s or early 60s are now being forced back into the labor market because companies “are seeking ways to reduce their roles in financing former employees in retirement...” Some find low-paying jobs to supplement the insult known as “Social Security,” but others aren’t so “lucky.” While it may not appear that capitalism is as callous, ungrateful or crude as it was when De Leon wrote this editorial more than a century ago, the growing number of castoff, homeless and destitute workers adrift on our streets proves the opposite—and some who escaped that fate for a time may be joining them soon.



## Workers as Squeezed Lemons

(Daily People, Aug. 19, 1901)

One morning last week the papers contained the announcement that a working man, Henry Ballinger, was found dying of starvation in the doorway of a private residence in this city. Inquiry brought out a tale that is an indictment upon the social system of today.

The spokesmen of capitalism are in the habit of committing the double crime—a crime that wrongdoers always resort to—of seeking to cover their own malfeasance by throwing blame upon their victims. Thus one is familiar with the charges that the workingman is “improvident,” “dissolute,” “debauched,” “given to excesses,” “lazy,” “shiftless,” etc. One and each of these “justifications” for capitalist felony on the working-class inquiry in the case of Ballinger barred out; it barred them out so completely that even the brazen apostles of capitalist inhumanity have not ventured to advance them:

Ballinger has been found to have been provident, he was found to have led an orderly life; he was temperate, a model husband, industrious, diligent. For 20 years he had worked as a bookbinder in one firm of this city and at his 56th year, after a lifetime of faithful work, he is discharged. On what ground? On the ground that he was *too old!* During a lifetime this workingman produced wealth in large quantity: the bulk of it went to the idle employer: he kept, was allowed to keep, no more than the dray horse, aye, less: worn out, his life tissue expended in the service of the capitalist fleecer faster than the pittance wages could restore, he found himself, at the age of 56, a wreck, a squeezed lemon, squeezed of all its juice, and thrown as such into the garbage barrel of society, to rot with other refuse!

The social system, where one human being can fare thus, has a leakage that damns it at the bar of conscience and of judgment. And the verdict of guilty must be pronounced with all the greater indignation and deliberateness seeing that no excuse exists for such a fate as Ballinger met with, and the whole working class is exposed to. Society is not—surely not today—in the state of a shipwrecked crew, hanging to a raft,

(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.

# Marx on Alienation

By Michael James

**D**o you feel alone, depressed, or cut off and isolated? Do you feel insignificant, purposeless or disconnected? The Marxian term for this personal and political malady is *alienation*. Consider the varieties of alienation we suffer in capitalist society.

## Alienation From Our Fellows

The two most dominant values in capitalist America are competition and extreme individualism. Lost are cooperation and collectivity. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to trust, for example. We are guarded, defensive and suspicious as we brace ourselves for the next hustle or swindle. The con job may come from the government, the corporations or the person next door, but sometimes it seems as though everybody in capitalist society is on the make. Many blame human nature, suggesting that people are naturally greedy, violent or predatory.

Marx, as a materialist, knew better. He explained that consciousness does not determine life but that life determines consciousness. The point is that the relations of production set the stage for human consciousness and human relations. The singular purpose of capitalism is to exploit. Therefore, exploitation characterizes human relations in this society. Marx brilliantly captured the depravity of human relations in capitalist society, charging that the bourgeoisie "has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous 'cash payment.'" Writer Aldous Huxley confirmed, "Our present economic, social and international arrangements are based, in large measure, upon organized lovelessness." Indeed, it is capitalism that creates the material conditions prompting many to recite the cliché about seeing only two roles for themselves in our society: be the victim or be the predator. The big fish swallows the small fish. Dog eats dog. Do unto others before they can do unto you. Whichever cliché you dredge up, rest assured that it is capitalism that so perverts human relations in America.

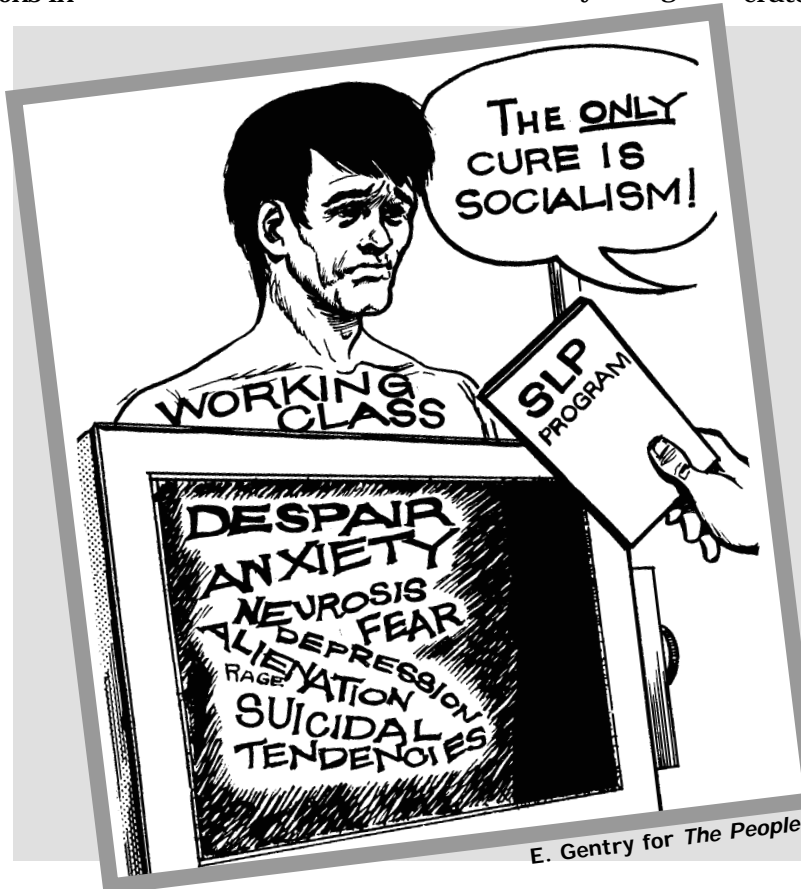
Marx, however, gave due credit to capitalism: "...What earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labor?" Even the magnificent technology created by the productive forces of capitalism contributes to alienation from our fellows. Products are introduced into our society to create profit with no regard for the social impact so that, according to Marx, "every new product represents a new *potency* of mutual swindling and mutual plundering." For example, there is a social element to mass transit, permitting us to say "hello," converse, perhaps share a newspaper. In capitalist America, however, corporations have forced us to be automobile dependent, each of us separated by chrome, steel, glass and ego.

The VCR and DVD player are wonderful inventions but they have taken a toll on the social act of leaving the house and visiting the local theater. In the past, if I saw you walking down the street or in the supermarket, we could say "hello" and chat, while now one of us is likely to be using a cell phone. This little invention, while great if your car breaks down, wreaks havoc with human psychology in several ways. It promotes an inability to delay gratification. It contributes to a breakdown of boundaries and privacy. It adds stress by inviting people to do more than one task at a time. It contributes to rudeness when pursuing private conversations in public places. It promotes self-importance and ego. It destroys community by privatizing public space.

Computers likewise contribute to alienation by promoting human isolation, burdening us with useless information and encouraging virtual rather than genuine face-to-face interaction. The MTV music video, another technological innovation, has been described as "the death of imagination." Traditionally, when listening to a song, it was our freedom and responsibility to conjure up corresponding mental images or associations. Now the song and the visual imagery are presented together for our passive consumption.

There are many smaller ways to assess alienation from our fellows. Our lack of community, as revealed in the way that many of us don't know our neighbors, often shocks foreigners. Lawyers promote litigiousness thereby prompting people to admit, "I didn't want to get involved" rather than helping out a crime or accident victim. Those who are victims of discrimination, a useful tool of the capitalist class for preventing worker solidarity, are alienated in their inability to live freely, openly and safely.

The ways that we are estranged from our fellows are numerous. Our social, communal, cooperative and collective nature is thwarted and frustrated. Capitalism denies human beings comradeship, belonging and true community. American iconic poet Walt Whitman wrote of the "need of comrades." Psychologist



Abraham Maslow confirmed that most Americans become blocked and frustrated at the belonging stage of our actualization or development. Marx, as always, said it best when he described our greatest wealth as being "the other person."

## Alienation From Nature

Another key value associated with capitalism is dominance over nature. Respectful coexistence is lost. Human restraint and reverence for nature are virtues smashed beneath capitalism's insatiable demand for development, expansion, appropriation and profit. Nature becomes a commodity for corporations and individuals to have, to consume, to degrade. Pollution is simply good business. How many of us grieve about the development and sprawl that has transformed our once charming, green, unique communities into garish, impersonal, commercial eyesores?

Another aspect of alienation from nature is simply being out of touch. Many of us are so stressed or overworked that we are numb to natural beauty. Technology again plays a role in distancing us from nature. One psychotherapist has observed a "loss of wonder" in children as

they become more absorbed in computers, TV and other technology and less observant of the natural world. It is heartbreaking to contemplate children and adults who no longer experience a feeling of wonder at the song of a bird, the complexity of a spider web, the formation of a cloud or the color of a flower.

## Alienation From Labor and the Wealth Produced by Labor

Marx knew that our labor is an expression of our deepest essence. Our labor is sacred, in a sense, a fundamental and profound manifestation of our energy, ideas, strength, determination and creativity. Capitalism defiles and perverts work. Intellectual and physical labor is a mere commodity that must be sold to a buyer. Many people despise and dread their work and many are made physically or mentally sick by it. The diagnostic manual of the American Psychiatric Association even includes a diagnosis termed "malingering," used to describe a worker who feigns illness in order to escape work.

Small wonder. In this society, most of us are alienated from our labor activity and from the product of that intellectual or physical labor. Our productive activity is not our own, the product created is not our own and the wealth generated is not our own. We are thereby alienated

from our own sweat. Your labor is an expression of *you*, of your deepest and truest self, but Marx saw that in capitalist society "the worker's activity... belongs to another; it is the loss of his self." Labor creates all wealth. When your labor belongs to another, you are left with nothing. You are nothing. Therefore, Marx urged workers to exclaim, "I am nothing and I should be everything."

The point is that capitalism is a system designed to steal. That theft is so grand that it is hard to fathom. In America, it began with the genocide of Native American peoples, continued with the capture and enslavement of Africans and marches on today with an assault on U.S. and foreign labor headed by multinational corporations and euphemistically known as "globalization." Marx perfectly described the way that capitalism "compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production, it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization

into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image." It is just one measure of the greatness of Karl Marx that his words so accurately portray the U.S. occupation of Iraq today.

## Alienation From Class Identity

Capitalism steals materially, through private control over the means of production and by appropriation of the wealth produced by labor, and capitalism steals ideologically, through bourgeois popular culture, education, and corporate news and entertainment. U.S. working-class history is ignored and erased. There is no working-class perspective presented in current affairs. There is no working-class culture. There is no working-class perspective in education. The significance of class and the class struggle is minimized, downplayed and ignored. The truth, however, is that class is our most defining characteristic, more so than race, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation or sexual orientation. This is so because we are material creatures.

As Frederick Engels said at Marx's funeral: "Just as Darwin discovered the law of development of organic nature, so Marx discovered the

(Continued on page 6)

## ...Ownership'

(Continued from page 1)

the political state by making it appear that the working class had a stake in the capitalists' system. It was a politically expedient measure adopted at the height of capitalism's greatest economic crisis to stave off what "enlightened" sections of the ruling class, led by Roosevelt, feared would develop into an equally destabilizing political crisis.

Many capitalist interests were as fiercely opposed to the reforms of the 1930s as they are in favor of President Bush's proposals for "reforming" the system today. Then, as now, both sides of the argument claimed to take their stand in the interest of America's workers. When Congress debated Roosevelt's proposal in 1935, for example, Rep. John Taber of New York de-nounced it as "insidiously designed to prevent business recovery, to enslave workers, and to prevent any possibility of the employer providing more work for the people."

Many of the same capitalist interests that initially opposed the New Deal measure eventually became reconciled to it. *The New York Times* came out against it in 1935, but in 1960 it described Social Security as "a permanent part of the American life, not only because it works, but also because so large a part of the population has a personal investment in it." (Our emphasis.)

Of course, both sides of today's capitalist argument also claim to speak for the working class, which they can get away with because the working class is unorganized and cannot speak for itself.

Regardless of which side capitalists and politicians take in the debate, however, the "success" of

either approach is linked to future expansion of the economy and high rates of employment. Yet the economy continues to stagnate, and only recently the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that a smaller proportion of working-age Americans are active in the labor market today than at any time since 1988. The fact that so many American workers have been dropped from the labor market entirely helps to keep the official unemployment rate low because those who give up the search for work entirely are excluded from the official jobless figures. Included or not, however, they are there, and wholly apart from what that might mean in political terms as a growing source of social breakdown and unrest, it undercuts the arguments on both sides of the debate on Social Security.

In short, even if we were to accept the argument that workers really do pay into the Social Security system, and that the fund is not simply diverted from surplus value, the systemic elimination of a large and growing portion of the working class from the economy removes them from the Social Security system.

Bush's "ownership society" idea did not provoke the same response before last year's election as it has since he brought it up again in his State of the Union address in January, but it was not totally ignored during the campaign. Last September, for example, former labor secretary Robert Reich dismissed it as "hokum."

"Ownership of America is now more concentrated than since the days of the Robber Barons of the 19th century," Reich said. "The richest one

percent of America owns more than the bottom 90 percent put together."

("The most current Monthly Population Estimate for the United States is 293,382,953, as of June 1, 2004," according to the U.S. Census Bureau, which, if Reich is correct, means that 2.9 million people own more wealth than the other 290 million people put together.)

The conclusion is hard to escape: if "ownership brings security and dignity and independence," as Mr. Bush said, capitalism has brought just the opposite to 99 percent of the American people.

Reich added his own bit of hokum to the mix by claiming that the solution to this disparity is to tax the rich and overhaul the education system. That won't do it, however, anymore than the New Deal reforms of the 1930s did. What will do it is a socialist reconstruction of our society in which all of America's 293 million people will own the economy and determine their own economic destiny.

### Workers and the 'Workerless' Economy

By Robert Bills

- Technology & Sociology
- A 'Workerless' Economy
- SLP Sounded the Alarm
- The 'Knowledge Class'
- It's Still Capitalism
- Capitalism or Socialism

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NEW YORK LABOR NEWS

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## ...Crashes

(Continued from page 1)

be done. Most trains do not crash, and that apparently is good enough.

As to the Glendale "accident": it shows that the nation's mental health care system is utterly inadequate. Even so, much could have been done to lessen the impact of a would-be suicide's driving a vehicle onto train tracks.

First was the configuration of the train. The heavier engine pushed the lighter passenger cars. A former railroad company safety official said: "There is no question you are safer when the engine is pulling the train. For years, I have thought that using engines to push trains was going to end in a disaster. Had there been a locomotive on the front end, this would not have happened in Glendale." (*Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 27)

An FRA representative claimed "the evidence is not conclusive." Any student of high school physics, perhaps even general science earlier, should know about momentum. Of two objects moving at the same speed, the heavier will have greater momentum. A locomotive would have likely thrown the SUV aside or carried it along without derailing.

The *Los Angeles Times* also reported that a locomotive-behind configuration "is less expensive because train operators don't have to buy additional locomotives or build turnarounds to move engines from one end of the train to the other."

There is another problem. It is quite easy for anyone, including a terrorist with explosives, to drive a vehicle onto railroad tracks. In California alone, there are some 9,000 grade crossings. It costs between \$20 million and \$40 million to separate one grade crossing. The federal government provides the state \$15 million a year. At an average cost of \$30 million, separations would cost \$270 billion, about what the U.S. plutocracy has allocated for subjugating and occupying Afghanistan and Iraq. Money is available, but capitalism has other priorities.

The facts cry out. Capitalism is to blame; capitalism must go. When will workers realize these facts and act?

## ...Alienation

(Continued from page 5)

law of development of human history: the simple fact, hitherto concealed by an overgrowth of ideology, that mankind must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion, etc...." Therefore, classconsciousness is necessary for a genuine or authentic personal identity. But millions of American workers, black and white, male and female, gay and straight, young and old, intellectual and physical toiler, have false consciousness: they simply do not know who they are, do not understand their true worth, and perhaps most tragically, do not embrace socialism as the only alternative to their exploited, degraded and precarious condition in capitalist society.

Capitalism steals everything from the working class: our labor, our wealth and our class-conscious identity. If you don't know who you are, you cannot defend yourself. This alienation is thorough and total. It is a loss of the authentic, classconscious self, what Marx called "self-estrangement" or "self-alienation."

### Alienation From Our Historic Purpose

Does the working class exist simply to produce wealth for the bourgeoisie? Does the working class exist merely to fight ruling-class wars? Does the working class exist just to be

forever duped, swindled and misled by the bourgeoisie? Does the working class exist to scratch and claw for mere reforms from the bourgeoisie? Is it the fate of the working class to eventually perish in a holocaust created by capital's military servants at the Pentagon? Is it the fate of the working class to perish in an ecological catastrophe created by corporate polluters? The answers are "No."

Marx saw that capitalism could be the last "antagonistic" period in which society is divided by conflicting and irreconcilable class interests. He therefore assigned one task to his esteemed working class: revolution! Abolish class distinctions! Abolish the profit motive! Abolish private control over production and distribution! Produce and distribute sanely! Create the new society! Create the new world! Marx summed it up beautifully: "The working class is revolutionary or it is nothing." (Marx to Engels, Feb. 18, 1865)

The choice is obvious. Is it right for a slave to be free of the master? Is it right for a battered wife to be free of the tormentor? Is it right for a child to be free of the bully? Is it right for we who create all wealth to act in our own class interests? The capitalist class daily commits crimes against humanity as it acts in its class interests!

We must not be alienated from our historic task. It is our purpose to overcome alienation by realizing who we are and what our historic and revolutionary duty is. It is our purpose to build

## SLP New Publications Fund 2005 National Convention

This is my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the SLP's 2005 National Convention New Publications Fund. (Please make checks/money orders payable to the Socialist Labor Party and mail to P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218.)

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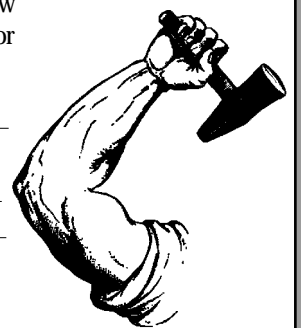
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# ACTIVITIES

## CALIFORNIA

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

**Oakland:** March 12, 3–5 p.m., Rockridge Public Library, Community Room, 5366 College St.

**Santa Clara:** March 19, 1:30–4 p.m.; Santa Clara Public Library, Sycamore Room, 2635 Homestead Rd.

**San Francisco:** Feb. 26 & March 26, 1:30–4 p.m., San Francisco Public Library, Conference Room, Grove & Larkin streets.

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

## ILLINOIS

Rock Island—A moderated discussion will be held on Saturday, March 5, 2–4 p.m., Rock Island Public Library, Community Room, 401 19th St. Topic: "Basic Marx."

## OHIO

Independence—Section Cleveland will hold the following discussion meetings from 1–3 p.m., at the Independence Public Library, 6361 Selig Dr., off Rt. 21 (Brecksville Rd.) between Chestnut & Hillside: Sunday, March 20 & Sunday, April 24. For more information please call 440-237-7933.

## OREGON

Portland: Discussion Meetings—Section Portland will hold the following discussion meetings from 10 a.m.–12 noon at the Portland Main Library, SW Yamhill & 10th: Saturday, March 12, "Socialism: Its Meaning and Promise" and Saturday, April 16, "The Mounting Pyramid of U.S. Government and Private Debt." For more information call Sid at 503-226-2881 or visit the section's website at <http://slp.pdx.home.mindspring.com>.

# ...De Leon

(Continued from page 4)

and where man is thrown back upon the brute conditions he has slowly been developing out of—the condition that predicates the life of one man upon the death of another. Cannibalism need not today be a ruling principle. The law of self-preservation no longer can justify the Ballinger fate. Society has developed in such a way that the brute law of self-preservation has undergone a complete revolution. Today the safety of each promotes the safety of all. This condition, the one condition that draws sharp the line between modern possibilities for good and former impossibilities, is the glory of the age. Thanks to the modern machinery of production, together with the cooperative labor that it enforces on man, the productivity of the race is so tremendous that the joys of childhood, the dignity of womanhood, the comfort of manhood, and the repose of old age are all securable to all. That the reverse is the fact; that a few—the idlers, at that—sponge up a life of luxury, and the masses—the workers, at that—are Ballingered, is the result of capitalist rule, a rule for the overthrow of which the Socialist Labor Party calls upon the working class and all decent people to rally around its standard.

## Steps You Can Take...

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

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# letters to the People

## Looking for Like-Minded People

I have a feeling that my subscription is close to expiring. Please keep *The People* coming. We at Wild Wasatch Earth First! are 100 percent in support of the SLP and wish there were more like-minded people in our little corner of the Intermountain West.

Gene Thompson  
Brigham City, Utah

## Appreciated

Oberlin College gratefully acknowledges your gift-in-kind during the 2004 calendar year of one subscription to *The People*. Subscriptions are important to this institution. Gift subscriptions are particularly appreciated in light of escalating costs and budgetary constraints. Thank you for this fine donation, which helps maintain the high quality of the Oberlin College libraries.

Linda R. Slocum  
Gifts Librarian  
Oberlin, Ohio

## Home at Last

Wow! It feels like I've just "come home at last" when I read and understand all the principles of the Socialist Labor Party. You bet I look forward to every issue of *The People*. I pass my issues along to many others who also wish to bring a better political/social system to America. This "free market capitalism" is rapidly destroying the hard-working people of our once great America. The SLP is the better way. We've got to get the word out—our time has now arrived.

Donald L. Ward  
Corning, Calif.

## Spreading the Message

I want you to know that I am out here yet spreading the message of the SLP in my everyday life, wherever and whenever I can! I know I must do more, such as donating money once again and distributing literature, but my belief in the idea that true socialism can save the world has never faltered.

William R. Tews  
Milwaukee, Wis.

## Priced for Workers

I received the pamphlets I ordered last week today. Many thanks for your expediency in shipping them out. Thanks also for the complimentary issue of the paper. Lastly, thanks for keeping the costs of your materials very reasonable. As a low-wage worker who has embraced the ideas of Marxism, I can tell you that this stands in stark contrast to the much higher priced products of some of the so-called "revolutionary" sects out there (some as high as \$90 for a sub for a newspaper. I don't even think the *Wall Street Journal* is that much, for God's sake.).

Shams al-Rashid  
New Lebanon, N.Y.

## Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

I think your analysis of the current situation in the

Middle East is on target. It appears the recent call by Mahmoud Abbas to stop all acts of armed struggle against Israel is the start of a new turn designed to split and fragment the Palestinian liberation movement from its militant wing. This can only embolden the Israeli leadership to increase their aggression and seize more land from the Palestinians. Essentially, this has been the process and continues to be the problem—that Israel's protection of itself requires it to take more Palestinian and Arab land. I thank you for your report.

Tom Siblo  
via email

## 'Leninism'

Congratulations on your continued publication of this indispensable source of instruction and inspiration.

One critical comment: In the recent article about "Bloody Sunday" in St. Petersburg, 1905, Lenin is quoted in regard to the suspect role of Father Gapon. This would have been an excellent place to bring up the suspect role of Lenin himself. Indeed, an explication of the deleterious effect of "Leninism" on the labor movement would be a good subject for a future article.

Keep up the good work!

Gilbert Dewart  
Pasadena, Calif.

## An Injustice

Voting without economic equality is an injustice. Today the American working class vote from where they sleep and should be voting from where they work. That is why their vote is not backed up with power to control their own destiny. They do not have power in their own homes but do have economic power in the places that they work. Workers have economic power to back up their vote providing they all belong to the same national union to deal with all the corporations today and in the future to manage production and social services for use and not profit.

Where does the working class start in order to live in a society that is based on production and social services for use and not profit? They start by becoming classconscious. This class awareness includes all workers, such as street cleaners, garbage collectors, cleaning personnel, waiters, scientists, engineers and others that are involved in production and social services. Workers that make a minimum wage are just as important as the ones that receive higher wages.

Next, they must form unions that represent their economic power. Their economic power is based on recognizing that the workers control and run the industries and social services. Once they have a sufficient majority to vote for their union candidates at the ballot box then the political democracy can be replaced with an industrial democracy. Owning the industries collectively will provide economic equality for all voting individuals in America. Voting without economic equality is an injustice.

John M. Lambase  
San Pedro, Calif.

# FUNDS

(Dec. 11, 2004–Feb. 11, 2005)

### New Publications Fund

Section Cleveland \$800; Section Cook County, Ill., \$116.32; Karl Heck \$140; Edward T. Jasiewicz \$50; Brian Blanchard \$49.64; Robert Ormsby \$25; George E. Gray \$16; T. McGregor \$15.31; Marshall Soura \$15.

Total: \$1,227.27

### Press Security Fund

Chris Dobreff \$300; \$100 each Bill Kuhn, Rick Farwell; Tom Puszykowski \$78; Roger Caron \$50; Marjorie Mills \$34; \$30 each R.E. Langh, William E. Tucker; James F. Cline \$28; \$25 each David Toorchen, Howard Hecht, Phillip Colligan, Rubinoff Brunson; \$20 each Eugene E. Ruyle, George Lovrich, Jane Christian, S.W. Andrick; Myron Radov \$16; \$15 each Donald L.H. Scott, Edward J. Madejczyk, Marshall G. Soura, Robert Burns, Sophie Carevich, Stephen Holoviak; \$10 each Charles Saunders, Ed Light, Edward Buschman, Rob Faivre, Thomas R. Dooley; Thomas C. McEvoy \$7.

Total: \$1,375.00

### SLP Sustainer Fund

Joan M. Davis \$1,200; Bernard Bortnick \$300; Betsy Kennedy "In memory of Frank Kennedy" \$250; Chris Dobreff \$200; Robert P. Burns "In memory of Katherine Kapitz" \$160; Robert P. Burns "In memory of Pete Kapitz" \$150; Section Cook County (\$150): Albert Bikar \$60, David Vollmer \$60, Henry Coretz \$30; \$100 each Donald J. Donaker, Lois Reynolds, Michael Preston; Donna C. Meyer

\$78; Helena Stevens \$70; \$50 each Margaret & Frank Roemhild, Donald & Dorothy O'Toole "In memory of Frank Kennedy"; William Barry \$40; Clayton Hewitt \$30; Lorraine Wildman "In memory of Frank Kennedy" \$25; \$20 each George E. Gray, Jill Campbell, Steve Littleton; \$10 each Mike Kowalski, Paul D. Lawrence; Section Wayne County, Mich., \$5; George T. Gaylord \$1.

Total: \$3,149.00

### Prisoner Subscription Fund

Lois Kubit \$10; Michael Preston \$5.

Total: \$15.00

### SLP Leaflet Fund

Richard Wilson \$7.00 (Total)

### Daniel De Leon Sesquicentennial Fund

Richard F. Mack \$20, Todd M. Jordan & futureoftheunion.com \$10.

Total: \$30.00

### Genevieve Gunderson Memorial Fund

Marty Radov \$41.00 (Total)

### The People's Thanksgiving Fund

Henry Coretz \$100.00 (Total)

### Socialist Labor Party

#### Financial Summary

Balance (Nov. 30)	.....	\$221,655.19
Expenses (Dec.)	.....	14,032.56
Income (Dec.)	.....	5,491.43
Balance (Dec. 31)	.....	\$213,114.06
Deficit for 2004	.....	\$ 68,271.30

# U.S. Mining Devastates Indonesian Environment

By B.B.

While international attention has been riveted on the horrific natural disaster caused by the tsunami in the Indian Ocean, certain unnatural disasters affecting the same region draw little attention.

Newmont Mining Corp., of Denver, the largest gold producer in the world, has been bringing systemic environmental and human devastation to Indonesia for years. Its open-pit operations, launched in 1996 at Buyat Bay and Ratatotok on the northern island of Sulawesi, has sickened many people in the area. Local villagers suffer from dizziness, breathing difficulties, tumors and skin diseases that erupted soon after Newmont began quarrying, crushing and cooking huge quantities of rock for their gold content. Ore processing dumps tons of toxic mercury vapors into the air and tailings laden with trace amounts of mercury and arsenic contaminate the bay.

Desperate villagers have brought a \$543-million suit against Newmont for what Glenn Miller, an environmental scientist at the University of Nevada, called "an outrageous amount of mercury to put into the atmosphere." (*The New York Times*, Dec. 22) An Indonesian government study "found significant levels of mercury and arsenic in the sediment and bottom-feeding organisms at Buyat Bay, indicating that pollutants had entered the food chain as Newmont deposited some 5 million tons of mine waste about a half mile off shore over the life of the mine."

According to reports, Newmont dumped 33 tons of mercury into the environment over a four-year period: 17 tons into the air and 16 tons dumped into the bay. David H. Francisco, head of Newmont operations, flippantly dismissed the dangers, declaring, "Yeah, I think there was impact....No, it didn't negatively impact on the bay and the people."

Francisco's sneering pronouncement conflicts with a company global audit that classified the Indonesian mercury pollution as "significant." The company argued that it spent \$10 million on a smoke stack scrubber that was supposed to mitigate mercury emissions and issued detection "badges" to workers, neither of which worked. The drive to increase profits and gold required sustained periods of intense heat, which the installed scrubbers could not handle. Moreover, Newmont insisted that its disposal techniques met U.S. standards. This was a blatant lie since an Environmental Protection Agency official stated that the United States prohibits the techniques referred to. This did not impede company operations—the compulsion for profit is psychopathic.

Unlike December's tsunami, Newmont's unnatural disasters lap the shores of more than one ocean. Since 1990, Newmont has expanded on five continents with operations in Uzbekistan, Turkey, North America, New Zealand, Indonesia, Peru and Australia. In the process, a wake of plunder, sickness, devastation and environmental degradation have wreaked havoc. In 2001, Newmont's record evoked chastisement from one of its big shots, Lawrence T. Kurlander, then senior vice president and CAO, for not upholding U.S. environmental standards. At the time he left the company in 2002, he again observed that "there is concern that we are not operating at U.S. standards' in Uzbekistan and Indonesia."

A look at Newmont's operations proves that those "lofty" U.S. standards are not what they are cracked up to be. In Nevada, reputedly the model, neither the state nor the EPA controls effluent except as water pollutants. There are

more mercury emissions in Nevada than in any other state. Indeed, in 2001 Newman canned two employees for blowing the whistle on violations of mercury emissions at its Nevada operations. Additionally, Newmont mines Western Shoshone lands in northeastern Nevada without tribal consent. The Shoshone watch helplessly as Newmont pollutes air, water and land—all with the blessings of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the state. According to Friends of the Earth, the company overall has released nearly 261 million pounds of arsenic, 9.9 million pounds of lead, and nearly 1.4 million pounds of mercury compounds nationwide. ([www.foe.org](http://www.foe.org), Jan. 9)

As small an impediment as federal oversight

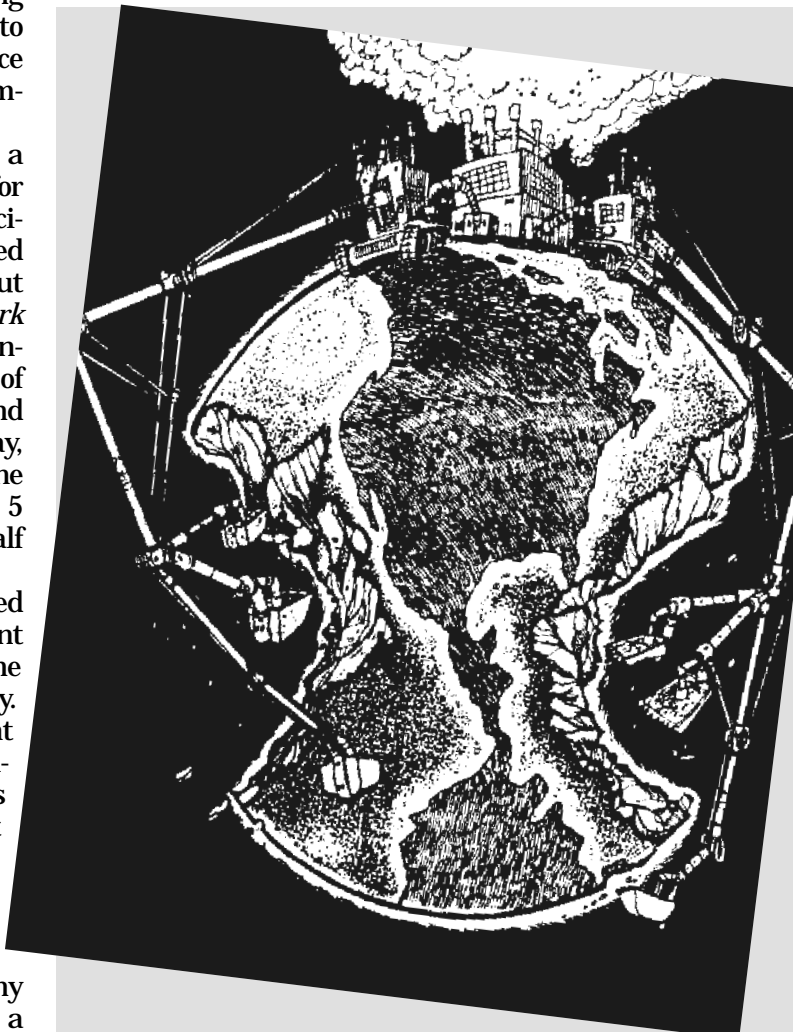
had strong influence over those national governments. Moreover, Newmont was buying out certain politically powerful villagers to break the resistance against their murderous operations. In the course of intimidating the resistance, members of a family who worked at the mine murdered Turan Killinc, a young active member of the resistance from the village of Pinarkoy. Wherever Newmont has gone, the Midas specter of communal disruption, environmental degradation and sickness has followed.

•In Ghana, Newmont reportedly is pressuring the government to relax its environmental protection statutes to allow it to pillage protected forest reserves for gold. Despite protests and resistance by environmental groups, the hunger for the filthy lucre local capitalists and politicians receive in reward for their complicity bodes ill for the opposition. (The company reportedly conducts itself similarly in Uzbekistan, where it has long-standing operations.)

Mr. Kurlander, in shedding opprobrium on the conduct of Newmont, wrote in a memo to CEO Wayne W. Murdy: "Our environment teams are not the minister of good news, they are the guardians of our most treasured asset: our reputation." When asked about this, Mr. Murdy pleaded memory loss; yet, he also responded by saying that the issues arose in discussions by senior management and that their bonuses were reduced after 330 pounds of mercury were spilled contaminating a village in Peru!

Commendable as Kurlander's moralizing seems, his was a "sermon" delivered from a bed of quicksand, which is the muck that forms the basis of capitalist morals. The compulsions that drive Newmont to pollute Indonesian and Peruvian villages have nothing to do with morals and everything to do with maximizing profits at the expense of its workers, their families and the communities that they live in. The banking interests, investors, political retainers, indeed the capitalist class collectively, profit from Newmont's depredations.

Production for use, not for profit, will be the driving motive in socialist society. That, in turn, will transform the uses of gold and all other precious metals whose monetary basis will vanish with the anachronism of commodity production. Along with those changes, the well-being of people, communities and the environment will ascend to the highest consideration ever known in human history.



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and regulations are to Newmont's mining operations in the United States, similar impediments are virtually nonexistent in certain other countries where government officials are easily bribed, state enforcement is lax and depredations against workers are committed with impunity. For example:

•In Cajamarca, Peru, the Minera Yanacocha gold mine, the second largest in the world, Newmont has despoiled 97 square miles in a 67,000-acre concession of land used for farming and grazing livestock. Newmont is suspected of having bribed Peruvian Supreme Court Judge Jamie Beltran who voted favorably to allow operations at the mine. Fujimori's spy chief, Vladmiro Montesinos, was videotaped pressuring Beltran for a favorable ruling all with the complicity of the U.S. State Department. The International Finance Corporation of the World Bank Group, in solidarity with its capitalist paymasters, has refused to investigate, citing weak evidence!

•In Turkey in the summer of 2002, the Izmir First Administrative Court ruled to close a Newmont gold operation at Bergama (ancient Pergamon, ironically dedicated to the Greek god of health). However, the Turkish government, dominated by the Islamic "Welfare Party"(!), ignored the court's decision despite a 10-year organized peaceful resistance from 17 villages in a 10-kilometer range of Newmont's mining operations. In Turkey, Newmont has

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