

# the People

Published by the Socialist Labor Party Established in 1891

VOL. 116 NO. 5

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2007

\$1.00

## Friedman Got It Wrong, Marx Got It Right

Milton Friedman spent his life extolling the "virtues" of unfettered capitalism. In 1975 he wrote *There Is No Such Thing as a Free Lunch*, and one year later he was awarded the Nobel Prize in economics. When he died in November at age 94 some in the capitalist press eulogized him as the "greatest economist of the 20th century."

According to Friedman, "The most important single central fact about a free market [capitalism] is that no exchange takes place unless both parties benefit."

Karl Marx had a different view. Capitalists and workers have opposing and conflicting interests. The exchange of labor for wages is an unequal one. Capitalism is a "free lunch" and much more for those who own the means of production and profit off the labor of the working class.

Which of these two views is correct? Do "both parties"—capitalists and workers—"benefit," as Friedman maintained, or are their interests "diametrically opposed," as Marx maintained? If you agree that Marx was right you agree with the Socialist Labor Party and should do all you can to support its work by your contribution to the Press Forward Fund. If you think that Friedman was right here are some facts that you may wish to consider.

According to a United Nations study released in December, a tiny segment of the world's population control virtually all of the world's wealth. Summarizing those findings in December for a British newspaper, *The Guardian*, science correspondent James Randererson wrote:

"The richest one percent of adults in the world own 40 percent of the planet's wealth" and "the richest 10 percent of adults accounted for 85 percent of the world's total global assets." On the other end of the scale, "Half the world's adult population...owned barely one percent of global wealth."

And if you think the spread of poverty is confined to the developing world, another study released in December by the Brookings Institution had this to report: "Each year between 2000 and 2004, the proportion of the U.S. population living below the poverty line...rose. It leveled off in 2005, such that 38 million U.S. residents lived in poverty that year, up from 34 million in 1999."

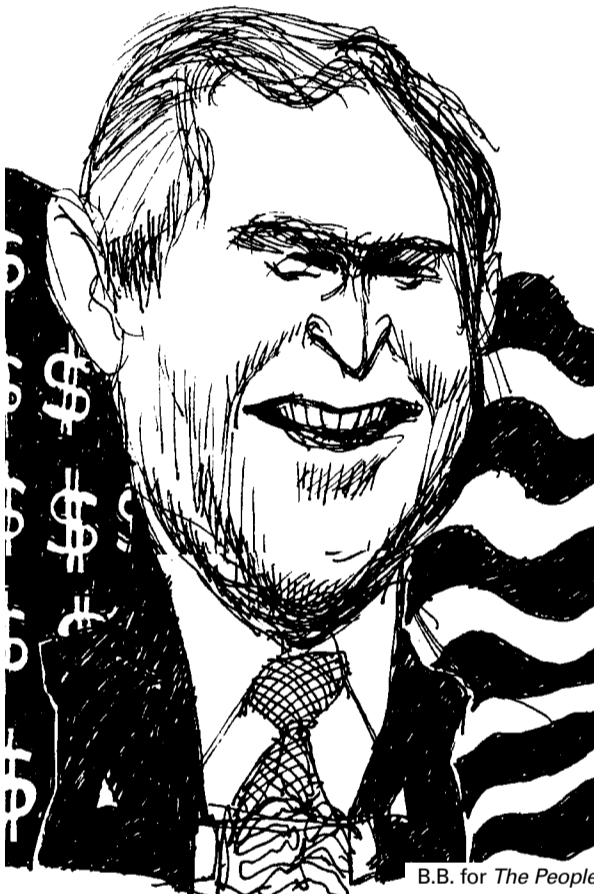
These facts confirm the Marxist position. The evidence is overwhelming. Capitalism and its profit motive must be replaced by a new system based on collective ownership of the means of production and the sources of life. A socialist industrial democracy of cooperative labor and production for use must replace it.

Help the SLP and *The People* spread that message by contributing generously to the Press Forward Fund.

## Oil Stakes Too High for U.S. Withdrawal From Iraq?

Despite the deteriorating military situation and growing chaos in Iraq, the Bush administration has rejected all proposals

for a withdrawal of U.S. forces from that war-torn country. As the fourth anniversary of the U.S. invasion approached, President Bush was expected to make and announce his decision on which of several options under consideration he would adopt for continuing the conflict. Costly as the war has been in terms of destruction and human life, the material and strategic stakes are too great for the U.S. to cut its losses and to let Iraq work out its own destiny.



### Iraq's Oil Wealth

The stakes are summed up in a single word: oil. Writing for the *Los Angeles Times* of Dec. 8, Antonia Juhasz of the Institute for Policy Studies put it this way:

"While the Bush administration, the media and nearly all the Democrats still refuse to explain the war in Iraq in terms of oil, the ever-pragmatic members of the Iraq Study Group share no such reticence.

"Page 1, Chapter 1 of the Iraq Study Group report lays out Iraq's importance to its region, the U.S. and the world with this reminder: 'It has the world's second-largest known oil reserves.' The group then proceeds to give very specific and radical recommendations as to what the United States should do to secure those reserves. If the proposals are followed,

(Continued on page 6)

## No More Hunger?

By Bruce Cozzini

The U.S. government has ended "hunger." Good news? Not exactly—the Agriculture Department in its annual report on Americans' access to food has defined it out of existence. Until now, it has used hunger to describe the state of those who cannot afford to put food on the table. Mark Nord, the author of this year's report, claims that hunger is "not a scientifically accurate term for the specific phenomenon being measured." Rather than hunger, poor people now experience "very low food security."

And lots of them did. As reported by *Mercury News* wire services (Nov. 16), the Agriculture Department said "12 percent of Americans—35 million people—could not put food on the table at least part of last year. Eleven million of them reported going hungry at times." That all these workers must go hungry when an abundance of food is produced is a travesty. But it is no accident. These are workers who must settle for the lowest paying jobs, if any. Not only are they exploited like all workers, but they work at the bottom of the wage scale, and are used by capitalism as an implicit threat to other workers whose jobs they could move up to take. According to an editorial in *The New York Times* (Nov.

20), the government has claimed a goal of "only" 6 percent of the population to suffer from hunger, but nothing is done to make that happen.

But since the problem won't go away, the government is applying the Orwellian technique of renaming hunger in the hopes that it will disappear from public consciousness. In George Orwell's *1984* the government of the totalitarian "Oceania," in accordance with the governmental doctrine of "IngSoc," developed a new language, "Newspeak." Its purpose "was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world view and mental habits proper to the devotees of IngSoc, but to *make all other modes of thought impossible.*" (Emphasis ours.) Thus, hunger becomes "very low food security." Just as global warming has become the temperature neutral "climate change" and CIA kidnapping and sequestering persons for purposes of torture becomes "extraordinary rendition." And an all-inclusive agency for repression has the cozy name of "Homeland Security."

Workers should not be fooled by weasel words. Hunger is a threat only to working people. That old expression, "I don't know where my next meal is coming from," is never spoken by the

(Continued on page 7)

Visit our website at [www.slp.org](http://www.slp.org)

# Stranger Than Fiction

By Michael James

Ever read *The Nation*? Beware! It is a voice of liberalism, which means it is reformist and often utopian. Consider a recent article that despairs over American culture.

Bourgeois progressives and reformers love to comment on culture because it makes for a shallow analysis, sparing them the civic dilemma of being viewed as anticapitalist. The writer in question is Walter Mosley, identified as a writer of mystery novels. Indeed, his article in *The Nation* is stranger than fiction.

Mosley describes the emptiness of U.S. culture with phrases such as “psychic anorexia” and “morally emaciated.” He credits American culture with bringing about a “spiritual famine” and a “barren emotional landscape” characterized by “hopelessness, emptiness and senseless cynicism.” He points to malignant and chronic social problems such as poverty, war, proliferation of fast food products and overflowing prisons.

Mosley is, after all, a mystery writer, so he correctly figures out that “it is the wealthiest among us who control Congress, the legal system and the presidency itself.” He even goes so far as to challenge the material base of our society when he complains “television distracts us, and the Lotto is one of the minor faiths under the greater religion of Capitalism.” Then he makes a political and ideological wrong turn that would be funny if it did not have the potential of luring readers into the futility of reforming capitalism and away from the necessity of abolishing capitalism. He concludes by saying

“our culture creates criminality.”

Bourgeois writers are mystifiers who lead the working class astray. The implication of Mosley’s analysis is that U.S. culture can somehow be adjusted and then our social problems will be corrected. Laboring without Marx, he would have a decent and sane culture somehow emerge from an indecent and insane economic arrangement. A proper analysis is that our material base of capitalism is criminal. Production and distribution are for the benefit of the capitalist ruling class. The profit motive poisons social policy and corrupts human nature. Moreover, from this material base emerges a culture that can only be sick and depraved, a culture whose essential purpose is to extol capitalism and keep workers blinded and enslaved.

In Marxian terms, it is base and superstructure. The material base of our society is capitalism, an outdated economic arrangement that allows a predatory owning class to exploit the working class, degrade the natural environment and conduct endless wars in pursuit of profit. An ideological and cultural superstructure of rhetoric and values emerges from this base. The capitalist superstructure in America is characterized by a lot of meaningless talk about freedom, liberty and democracy, and by values such as individualism, competition, dominance over nature, consumerism and status, peppered with antisocial mythology such as Horatio Alger pull-yourself-up-by-your-own-bootstraps-get-rich-quick stories.

Mosley is essentially dreaming. He wants cap-

italist society to conduct itself humanely, decently and peaceably as though it were free from the profit motive and free from class struggle. Consider Mosley’s call for action, for example. Does he cry out for socialism? No. Does he credit Marx for giving us a classconscious, revolutionary, scientific, disciplined and liberating methodological insight into capitalism? No. Does he make clear that capitalism, much like the exploitative economic arrangement of slavery, cannot be reformed and can only be abolished? No. Does he inspire members of the working class, the class that creates all wealth and the only class that can save the world from capitalism, to become abolitionists? No.

What is Mosley’s solution? He writes, “Maybe if we...cared a lot more.” It is a childish and utopian sentiment, a magical solution that chooses to ignore our capitalist economic context. As social beings, our nature is to care. However, our humanity becomes thwarted and perverted by an economic system that promotes greed, aggression, fear and exploitation.

Liberals, at least the sincere among them, aim at turning capitalism into a just, fair, peaceful and sane society. History proves the task is impossible. From FDR’s New Deal to LBJ’s Great Society, and including endless other historical and contemporary movements before and since, have shown it to be a Sisyphus-like labor. Just look where we are today. Liberals inadvertently confess it every time they bemoan the loss of some past “gain,” yet dogmatically insist on trying to roll the boulder uphill again and again.

A classconscious worker merely needs to scan *The Nation* to feel a deep appreciation for the SLP and *The People*. Mosley wants more caring. Well, the SLP, speaking through *The People*, cares enough to speak the revolutionary truth.

## Marx Online

This year marks the 160th anniversary of Karl Marx’s pioneering work on economics, *Wage-Labor and Capital*. It is one of several works by Marx that can be read on or downloaded from the SLP’s website.

Although this early work of the youthful Marx is frequently described as being less sophisticated in its analysis of capitalism than such later works as *Value, Price and Profit* and *Capital*, in a certain sense that is its most important feature. Indeed, *Wage-Labor and Capital* has an a-b-c quality about it that makes it the ideal starting point for anyone seriously interested in learning what Marxian economics is all about and, for that matter, what capitalism is all about.

The reader who grasps the lessons Marx offers in *Wage-Labor and Capital* will be forever immunized against such economic nonsense as, for example, that capitalism is a “consumerist” or “consumer driven” society and will learn that the secret of capitalist profits is the exploitation of workers as *producers*, not as *buyers*.

Marx wrote *Wage-Labor and Capital* as a series of lectures he delivered to working-class audiences who knew little or nothing about the workings of the capitalist system. He later published several of these in a newspaper he edited at the time. Although he did not complete the series before a hostile government shut the newspaper down, those that were published make up the text of this invaluable work.

In *Wage-Labor and Capital*, Marx gives scientifically accurate yet easy-to-understand definitions of wages and prices and how both are determined. He explains the nature of capital, shows how it grows and explains the relation of wage-labor and capital. He also explains the basic economic law that determines how wages and profits rise and fall, why the interests of the working class and the capitalist class are diametrically opposed and what effect the growth of productive capital has on wages.

An introduction by Frederick Engels adds

greatly to the value of *Wage-Labor and Capital*. Engels shows the importance of Marx’s concept of labor power and why what the classical economists (Adam Smith, David Ricardo, *et al.*) had to say about “the cost of production of labor” was essentially meaningless. In this connection, Marx demonstrated that the workers could not sell their *labor* to the capitalist, for “so soon as his labor begins it ceases to belong to him, and therefore can no longer be sold by him.” Workers sell their labor power, their ability to work. “Its cost of production, therefore, coincides with his own cost of production.” The workers sell their labor power at its value (by and large). *However, they must continue working after they have produced new value equal to that of their labor power.* The capitalist keeps, and shares with bankers, the capitalist state, etc., the new value, or surplus value, created by the workers.

The secret of the capitalist exploitation of the workers revealed in the above statement is shown in detail in Engels’ introduction and in the text of *Wage-Labor and Capital*. The demonstration is scientifically accurate and presents the only sound explanation of the process of wealth creation and worker exploitation under capitalism. That demonstration leads to the conclusion “that even the *most favorable situation* for the working class, namely, the most rapid growth of capital, however much it may improve the material lives of the worker, does not abolish

the antagonism between his interests and the interests of the capitalist. *Profit and wages* remain as before, *in inverse proportion*. If capital grows rapidly, wages may rise, but the profits of capital rise disproportionately faster.” The growth of productive capital results in an intensification of the workers’ exploitation, so that “the greater *division of labor* enables one laborer to accomplish the work of 5, 10 or 20 laborers.” The workers are forced to compete against themselves as members of the working class, and as the capitalists are forced to exploit the workers on an ever-increasing scale, “in the same measure do they increase the industrial earthquakes, in the midst of which the commercial world can preserve itself only by sacrificing a portion of its wealth, its products, and even its forces of production, to the gods of the lower world—in short, the *crises* increase.”

Despite all of capitalism’s belittling of Marx, the beneficiaries of capitalism know or sense that his analysis was correct and that the crises—crashes, depression, etc.—he forecast are an *inevitable* consequence of capitalism’s operations.

Read *Wage-Labor and Capital* online. If you have never read it before you will find it a rewarding experience. If you have read it before, but it has been awhile, read it again. It sheds as much light on the workings of the system in these days of globalized capitalism as it did on the capitalism of 1847 when it was written.

A sample copy of *The People*  
is your invitation to subscribe.

\$5 for a 1 year sub     \$8 for a 2 year sub     \$10 for a 3 year sub  
 \$9 for a 1 year sub by first-class mail

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ APT. \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Make check/money order payable to The People.

**the People** P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218

# 'Retirement' Increasingly Defined by Insecurity & More Work

By Ken Boettcher

The "golden years" of retirement have always been a cruel and multifaceted illusion for most older U.S. workers. Now, however, even the illusion can no longer be maintained. Corporate public relations machines promoting the belief by workers that decades of docile service to their employers will be rewarded with a comfortable retirement have little fodder left to feed the myth. Today a lifetime of hard work earns most U.S. workers only increased economic insecurity and more hard work—at lesser pay and with fewer so-called benefits.

According to an article in *The New York Times* last year, even at their peak in the late 1970s, defined-benefit pensions solely covered only 62 percent of all active workers. In 1979, 16 percent had only a so-called defined-contribution plan like a 401(k) plan. That left millions out of any kind of plan, but a smaller percentage than left out today. Even so, for most recipients of this supposed capitalist largesse, these plans hardly made life rosy. For some, however, they made the difference between eating dog food and eating decent meals.

By 2002, according to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. (PBGC), the quasi-government agency that insures most defined-benefit pension plans, "only about 20 percent of private-sector wage and salaried workers [were] covered by PBGC-insured defined benefit pension plans."

According to the conservative Heritage Foundation, as of 2004, "Almost half of all workers and up to three-fourths of small-business employees have no [retirement] plan. Overall, according to the Employee Benefit Research Institute, only 50.9 percent of workers participate in an employer-sponsored [retirement] plan. Among firms with fewer than 25 employees, only 23.2 percent are able to participate. Most workers cannot participate because their employer does not offer a retirement plan."

The shift toward defined contribution plans and away from defined benefit pension plans is accelerating as more companies use bankruptcy proceedings as a tactic to dump their pension plans onto a PBGC that is reportedly already \$23 billion underfunded. Bankruptcies have increasingly provided a legal means for companies to dump their pension obligations. The potential line for such bankruptcies is long. Standard & Poor's reported that so many companies had fallen behind in their payments that "S&P 500 defined-benefit plans as a group were \$140.4 billion underfunded for 2005."

For retirees, the result of this trend can be catastrophic. The PBGC pays out much reduced

pension payments, and returns from 401(k)-type plans that often replace pensions can't be counted on. Participation in a 401(k)-type plan does not mean a worker will be able to build a retirement fund, even if an employer matches

up with inflation, but the chances of significantly growing invested funds are not high for most.

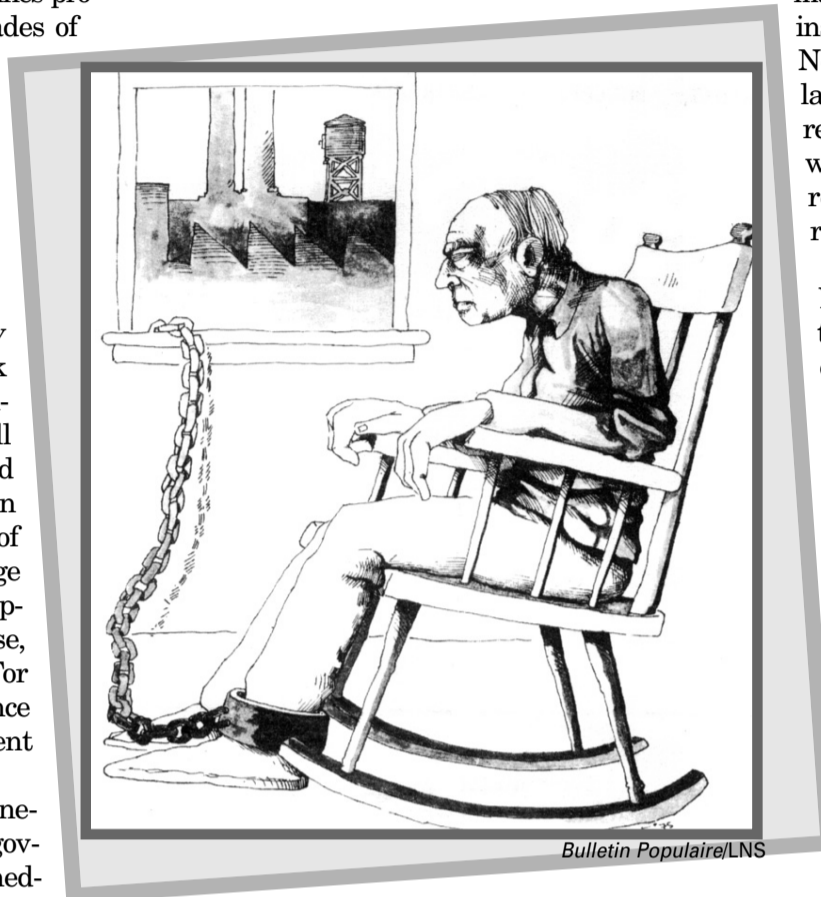
The trend toward fewer and smaller pensions and more risky and low-return 401(k) plans means work may end only with death for the majority of today's workers, while economic insecurity grows. Interviewed by *Frontline*, Notre Dame economics professor Teresa Ghilarducci observed, "What is the meaning of retirement if the only way you can live is to work? The answer is, there is no meaning to retirement anymore....It's the end of retirement."

Figures reflect that truth. As *The New York Times* reported in 2005, "The steepest turnaround in labor participation has occurred among older men. The percentage of men 55 to 64 years old in the workforce fell...from 87 percent in 1950 to under 65 percent in 1994. Then it began inching back up, reaching 69 percent last year, according to the Labor Department. Among men 65 and older, the participation rate rose from 15 percent in 1994 to 19 percent last year."

These are the miserable and degrading circumstances confronting millions of workers after a lifetime of work and struggle in the "best of all possible systems," as defenders of the capitalist system often describe it. Forced to seek work again, and facing a glutted labor market,

older workers able to work and able to find work end up in jobs that pay far less, have fewer benefits or no benefits at all. Marital strife, depression, alcoholism and even suicide are common results.

In a sane society, one in which production was organized for human needs and wants rather than for the private profit of a tiny minority, things could be different. That can only result from the revolutionary efforts of the workers, as a class, organized politically and industrially to abolish capitalism, take possession of the nation's economy and operate it democratically for the use and benefit of all society. Then all will be assured of economic security and material well-being throughout their lives—straight through the golden years promised but never delivered by capitalism.



the funds invested by workers with wealth it stole from them in the first place. Some 401(k) investments can be a complete loss, as former Enron workers can attest.

In general, the return is not much for most—the main beneficiaries of the fund are often not the majority of workers. In an episode of the series *Frontline* called "Can You Afford to Retire?" aired in November on Public Broadcasting Service stations, a benefits consultant calculated investment returns for a 401(k) plan's participants. "Say the bottom 20 percent [of employees] had an investment return for the year of 4 percent. The top 20 percent [usually managers] would be anywhere between five and seven times that number." Some might be able to keep

## Producers & Parasites

By Jim Plant

The source of all social wealth is human labor. Globally, the working class not only produces all social wealth, it produces it in ample quantities to abolish poverty. Yet, tens of millions of people the world over live in excruciating poverty. Increasingly, they are being driven from the countryside into depressing slums or shantytowns with substandard health care, water supplies and no way to make a decent living.

Against this background, successful capitalists in the developing world are living out their lives in extreme comfort and privilege, just as their counterparts in America and Europe have been doing for generations. Even a rudimentary survey of the press over a few weeks reveals many examples, although cases reported are but the tip of an iceberg.

Early in November, for example, David Martinez, a Mexican capitalist, purchased a canvas by Jackson Pollock for a reported \$140 million. Mr. Martinez, according to the Nov. 3 edition of the *London Guardian*, also recently purchased another painting last June for \$15.5 million and he managed to purchase an apartment in Manhattan for \$55 million.

Mr. Martinez purchased the Jackson Pollack

from a U.S. capitalist, David Geffen, who is reputedly worth \$4.5 billion (although this makes him only the 45th richest man in the United States). Mr. Geffen has apparently sold many other paintings in recent months, but not because he is short of cash. No, he wishes to become a newspaper magnate, and for starters his eye is on the *Los Angeles Times*.

The taste for opulence and obscene profligate waste and consumption is a worldwide phenomenon in capitalist society. The *International Herald Tribune* of Oct. 26 gives an example from India. In the city of Pune lives an Indian capitalist, Yohan Poonawalla. The 34-year-old Mr. Poonawalla has a taste for expensive automobiles, of which he owns "around 30." Among them are eight Rolls Royces, the latest costing a mere \$940,000. He has a \$450,000 Lamborghini, plus many BMWs and a Porsche. He also has a pool of over 20 chauffeurs to call upon. The *International Herald Tribune* notes that India today has about 300 million people living on less than \$1 per day.

One of the world's poorest countries in terms of income per head is Burma (Myanmar). It is also one of the most oppressive, being governed for

(Continued on page 6)

**the People**

Founded April 5, 1891

The People (ISSN-0199-350X), continuing the *Weekly People*, is published bimonthly by the Socialist Labor Party of America, 661 Kings Row, San Jose, CA 95112-2724.

Periodicals postage paid at San Jose, CA 95101-7024. Postmaster: Send all address changes to *The People*, P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218. Communications: Business and editorial matters should be addressed to *The People*, P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218. Phone: (408) 280-7266. Fax: (408) 280-6964.

Access *The People* online at: [www.slp.org](http://www.slp.org). Send e-mail to: [thepeople@igc.org](mailto:thepeople@igc.org).

Rates: (domestic and foreign): Single copy, \$1. Subscriptions: \$5 for one year; \$8 for two years; \$10 for three years. By first-class mail, add \$4 per year. Bundle orders: 5-100 copies, \$16 per 100; 101-500 copies, \$14 per 100; 501-1,000 copies, \$12 per 100; 1,001 or more copies, \$10 per 100. Foreign subscriptions: Payment by international money order in U.S. dollars.

# the People

Published by the Socialist Labor Party Established in 1891

National Secretary: Robert Bills

VOL. 116 NO. 5 JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2007

## Pinochet: Capitalism's Man

Thousands of Chileans celebrated in the streets on Dec. 10 upon news of the death of ruthless dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet, U.S. capitalism's blood-thirsty point man in Chile from 1973 to 1990.

Within hours, supporters of the former dictator also were in the streets, and some violence broke out between opposing factions. Some 30,000 people reportedly attended the tyrant's funeral.

How could anyone be left in Chile who supported the old degenerate? After all, tomes have been written that factually recount the gory history of a regime "in which," as *The New York Times* succinctly put it upon Pinochet's death, "more than 3,200 people disappeared or were killed and tens of thousands were detained, tortured or exiled."

Support for Pinochet, in Chile as well as among the foreign sponsors of his regime, is all about who benefited from his state terror. As *Time* magazine said of those who attended Pinochet's funeral, "Most were from sectors that benefited in some way from the dictatorship, such as the military, business and landowning communities."

The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency helped plan the coup d'état that put Pinochet into power. U.S. aid—public and covert—helped keep him there for 17 years. He was the darling of the American conservative movement, praised by former U.S. secretary of state Henry Kissinger and British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, free-market economic ideologues Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek and other defenders of capitalism as one of their brethren, a hero for their free-market cause.

That brings us to the fundamental point to be made upon the occasion of Pinochet's death. He was foremost a defender of capitalism—then a dictator.

Chile's capitalist class was furious with reforms enacted by Salvador Allende—the democratically elected president that Pinochet deposed in 1973—that nationalized Chile's vast copper resources, among other industries and services. Popular unrest, no small amount stirred up by the CIA, threatened bourgeois rule.

Pinochet, his regime and its international sponsors responded to the threat to local and international capitalist interests by doing away with the threat and *anyone* who might possibly support it.

He was a defender of capitalism in the same sense that Hitler was, that Franco was, that Mussolini was. They were all capitalism's men. They all jettisoned the facade of bourgeois democracy when capitalism in their country faced possible collapse and the threatened ascendancy of the ruled class.

That is the lesson that this occasion affords.

As Daniel De Leon wrote in the *Daily People* of April 24, 1912, "Ruling classes are at best veiled autocrats. So long as the corresponding ruled class does not yet feel its historic mission to overthrow the ruling class throb in its veins, the veil is kept unlifted from the face of the rulers. In the measure that the ruled class does begin to feel its historic mission throbbing in its breast, the veil begins to be lifted. The nearer to a crisis, the stronger is the need felt by the rulers for autocratic measures."

Ironically, the only permanent solution to this threat and the *only* hope to avoid it—is to do precisely what the ruling class fears most—build a revolutionary movement that will consolidate the latent political and economic power of the working class and enable it to replace strife-ridden capitalism with the economic democracy of socialism. It is a race against time that workers can ill afford to lose.

—K.B.

## 'Socialist' Chavez?

Hugo Chavez, reelected president of Venezuela in December, is winning support both at home and abroad among those who believe that what he is building in Venezuela is, as Chavez claimed after his election, "the kingdom of love, of peace; the kingdom of justice, of solidarity, brotherhood; the kingdom of socialism," in short, the "kingdom of Christ."

What Chavez may build in Venezuela remains to be seen. He has done nothing that makes it likely he will build anything more than a variant of state capitalism or bureaucratic state despotism. One thing is certain. If he builds the kingdom of Christ it won't be socialist.

Jesus was no Socialist because the material conditions prerequisite for the building of socialism didn't exist 2,000 years ago. There was no socialized productive apparatus capable of producing an abundance for all.

The "program" of Jesus, if you will, was that the misery of the world should be shared so that no one suffers alone; all must suffer equally. That was as humane a "program" as could then be had. The lack of socially developed, large-scale means of production meant that not enough could be produced to end the misery of all. Today an abundance for all is possible; real socialism *can* be built upon the massive socialized means of production organized under the industrial development of capitalism.

But it can't be built by decree, or from the top down, by any "leader," including Chavez. It is a touchstone of socialism that "The emancipation of the working class must be achieved by the working class itself."

Fundamental social transformations of the past have been carried through by minorities at the head of unconscious masses. The transformation from capitalism to socialism can only be achieved when the majority of workers know what is at stake and why they must act. Without this knowledge they cannot build a society they can run democratically in their own interest.

Spreading around oil money does not a Socialist make—however Christ-like it may make Hugo Chavez feel.

—K.B.

## A De Leon Editorial

### Life v. Property

War and its atrocities are inseparable from capitalist "civilization." Only socialism can put an end to them.

**A HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

(*Daily People*, Jan. 1, 1907)

Once upon a time, in the history of the human race, within the fold of an empire, the most powerful yet seen on earth and which raised to the highest pinnacle of perfection the theory "*property* is more precious than *life*," the occurrence was regular of gladiators, chosen to delight the ruling class with their skill at arms and with their dying agonies, marching proudly around the arena and, standing at the foot of the throne of the emperors, intonate the greeting: "*Salve, Caesar, nos morituri te salutamus!*"—Hail to you, Caesar, we who are about to die, salute you!

Nigh 20 centuries have rolled over the head of humankind since that spectacle of a despotic property-holding class, and of the despotized disinherited, agreeing so completely upon the supremacy of *property* above *life* that, as a matter of course, the property-holder accepted the *life* of the propertyless as his due, and the propertyless, in turn, poured out its *life*, as a matter of course, as a meet libation at the wassails of *property*. The paganish superstition has not yet wholly vanished.

On this very day "A Happy New Year!" is hardly distinguishable, on the lips of many of the modern disinherited, from the essence of greeting vouchsafed the caesars by the gladiators about to die. On the lips of many of the modern disinherited, and on the ears of all holders of *property*, "A Happy New Year!" but means a continuation of conditions typified by the gorgeous Christmas tree, "laden with sausages, ham bones, juicy chicken and other delicacies" given last Christmas by the society belle Miss Nannie Sloan of Baltimore to her dogs Lady, a greyhound; Billy, a fox terrier; and Tramp, a pug, while the *life* of the producers of all wealth, "sausages, hams, juicy chicken and other delicacies" included, slowly ebbs in misery.

And yet, uneradicable as the superstition is with *property*, and slow to eradicate as it is from the mind of wide layers of the disinherited, the superstition is fast losing ground. With a powerful minority of the propertyless in the civilized world today—a minority big with the future, a future that is at hand—the superstition is dead, and cast to the winds of oblivion. With this minority, on the grave of the death-dealing superstition of old a life-bringing principle is reared—*life is more precious than property*. On the lips of this minority "A Happy New Year!" preserves not a vestige of the meaning it breathed on the lips of the Roman gladiator. Exactly the reverse. On the lips of this swelling minority of the today, the full-throated wish "A Happy New

(Continued on page 6)

## what is socialism?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Lou Dobbs Assails Corporate Attack on 'Middle Class'

By B.B.

Lou Dobbs, anchorman of CNN's evening program "Lou Dobbs Tonight" and financial journalist, has been on a campaign attacking corporate America for undermining and deliberately destroying the "middle class." His evening homilies seldom fail to chastise politicians for their failure to protect the southern border or to fling invective against greedy employers who drive wages down by using illegal immigrant labor. He berates corporations for outsourcing jobs overseas. He inveighs against politicians of both Democratic and Republican parties for failing Americans on health care and education. He tours the country to lecture "middle class" audiences on all of the above, on their impending impoverishment and to promote his latest book, *War on the Middle Class: How the Government, Big Business, and Special Interest Groups are Waging War on the American Dream and How to Fight Back* (2006).

One such tour brought Mr. Dobbs together for an interview with Rod Dreher, an editorial writer with *The Dallas Morning News*. In the course of their question-and-answer dialogue, Dobbs stated, "The Forbes 400 list this year has nothing but billionaires on it, at a time when real wages have been falling for the past six years for working people and their families. Our middle class has been devastated, and the middle class is the foundation of our country."

Apart from the fact that real wages have been falling for decades, coupling "middle class" and "working people and their families" is an oxymoron. The term *middle class* to describe the *working class* creates confusion. Middle class is an ill-defined term surreptitiously introduced by pandering academics trying to best Marxian social analysis by defining class by income level rather than by its relationship to the means of production. The same crystal ball gazing that characterizes bourgeois sociology generally inspires it. Thus medium to high income falls into medium to high "middle class," whether such definitions totter on credit and defaulted mortgages or not. Similarly, low incomes are ostensibly those who occupy the lower class—or, heaven forbid, the working class. Obviously, such terms mean nothing.

The origin of the term middle class arose in the period of the revolutionary overthrow of feudalism by the capitalist class, wherein they were styled as the class in between the feudal serfs and nobility. Then the middle class was synonymous with the capitalist class, or the bourgeoisie, the owners of capital and productive wealth. In France, they were referred to as the Third Estate.

That which differentiated them as a class was a clear economic distinction: their relationship to the economic system, which in turn imparted orientation as to their class interests. Similarly with the growing class of wageworkers, or proletariat, that is, those owning no productive wealth and compelled to sell their labor power to the highest bidder, another clear economic distinction that also imparted orientation to their class interests. Thus arose between these two classes incessant class warfare centered on the division of the wealth that the wage working class alone produced.

Confusing terms is the stock-in-trade of capitalist pseudo-sociology. Such media apologists of capitalism as Mr. Dobbs glibly absorb and mechanically repeated those confused terms. They are true believers of the misconceived adage that capitalism is "the best of all possible

systems." Indeed, during the interview Dobbs qualified his "critique" with the testimonial, "I believe in capitalism, but I absolutely abhor the concept of unfettered capitalism...certainly the furthest thing from the imagination of our Founding Fathers."

Speaking of whom evokes a time when a largely agricultural nation consisting of small farmers, shopkeepers, craftsmen, stunted facto-

capitalists, craftsmen and small holders who were dumped into the ranks of the working class. Hence, today, there is no middle class.

Perpetuating the term when the substance has vanished serves the Dobbsian purpose well. It nurtures the illusion of a broad class independent of the working class and yet not of the dominating or ruling class. It stimulates conceits on the part of some wageworkers, many of whom fancy themselves a "cut above" and separate from ordinary laborers and factory workers. It encourages the chimerical vision of relief from the uncertainties and precariousness of wage slavery by ascending to the sacred precinct of managerial privilege. It retards classconsciousness.

Were Mr. Dobbs to change every reference from "middle class" to "working class" he would likely expose himself to red baiting; hence he resorts to a term he can straddle. Presumably, he believes in a benevolent capitalism in which the competitive forces and compulsions that drive the capitalist system to function like a system are magically suspended. Thus he states, "Republicans and Democrats and their corporate masters are not looking at the United States as a great nation. They're looking at us as the greatest consumer market in the world. And...at Americans first as consumers, as units of labor, rather than as fellow citizens. And I say to hell with them."

Such invective "batters no parsnips," for to send a real message to the capitalist class requires the united action, the solidarity, the classconsciousness of the working class acting as a multimillion-person majority, organized as an integrated union equipped to take, hold and operate the productive wealth of the nation while banishing the entire system that is driving humanity to disaster.

Confounding wageworkers with the anachronisms such as "middle class" fogs the issue of the age, which is "thrive with socialism or die with capitalism" and contributes to the pall enveloping the whole question of social development.



D. Cooper for The People

ry owners and a relative minority of wageworkers constituted a majority of what might have been termed the "middle class," a term that never took root in America because there were no serfs or feudal nobility. There was no in-between class. The subsequent broad industrialization that took place in the 19th and early 20th centuries virtually wiped out the petty

255075100 years ago

## Leaders and Socialist Revolution

(Weekly People, Jan. 5, 1957)

It is an instructive commentary on the primitiveness of the workers' councils that sprang up in Hungary, and took over the leadership of a previously leaderless uprising, that they were highly vulnerable to paralysis through the arrest of their leaders. The Kadar regime shrewdly concentrated on arresting workers' council members, knowing that this would throw the rebellious workers into confusion. The trick apparently worked. Where formerly the councils concentrated on the demands that Russian troops get out of Hungary and Imre Nagy be admitted to the government, now they found themselves absorbed in a struggle of far lesser scope—the struggle to effect the release of their leaders.

There is a lesson here of prime importance to the working class whose historic mission it is to terminate class rule and reconstruct society on socialist lines. The movement that is to effect this revolutionary change is doomed before it starts if it is immune to paralysis through the assassination, arrest or incapacitation in any way of its elected representatives. Therefore, such a movement must be so ordered that whatever the "proslavery rebels" of capitalism may do to these representatives will fail to halt the tide of revolution.

But how can the organization of the working class function without leaders?

The Socialist Industrial Union program, formulated by the great American Marxist, Daniel De Leon, and promulgated by the Socialist Labor Party, shows the way. A ruthless, lawless, desperate ruling class can kill or kidnap individuals—but it cannot kill or kidnap the whole working class. It can cripple a movement in which action is improvised and dependent on the decisions of the individual leaders—but it is helpless to cope with a movement in which, at the least, a substantial section of the working class is clear upon the revolutionary goal and clear upon the tactics. Such a movement possesses inner springs of intelligent action. It requires central direction to *coordinate*, but it does not rely upon leaders to *lead*, which is to say, *to decide what is to be done*. In short, the movement of working-class and social emancipation—the Socialist Industrial Union—is invulnerable to ruling-class blackmailing attempts at paralyzing it by inactivating its "leaders."

The goal of the Socialist Industrial Union is a system in which all means of social production will be socially owned and administered democratically for the benefit of all the people by a Socialist Industrial Union government. This is not a complicated concept. It can be easily grasped by a classconscious working class. And, once grasped, it renders the workers' movement proof against ruling-class trickery and compromise.

(Continued on page 6)

# ...Oil Stakes Too High

(Continued from page 1)

Iraq's national oil industry will be commercialized and opened to foreign firms.

"The report makes visible to everyone the elephant in the room: that we are fighting, killing and dying in a war for oil. It states in plain language that the U.S. government should use every tool at its disposal to ensure that American oil interests and those of its corporations are met."

## Intensifying the Conflict

Congress created the Iraq Study Group (ISG) last March to evaluate the deteriorating situation in that country and to recommend alternatives for resolving the conflict with a minimum of damage to U.S. imperialist interests. Among other things, the ISG, led by former secretary of state James Baker, described the situation in Iraq as "grave and deteriorating" and recommended a gradual withdrawal of U.S. forces. President Bush has rejected that option, however, and may decide to send even more troops to Iraq to intensify the conflict and add to the carnage. That is the option being pushed by the Pentagon, according to a report in the *Los Angeles Times* of Dec. 13, and this "surge" could increase the number of troops by nearly 30 percent.

"The size of the troop increase the Pentagon will recommend is unclear," the *Times* reported. "One officer suggested an increase of about 40,000...would be required....There are about 140,000 U.S. troops in Iraq."

## Contempt for Democracy

Last November's midterm elections were widely described as a "referendum" on the Bush ad-

ministration's conduct of the war. The resounding defeat handed to the Republican Party and the electoral success of its Democratic opponents was generally accepted as irrefutable evidence that the overwhelming majority of Americans reject the war and want it brought to an end, if not immediately then gradually. However, it is far from certain that the new Democratic majority will make any effort to impose a major change.



Already incoming Senate majority leader Harry Reid has indicated a Democratic willingness to support a troop "surge" into Iraq. "If the commanders on the ground said this is just for a short period of time, we'll go along with that," Reid said in December. (Associated Press, Dec. 18)

If the American working class wants a world in which peace and international harmony will prevail it will have to do more than flop back and forth between the political parties of capitalism. It will have to place its desire to live in such a world beyond the capacity of any set of leaders to thwart their wishes. That can only be done by their conscious decision to take matters into their own hands by organizing their political and economic might to establish a socialist industrial democracy through the Socialist Industrial Union program offered by the Socialist Labor Party.

# ...De Leon

(Continued from page 4)

Year!" is the distant rumbling of that approaching social storm which, when it shall have passed over the head of mankind, will leave behind a social system in which *life* will be sacred, *property* its servant, and *happiness*, not the stolen privilege of a few, but the inheritance of all.

A Happy New Year! shouts the fighting SLP of the land to the wage slave wherever found.

# ...Parasites

(Continued from page 3)

many years by a brutal military dictatorship. Recently the daughter of Gen. Than Shwe, the head of the military junta, was married. A leaked 10-minute video clip of the wedding has appeared on the Internet. The *Guardian* of Nov. 3 reports that "In the most opulent sequence the camera zooms in on glittering jeweled clusters in the hair of the bride, Thandar Shwe, then pans down from



her diamond ear-studs to at least six thick strings of what appear to be diamonds." "What is not seen are the gifts, which reportedly include luxury cars and houses worth a total of \$50 million." Opponents of Burma's military regime say that the spending on the marriage in July was more than three times the state health budget.

One day the world's workers must finally become conscious of the nature of capitalist exploitation and of their own class interests. They have it within their power to rid the world of poverty-breeding capitalism and to create a just and peaceful global society in which the proceeds of labor will provide secure, comfortable, enjoyable and culturally rich lives for all.

# ... 50 Years

(Continued from page 5)

Similarly, the tactics, easily within the compass of mass understanding, combine political and industrial class action—political action to outlaw capitalist ownership; industrial action to take physical possession of the factories, mills, mines, railroads, etc.

In short, a working class that knows where it is going and how it is going to get there requires no special set of leaders to show the way. Its collective, industrially organized power is invincible.

## The General Strike

(*Weekly People*, Jan. 5, 1957)

According to the consensus of news observers, the 48-hour general strike called by the Budapest Central Workers Council for midnight, Dec. 10, was 80 percent effective. That is, it shut down 80 percent of Hungary's economic operations for two days. But as a means of coercing the Kadar government into granting the workers' demands it was a total failure. Indeed, the strike itself failed to end in a rout only because of its brief predetermined duration. The incident illustrates once again the inadequacy, inappropriateness and self-defeating nature of the general strike as a revolutionary weapon.

First of all, the posture of strikers is that of petitioners—and this is so even when the "petition" is framed in the form of an ultimatum or demand. Accordingly, the strike is not the act of men who are bent on *taking* that which they declare is theirs, on *wresting* it from the class that has possession. Rather it is an act of men intent on gaining their end by coercing the usurping class into giving in. It therefore tacitly acknowledges the usurpers' right *not to give in*. "It is a tacit recognition," De Leon wrote, "of an existing social order."

The general strike in Hungary was in the nature of a demonstration to the government that, despite the bloodbath given them by the

Red Army, the workers were united against it and still determined in their demands. This was evidenced by its limited duration. And even though the strike demonstrated solidarity it did not bring the workers any nearer to understanding how that solidarity could be used to put an end to bureaucratic despotism. On the other hand, many a Hungarian worker, reflecting upon the significance of a paralyzed production and distribution system, must have seen in the general strike a method of achieving chaos.

The constructive revolutionary act cannot be a strike, general or otherwise. The constructive revolutionary act cannot be the negative one of *leaving* the workshops; it must be the positive one of *taking them over* and locking out the exploiters, be they capitalists or bureaucrats.

In countries like the United States, which has a Constitution legalizing fundamental social change, this constructive act will follow the destructive—destructive in the sense that it destroys capitalist ownership and dismembers the state—act of their political arm. The constructive revolutionary act is one that can be performed only by the integral-industrial organization of the working class.

NEW EDITION

## Earth Day and May Day

Two Views of the Future

By Robert Bills

\$2 postpaid  
16 pages

New York  
Labor News  
PO Box 218  
Mtn. View, CA  
94042-0218

## The People's PRESS FORWARD FUND

This is my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for *The People's* Press Forward Fund, which will help support the SLP's official journal. (Please make checks/money orders payable to the Socialist Labor Party or *The People* and mail to P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Apt. \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

(Political contributions are not tax deductible.) Acknowledgments will be made in *The People*.  
Please indicate if a receipt is desired:  Yes  No



# letters to the People

## Press Forward

Keep pressing forward! You're doing a wonderful service to thousands of readers.

Diane Lorraine Poole  
Pittsburgh, Pa.

[Sent \$10.00 contribution to Press Forward Fund.]

## Truckers

There is an error on page 3 of the November-December issue. "Paying drivers by the hour rather than by the load, which encourages speeding..."

In fact, road drivers are paid by the *load* and this "encourages speeding and fatigue when drivers press themselves to complete a run in time to start another..."

There is an error on page 6, "Texas Leads," etc., inasmuch as the article ends abruptly, mid-section.

Daniel B. Lazarus  
Cincinnati, Ohio

[Truckers are compensated in various ways: by the load, as our reader says; by the hour, as reported by The Dallas Morning News and cited in our article; by the mile, or by some combination of these, depending on whether the driver is a full-time employee, unionized or otherwise, or

an independent contractor.

A copy flow problem caused a portion of the last sentence of the article to be dropped. The complete sentence is as follows: "The industrial unions involved in the construction of roads and vehicles of all kinds will democratically determine how best to serve our needs without the insane drive for profit to prod them into foolhardy and dangerous decisions such as those that today jeopardize our safety and well-being every time we step out of the door."]

## Health Insurance

Your article, "Health Insurance: A Leach on Society," in the November-December *People* should be on the front page of every newspaper in the U.S.

The United States has enough money to kill more than 100,000 Iraqis, kill more than 2,800 American soldiers, destroy and rebuild Iraq and turn thousands of law-abiding Muslims into terrorists, but doesn't have the money to grant health insurance to every American citizen.

Robert A. Bloomer  
Bonnieville, Ky.

## China's Rich

Please send me 100 *Global Warming* leaflets

and one copy of *Earth Day and May Day...*

Thanks for publishing the farce of China's government. I heard on Voice of Russia last week that China has published a list of "The 100 Richest People in China." Can you believe it?! I suggest to people to use the runup to the Beijing Olympics as a good way to use the media against the government.

Anyway, here's a check [\$15]. Keep the change. ¡Viva la Revolución!

Douglas Aaron  
Salem, Ore.

## The Homeless

I very much enjoy your writing in *The People*. There's something about capitalism that just drives me up the wall. It's this business that the homeless need to be rehabilitated so they can be a success in our rotten capitalist system, that they must all be winos or druggies or just plain need religion. It seems very hard for a lot of people to conclude that there just aren't enough jobs for all of us.

Joe Randell  
Bellingham, Wash.

## Still a Reader

I still read with interest each issue of *The People*. I thought the current issue superior. The writing seemed livelier and more colorful.

I was struck by the absence of any reference to the Second Amendment in "Remember Your Three Rs." Though workers should not cede any rights to the capitalist class, the overwhelming firepower in the hands of the repressive apparatus of the state diminishes the likelihood of success in any resort to armed force, if it should come to that, in a slave owners' revolt. Defections might do the trick.

I am not sure Hannibal is rightly called a "conqueror" vis-à-vis Rome. He ravaged Italy for 15 years, annihilating every army sent against him. In the end, he was defeated at the Battle of Zama in North Africa after the Romans invaded. The Carthaginian Senate called him home, which is what the Romans had hoped for. If I recall he was successful in Spain, however.

P.D. Lawrence  
Fresno, Calif.

## ACTIVITIES

### CALIFORNIA

**San Francisco: Discussion Meeting**—Section S.F. Bay Area will hold a discussion meeting on Saturday, Feb. 17, 1:30-4 p.m., Santa Clara Public Library, Sycamore Room, 2635 Homestead Rd. (between Kiely Blvd. & San Tomas Expwy.), Santa Clara.

### OHIO

**Independence: Discussion Meeting**—Section Cleveland will hold a discussion meeting on Sunday, Jan. 7, 1-3 p.m., Independence Public Library, 6361 Selig Dr. (off Rt. 21 between Chestnut & Hillside). For information call 440-237-7933. (Please note: No meetings are scheduled in February.)

### OREGON

**Portland: Discussion Meeting**—Section Portland will hold a discussion meeting on Saturday, Feb. 17, from 10 a.m.-12 noon, at the Portland Main Library, SW Yamhill & 10th. Topic: "What Do You Know When You Graduate? A study of corporate influence in the classroom." For more information call Sid at 503-226-2881 or visit the section's website at <http://slp.pdx.home.mindspring.com>. (Please note: No meeting is scheduled in January.)

For information about future meetings, visit the section's website at <http://slp.pdx.home.mindspring.com> or call Sid at 503-226-2881.

## ...Hunger

(Continued from page 1)

owners of industry. And as more and more well-paying jobs disappear, as they have lately in auto, airline and other industries, and as more jobs are "outsourced," more workers will have to contend with the prospect of hunger, even homelessness (should we call it "low housing security"?). If workers are to free themselves of the threat of hunger, they have to recognize the class nature of the problem, organize to end the capitalist system of production for profit and institute socialist production for use.

## Funds

(Oct. 21-Dec. 14)

*Press Forward Fund*

John O'Neill (In memory of Anne Karp) \$1,000; Section Cleveland \$500; \$400 each Section San Francisco Bay Area, Section Wayne Co., Mich.; Mary Buha \$300; \$200 each Chris Dobreff, Gerald Lucas, Irene F. Schelin, Joan M. Davis, Warren & Nancy Carlen (In memory of Comrades Albert & Mary Mills); \$150 each John S. & Rosemary Gale, Robert K. Hofem; Section Cook Co., Ill., \$124.80; \$100 each Dr. L. Miles Raisig, Helen Deneff, Irene S. Louik, Michael J. Preston, Roy K. Nelson, Tom Puszykowski, Tony Marsella, Walter Vojnov; Bill & Joan Kelley \$95; Harvey K. Fuller \$75; Frank Cline \$68; Marshall G. Soura \$63; Bruce Gard \$60; \$50 each Al Bikar, Earle McGue, Harley Selkregg, Robert Ormsby, Sid Fink & Joe Groelke, William Barry; Lloyd A. Wright \$45; Anonymous \$41; Lawrence Hackett \$40; Jill Cambell & Steve Littleton \$35; John Hagerty \$30; George E. Gray \$26; \$25 each Albert C. Goldberg, Donald L. Scott, James Whiteside, Juliette Jackson, Ken Stibler, Manuel Luevano, Michael James, Randolph Petsche, Robert Varone, Ross Schelin, Sandra La Framboise; T. McGregor \$23.63.

\$20 each Bill Conklin, Charles Saunders, Ewald Nielsen, James A. Barr, Karl H. Heck, Michael A. Ogletree, Orville Rutschman, Richard Edgar, Roger Hudson, Severino Majkus, William O'Mahoney; \$15 each Harold Madsen, Maurice Greb; \$10 each Ali Ebrahimi, Chuck Fair, Curt Walker, Diane Lorraine Poole, Dora Ruggiero, Douglas Aaron, E.J. Pacharis, Harry C. Gibson, James Lehner, Joseph Bellon, Keith O'Camb, Marotte, Matthew Rinaldi, Richard F. Mack, Richard H.

Cassin; \$8 each David W. Geier, Milton A. Poulos, Anonymous; \$5 each Albert E. Atwell Jr., Don Patrick, L. Lela, Robert F. Jensen, Stephan Graham, Walter K. Bagnick; Robert Jensen \$4; Robert A. Bloomer \$3; Ed Musgrave \$1.

Total: \$6,463.43

*Christmas Box*

Richard Ernstein \$50.00 (Total)

*Press Security Fund*

Ronald H. Harner \$20; Scott M. Sullivan \$16; Anonymous \$15; Marotte \$10; James E. Larson \$7.

Total: \$68.00

*Prisoner Subscription Fund*

Michael J. Preston \$10; \$5 each Richard F. Mack, Marshall G. Soura.

Total: \$20.00

*SLP Leaflet Fund*

Robert Burns \$30; C. James Matuschka \$8; \$2 each John S. Gale, Douglas Aaron.

Total: \$42.00

*SLP Sustainer Fund*

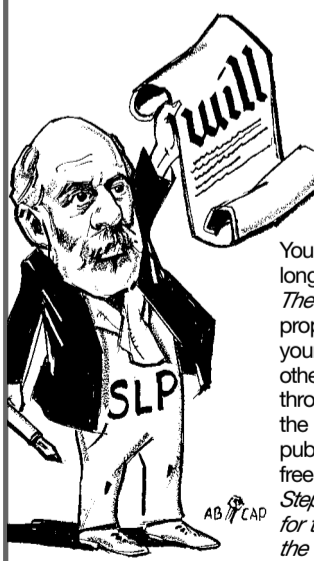
Joan M. Davis \$800; Chris Dobreff \$400; Bernard Bortnick \$350; Robert P. Burns \$320; Lois Reynolds \$100; Jill Campbell & Steve Littleton \$60; Michael Wenskunas \$50; \$20 each George E. Gray, James H. Lehner, Section San Francisco Bay Area: Bill Kelley; Helena Stevens \$15; George T. Gaylord Jr. \$2.

Total: \$2,157.00

## Socialist Labor Party

*Financial Summary*

Bank balance (Sept. 30) . . . . . \$ 91,114.58  
Expenses (Oct.-Nov.) . . . . . 19,094.77  
Income (Oct.-Nov.) . . . . . 8,161.35  
Bank balance (Nov. 30) . . . . . \$ 80,181.16  
Deficit for 2006 . . . . . \$ 69,672.10



### 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 to Provide for the Financial Security of the Socialist Labor Party*.

Socialist Labor Party  
P.O. Box 218  
Mountain View, CA 94042-0218

Please send a free copy of *Steps You Can Take* to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

# Fishing the Seas to Extinction

By B.B.

Studies evaluating information gathered by the United Nations and other researchers have scientists alarmed over the state of the world's fisheries. These studies suggest that many species of fish have been depleted to the point where their extinction is a distinct possibility. The number and variety of species threatened are important as food for our own species.

There is no mystery to the decline. It is directly traceable to overfishing. While other factors are involved, the primary source of the problem is that too many fish are being taken from the oceans. The affected varieties of fish are not able to reproduce as fast as they are being harvested. Some scientists believe that certain threatened varieties of ocean fish may not recover to avoid extinction unless fishing is sharply reduced or completely stopped long enough to allow endangered species to recover their losses.

It should be evident to every sentient being that an economic system driven purely by continuous market expansion with a view to sale and profit will disastrously collide with the limits of finite resources, and with a finite world. But it isn't. Instead, we hear incessant warnings of impending disasters of one sort or another and the fundamental social change our age demands is totally ignored.

In addition to incontrovertible warnings of global warming, environmental destruction and species loss, we now have another disastrous cataclysm looming on the horizon, a result of capitalism gone amuck. According to researchers who analyzed "fishing data collected by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization and other sources," "marine ecosystems will unravel and there will be a 'global collapse' of all species currently fished, possibly as soon as mid-century." (*The New York Times*, Nov. 3)

Boris Worm, a top marine biologist teaching at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, had a shocking epiphany. While giving a test to his students, he "analyzed data for the first time on his laptop" and was astounded to see "just a smooth line going down. And when he extrapolated the data into the future 'to see where it ends at 100 percent collapse,'" he came to 2048. Not believing his eyes, he ran the check again. The answer was the same. Then he double-checked his mathematical calculation by hand and the result was the same.

The *Baltimore Sun* of last March 21, some months before, had amplified these grave conclusions in an article by Andrew Sharpless, the CEO of Oceana, an international environmental group, stating that the U.N. "estimates that more than 75 percent of the world's fish stocks are in jeopardy." They include fish of "high commercial value: haddock and cod in the North Atlantic, Argentine hake in the South Atlantic and most species of tuna." Orange roughy, blue ling, roundnose grenadier, seabream, splendid alfonsino or forkbeards, tusk and deep-sea sharks are also severely threatened with overfishing and extinction.

Moreover, Daniel Pauly, a fisheries scientist, offered the example that the once flourishing seabed beneath the continental shelf off the coast of Maine "is smooth. In many places except for the tracks left by a few thin worms, the animals have largely left without a trace.... There are no fish."

Josh Reichert, an environmentalist of the Pew Charitable Trusts, concurred in Dr. Worm's assessment, adding that the report is "a kind of warning bell" that "assumes we do nothing to fix this...and shame on us if that were to be the case." Dr. Worm favors eliminating "horrendous

overfishing where everyone agrees it's a bad thing" or banning destructive fishing practices in the most sensitive areas.

The *Sun* article hastened to offer news that action is being taken. They were referring to the fact that the World Trade Organization (WTO) has "moved beyond the consensus that many fishing subsidies lead to overfishing and destructive practices" and that "At least five countries have submitted detailed proposals on eliminating these subsidies." The government subsidies were cited as seriously warping the sacred "free market," thus creating overcapacity, inhibiting developing countries' fishing industries, and depleting fishing stocks worldwide. Mr. Sharpless observed, "The world needs to stop making payments that encourage com-

**It should be evident to every sentient being that an economic system driven purely by continuous market expansion with a view to sale and profit will disastrously collide with the limits of finite resources, and with a finite world.**

mercial fishermen to catch too many fish. Refreshingly, that proposition has united interests that typically stand with daggers drawn."

How apt! A better description of capitalist competition could hardly be found. But now, months later, we find that, surprise, surprise, the "daggers" remain drawn! In an article written by Marta Madina, also of Oceana, we are told "a group of European countries, led by Spain, France, Portugal and Poland" are "attempting to destroy any initiative taken to stop the deterioration of fish species and marine ecosystems." She goes on to accuse those governments of ignoring the "warnings given by the scientific community regarding the depleted conditions of fish stocks" and chastises them for requesting "quotas that put the future of fisheries at risk, especially deep-sea fish species." Ms. Madina goes on to express outrage that in the face of falling fishing fleet catches, down 60 percent over 2005, the countries cited blithely ignore the destruction.

What altruistic Oceana, marine biologists, ecologists and scientists are failing to comprehend is what Marx brilliantly referred to as "the most violent, mean and malignant passions of the human breast, the Furies of private interest." Indeed, when capitalists sense danger to their profits, they shed their human attributes and Jekyll-and-Hyde-like are transmogrified into shark-like predators. They will, in turn, prevail upon their country's governments to protect their interests. They will plead, cajole and threaten. Those governments respond accordingly, often under the guise of addressing imbalances in the balance of payments deficits, an old capitalist refrain. They will raise all sorts of smoke screens, including the favorite red herring, "job loss." "Oh our poor workers, their fam-


ilies, the children, what will they do?" though not a murmur is heard over factory closings, outsourcing, etc. So goes such thinly disguised dissembling in the service of capitalist profits.

Some conclude that fish farming may be the salvation of fish species. However, in a document posted to the Internet by the nonprofit organization SeaWeb in 2004, all is not well on the aquaculture farm. According to the SeaWeb posting, "Ten leading experts...evaluated whether farm-raised fish add to the global food supply...or contribute to the depletion of fish populations worldwide." They found "that in some cases aquaculture does more harm than good." "Many types of aquaculture are pushing us faster towards a worldwide fisheries collapse through inefficient practices that rely too much on the ecologically inefficient practice of feeding wild-caught fish to farmed fish." Others are "destroying [wild] fish habitats and collecting wild fish to stock fish farms."

According to Rosamond Naylor, a senior research scholar at Stanford University, one of the experts cited above, "many types of aquaculture are creating unforeseen problems and we seem to be headed for big trouble as a result." Among those problems is feeding ground-up wild fish to farmed fish—it requires three pounds of wild fish to produce one pound of shrimp or salmon. Another degenerating practice is feeding vegetarian species fish oil and fishmeal to accelerate production. Moreover, habitat destruction in terms of hundreds of thousands of hectares of coastal wetlands and mangroves, "critical nurseries" for wild fish and shellfish, have vanished because of untreated effluent, feces, antibiotics and uneaten feed from fish farms. Rebecca Goldberg, Environmental Defense senior scientist, stated flatly that farm-raised salmon and shrimp constitutes a "net loss of marine resources."

The inescapable conclusion that must be drawn from these facts is that the fishing industry dominated by the lecherous hand of profit and private ownership of the means of social production, that upon which billions of people depend, cannot be allowed to continue.

Moreover, the same must be said for the entire industrial complex. It can only be entrusted to the working class organized within the democratic socialist industrial governmental framework embracing all industries, and grounded upon the universal societal principal of production for use not markets and profit.



**Leaflets to Distribute**

- **America's Workers Can Build a Better World** (SLP National Platform)
- **Global Warming: All Talk, No Action Worsens Threat**
- **Technology & Job Loss: What Workers Can Do About It**

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of each of the above titles. I enclose \$2 per 100 ordered to help cover printing and postage costs.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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