

IN THIS ISSUE

Concentration of Capital Wipes Out the Family Farm

Page 2

Capitalists Resist Ergonomic Workplace Safety Standard

Page 3

Socialist Labor Party Marks 110th Anniversary

Page 5

Return of Panama Canal Didn't End U.S. Control

Page 8

SOCIALIST EDUCATION FUND—

Symbols

"The red flag makes no bones of its purpose. Its purpose is the overthrow of the existing capitalist order of society, and the substitution of the same with the socialist or industrial order; in other words, to do what James Madison long ago prophesied would have to be done, to wit, adjust the national institutions to economic conditions that were bound to change."

—Daniel De Leon

The red flag symbolizes everything that socialism stands for, but it is only a symbol. The substance of socialism is in the principles it teaches and the goals it has set.

First among the principles of socialism is the unity of all workers, regardless of race, color or creed, for the overthrow of class rule and exploitation. In the slogan—*Workers of the World, Unite!*—socialism proclaims its abhorrence of racism.

What does the Confederate flag symbolize? What political, social and economic ideas does it represent?

It may seem absurd that such a question could still be matter for serious dispute. Nonetheless, the state of South Carolina is presently embroiled in a controversy on this very question.

Since the civil rights movement of the 1960s, the Confederate battle flag has been flown atop the capitol dome in Columbia. It was put there to symbolize the state's resistance to integration and civil rights, and there it remains.

The NAACP has launched a boycott of the state until the flag is hauled down and relegated to the museum. The state legislature is embroiled in a debate on whether to take it down or let it fly.

On Jan. 17, nearly 50,000 people rallied in Columbia, S.C., to express their indignation that the flag still flutters over the capitol dome 135 years after the Civil War ended chattel slavery. Most were African Americans and descendants of slaves.

Their demonstration followed another, but much smaller rally of 6,000 people on Jan. 6. The smaller demonstration was sponsored by what a Reuters report called "a loose federation of Southern heritage groups." The report quoted one of the demonstrators' spokesmen:

"The issue at stake is the truth," said Rev. Bobby Eubanks, a Baptist minister and member of the South Carolina Heritage Coalition. "The flag is not a racist symbol. The flag symbolizes the rights of sovereign states."

Those who participated in the larger demon-

(Continued on page 8)

Capitalist Skeptics Resist Evidence of Global Warming

A decade ago, global warming was a hotly debated subject. Today, that debate and the intensive research that has accompanied it have led scientists in many parts of the world to conclude that global warming is a fact. Various reports in recent years indicate that there is general agreement among a large majority of meteorologists and climatologists that some degree of global warming has been going on for many years due to natural atmospheric conditions. However, there is now the added fact that there is widespread and growing agreement that global warming is being exacerbated by human activity.

Last month the *San Jose Mercury News* reported that, as far as the nation's top weather and climate officials were concerned, the debate about the cause of global warming was over. That official is James Baker, the administrator of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, who warned that human interaction with the environment was causing climatic changes of such degree as to be a world threat in the 21st century.

The evidence that global warming is now an ongoing phenomenon is growing. Among the items of evidence cited to date are the following:

- The ice cap at the top of the globe is now 40 percent thinner than it was two or three decades ago.
- The climate at the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions is getting warmer in some of their seasons.
- The area covered by sea ice is less and of shorter duration in many places.

- Mountain glaciers in Alaska have been shrinking.

- The same is true of the Greenland ice cap.

- Spring in the Northern Hemisphere comes a week earlier than it did 30 years ago.

- Severe rainstorms are up about 20 percent, not surprisingly, since warmer air carries more water vapor.

- Coral reefs around the world have been bleached by warmer waters.

- Sea levels are rising.



Dr. Drew Shindell, atmospheric physicist at the NASA Goddard Center for Space Studies, has noted that computer studies indicate that the situation is "not a natural thing." The computer models show that the increasing heat-trapping greenhouse gases are largely responsible for increasing global warming.

"The world must learn to live with the consequences of rising sea levels that could inundate the lowest lying coastal areas, Baker said. Eighty percent of the coast already is eroding from rising sea levels, mostly because of an increase in ocean temperatures over the past 100 years, he said." (*San Jose Mercury News*, Jan. 12)

Despite the growing body of evi-

dence that global warming is a growing threat, and despite the evidence that greenhouse gases are a major contributor to the problem, many U.S. capitalists who rely heavily on fossil fuels as their cheapest source of energy remain skeptics. As *Business Week* noted shortly after the Kyoto conference on global warming: "There's no evidence, they [the capitalists] said, that emissions from the burning of fossil fuels are raising the Earth's temperature. And trying to cut those emissions—the goal of an international treaty hammered out last December [1997] in Kyoto—would cripple the American economy." At least, it *might* cut into their bloated profits!

As the *San Jose Mercury News* editorially observed sometime ago—

"U.S. efforts remain half-hearted because too many representatives of heavy industry and coal-producing states...are pretending that global warming is not a problem or that the United States is being asked to assume an unfair burden in slowing it down. They've turned a blind eye to the scientific evidence that global warming is happening and that it will produce rising sea levels, more unpredictable weather and the spread of tropical diseases. They have raised hysterical fears that the treaty is a first step toward the 'deindustrialization' of the United States...."

And so it will be as long as the U.S. capitalist society exists. Profits, not human welfare, will remain the primary purpose and objective of the U.S. capitalist class.

—N.K.

Billions Squandered On Late Fix of Y2K Bug

By Ken Boettcher

The infamous history of capitalism and its brigand ruling class is replete with many a horror committed against the environment and humanity for the sake of defending, maintaining or advancing profit or the spheres of influence that enable a smooth flow of profit. Though the recent Y2K bug was thankfully a bust as a major cataclysm, it too should find a place in the notorious annals of capitalist society.

If future history books are ever written free of the socioeconomic constraints that presently yoke most such texts to the perspective of the ruling capitalist class, there will no doubt be a special place for all the wars, genocides and holocausts into which various ruling classes throughout the history of capitalism have thrust so many millions of working men, women and children. For these are perhaps capitalism's most heinous crimes, the greatest mass murders in history.

Near the head of the list will also be the greatest robbery in history, the exploitation of wage labor by the capi-

talist class—the act through which a tiny owning class expropriates the greater portion of the wealth created by the majority working class. This process is repeated day after day in every capitalist nation on Earth, making the total amount of stolen wealth absolutely astronomical.

Following somewhere on the heels of the foregoing will be the massive waste of human and natural resources that has accumulated during the lifetime of capitalism as a result of the anarchy of capitalist production. It is here that the list should show the \$600 billion spent around the world to fix the so-called "Y2K problem."

That's right—\$600 billion—and that's not counting any problems or litigation that might crop up as we get farther into the year. The total is roughly equal to the gross domestic product of South Korea in 1996. That kind of money could have built thousands of hospitals, schools, clinics and other needed facilities in communities around the world. It could have helped wipe out illiteracy or built millions of homes.

But it didn't. That \$600 billion—or more—went to do a "last minute" fix on a computer bug that could have been fixed 30 years ago before the cost to do so became so phenomenal. It wasn't fixed then because capitalist production is a seething cauldron of the competing profit interests of many individual capitalists. They don't often get together to solve problems. When they do, they do so primarily through the political state, which attempts to enforce their collective will, if agreement on action can be reached in a Congress also torn by the same competing ruling-class interests.

Robert Kuttner, writing on "Villains in the Y2K Case" for *The American Prospect*, recently observed that the two-digit clock standard at fault in the Y2K bug was warned against by computer scientists even in the 1960s, when the only computer users were the military, government agencies and large corporations. No one acted on the warning.

"As early as 1971," Kuttner wrote, (Continued on page 6)

Concentration of Capital Wipes Out the Family Farm

By Nathan Karp

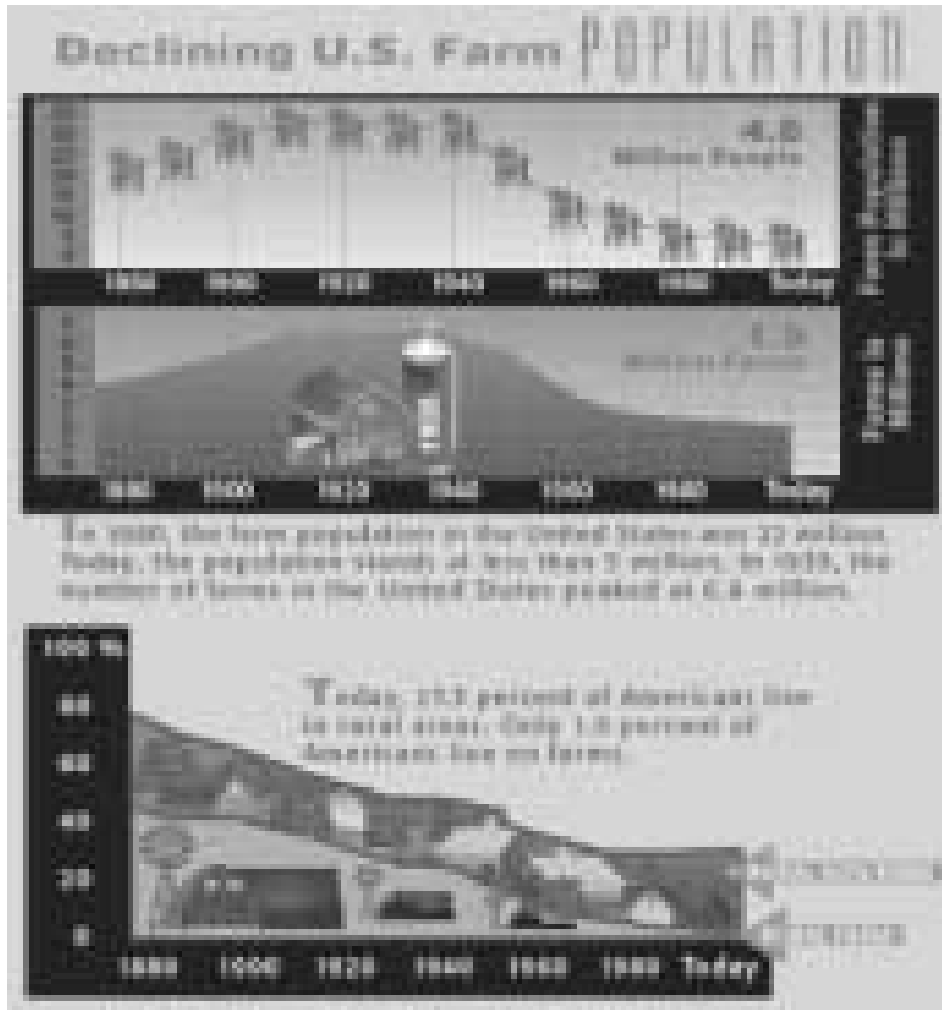
Despite claims that a record expansion has spread good fortune and affluence to all sectors of the economy during the past decade, the important agriculture industry has been sinking deeper and deeper into the doldrums. Even the federal government's \$22.5 billion aid package has failed to prevent the industry's decline, and the prospect of another multibillion-dollar federal aid package is not likely to change the industry's troubled picture.

The number of farms in the United States has been in decline since the Great Depression. Through "good" times and bad, through succeeding waves of "prosperity" and crisis, nothing has stemmed the tide. In November 1994, for example, the Associated Press (AP) reported that the number of farms had slipped below "2 million for the first time since the Civil War." That particular report, which was based on the federal government's 1992 Census of Agriculture, added that:

"The total of 1,925,300 is the lowest since 1850, the year Millard Fillmore succeeded Zachary Taylor as president...."

According to the same 1994 AP report, "The number [of farms] peaked at 6.8 million in 1935." Thereafter, the drop began. By 1947, the number had fallen to 5.9 million, a loss of 900,000 units. The decline continued during the next decade, accelerated by a growing concentration of land resources, ever-increasing mechanization of farm machinery, better seeds and improved farming methods. By 1958, the number of farms was down to 4.8 million—a loss of 1.1 million. Understandably, most of the lost farms were the smaller units, the "family farms" and the so-called independent farmers that were unable to compete with the new and large "farm factories" that were increasingly dominate in all phases of the agriculture industry.

Even these developments were just the



American Farm Bureau

beginning. During the next 34 years, the decline was truly spectacular. From 1958 to 1992, 2.8 million farms were wiped out!

The decline apparently continues. For example, in Illinois, which had over 100,000 farms in the early 1980s, there were only 73,000 in 1997, a 28 percent drop.

Last November, in a lengthy article on what it called the "new agriculture," *The New York Times* reported that, "The nation's largest farms—those with more than \$250,000 in sales—now account for more than 72 percent of all agricultural sales, up from 53 percent a decade ago." Such concentration exists not only with

regard to crops, it prevails in all other agricultural sectors. "The concentration," the *Times* noted, "is staggering," and it added: "More than a fifth of the nation's pork is now slaughtered at one company. Four big companies now control about 70 percent of all cattle slaughter, up from 39 percent in 1985, according to the government." (Nov. 28)

G. Allen Andreas, chairman and chief executive officer of the huge Archer Daniels Midland Co., explains this rapid concentration and corporate growth as follows: "The competitiveness of the world's global food marketing system has driven

ly emerging across the country. These unfortunates are more and more being considered as fair game, frequently by thrill-seeking adolescents whose attitudes against these outcasts of society have been formed by bourgeois prejudices that lead them to despise those who can't "make it" in our capitalist system, and by city officials and police who are annoyed by the presence of the homeless and crack down on them, arrest them or hassle them to get lost.

The NCH has so far tallied 29 homeless people killed in 1999 in 11 cities across the country, and six others who barely sur-

(Continued on page 7)

many of us together to form stronger blocs." That is certainly a bland description of the ruthless process during which many small farms are swallowed up or simply forced out of existence. Many farm groups have expressed concern that the resulting large agriculture conglomerates stifle competition and will doom the family farms.

Family Farms Eliminated

The fact is that the family farms have been largely eliminated already. Now fighting for survival are the so-called independent farmers. They are hardly operators of small family farms of 40 or 50 acres or so. The *Times* offers an example of an Illinois farmer who owns and farms 700 acres. Thanks to good weather, good seed and other favorable factors he anticipates a bumper crop on which he expects to lose as much as \$40,000. "There's just no profit in farming anymore," he says. The figures bear him out at least as far as independent farmers are concerned. According to the *Times*, "net farm income has fallen more than 38 percent since 1997." In Illinois the economic picture is even worse. There the average net farm income in 1998 was \$11,074, down over 80 percent from the 1996 average of \$62,000.

There is little doubt that a large percentage of America's 1.9 million farmers will face tough times in the days and months ahead. Those farmers' economic problems severely impact those companies that build and sell them farm equipment. Already the demand for farm equipment during the past year had declined generally by 40 percent. The demand for the really big pieces of equipment was down even more. Also negatively affected are those companies that sell seed, chemicals, feed for livestock, etc. The results all along the line are cutbacks in production, mergers, restructuring, employee layoffs, etc.

Under capitalism, the concentration and extensive mechanization of an industry brings misery and hardship to great numbers of workers and their families. The agriculture industry is no exception to this general rule. Yet, as the *Weekly People* explained in an article some time ago, "This concentration of agriculture into fewer, bigger and more efficient units is a process Socialists welcome [in principle]. The giant farms are run like factories. They are manned from top to bottom by workers. Therefore, they will be far easier to take over and integrate into the socialist system.

"For the agricultural industry will have to be taken over in the same way that the textile, or the steel, or the transportation industries are taken over—by the workers who run it, organized on Socialist Industrial Union lines....They will [then] be managed...democratically through Socialist Industrial Union councils. And their continued mechanization, instead of bringing disaster to individuals and families, will lighten the burden of labor all around."

Homeless Victimized By Brutalized Youth

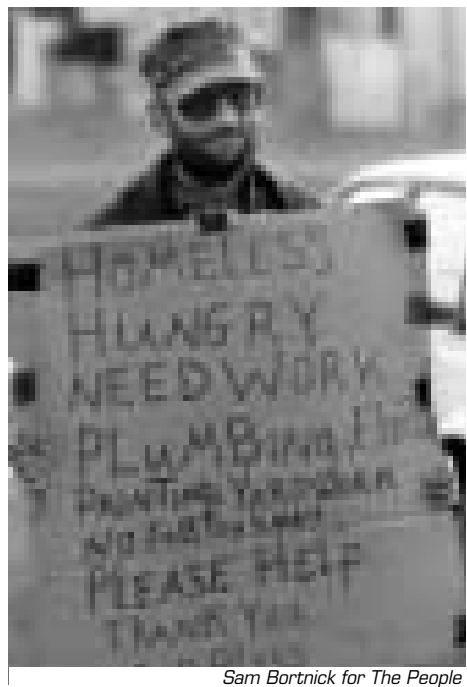
By B.G.

It has often been said that a society can best be judged by the way it treats its most unfortunate members. Under capitalism, there are always an abundance of unfortunates whose drastic social and economic conditions are a reflection of the inequalities bred by capitalism itself. Among these, by far the most wretched are those who have not made it to the first rung on the

social and economic ladder, or who once having climbed that far have now slipped into oblivion. These are the homeless, who sleep on the streets, or under bridges, or in train stations, or in abandoned buildings, and who search for their fortunes in trash cans and from handouts by compassionate passersby.

The homeless are people with a multitude of problems. A large percentage are emotionally disturbed. The National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) cites a study estimating that "20–25 percent of the single adult homeless population suffers from some form of severe and persistent mental illness." States and cities have been saving money for years by closing their mental hospitals and dumping the inmates out to fend for themselves. These cannot hold onto jobs without oversight and treatment if their conditions are mild, and not at all for the more seriously sick. Others on the streets are alcoholics and drug addicts who also need treatment. Still others are normal in all respects except that they were low earners who lost their jobs and could no longer pay the rent. Others are single mothers, divorced, abandoned or fleeing from abusive situations, and unable to find jobs and still care for their children.

A disturbing culture of violence against the homeless in our society has been steady-



Sam Bortnick for The People

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Capitalists Resist Ergonomic Workplace Safety Standard

By Ken Boettcher

The long-running battle over the establishment of a workplace ergonomics standard is heating up. But don't hold your breath waiting for the nation's workplaces to be free of the repetitive strain and associated musculoskeletal injuries that maim and debilitate hundreds of thousands of workers every year.

This month the first of three public hearings will be held that may lead to the establishment later this year of the Occupational Health and Safety Administration's long-promised "permanent Ergonomics Program Standard." That is, unless opponents of the standard succeed again in blocking it. OSHA began work on an ergonomics standard in 1990, but has been blocked from implementing any such standard by congressional and other action.

As the AFL-CIO notes in a "Fact sheet on RSIs" (repetitive strain injuries) available on its Web site, "...Some employers have launched a campaign to prevent OSHA from taking action....They also are moving to change state laws to make it difficult, or impossible, for injured workers to collect workers' compensation for these injuries. They have formed the National Council on Ergonomics, an industry front group, to block a standard for as long as possible. They do this by arguing that there is no scientific basis for an ergonomics standard and by questioning whether RSIs are related to workplace conditions."

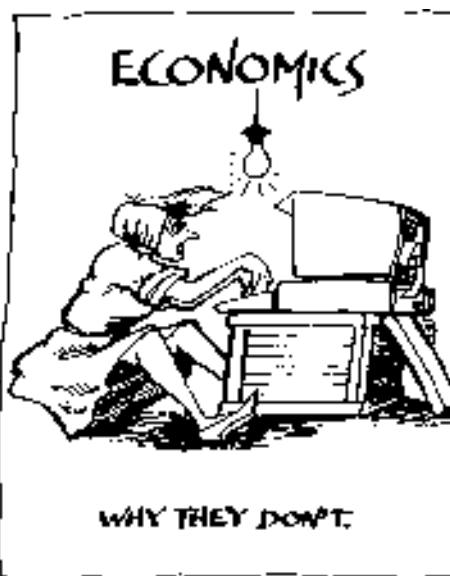
The response of some of these elements to OSHA's announcement last November that it had begun the procedure to implement the standard served to corroborate the AFL-CIO's contention. "There is insuffi-



cient scientific evidence to justify a costly new ergonomics regulation," charged Jerry J. Jasinowski, president of the National Association of Manufacturers. Food Distributors International, a food wholesalers association, estimated that the standard would require its members to spend \$5 billion to reconfigure their warehouses and force some out of business. FDI wants OSHA to wait for the National Academy of Sciences to finish its study of the question, which would be sometime next year.

But the tactic of greeting each new study with a demand for yet another appears, at least regarding this issue, to have worn out its credibility. So far this year it has failed to bear fruit: OSHA's path toward implementing the standard has not been blocked.

That could have something to do with the fact that a mountain of evidence does



Carol* Simpson

indeed exist today to suggest the relationship of work hazards and occupational factors to repetitive strain injuries. As OSHA itself has noted, according to *The New York Times*, "...Hundreds of scientific studies in recent years have produced 'overwhelming evidence' that these injuries are linked to workplace activities."

Opponents also charge that the timing of the proposed standard is politically motivated—to benefit Vice President Gore's campaign for the presidency. "Why the rush?" asked John R. Block, president of Food Distributors International. "The administration wants to finish this regulation before George W. Bush is elected. Vice President Gore owes a lot to labor unions." FDI itself is hardly a disinterested actor in the battle. The food-processing and distribution industry is one of the biggest offenders in the growth of repetitive strain

Poverty Manipulated For Political Ends

By B.B.

As noted in our December issue, Democratic presidential aspirant Bill Bradley has latched onto child poverty as an "issue" on which to build his campaign for the Oval Office.

Poverty is not an issue, except in the sense that it is a byproduct of the capital-

ist system. Capitalism is the issue, in this instance as in all others where it is the source of a social problem.

Bradley, however, has no more interest in getting at the true issue than any other politician. He merely points to child poverty to create the impression that he can do something about it. In truth, however, the only thing politicians have ever done about poverty is to manipulate it for their own ends.

The practice is morally reprehensible because there is no material or moral reason why any person, child or adult, should live in poverty today. The productivity of the American working class has long since eliminated any question of there being a shortage of the goods and services needed to eliminate poverty completely. But capitalism squanders so much of what labor creates to line the pockets of a useless and perverse ruling class that millions of working-class Americans go without the bare necessities—even while politicians and other apologists for capitalism boast of "our great prosperity."

That is not the worst of it. Capitalism is not simply content to steal food and other necessities from the mouths and the backs of the working-class children whose parents produce the great wealth of the nation. It goes further by manipulating the meaning of poverty with the aid of statistics and formulas designed to hide the truth. These efforts, apart from giving the Bradleys "issues" on which to build election campaigns, give work to statisticians, bureaucrats and others whose main contribution to society is to sweep as many of capitalism's social crimes under the social

rug as their manipulation of formulas and figures make possible. Still, truth has a way of peeking out from under the social rug to make its presence known.

A recent article in *The Dallas Morning News* tangentially confirms this. *News* columnist Ira J. Hadnot, writing on "The Politics of Poverty," demonstrates that, "Determining who is poor in America is more than mathematics: It is political."

The current formula for measuring poverty dates from the administration of Lyndon Johnson and his much ballyhooed "War on Poverty." In 1969, Johnson's Council of Economic Advisers established \$3,743 as the income required to support a family of four. All who fell below this line were in poverty, while many marginally above were walking the razor's edge.

This figure was partially derived from a 1955 study conducted by a civil servant, Mollie Orshansky, who was suddenly thrust into prominence. Orshansky is a mathematician who was raised in poverty. In developing her definition of poverty, she employed a simple methodology. By tripling the annual cost required for food worked out by the Department of Agriculture, she arrived at a bare-bones sum of \$3,100, and adjusted this to suit 100 different family situations and various economic conditions.

Orshansky's formula became the basis for the bureaucracy's establishment of an official poverty rate. The number of people who fell within that category in 1969 was determined to be 24.1 million. Despite the flaws with the formula, criticized by Ms. Orshansky and others during the Johnson administration, this has been the standard for measuring poverty ever since, with periodic but no less arbitrary adjustments for inflation made along the way.

Pressure has been building for an updated definition. Legislation under the Clinton administration pushed millions of welfare recipients into the ranks of a new

(Continued on page 6)

injuries among U.S. workers.

But Block's observation may have some truth to it. Implementation of the standard is a bit of window-dressing for the capitalist system of exploitation that has long been sought by the lords of the declining U.S. trade union movement, the chieftains of the AFL-CIO. It would be a feather in their cap that could serve to buttress their fraudulent contention that the existing unions serve to defend workers' interests.

That is not to say that the standard would rid U.S. workplaces of repetitive stress injuries. A quick look at the provisions of the proposed standard proves the point. As *Facilities Management News* describes it in a brief on "Ergonomics" under the heading of "Regulations & Government" on its Web site:

"Under the OSHA proposal, about 1.6 million employers would need to implement a basic ergonomics program—assigning someone to be responsible for ergonomics; providing information to employees on the risk of injuries, signs and symptoms to watch for and the importance of reporting problems early; and setting up a system for employees to report signs and symptoms. Full programs would be required only if one or more work-related MSDs [musculoskeletal disorders] actually occurred. The proposal also offers a 'Quick Fix' alternative to setting up a full ergonomics program. Correct a hazard within 90 days, check to see that the fix works and no further action is necessary. In addition, a 'grandfather' clause gives credit to firms that already have effective ergonomics programs in place and are working to correct hazards."

Ergonomics programs would thus be required to cover only those jobs where the risk of MSDs has been shown to exist and related jobs, rather than all jobs at a given workplace. "Workers who need time off the job to recover from the injury could get 90 percent of pay and 100 percent of benefits," according to *Facilities Management News*.

It is this latter provision that irks many capitalists the most. These amoral profit mongers, who pay workers only a fraction of the wealth they create and steal the rest, blanch at the prospect of workers getting paid for staying home or doing light duty on the job.

Even the AFL-CIO recognizes that the proposed standard has its shortcomings. "The draft rule," says an article on the federation's Web site, "covers only general industry—construction, maritime and agriculture are excluded. It applies only to manual handling and production operations and to jobs in other workplaces where a musculoskeletal disorder (defined as an OSHA-recordable case) is identified. Patterns of symptoms or recognized hazards known to cause MSDs do not trigger any action."

"In the view of the AFL-CIO," says a "Summary of OSHA's Proposed Ergonomics Program Standard," another document on the federation's Web site, "the proposal is a positive step forward...but needs to be expanded so that all workers are covered, and strengthened to require employers to control hazardous jobs before injuries and illnesses occur." Still, the federation sees enough good in the standard to call OSHA's proposal a "victory."

Clearly, the proposed standard contains loopholes sufficient to guarantee that hundreds of thousands of workers each year will be stricken by some form of repetitive strain injury. More than 600,000 workers presently fall victim to them every year, and an estimated 6.1 million workers have suffered from such an injury since 1990, when OSHA first proposed a standard.

Some large employers who have the resources to implement an extensive program and to correct problems have discovered that investing in such programs can bring higher productivity, less down time

(Continued on page 6)

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A Great Discovery

The numerous summaries by capitalist news media of the leading events, developments, discoveries and inventions of the 20th century have tended to stress wars and political upheavals, on the one hand, and the enormous strides of the physical sciences, on the other. This will ever be known as the epoch in which humanity conquered the air, released the power locked within the atom and ventured into outer space. It will also be recorded as the age when a new world of physics, chemistry and biology was unveiled—a new world that held forth a promise of material abundance almost without limit, and the end of poverty.

Despite the tremendous discoveries and inventions of the physical scientists, we assert that the *leading* scientific achievement of the century, the scientific achievement that will make the epoch live forever in the memory of the human race, is a discovery outside the field of physical science. Yet it is a discovery that is absolutely indispensable if humanity is ever to consolidate its latest conquests over nature. Today, humankind stands in danger of being destroyed by its own inventions. It has become commonplace for the scientists themselves to speculate on this and to observe that social science has been outstripped by the physical sciences.

However, it is precisely in the sphere of social science that the leading discovery of this epoch was made. If the scientists do not know this, and if they weep and complain that the fruits of their intellect are being perverted to diabolic uses by militarists and ignorant politicians, it is because they themselves are so blinded by class egotism and class prejudice that they cannot see what has been under their noses almost from the beginning of the 20th century.

For the *leading* scientific and human achievement of the 20th century is De Leonism—the discovery by the great American Marxist, Daniel De Leon, of the social forms essential to a society of freedom in an industrial age. And make no mistake, it is still an *industrial* age. As *The People* observed several years ago:

“Reports on the death of industrial capitalism have been greatly exaggerated. No one can deny that computers and other technological advances in the implements of production have swept through and profoundly transformed many industries. There is no question that these advances in the means and methods of production have wiped out millions of jobs. Many of the factories and production plants that once littered the country have disappeared. Some have been torn down or abandoned. Some have been replaced by new facilities equipped with the labor-displacing computers and robots that have left millions of workers unemployed and unlikely ever again to find work at their former trades.

“At the same time, however, millions of workers are still employed in the manufacturing and extractive industries dedicated to the production of commodities, whether raw materials such as coal, oil and steel, or to finished products such as cars, aircraft and apparel. They continue to turn out commodities meant to be sold for a profit. While this

may be the ‘age of information,’ virtually all of that information is gathered and applied to facilitate the production and disposal of finished goods on the domestic and world markets.

“In short, while technological advances have brought and will continue to bring profound changes into the industrial process, they have not and will not be used to eliminate the production of industrial products. On the contrary, they are being used to increase the quantity of manufactured goods, but to do it by intensifying the exploitation of a dwindling number of workers.”

De Leonism advances the concept of industrial constituencies and industrial union councils in place of the territorial constituencies and political parliaments of class rule. It provides society with the organs of an effective democracy, hence the social instruments for ordering our economic lives in a sane and rational way, and ending the economic conflicts that breed hatred and prejudice and lead to war. It thereby brings social science abreast of physical science.

“When we look back over the immense changes of the century that is ending, and as we reflect on the revolutions in science, we must be struck most forcibly by the fact that there is one sphere in which change has been stubbornly and successfully resisted. We mean, of course, the social sphere, where the political institutions of class rule remain impervious to the general rule.”

Technology’s promise of abundance will continue to be an empty one insofar as the mass of humanity is concerned. The fruits of science will continue to be perverted to harmful and destructive uses until capitalism and its outmoded political institutions are replaced by socialism and the Socialist Industrial Union administration, i.e., by the De Leonist concept of a reconstructed society.

Recapitulations of a century are valuable chiefly in that they *remind us of changes*, hence of the fact that society as well as all of nature is in a state of flux. But when we look back over the immense changes of the century that is ending, and as we reflect on the revolutions in science, we must be struck most forcibly by the fact that there is one sphere in which change has been stubbornly and successfully resisted. We mean, of course, the social sphere, where the political institutions of class rule remain impervious to the general rule. The political state of today is many times larger and more powerful than what it was 100 years ago, yet the political state of capitalism in the year 2000 is essentially what it was at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. Qualitatively it has not changed.

De Leonism is the Marxist program for replacing these outmoded institutions with the industrial union government of socialism. For that reason, it is the foremost achievement of the 20th century, a concept that sooner or later will liberate the human race.

A De Leon Editorial

Apologists For Parasites

Capitalism is based on the exploitation of the working class, and the “unionism” that accepts the capitalist claim to “fair profits” is unethical.

‘Ethics’ and ‘Necessity’
(Daily People, Feb. 1, 1906)

“The ethics and necessity of labor unions” was the subject upon which John F. Tobin of the AFL spoke before the Congregational ministers’ meeting in Boston on the 29th of January. Mr. Tobin’s address furnished cumulative evidence of the fact that the “ethics” of the unionism which he advocates is of the nature of the “snakes in Ireland”—they do not exist; and that the “necessity” for such unionism is urgent—to the capitalist class.

Said Mr. Tobin, as reported in quotation marks by the *Boston Globe* of the same day:

“The trades union bases its claim for existence on the fact that the buyer and the seller of labor should occupy equal grounds....The employer declares that he has a right to receive fair profits—which is undisputed.”

“Horse fly” means horse fly, an insect that sucks up the blood of horses; “horse” means horse, a noble animal whom the horse fly torments, and who would be all the better off if there were no horse flies. He who says “horse fly” and “horse” implies the two things—provided his ethics binds him to mean what he says and to say what he means. Obviously, the ism of the man who were to say: “The horse bases his claim for existence on the fact that the horse fly and the horse should occupy equal grounds”—is an ism in which “ethics” can figure only as snakes figure in Ireland—by their absence. Such is the fix of Mr. Tobin’s unionism. “Seller of labor” means the proletarian—a being who is produced by a social system that lowers him from the rank of human to that of merchandise, that

which he sells being, in the last analysis, himself; “buyer of labor” means capitalist—the being, whose class brought about the system that produces the proletarian, who upholds the system and who cannot exist without the continuance of the proletarian. The ism that bases its claim for existence on the fact that the “buyer” and the “seller of labor” should occupy equal grounds, holds identical ground with the man whose ism were to declare that “the horse bases his claim for existence on the fact that the horse fly and the horse should occupy equal grounds.” He who holds such language either recklessly shoots off his mouth on an important question without recking what he is talking about, or he speaks against better knowledge. No “ethics” there, in either case.

Again, the ism that were to say: “The horse fly declares that he has a right to a fair share of the horse’s blood—which is undisputed” is unquestionably a “necessity” for the horse fly. No horse fly, either individually or as horse flydom, would otherwise than dote on such an ism. Such is the “necessity” of Mr. Tobin’s unionism. The unionism that accepts as “undisputed” the declaration of the capitalist horse fly that he has a right to receive fair profits (enough proletarian blood, marrow and bone to live on) is undisputedly a “necessity” to the capitalist class; why, it is the breath in the nostrils of the capitalist horse fly.

So say we all! So know we all! So knowing and saying the awakening proletariat is organizing to cast off its back the “ethical” Tobins, together with their unionism, that is becoming so rotten ripe for overthrow that it can no longer suppress the stench of its “necessity” to capitalism.

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.

Why YOU Should Join the SLP!

What Is the SLP?

The Socialist Labor Party is the fourth oldest political party in the United States. In a sense, however, it may be called the second oldest because all other political parties are either out-and-out parties of capitalism or parties of reform that identify themselves with the "labor," "socialist" or "communist" label. The SLP is the only political party of the country that rejects capitalism and every effort to gloss over capitalism's imperfections with the social cosmetics of reform. No other party can make that claim.

The SLP was founded upon the principles of scientific socialism in 1890, 110 years ago. It has never deviated from these principles nor compromised them for temporary gain. It holds, with Marx, that the approaching social revolution must be accomplished by the enlightened *working class* and cannot be accomplished by a minority at the head of unclassconscious masses. To the end of educating our fellow workers to their mission and in the methods of achieving the goal of the Industrial Republic of Labor, the SLP has conducted a tireless campaign of agitation and education. It is the one and only exponent of Socialist Industrial Unionism through which the American workers must and will back up their socialist ballot and which will become the framework of the new administration—the industrial union administration.

Should I Join the SLP?

If you agree that the prolongation of capitalism means more wars, more exploitation, more environmental and human degradation; if you agree that society must be reconstructed on a socialist basis for progress to be the law of the future as it has been of the past; if you agree that the program of the SLP is the correct program for bringing about such a socialist reconstruction of society, then you should join the SLP and become an active member in its ranks.

At the same time, however, the SLP does not encourage the applications of persons who are carried away by momentary enthusiasm. Other organizations have done this, among them the so-called Socialist and Communist parties. In the 1920s, for example, the CP made an all-out drive for new members. It started the year, according to one report, with 10,000 members. It took in 10,000 new members. And it ended the year with—10,000 members! The SLP, of course, has nothing in common with the CP. Nevertheless, experience and common sense teach it that it should not encourage those who would join in a burst of emotion.

The SLP does want new members. But it wants men and women who know beforehand what the SLP stands for, and who support the party's program and principles. It wants men and women who have thought it over, and who have reached the conclusion that the Socialist Industrial Union program of the SLP is the way to socialist freedom.

Among the nonmember readers of *The People* there are unquestionably many who, as far as general understanding and conviction are concerned, have the qualifications for SLP membership. More are in the process of acquiring these qualifications all the time as they build up the store of knowledge that scientific socialism imparts. Those who do should apply for membership. Not only are they wanted, they are needed to strengthen the SLP and to ensure its future.

What Are the Membership Requirements?

SLP membership requires, among other things, a grasp of the class struggle and its implications. This, in turn, requires an understanding of basic and elementary Marxian economics, as, for example, what *wages* are, what determines the *value* of commodities and how the capitalists exploit wage labor through the extraction of *surplus value*. This knowledge is available in the pamphlets of the party and other

literature included in the party's New York Labor News catalogue. The party also prints *Socialism for Beginners*, a brief statement on how to go about studying socialism and what to read. The New York Labor News catalogue and *Socialism for Beginners* are supplied free to interested persons, or may be downloaded from the SLP's Web site (www.slp.org).

The age limit for SLP membership is 18, but the party encourages youths under 18 to attend its activities and to participate in its work, especially in the vital work of distributing SLP leaflets and *The People*.

Dues in the SLP are nominal. The first month's dues are free and there is no initiation fee.

In states where there are SLP subdivisions, new members become members of sections (local SLP organizations) having jurisdiction. In states where the party is not yet organized, new members would be "national members-at-large," that is, they would come directly under the jurisdiction of the national organization.

Does the SLP Manage Its Affairs Democratically?

Yes. The SLP is a democratic organization. The highest authority in the party is its own enlightened membership. Furthermore, the democracy of the SLP is not a "paper democracy." It is a living principle that the membership guards jealously. Efforts have been made to short-circuit SLP democracy, reduce it to absurdity and by such means to disrupt the party. They have failed. But, whenever they have been attempted they have brought home anew the vital lesson that the party's principles are safe from serious internal attack only under a system of collective decision making and of membership enlightenment on the facts.

One safeguard of the SLP's democracy is its Constitution, which, among other things, declares that all of the following acts of the National Convention shall be submitted to the membership for a gen-

eral vote and shall not be effective until thus approved:

- "1. All Constitutional changes.
- "2. All resolutions and statements setting forth party policy, position or analysis of political and/or theoretical questions.
- "3. Election of National Officers. [There are three: A National Secretary, a Financial Secretary and Editor of *The People*.]
- "4. Election of NEC members. [The National Executive Committee has seven members.]"

The membership referendum, or general vote of the party's whole membership, is the most important safeguard of SLP democracy. "As nothing of any importance can be done in the party without a referendum vote," De Leon said, "such a thing as rule from above has no ground to stand on."

What Duties and What Rights Do SLP Members Have?

In many respects, rights and duties are the obverse and reverse of the same coin.

Members of the SLP have the *right* to make, speak to and vote on any motion at their section's meetings. Members of one section who are visiting another section also have the right to speak to motions before that section, though visitors have no right to make or second a motion before another section and may be excluded from that section's meeting under certain circumstances, as when the section they are visiting goes into executive session to consider some matter of exclusive concern to that section.

At the same time, members have the *duty* of attending the meetings of their own sections where the rights mentioned may be exercised. In the end, SLP democracy depends on the participation of its members in the decision-making process.

While members have the right to make, speak to and vote on motions, they also have the obligation of complying with the decision reached. Democracy, after all, involves more than the rights of individuals and minorities to be heard and to participate in the decision-making process. It involves a willingness to be bound by the decisions once reached by democratic means.

Where important disagreements cannot be resolved at the section level, members have the right to appeal against them to the party's National Executive Committee. In the meantime, however, members are expected to comply with the decisions reached.

Members also have the right to stand for elective office within the section or within the party once they meet the basic eligibility requirements, which range from six months to two years of membership in continuous good standing. At the same time, members who accept election to office have the duty of discharging the responsibilities of that office. The membership who elects the officers has the right to expect this from those they elect.

The primary *duty* of every member of the SLP is to keep her or himself in good standing before the organization by paying their dues regularly and promptly, or by requesting the exemption from dues payments to which they are entitled in cases of unemployment, financial hardship or illness. Members who fail to maintain their good standing forfeit their rights and risk their membership.

What Does Discipline in the SLP Mean?

In an excellent summation of this point, De Leon once wrote:

"In a political party of socialism the

(Continued on page 7)

Socialist Labor Party Marks 110th Anniversary

The Socialist Labor Party was organized on its present basis as a militant party of Marxian socialism in 1890. This year of 2000 therefore marks the 110th anniversary of the party.

The Socialist Labor Party was the outgrowth of the Socialistic Labor Party, which was organized in 1876–1877. That party, in turn, was a development of various movements that traced back (indirectly) to the work of Socialists in unions and in the American branch of the International Workingmen's Association founded by Karl Marx.

On a lineal basis, the SLP can trace its origin back to 1876. On a collateral basis, it can trace its origin back to, say, 1868–1869, when Frederick Sorge, a friend of Marx and Frederick Engels, worked for the affiliation of the National Labor Union to the International.

Propaganda vs. Action

But such a search for origins is of more academic interest than social. The fact remains that the SLP of today originated in 1890 when its ranks were joined by Daniel De Leon.

One historian of the SLP has stated that the old Socialistic Labor Party was considered a "party of propaganda" by its mem-

bers "who wanted it to remain forevermore a 'party of propaganda' and endorse whatever radical movement might spring up." In this "propaganda" party confusion reigned supreme, much as it reigned (and still reigns) in the so-called Socialist Party of a later period.

De Leon's 1890 entry into the party was followed by emphasis on socialist *action*. De Leon, a Columbia University lecturer on international law, brought the message of socialism to the streets of New York City and insisted upon the need for challenging capitalism at the polls.

The People was founded soon after De Leon's entry into the party, with Lucien Sanial as editor. About that time, the party sent De Leon on an organizing tour that took him to the Pacific Coast and back. The result was a knitting together of the party's units and the real beginning of the party as a militant party of Marxian socialism. De Leon then became Sanial's assistant and assumed the editorship of *The People* when Sanial's failing eyesight forced him to resign the post in 1892.

The Opposition Within

The spirit of action injected into the party by De Leon was not in itself sufficient to make the SLP *the* party of socialism. In-

deed, that spirit was welcomed by some antisocialist elements within the party for its value in promoting the growth of the party as an institution. These elements were soon disillusioned.

De Leon was not interested in an institution. He was concerned with the task of abolishing capitalism and of establishing socialism. He knew that numbers were not enough and that the party's members and other supporters must have a goal, a method of reaching it, and a plan for the establishment and operation of the socialist society.

The story of De Leon's and the party's struggle with antisocialist elements is an integral part of the history of socialism. In retrospect, it may be said that the struggle was fortunate in that it emphasized the need to clarify the issues involved. Certainly, the struggle sharpened De Leon's awareness of the need for Marxian soundness and drove him on to an examination of society and of social forces that culminated in the great discovery of Socialist Industrial Unionism.

Revolutionary Milestones

Revolutionary Milestones, an out-of-print SLP pamphlet, tells the story of the

(Continued on page 7)

... Billions Squandered

(Continued from page 1)

"the government's official committee on data protocols, which evolved into the American National Standards Institute, recommended a four-digit standard."

"By 1988 ANSI was recommending that four-digit dates be used exclusively. That same year, the government's National Institute of Standards and Technology called for a four-digit format, and explicitly warned of the millennium bug."

Still the capitalist owners of industry did not listen, and government failed to implement any regulations that may have forced them to do something about the problem.

The major players in the com-

puter industry also missed the boat, thereby compounding the problem. "If there is a private sector villain of the piece," Kuttner observed, "it is of course Microsoft. The early universal operating system, Microsoft's DOS, came into widespread use in the early 1980s. It used a two-digit date format." Microsoft continued the two-digit date format with its Windows operating system in the 1990s, selling millions of copies of an operating system doomed by the millennium bug. To continue the two-digit date format was cheaper than pushing for the conversion to a four-digit format, so the problem marched on.

Capitalism may have solved the worst of its Y2K problems in its

last-ditch \$600-billion effort over the past year or so to avoid a millennial cataclysm. Or it may simply have lucked out so far, with few bothersome failures recorded to date on systems that weren't fixed. Either way, the risk of those failures worldwide was one that only a planless, class-ruled economic dictatorship like capitalism would even consider taking.

Only a fundamentally different type of social and economic system can avoid the kind of calamity the Y2K bug could have been, and the monumental waste that it was—a socialist society, freed from what Karl Marx once referred to as "the furies of private interest" that now control the world's industries and services.

... Safety Standard

(Continued from page 3)

and thus higher profits. Their opposition is not to a program, but instead may be read as opposition to an OSHA-mandated program. For this element, Charles N. Jeffress, assistant secretary of labor in charge of OSHA, had some harsh words when the standard was proposed last November. "You cry wolf about ergonomics," said Jeffress, "while at the same time investing in ergonomic programs....Have you no shame? Do you not care about the reputation for misrepresentation that you are creating for your corporations?"

The capitalist owners of the nation's industries and services have long fought such a standard, with many still maintaining that it is either unnecessary or will cost them so much that it will "endanger jobs" by forcing some companies out of business. OSHA it-

self has dutifully towed this line for years. It has been complicit from its start in putting profits first and human health and safety last as an agency of the capitalist state.

The business unions, too, accept the unwritten premise of that class and its state: they recognize the "right" of capitalists to exploit workers to make a profit and stay in business; hence, their right to treat workers as commodities. That means treating workers as replaceable and deserving of only the most marginal protections to their health and safety. Having accepted these premises, procapitalist unionism has recourse only to the "good will" of the notoriously amoral capitalist class, whose primary aim in life is the pursuit of profit.

Workers have never received any real or lasting relief from workplace hazards or dangers as a result of the

legislative action of the political representatives of the capitalist class. OSHA has always been more bark than bite, thanks to effective capitalist-class control of the political state and all its agencies of funding and coercion. Its biggest enforcement actions are merely window-dressing for its lack of action overall.

Reversing and ending the growing risks to health posed by repetitive stress disorders and all other occupational diseases and injuries will require that another actor step onto the stage. An industrially organized working class is needed to take, hold and operate the means of life and effect a complete redesign of many of the tools used and processes followed in capitalist industry. Real safety on the job requires production for human needs and use rather than for private profit, and democratic control over the ends and means of production.

... Poverty Manipulated

(Continued from page 3)

category—the working poor—to fill the proliferating low-paying service jobs. Additionally, the continuing erosion of working-class living standards, the further degeneration of the traditional family and changes in essential technology are also contributing factors. While socialism reveals the means to abolish poverty, capitalism nurtures it and tinkers with its definition.

Hence, the Census Bureau, other federal agencies, professors and doctors of so-called sociology, and the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council are engaged in laborious and contentious deliberations over the definition of poverty.

For example, John Cogan of Stanford University dissented from the NAS/NRC panel, charging the rest with trying to set government policy. Dr. Franklin D. Wilson defended the panel's conclusions, stating, "Panel members know that politics is ultimately going to determine what the [poverty] line is." Dr. David Murray of the independent STATS research organization declared that, "No one can put their finger on the extent of poverty in America because there has never been a consensus from all con-

cerned groups on how to measure it." Prof. Charles Clark of St. John's University noted that, "It is laughable that the poverty rate in the U.S. is based on a food budget from the 1950s." Dr. Robert M. Hauser of the University of Wisconsin waded into this fray with the thought that if the definition of income includes "the earned income tax credit, Section 8 housing assistance and food stamps, then government programs are moving many people above the poverty line. We are changing the composition of who is poor in this country. They are more apt to be the working poor."

This is the rub. As Hauser explains: "Politically, there are people who don't want more attention paid to working people who don't have adequate incomes." To this Dr. Clark adds: "Now we are into the politics of self-reliance. It is embarrassing for the most industrialized, well-fed nation in the free world to have large concentrations of people in poverty....It can be safer, politically, to live with the status quo than make dramatic changes to the formula."

The reference to "the politics of self-reliance" is a euphemism for the dramatic cuts in welfare benefits enacted under the Clinton ad-

ministration that has pushed millions into low-paying service sector jobs that provide inadequate wages to meet the bare necessities of life. The political "chickens" of that legislation have come home to roost.

Within class-divided society, conflicting material interests lurk behind every political issue. With the current euphoria over profits among the capitalist class, poverty is on the back burner. That the number of people who live below the official poverty line has risen from the 1969 level of 24.1 million to a 1998 level of 34.5 million, as measured by current standards, is cause for alarm.

According to Dr. Murray, when it comes to measuring poverty, "No president wants to have the poverty rate go up 50 percent on his watch....the poverty formula and what to do with it becomes a political football. Various groups are trying to control what goes in or is left out."

Upon the arid plains of capitalist politics stands a growing monument to the system: *poverty*. It continues to grow as a result of the workings of the system. In the words of Marx and Engels, "The modern laborer...instead of rising with the progress of industry,

(Continued on page 8)

activities

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

OREGON

Portland

Discussion Meetings—Section Portland holds discussion meetings every second Saturday of the month. Meetings are usually held at the Central Library, but the exact time varies. For more information please call Sid at 503-226-2881. The general public is invited.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

House Party—Section Philadelphia will host a house party for the

benefit of the National Executive Committee Banquet fund. The house party will be held on Sunday, March 12, from 2-5 p.m., at the home of George Taylor, 7467 Rhoads Street, Philadelphia. Speaker: Matt Keeley. For more information call 216-673-1170 or e-mail slpphill@aol.com.

WISCONSIN

Discussion Meetings—Section Milwaukee will conduct discussion meetings at the Milwaukee Public Central Library, first floor meeting room, 814 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee. The meetings will be held from 2-4 p.m. on the following Sundays: Feb. 6, March 5 and April 9.

SLP National Executive Committee Session

BANQUET Reservations

SLP • P.O. BOX 218
MTN. VIEW, CA 94042-0218

Enclosed is my check/money order in the amount of _____. Please make the following reservations for the SLP's NEC Session Banquet on Saturday, April 1, at the Holiday Inn, 4200 Great America Parkway, Santa Clara, Calif., at \$12 per adult and \$6 for children age 12 & under. Social hour at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 7 p.m.

___ADULTS ___CHILDREN
___CHICKEN MARSALA

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ APT. _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Please don't mail cash. Checks/money orders payable to the Socialist Labor Party. Reservations must be made through the SLP, not the Holiday Inn, and must be received by Tuesday, March 28.

ROOM Reservations

SLP • P.O. BOX 218
MTN. VIEW, CA 94042-0218

Enclosed is my check/money order in the amount of _____. Please make the following room reservations for the undersigned for Saturday, April 1, at the Holiday Inn, 4200 Great America Parkway, Santa Clara, Calif., at the rate of \$86.50 per night, tax included. I will share these quarters with _____.

I will arrive (day and date) _____ and depart _____.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ APT. _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Please do not mail cash. Use separate sheet if necessary. Make check/money order payable to the Socialist Labor Party. All reservations must be made through the SLP, not the Holiday Inn, and must be received by Friday, March 17.

To Break the Chains Of Wage Slavery, Workers Need Socialist Education.



Support the SLP's Socialist Education Fund

Yes! I want to help support the SLP. Enclosed please find my contribution of \$ _____.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ APT. _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

[] Please send a receipt. (Contributions are not tax deductible.) Please do not mail cash. Make your check/money order payable to the Socialist Labor Party. Send to:
Socialist Labor Party, P.O. Box 218
Mountain View, CA 94042-0218

directory

USA NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

NATIONAL OFFICE, SLP, P.O. Box 218, Mtn. View, CA 94042-0218; (650) 938-8359; fax (650) 938-8392; e-mail: socialists@igc.org; Web site: www.slp.org.

AKRON, OHIO

Call (330) 864-9212.

ALBANY/SCHENECTADY, N.Y.

SLP, P.O. Box 105, Sloansville, NY 12160-0105.

CHICAGO

SLP, P.O. Box 642, Skokie, IL 60076-0642.

CLEVELAND

Robert Burns, 9626 York Rd., N. Royalton, OH 44133. Call (440) 237-7933. e-mail: j.oneil@worldnet.att.net.

CORPUS CHRISTI, TEX.

Call (512) 991-0287.

DALLAS

Call Bernie at (972) 458-2253.

DENVER

For SLP information, call (303) 426-5108.

DULUTH

For information, call Rudy Gustafson at (218) 728-3110.

EASTERN MASS.

Call (781) 444-3576.

HOUSTON

Call (713) 721-9296.

LARAMIE, WYO.

e-mail: portage@uwyo.edu.

MIAMI

Call (305) 892-2424.

MIDDLETOWN, CONN.

SLP, 506 Hunting Hill Ave., Middletown, CT 06457. Call (860) 347-4003.

MILWAUKEE

SLP, 1563 W. Rogers St., Milwaukee, WI 53204-3721. Call (414) 672-2185.

NEW LONDON, CONN.

SLP, 3 Jodry St., Quaker Hill, CT 06375. Call (203) 447-9897.

NEW YORK CITY

Call (516) 829-5325.

OAKLAND, CALIF.

SLP, P.O. Box 70034, Sunnyvale, CA 94086-0034. Call (650) 938-8370.

OCEANSIDE, CALIF.

Call (760) 721-8124.

PHILADELPHIA

SLP, P.O. Box 28732, Philadelphia, PA 19151. Call (215) 233-3056. e-mail: slpphill@aol.com.

PITTSBURGH

Call (412) 751-2613.

PONTIAC, MICH.

Call (810) 731-6756.

PORTLAND, ORE.

SLP, P.O. Box 4951, Portland, OR 97208. Call (503) 226-2881.

SACRAMENTO, CALIF.

SLP, P.O. Box 2973, Sacramento, CA 95812.

SAN FRANCISCO/SAN JOSE

SLP, P.O. Box 70034, Sunnyvale, CA 94086-

0034. (650) 938-8370.

SEABROOK, N.H.

Call (603) 770-4695.

SEATTLE

SLP, P.O. Box 31045, Wallingford Station, Seattle, WA 98103.

ST. PETERSBURG, FLA.

Call (727) 321-0999.

SOUTH BEND, IND.

Jerry Maher, 211 S. Michigan St., #505, South Bend, IN 46601. Call (219) 234-2946.

S.W. VIRGINIA

Thad Harris, P.O. Box 1068, St. Paul, VA 24283-0997. Call (540) 328-5531. Fax (540) 328-4059.

WILKES COUNTY, N.C.

e-mail: DarrellHKnight@aol.com.

AUSTRALIA

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

CANADA NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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

VANCOUVER

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

... Join the SLP!

(Continued from page 5)

word discipline has its twofold application.

"First, the discipline of obedience to facts, and obedience to the rules and regulations that the facts prescribe for the realization of the socialist aim. This is the discipline of education. It is not, nor can it be, produced by party legislation. It is the product of correct training. Necessary to it are unity of purpose, unity of method. The socialist movement cannot be all things to all men; it can be only one thing, and to only one class—the working class.

"Second, discipline also implies the power of the party to visit with censure or expulsion as punishments, infractions or offenses against the party's rules or principles. Rigid adherence to party principle and tactics being necessary to socialist success, transgressions against the party must be met with punishment according to the gravity of the offense. Membership in the party being voluntary, and the discipline being self-imposed, he who subscribes to the party's ethics does so, not as one yielding submission to imposed authority, but as one bowing to the necessity and desire of maintaining strict adherence to principle and for orderly government in

party affairs.

"Discipline in this, its twofold application, is a recognition that knowledge is power and that in union is strength."

This explanation of socialist discipline is simple and clear. And it is fitting that De Leon should note as the *first* application of discipline in a party of socialism *obedience to the facts and the rules and regulations that the facts prescribe for the realization of the socialist aim*. To nonmembers, this vital "discipline of education" is not as self-evident as the discipline which manifests itself in the censure, suspension or expulsion of members who commit offenses against the party and party principle. Both applications of discipline are necessary, but where the members keep themselves informed on the facts, on the principles and program of socialism, and on the necessity to adhere to the principles and program without swerving, it is rarely necessary for the party to invoke its power to punish infractions.

I Believe I Am Ready for Membership in the SLP. How Do I Proceed?

Assuming that you live in a community where there is a sec-

tion of the party, you should secure an application form from that section. The application form poses a series of seven questions. They are not trick questions, but questions which afford applicants the opportunity to affirm their convictions concerning the correctness of socialist principles and the program of the party. The application must be endorsed by a party member and submitted to the section. The application is then reported to the section and voted upon.

If you do not live near a section, you can secure a membership application form by writing to the National Headquarters. The National Executive Committee acts on all such applications.

Any interested person may also write to the National Headquarters for the SLP's membership packet, which, among other things, includes a copy of the party's Constitution, a booklet that explains SLP membership in more detail and, of course, a membership application form. Interested readers should mail their request to:

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

Be sure to specify that you want the SLP Membership Packet.

... SLP Marks 110th

(Continued from page 5)

SLP's development in basic terms. The recorded "milestones" will seem unimportant to people whose idea of socialism has been formed by the reformistic mishmash of the so-called Socialist and Communist parties. They are, however, true milestones in the progress of socialist thought and action, or, to use another simile, true foundation stones of socialism.

The first "milestone" was "Americanizing the movement." The old Socialistic Labor Party was largely a German party, which was under the control of German immigrants who slavishly followed the tactics of the German Social Democratic Party and who held America and the American workers in contempt. This issue now has a mere historical importance within the SLP, but, in various manifestations, it still affects the growth of socialism. For example, the SP, in the name of "socialism," attempted to tie the American and other workers to the tactics and goals of "successful" "socialist" parties in England and Germany, while the CP kowtowed to every twist and turn of the former Soviet Union.

Other "milestones" in the 110-year history of the SLP include:

- The struggle against capitalism's craft unionism;
- The struggle for proletarian discipline, i.e., the building of a party that is clear on its goal and the tactics needed to reach it;
- The struggle for revolutionary clarity and against the debilitating distraction of reform;
- The struggle for party ownership and democratic control of the party's press;
- The struggle against "social patriotism"—meaning no truce be-

tween the classes and complete clarity on the meaning and implications of the class struggle;

- The struggle for free immigration and against racism (a point affecting class solidarity);
- The struggle for Socialist Industrial Unionism and against anarcho-syndicalism;
- The struggle against political parties disguised as religion;
- The struggle against Stalinism and other "socialist" and "communist" pretenders.

The SLP's Experience

Each "milestone" represents a thorough Marxian analysis of the indicated subject and an advance in the SLP's understanding of social forces. Together, they add up to the experience of 110 years.

This experience is available to the workers of America, and of the world, once they are determined to

end capitalism and to build the socialist society.

Indeed, it may be said with all factors in mind that the lessons imparted by this experience are a necessity if the workers are to avoid entanglements with movements and ideas that are bound to entrap them still more in the meshes of capitalism and statism.

In the year 2000, as in 1890, and as in all the years between, the Socialist Labor Party urges the workers and all other forward-looking persons to study the socialist alternative to capitalism and statism and to join with it, as De Leon did in 1890, for the socialist reconstruction of society.

Get Subs!

... Homeless

(Continued from page 2)

vived violent attacks. And these were only those who made the news reports.

One of the most chilling accounts of all for 1999 was of a 14-year-old student in Seattle who clubbed a 50-year-old homeless man with his skateboard, robbed him and then stabbed him to death with a pocket knife. The kid then proudly boasted to friends about killing a "bum."

Also in Seattle, three teenagers killed a homeless 46-year-old man who was just trying to sleep under an overpass. One of these young murderers boasted to friends, "Let's just say there's one less bum on the face of the Earth."

In Chicago, a homeless man was set on fire while sleeping on a park bench and sustained third-degree burns on 20 percent of his body—one of the "fortunates" who survived.

In Denver, five homeless were beaten to death and at least two beheaded. In Richmond, Va., a homeless man was beaten to death, beheaded and the head placed for display on a bridge a mile away.

Michael Stoops, who is a community organizer for the NCH, often speaks at high schools and queries the students on their attitudes toward the homeless. Invariably they reply that these people are bums and drunks who were too lazy to work. Stoops noted, "We're obviously sending a message to our young people that homeless people are not worthy of their respect."

This attitude was echoed by John Urquhart of the King County sheriff's office in Washington State. The homeless are undoubtedly singled out, he said, because they are available, nameless and condemned as "throwaways of society."

In New York City, where youths had been setting fire to homeless people, a comprehensive survey of violence against the homeless was conducted in 1994. It found that 80 percent of homeless persons had been victims of violent criminal acts.

What better witness can there be for the establishment of a sane socialist society than viewing the cruelties that capitalism engenders in its own society? Not only does capitalism create "throwaway people," but it corrupts and distorts the minds of the young, thus training them for the dog-eat-dog society that they will soon be entering as adults. Under socialism, people matter, life is sacrosanct, and cooperation and helpfulness to others take the place of violent, cut-throat competition. Which society would you prefer for yourselves and for your children?

Earth Day vs. May Day:

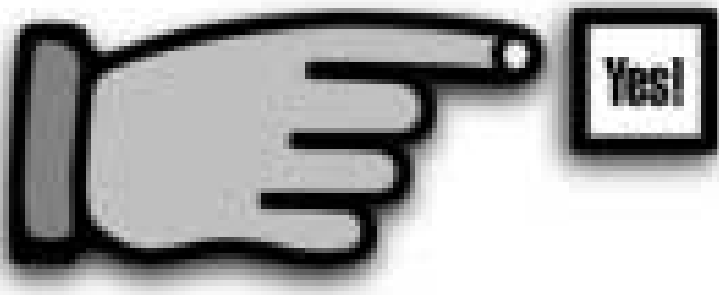
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Return of Panama Canal Didn't End U.S. Control

By Diane Secor

In accord with the Carter-Torrijos treaty of 1977, after nearly a century of U.S. military occupation, the Panama Canal was handed over to the Panamanian government on Dec. 31.

The decision to relinquish direct control over the canal has been hotly debated by U.S. politicians and in the bourgeois media. Conservatives decry it as a "giveaway" that will adversely affect vital "national security" interests, while "liberals" praise the transfer as an attempt to rectify a historic injustice. Both arguments are based on a false premise. The implication is that the United States has actually surrendered control of the canal and has given up the "right" of intervention to defend it. Also implied is that, on the whole, U.S. economic, military and strategic interests have been sacrificed to honor the principle of self-determination for the Panamanian people. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In reality, the United States has retained the right of intervention to defend its material interests. Moreover, the "privatization" of the Canal has been a bonanza for U.S. and other multinational corporations.

While the Carter-Torrijos Panama Canal Treaty of 1977 did nominally cede control of the canal to Panamanian jurisdiction, there is a catch to it called the Treaty Concerning the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal, or the Neutrality Treaty. A Web site maintained by Americans who grew up and went to school in the former Panama Canal Zone (czbrats.com), posts a document that explains how this makes a mockery of any U.S. claim to "give up" its hold on the canal.

Unlike the Panama Canal Treaty, there was and is no termination date on the Neutrality Treaty, as the full name indicates. It stipulates that "both in time of peace and in time of war [the canal]...shall remain secure and open to peaceful transit by the vessels of all nations on terms of entire equality."

Panamanian sovereignty was further eroded by another provision that U.S. and Panamanian "warships were entitled to 'expeditious' transit of the canal." President Carter was quite satisfied with this. However, the military officer who was then president of Panama, Brig. Gen. Omar Torrijos Herrera, acknowledged that this arrangement would indefinitely "place [Panama] under the protective umbrella of the Pentagon" and that it would be tough to sell it to his country men and women who would feel "sold out."

To try to smooth things over, Carter and Torrijos signed a Statement of Understanding in October 1977, saying that the U.S. "right to act against any aggression or threat directed against the Canal...does not mean or shall it be interpreted as the right of intervention of the United States in the internal affairs of Panama."

Many Panamanians who had examined the documents in question just didn't buy it. They were even more skeptical when the U.S. Senate got their hands on this Neutrality Treaty and with good reason. Among the amendments the Senate added to the Statement of Understanding was the DeConcini Condition, providing that, "if the Canal is closed, or its operations are interfered with [the United States and Panama shall each] have the right to take such steps as each deems necessary...including the use of military force in the Republic of



Panama Canal Commission

Panama President Mireya Moscoso and former U.S. president Jimmy Carter at the "Canal Transition Event" on Dec. 14 at Miraflores Locks.

Panama, to reopen the Canal or restore the operations of the Canal." It was also made clear that this type of intervention would not be considered as "intervention" as defined by the Statement of Understanding, thus making the entire "agreement" between two sovereign states into a farce.

As amended, the Neutrality Treaty was ratified by the Senate, and in June 1978 it was signed by Carter and Torrijos. Torrijos signed under protest, and to placate Panamanian opposition added a statement that Panama would "reject...any attempt by any country to intervene in its internal or external affairs." Nevertheless, no well-informed person, either in Panama or in the United States, was fooled by this. The facts were painfully obvious. According to czbrats.com, "The DeConcini Condition, because it was attached to the Neutrality Treaty, would remain in force permanently." Thus, as amended, the Neutrality Treaty "was never ratified in Panama [and] was received there by a storm of protest." This "Neutrality Treaty" amounts to little more than a unilateral declaration that seeks to justify U.S. military intervention on grounds of protecting the canal.

The formal transfer of the Panama Canal has opened the door for investors from all over the globe to buy chunks of territory formerly occupied by the U.S. armed forces. These "privatization" contracts are "worth more than \$1.5 billion," according to a report issued by Business Wire. (Dec. 16) Ancillary agreements to the canal treaty laid the groundwork for this, providing for U.S. loan guarantees, including "\$20 million...by the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation," "\$200 million...provided by the U.S. Export-Import Bank for financing Panamanian purchase of U.S. exports" and up to \$50 million in foreign military sales credits over a 10-year period," to give American capitalists a head start.

As in any intensely competitive and complex set of circumstances of this nature, some elements of the U.S. capitalist class will benefit more than others. There will be some winners and a few losers. However, according to Business Wire, some of the most prominent and powerful U.S. corporations have fared pretty well. Among them are "Mobil Oil, ICF Kaiser, Kansas City Southern Railroad, Sea Land and Stevedoring of America," as well as "17 companies...in the Techno-Park, including Oracle [and] Eli Lilly & Co..."

In addition to attractions such as raw

materials, cheap labor and opportunities for expanding markets, U.S. companies are lured by "Panama's strategic location...the Colon Free Zone, Panama's international banking center, ports at either end of the canal, and the canal itself, [which] have attracted manufacturers interested in export processing, light manufacturing and logistics." Moreover, foreign capitalists from countries such as "the United Kingdom, Italy, Mexico, Costa Rica, Taiwan, Hong Kong [now under Chinese control], South Korea and Canada" have also made substantial investments "in former Canal Zone properties" and related areas.

Far from diminishing the U.S. role in the region, this international investment serves to enhance the U.S. position as de facto guarantor of "security" in the Canal Zone.

Since so many nations have a stake in maintaining an environment in which commercial interests can flourish, they are more likely to support U.S. military action if the canal is threatened. Given the track record of both Democratic and Republican administrations to intervene in Panama's internal affairs with the support of the "international community," i.e., ruling classes of the world, imperialist "gun boat" diplomacy is alive and well. The basic nature of capitalism has not changed.

... Poverty

(Continued from page 6)

sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth. And here it becomes evident, that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society...It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him. Society can no longer live under this bourgeoisie, in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society." (*Communist Manifesto*)

Even the faulty statistical definition of poverty currently being used demonstrating an increase of 10.4 million people validates Marx and Engels' conclusion. The working class must eventually confront the prospect of their impending impoverishment. If not voluntarily, events will compel them to.

... Symbols

(Continued from page 1)

stration saw it differently, and with good reason. Their feelings about the Confederate symbol were summed up in the slogan: "Your heritage is my slavery."

There is no need to speculate over what the Confederate flag stands for. It stands for what the Confederate States stood for, and regardless of what the Rev. Bobby Eubanks calls the "truth," what the Confederate States stood for was slavery and racism. Indeed, as Karl Marx succinctly and correctly observed, the Confederacy "confessed to fight for the liberty of enslaving other people..."

There is no need to argue over that, either, since we have it on the authority of Alexander H. Stephens, vice president and one of the leading intellectuals of the Confederacy. In his famous "cornerstone" speech of 1861, Stephens said:

"The prevailing ideas entertained by...most of the leading statesmen at the time of the formation of the old Constitution were that the enslavement of the African was in violation of the laws of nature; that it was wrong in principle, socially, morally and politically...Those ideas, however, were fundamentally wrong. They rested upon the assumption of the equality of races..."

"Our new [Confederate] government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the Negro is not equal to the white man, that slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and normal condition."

It was Stephens who was wrong, of course, but at least he was honest. The Eubankses are wrong and dishonest.

Chattel slavery ended with the Civil War, but racism and class rule did not. The slaves of the old South moved up the social ladder when they shed their chains; but they were not completely freed.

Today millions of African-American workers live in poverty. Today the vast majority of African Americans (indeed, of all Americans) are as tightly bound to the capitalist class that owns the plants of production as their ancestors were bound to the planter class that owned the land on which they slaved.

Whether the Confederate flag flies or falls will change none of this, gratifying though it would be to see that repulsive symbol of slavery and racism removed from all public buildings. However, its removal cannot erase the past, racist sentiments or the capitalist system.

Digging racism out by the roots, not merely hauling down its symbols, means ending class rule and the other divisions that class rule engenders. It means working hard to spread the message of socialism. It is one of the most important reasons why readers of *The People* should support the SLP in every way they can.

As noted in our last issue, there are many ways to do that, but few as important as contributing to the Socialist Education Fund. Please use the coupon on page 6 to contribute as generously as your circumstances will allow.

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