

## IN THIS ISSUE

**Bush and the Iraqi National Congress**

Page 2

**Hoof-and-Mouth, 'Mad Cow' Outbreaks Damn Capitalism**

Page 3

**A Page From History—Lessons of the Singer Strike**

Pages 4-5

**SLP of Ukraine on Political Front Line**

Page 8

### SLP SUSTAINER FUND

## It's a Matter Of Principle

Last month, Congress went along with the Bush administration to accommodate the capitalist class at the expense of the working class when it repealed a new set of federal rules designed to protect workers from on-the-job injuries caused by repetitive motion tasks.

Bush and his congressional backers claimed that the rules were no good. Why not? Because, as Sen. Don Nickles of Oklahoma put it, the new law, which incorporated the regulations, was, among other things, "the most...intrusive regulation ever promulgated, certainly by the Department of Labor and maybe by the government entirely."

Intrusive? Into what? Why, into relations between capitalists and workers—and heaven knows that the Bush administration would never think of intruding itself between capitalists and workers. High-minded statesmen of the Bush-Nickles persuasion would never dream of trampling on that most sacred and inviolable of all capitalism's most sacred and inviolable principles—the separation of business and state.

Well, almost never, or hardly ever, or, well, only when it's needed to protect the interests of *business!* Sometimes a man just has to show a little flexibility in such things. He can't be too rigid, too dogmatic, or he might lose sight of the forest for all the trees.

Now, if you get the idea from this that the same Bush-Nickles combination that wouldn't dream of intruding between workers and capitalists over safety regulations but would invoke the unconstitutional Railway Labor Act to intrude itself between an airline and its employees suggests that a double standard may be lurking here, or at least a wee bit of hypocrisy, you'd be wrong. We know it looks bad, but appearances can be deceiving. President Bush and Sen. Nickles are principled men—it's just that the principle that's sacred to them isn't the one that most people think it is.

The principle sacred to the Bush-Nickles mentality is this: *What's good for capitalism and capitalists is good for the country, no matter how bad it may be for the working class.*

The Socialist Labor Party disagrees. What's good for capitalism is bad for the country precisely because it's bad for the working-class majority.

But principles aren't worth the breath needed to breathe them or the paper and ink needed to print them if they cannot be enforced. That's why the SLP needs the support of everyone who reads

(Continued on page 6)

# Bush Violates Oath, Should Be Removed

President George W. Bush—acting more like the third English king than the third American president to bear that name—violated his oath of office last month when he invoked the unconstitutional Railway Labor Act of 1926 to prevent 10,000 mechanics at Northwest Airlines from going on strike.

George the Third should be impeached and removed from office. For that matter, every member of Congress who, through ignorance or complicity, failed to condemn Bush's dictatorial act and to take the steps needed to ensure enforcement of the 13th Amendment of the Constitution, should be recalled. They too have violated their oaths to "defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic" and to "bear true faith and allegiance to the same...."

### Involuntary Servitude

Early last month, more than 10,000 airline mechanics, janitors and other service employees of Northwest Airlines voted overwhelmingly to authorize Local 33 of the Airline Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) to call a strike over wages, pensions and retroactive pay. That was their right, not because politicians, professors, preachers, etc., frequently boast that capitalism is synonymous with a system of "free labor," but because it is guaranteed to every worker by the 13th Amendment. That provision, adopted after the Civil War, is plain and simple. It states:

"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime, whereof the party has been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to

their jurisdiction."

The same provision empowers Congress "to enforce this article with appropriate legislation." It does not empower Congress to enact "laws," such as the Railway Labor Act of 1926, that undermine, compromise or nullify this or any other provision of the Constitution. And it certainly does not empower the president of the United States to usurp power to wipe out a constitutional guarantee by "executive order," or by any other means.

### Bush's Executive Order

The Northwest Airlines workers'

vote was taken after more than a year of negotiations with the company and after a 30-day "cooling-off period" ordered by the National Mediation Board had lapsed without significant change in the company's demands.

President Bush responded by invoking the Railway Labor Act. He sought to justify his executive order forbidding the workers to exercise their right to withhold their labor with the assertion that "this dispute threatens substantially to interrupt interstate commerce to a degree that would deprive sections of the country of essential transporta-

(Continued on page 6)

# State Blocks Airline Workers' Strike Actions

By B.B.

Discontent among major airline workers is surging after years of fruitless negotiations that have produced nothing but stonewalling by airline capitalists and frustration for workers. The battle lines are being drawn as the courts and the political state rush to stop any possible strike actions that would affect the exceptional profits that the industry has been reeling in.

According to *The Dallas Morning News*, five airlines—United, Delta, Southwest, American and Northwest—are confronting possible strike actions by mechanics, pilots, ramp personnel and flight attendants. At the heart of workers' grievances are low wages, poor and deteriorating working conditions, job insecurity and retirement concerns—all of which typify capitalist exploitation of labor.

For example:

- American Airlines experienced a mechanics' work slowdown at New York's JFK Airport, one of the nation's busiest. Mechanics were protesting a rotten contract offer that the airline made to the union in late February.
- Twenty-three thousand American flight attendants, who have been in

negotiations for years, voted "overwhelmingly to approve a strike if bargaining fails to produce an agreement."

- Ninety-eight hundred Delta Airlines pilots may be forced into a federally mandated "cooling off" period after a month of mediated talks showed no progress.

- Five thousand three hundred ramp, operations and provisioning agents working for Southwest Airlines set up pickets at Dallas' Love Field. If a strike materializes it will be only the second strike against Southwest in 30 years.

- Northwest Airlines mechanics (see above) threatened a strike in March but were prevented when President Bush intervened with an executive order on March 9.

- United Airlines and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers are locked in negotiations for 45,000 workers.

However much corporate airlines engage in cutthroat competition with one another, when opposing workers they form a solid wall of resistance. Expressions of disdain and revulsion at "big government" fall by the wayside when rebellion looms against their class interests. This holy article

of faith vanishes as the courts, the police, politicians and, if necessary, the army rush to enforce the enslavement of the working class.

Accordingly, American Airlines prevailed upon the courts to issue restraining orders and filed suits against the "illegal" pilots' "sickout" in February of 1999. Similarly with the mechanics' slowdown. In February, federal mediators in a dispute between Southwest Airlines and the Transport Workers Union recessed talks indefinitely with instructions that the firm and the union make another effort to resolve their differences, thereby turning the clock back to where it was when "mediation" began.

Delta used the court restraining order when its pilots rebelled against enforced overtime. (Air safety be damned!) Now, they are in the clutches of the National Mediation Board, a state apparatus instituted decades ago to ensure "labor peace."

President Bush, eager to demonstrate his fawning devotion to the capitalist class, declared he was coming to the rescue of Northwest Airlines, just as "friend of labor" Clinton did

(Continued on page 3)

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# Iraqi National Congress Boosted by Bush Presidency

During the Cold War, the United States supported many petty dictators and occasional guerrilla groups in its efforts to outflank the Soviet Union in Africa, Latin America and other far-flung regions of the globe. One among the beneficiaries of U.S. support in those days was Saddam Hussein of Iraq, who has held power in that country since 1979.

Some things have changed since the Cold War, of course, but the strategy the United States used to frustrate Soviet ambitions in many parts of the developing world still has its uses.

Four years ago, for example, Congress appropriated \$98 million to help something called the Iraqi National Congress in its efforts to undermine and eventually topple the United States' former ally in Baghdad. The INC is led by Ahmad Chalabi, at one time a banker in Jordan where, according to Agence Europe, a Belgian news agency, criminal charges are still pending "against him...after the collapse of the Petra Bank, which he chaired and which in the early eighties bankrupted thousands of depositors in Jordan and Lebanon."

Not for that reason, we suppose, but for other reasons of its own, the Clinton administration disappointed Chalabi and his Iraqi National Congress by keeping most of the \$98 million under wraps.

"Only a small part was released by the



B.B. for The People

Clinton administration, a reflection of its cautious approach," the INC complained in a press release posted on its Web site on Feb. 7. "Clinton's national security adviser, Samuel Berger, once explained the administration's rationale by saying that if 'you encourage and almost incite people to rise up against their government, you incur a moral obligation to come to their defense at a moment of peril.'"

But with Clinton out and the son of the father of the Gulf War installed at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., the INC and its fugitive leader believe things may be looking up. As the press release cited put it:

"Seeing new hope after years of frus-

tration, an Iraqi opposition leader said Wednesday [Feb. 7] the Bush administration is 'significantly' more inclined to provide aid to resistance groups than was the Clinton administration."

The INC also reported that, in January, it "was encouraged by the Bush administration's decision to allow the group to draw \$4 million approved by Congress to carry out information-gathering activities inside Iraq relating to Iraqi war crimes, weapons development and other matters....the INC is conferring with administration officials on the release of an additional \$29 million approved for the current fiscal year. It will be used for humanitarian relief, media-related activities, administration, diplomacy and conferences."

Why would the U.S. government want to risk getting drawn into a guerrilla war in Iraq? Is it just to support a shyster like Chalabi? Is it for "humanitarian" reasons? Certainly not. The father of the son may have debunked the "theory" that the Gulf War and other U.S. efforts to pull the Saddam thorn from its side was not over oil, but if the son of the father is superior to his progenitor in one particular it is his candor.

Oil is the answer; there can be no doubt about that. Bush II is picking up where Bush I left off. As background, the Web site of Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair, *Counterpunch*, recently explained:

the head of this column, is an instance in point. That view, together with those of his associates in pure and simple trade unionism, Messrs. Gompers and Lennon—one of whom thinks capitalists are entitled to their profits under the present system, and the other of whom asserts that it is sophistry to claim that there is any antagonism between capitalists and workingmen—are all typical of the old school of trade unionism, or trade unionism pure and simple; they are the views that keep the working class in ignorance and divided; they are the views against which new trade unionism is arraigned.

Mr. McNeil's "belief" was expressed in a speech delivered before workmen at Worcester, Mass.; Mr. Gompers' view was expressed in this city also before workmen, although only a very few; Mr. Lennon's assertion appears in the *Tailor*, a workman's paper. The harm these expressions do to the unguarded workmen, who hear or read them, is incalculable. But still they have one redeeming feature: they serve to push the enlightened movement of new trade unionism, by revealing in ever clearer light the utter unfitness of the old trade unionists and pure and simplers to lead the battle of emancipation.

"In the late 1990s Chalabi's cause was pressed by Republicans in Congress, most notably Jesse Helms and Trent Lott. A bizarre alliance, stretching from Helms to *The New Republic* to *Vanity Fair*'s Christopher Hitchens, pressed Chalabi's call for the U.S. to guarantee 'military exclusion zones' in northern Iraq and in the south near Basra and the oil fields to be administered by the Iraqi National Congress. Such guarantees could set the stage for a new military assault on Saddam."

And so capitalism's struggle for control of the world's oil resources marches on.

Diane Secor contributed to this article.

## Our 111th Year

Question: *What socialist journals have survived into their 111th year of publication?*

Answer: *You're reading it.*

Longevity in itself, of course, is no criteria of success. But we do take some satisfaction in opening with this issue our 111th year as the official journal of the Socialist Labor Party, the voice of De Leonism in the United States, and a paper that tries to uncover the news for working people.

If *The People* has survived for 110 years there are two reasons: one, a readership that has generously supported a paper that upholds ideas and principles that can be found nowhere else; and two, because the job *The People* has set out to accomplish is far from completion. We are, after all, trying not just to help our readers understand society, but to build a socialist movement that can change it.

To that end we ask all of our readers to help us mark our 111th year of publication by promoting and supporting both *The People* and the cause of socialism at every opportunity in the months ahead.

## Do You Belong?

Do you know what the SLP stands for? Do you understand the class struggle and why the SLP calls for an end of capitalism and of its system of wage labor? Do you understand why the SLP does not advocate reforms of capitalism, and why it calls upon workers to organize Socialist Industrial Unions?

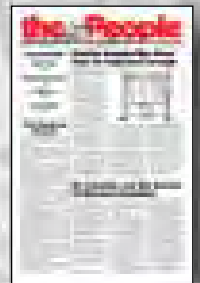
If you've been reading *The People* steadily for a year or more, if you have read the literature recommended for beginning Socialists, and if you agree with the SLP's call for the political and economic unity of the working class, you may qualify for membership in the SLP. And if you qualify to be a member you should be a member.

For information on what membership entails, and how to apply for it, write to: SLP, P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218. Ask for the SLP Membership Packet.

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### A De Leon Editorial

## Capitalist 'Rights'

Here De Leon roundly criticizes a "labor leader" for maintaining that capitalists have "rights" that should be recognized by the labor movement. Socialists reject the theory and explain why.

### Another Instance of Old Trade Union Incapacity

(*The People*, June 11, 1893)

I believe employers have rights as well as employees.

—George E. McNeil,  
*The Carpenter*, May 1893

Who are the modern employers, to what economic class do they belong? They are, and belong to, that class that is in possession of the machinery of production—land and capital—without which civilized man must perish. They are the capitalists.

Who are the employees, to what economic class do they belong? They are, and belong to, that class that is stripped of the machinery of production—land and capital—without which they are at the mercy of the class that owns these prerequisites to a living. They are the working people.

How did the capitalist, or modern employing class come to the ownership of the machinery of production? Through fraud and theft.

Whom did they defraud and rob? The working class.

How? Labor is the sole producer of all wealth. By returning to labor barely one-quarter of its own products and fleecing it of about three-quarters of what it produces, the capitalist or employing class piles up the wealth which it then turns upon labor as an instrument of further oppression. The employer or capitalist class is an idle, useless class, a parasite on the body economic and politic, the working class is the breadwinner for this robber class.

Why does the employee or working class not refuse to allow itself to be robbed by the employer? Because the employer, being in possession of the gates to bread and butter, can starve the employee into a "contract" whereby the latter submits to be robbed rather than die outright.

Is there any moral force at the bottom of such a transaction?

None! only might and brute force. The employer is buttressed up in the possession and enjoyment of his stolen goods by the powers of the government, which his bunco steerers cajole the people into placing in his hands. With the physical force powers of the state to guarantee his economic power, he stands before the working class like a highwayman before the traveler whom he waylays.

Unless wrong—theft, fraud, chicanery and the whole catalogue of crimes—can be the basis of "rights," the employer has not "rights" whatever.

The labor movement is directed towards redressing this wrong; its tenets are clear enunciations of the undeniable fact that the capitalist or employing class is fundamentally the enemy of the employee or working class, and vice versa; that the hostility between the two is irreconcilable; that the capitalist class has no legitimate functions whatever to fulfill; and that it has no right either to its stolen goods nor to existence—unless mankind is to be allowed to relapse into the barbarism of tyranny, from which it has been painfully trying to emancipate itself.

Only if drilled upon these principles can the classconsciousness of the working and oppressed classes be awakened; only then can they be made to perceive the solidarity of their interests; and only in proportion as they are clear upon these subjects are they seen to form a solid body, that nothing can break, and that pushes the enemy steadily to the wall.

That, on the other hand, there should still be so much disruption, disintegration and eternal breaking downs among certain branches of organized labor is the inevitable result of the preaching of the contrary doctrine by men within the ranks of labor. Mr. McNeil's statement, at

# Hoof-and-Mouth, 'Mad Cow' Outbreaks Damn Capitalism

The outbreaks of hoof-and-mouth disease and "mad cow" disease that have devastated the British meat industry and still threaten public health and security in Europe and the rest of the world damn the capitalist system for the antisocial, criminal system it is.

For these seemingly quite different outbreaks share a common root: they arise primarily as a result of conditions imposed by production for profit in modern capitalist agriculture.

Procapitalist reporting on the hoof-and-mouth outbreak often misses the fact that the spread of hoof-and-mouth disease represents both a threat to public health and to the economic condition of workers. Many reports mention only the threat to livestock represented by the disease.

However, as the number of livestock that must be destroyed rises into the hundreds of thousands, or perhaps even millions, the threat also rises of groundwater pollution from burying their remains or ashes. To the extent that wastes remain unburied or unburned in this massive task, to that extent does the threat increase from disease-carrying rodents and other pests.

As the livestock toll rises, more jobs may be lost in the agriculture industry and other industries—including meatpacking, leather products, apparel and drugs. Increased profits from higher prices resulting from the changed ratio of supply to demand may benefit any agricapitalists whose herds escape slaughter, but the toll on social resources and the working class could be vast.

Capitalism does not cause the virus, but it sets up the conditions which allow for its rapid spread and necessitates slaughter and the results thereof, as the only "practical" method of halting an outbreak.

## Hoof-and-Mouth Promoted

Society does not *require* that livestock be raised in feedlots where hundreds or thousands of animals are cramped together in quarters that invite the rapid spread of any disease—or that they be transported long distances under similar conditions to slaughterhouses, likewise risking rapid spread of disease.

The slaughterhouses and meatpacking plants, like the feedlots and virtually every other facility involving livestock production, are arranged for maximum profit rather than for maximum public safety and health, cleanliness and protection of the food supply and environment. The stage for the catastrophic social risks and

losses associated with the rapid spread of hoof-and-mouth disease could hardly be more efficiently set if capitalists *desired* catastrophe.

Concentration of ownership of agricultural enterprises also contributes to the mess, spurring the tendency to concentrate livestock. Aside from the feedlots, dairy and sheep herds are thus larger than they need to be and closer to each other than they should be.

**In the penultimate insult to Mother Nature and common sense—and the most direct link between the root cause of "mad cow" disease and hoof-and-mouth—modern capitalist livestock production...attempts to overcome the deleterious effects of overcrowding by turning livestock into cannibals, feeding them the protein-rich offal of slaughtered livestock.**

Competition among supermarkets for ever cheaper sources of meat and dairy products increases the pressure to concentrate livestock production. The supermarkets would just as soon irradiate meat to kill the bacteria that might come from long-range transport or other results of production for profit. It is cheaper to throw gamma rays at bacteria after they get a start than worry about the sanitary or other conditions under which meat or other animal products are produced.

All this crowding takes its toll on livestock health, weakening their immune systems and making them more susceptible to disease. Modern capitalist livestock production responds by including low levels of antibiotics in livestock feed in an attempt to ward off illness and promote rapid growth. But the practice helps create strains of bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics used in both livestock and humans, in effect weakening the immune systems of both.

And in the penultimate insult to Mother Nature and common sense—and the most direct link between the root cause of "mad cow" disease and hoof-and-mouth—modern capitalist livestock production also attempts to overcome the deleterious effects of overcrowding by turning livestock into cannibals, feeding them the protein-rich offal of slaughtered livestock.

There are ostensibly legislative protections against diseased guts and trimmings being fed to some animals. Those fed to

swine, one report noted, "must be sterilized by boiling or baking at 212 degrees for half an hour, and cannot be taken from imported stock." There is no reason to assume that this kind of "protection" is any more effective than capitalism's laws "protecting" the environment or worker safety and health on the job. Such window dressing isn't likely to provide any truly effective prevention against the spread of hoof-and-mouth disease.

Vaccines against some forms of hoof-and-mouth exist, though most news reports say vaccination is "not practical." What they mean to say is that it is not practical under the system of production for private profit. In fact, the vaccine works effectively enough that its routine use in Iraq reportedly eradicated the disease.

The reason many countries don't use vaccine has to do with protecting the profits of their livestock producers. Vaccinated animals don't get the disease, but they carry antibodies and can test positive for it—making exports impossible. Livestock imports are commonly tested for the disease.

As one report put it, if any of a number of "experimental synthetic vaccines" were used, "it might be possible to tell the difference between vaccinated herds and infected herds." But they might not "be any more effective in tackling the disease on a national scale." Why? As another report put it, "the cost (about \$1 billion annually) of vaccinating all susceptible animals would be prohibitive." Vaccines would likely have to be produced and administered for all seven known varieties of hoof-and-mouth.

## 'Mad Cow' Epidemic

Unfortunately, there is no known cure for "mad cow" disease, or bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), and recent studies suggest it is virtually directly transferable to humans, in whom it is called new variant Creutzfeldt Jakob

Disease (vCJD).

The "mad cow" disease outbreak dwarfs the current outbreak of hoof-and-mouth disease. Since the illness was first identified in cattle in 1985, millions of have been slaughtered. A CNN report says "as many as 500,000 contaminated beef carcasses are thought to have entered the human food chain." The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that more than 168,000 cases of BSE have been reported in Britain. Cases have been reported in native cattle in France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal and Switzerland, and in cattle imported from the United Kingdom in Canada, Denmark, the Falkland Islands, Germany, Italy and Oman. The death toll from definite and probable cases of vCJD is reported to be 95, and the number of people infected between 1980 and 1996 could be as high as 2 million.

While the exact mechanism of brain deterioration remains the subject of some disagreement among scientists in the field, there is very little disagreement as to the way it was created. It was created by the profit motive—the same feeding of animals to animals that helps spread hoof-and-mouth more rapidly.

A CNN report observes that "experts believe BSE was created when cows were fed scrapie [a BSE-like disease in sheep]-infected feed manufactured from abattoir offcuts." "Cattle feed had been produced from animal remains since 1930, but in the 1970s and 1980s changes occurred in the way it was made," the CNN report continued. "Solvents thought to be a health risk to workers were banned and lower temperatures were used in processing the feed."

The new "feed" allowed "a resilient strain of scrapie to enter the feed and for it to re-emerge in a new form in cattle disease—BSE." "Cattle carcasses infected with BSE were then used in manufactured feed, which recycled the disease and rapidly worsened the epidemic," the report said.

The widespread export of infected British bone meal, poor monitoring for BSE, an incubation period that is suspected to be very long—from 10 to 40 years—and recent evidence that suggests BSE may be carried by sheep, pigs and poultry, together with the continuing practice in many countries of feeding at least some livestock and poultry with feed made from the offal of other animals make it a virtual certainty that BSE will show up eventually in most countries of the world, including the United States. According to some reports, the BSE epidemic, which may hardly have started yet, could dwarf the AIDS epidemic.

## What Could Be

Livestock and food production generally could be accomplished in a less concentrated fashion and less intensively, even organically, if they were not produced according to the profit motive. Given existing technology, that could mean putting more arable land into production and utilizing more human labor power in the process of livestock and food production in general. In return society could be reasonably assured that the human food supply—as well as the food supply of livestock—was safe and healthy.

Like so many other economic, social and environmental crises produced by capitalist control of the means of life, the BSE crisis cannot be adequately addressed within the system of economic dictatorship that produced it—capitalism. Only socialism can provide that opportunity.

With the establishment of social ownership and democratic control of the economy as a whole, we the people would be able to control livestock, food and every other kind of production. We would determine if and when new technologies would be implemented, and under what conditions. There would be no economic incentive to utilize practices in any industry that could harm society or any of the humans who are part of it. With the abolition of private ownership of the means of life, the nightmare diseases of capitalism will be but dim memories.

# ...Airline Workers

(Continued from page 1)

with the American pilots' walkout a few years ago. Bush has fulfilled his promise to stop any strike action by the mechanics and raised the usual shibboleth that he acted "to protect the flying public," meaning flying profits. He further threatened to block any airline strike that threatens capitalist profits. His current posturing recalls those of that darling of the capitalist class, Ronald Reagan, against the air traffic controllers.

"It's important for our economy," Bush cryptically intoned. "But more important, it's important for the hard-working people of America to make sure air service is not disrupted. I'm watching."

Of this blatant hypocrisy, O.V. Delle-Femine, the mechanics union's national director, responded apologetically that, "We are not a 'strike happy' organization and do not condone the use of unauthorized or illegal job actions." AFL-CIO's Sweeney, described as "even more strident," (!) noted, "Any attempt by President Bush to short-circuit the full course of these discussions tilts the field unjustly against airline workers."

"Tilted fields"? To carry the sports analogy further, the AFL-CIO has, hand-and-glove with the capitalist class, created the mother of all "tilted fields," on which the working class has been playing an

uphill battle for over a century. Unlike the unity of the corporations and the state power at their beck and call, the airline workers—as all workers—remain fatally fragmented by the AFL-CIO grand strategy that "capital and labor are brothers"; that they have a common interest; that "brother capital" has an inherent right to ride the back of "brother labor."

To consolidate the arrangement that allows "brother" capital to fleece "brother" labor with impunity the AFL-CIO dues-paying racket has fragmented the instinctive unity of the working class by dividing it by occupation and—more important—by locking most workers out of the unions. Thus workers of all airlines are compartmentalized by each company and occupational groups within each and with innumerable separate agreements rather than melded in a single industrial union that would truly unite all workers employed in the same industry.

Working-class unity is synonymous with revolutionary socialist unionism—with Socialist Industrial Unionism to be exact. Unity cannot be founded on the notion that we are all one big happy family, exploiting capitalist and exploited worker alike. The struggles facing airline workers are not with the airline capitalists only. They are with the divisive organizations which deny them unity and, hence, success.

**the People**

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## A PAGE FROM WORKING-CLASS HISTORY

# The Kilbowie Strike

Last month marked the 90th anniversary of the first significant strike ever waged against a multinational corporation. That strike occurred at the Singer Manufacturing Co.'s "Kilbowie" plant at Clydebank, Scotland. The strike was defeated after several weeks, but its importance is not affected by the outcome. Indeed, the lessons derived from the struggle are of lasting importance.

What follows is the text of a manifesto issued after the strike by the Industrial Workers of Great Britain and published in *The Socialist*, the official monthly journal of the Marxist-De Leonist Socialist Labor Party of Great Britain. Although the strike itself was directed by a strike committee of the 12,000 men and women who waged it, the IWGB and SLPGB both played significant roles.

Two previous articles on the Kilbowie strike, also taken from *The Socialist*, were reprinted in our issues of February and March. The manifesto reproduced here was printed in *The Socialist* of July 1911. Because of its length it will appear in two approximately equal installments. The second and concluding installment will be printed in our next issue.

—Editor

## A Manifesto Issued by the Singers' Sewing Machine Workers' Group of The Industrial Workers of Great Britain

The recent strike in Singer's Factory at Kilbowie has caused more discussion throughout the Labour Movement than any of the numerous industrial disputes of the last ten or twenty years. The widespread interest which it evoked—not only in Britain but also in America and the Continent—the volume of comment which has been passed upon it, angry denunciation in many quarters, in others enthusiastic praise, have placed it in the History of Labour alongside of the Dockers' Strike of 1889, and the Engineers Lock-Out of 1897, events which, though they implicated a vastly greater number of workers than those concerned in [the] Singer's Strike, have this point in common with it, that they marked a new epoch in the Labour Movement, and introduced, for good or for ill, new principles and tactics into the conflict between capital and labour.

By demonstrating the fallacies and errors resident in old and trusted methods, they [Dockers and Engineers] proved the need for and gave birth to newer and better methods. The Dockers' Strike laid the foundation of what was in the last decades of the Nineteenth Century known as the "New Trade Unionism." The defeat of the Engineers in 1897 revealed hitherto unsuspected weaknesses in the "New Trade Unionism" and its inability to face the improved organisation and tactics which the employers used against it. Accordingly it gave rise to that wave of advanced thought—unfortunately focused almost entirely on political action—which has manifested itself so signally among the working class during the last ten years. The strike at Singer's Factory in Kilbowie has brought to light the existence of and the need for the new method of organisation: Industrial Unionism.

The defeat of this strike has brought in its train one result which was from the nature of things inevitable. In spite of the fact that, at the moment when the strike broke out, less than a tenth of the workers were members of the Singer Group of the Industrial Workers of Great Britain [I.W.G.B.]; in spite of the fact that of that small portion over five-sixths were members of only a few weeks' standing, and consequently while full of pluck and enthusiasm were acquainted only with the exter-

nals of industrialism, an attempt has been made, from various quarters, to lay the whole blame for the failure upon Industrial Unionism. Opponents of Industrial Unionism, capitalists and official trade unionists, have not concealed their delight at the defeat of these thousands of oppressed and sweated workers, on the grounds that their failure was calculated to discredit the



End of the workday at the Singer Works, Clydebank. (Circa 1910)

I.W.G.B. In addition to these, a number of men sympathetic to the new movement, who in their early enthusiasm, expected it to work miracles, have shown a tendency in the bitterness of defeat to indulge in angry recriminations or pessimistic criticisms of Industrial Unionism. The former we have no desire to conciliate. We have nothing to offer them but our hearty contempt, and accept their hostility to our movement and their mean gratification at the defeat of the Singer workers, as tributes to the integrity of the I.W.G.B. It is to the workers, not only of Kilbowie but of the whole of Britain, that we address this statement that they may learn the real lessons to be derived from the Strike and its sequel, and the true conclusions that are to be drawn from it.

The Singer Firm is an international concern, although, as the name indicates, its founders were of German origin.\* It has factories in Germany, Russia, and the United States, as well as in this country, and agencies throughout the whole civilised world. Thus the workers of many nations are made to yield tribute to them. While ready to exploit the patriotism of the workers, as a means of blinding them to the real cause of their robbery, while ready to utilise the workers of one country to beat down those of another, to pit German against Yankee and Yankee against Briton, they themselves as "fatherlandless" fellows are entirely free from such crotchets. Their one aim is the extraction of a thoroughly cosmopolitan dividend of 176 per cent. out of the labour of those employed under them. The international character of this firm must be kept in mind if we are to understand the recent developments. We shall return to it at a later stage.

In Kilbowie factory 12,000 workers are employed. These are divided into 41 departments, each department with its foreman, under-foremen, and clerks, machine and bench hands (male and female), and inspectors, male or female, according to the nature of the parts to be inspected. Each department carries out its own particular part of the process through which the article goes in the course of manufacture, and, even within the department, a further subdivision of labour takes place. Thus the workers, while skilfully organised by the firm for the production of the machines, are, by the very nature of that organisation, by the infinity of sections and sub-sections, each with its particular

process, completely disorganised in their relations to one another—a mass of disintegrated and disconnected units, parts of a big machine, and directed by powers from above. Consequently while grievances are widespread all the time, while each individual keenly feels the increasing exactions in his own case, the method of factory organisation prevents him from

knowing exactly what grievances exist in addition to his own. Even in some of the departments where from 600 to 900 are employed, a worker does not know (unless aided by the mechanism supplied by the I.W.G.B.) what is going on outside the half dozen or so who work immediately alongside of him.

This disintegration of the workers, this ignorance of each unit as to the condition of the other units, is cunningly manipulated by the management for the increase of the wealth of the firm. Worker is pitted against worker in continually intensifying competition. Every device that human intellect perverted to the antisocial service of the enemies of humanity can conceive, is put into operation to increase the rate and intensity of labour and to reduce the wages paid to the workers. It might be thought that with a dividend of 176 per cent. the shareholders would be fairly well contented, and, from their opulent eminence, afford us an object-lesson in the avoidance of that insatiable avarice which employers tell us is the besetting sin of the workers. Nothing is further from their minds.

"High dividends we now possess,  
But higher they shall rise;  
And what they shall hereafter be  
Is hid from mortal eyes"

Those unhappy men who are entrusted with the antisocial task of extracting the last iota of value-producing energy out of their fellow-men, from the General Manager at the top down to the meanest and coarsest specimen of the foul-mouthed, hectoring foreman, take good care that the workers at Kilbowie are conducted in the spirit of this inspiring anthem.

Generally speaking, the agency through which this system of progressive blood-sucking is carried on, is the method of inspection employed by the firm—and innumerable are the ways in which it works. Ostensibly the object of the inspection is to ensure that the standard of work is maintained, that the dear public for whose welfare Mr Parks' bowels are moved with a ceaseless solicitude, should get a good article for their money. The most cursory examination of its operation will show that it is really a device for speeding up Labour and for the reduction of prices to the producer. To begin with, it must be understood that almost the whole of the operatives employed in Kilbowie are

engaged on piecework. The prices for a given quantity are fixed—so much per hundred, whatever it may happen to be. This of course implies a certain quality of work—and this is where the shoe pinches. If the standard of quality were a thing fixed, the workers would know exactly where they are. In actual fact the standard is continually being raised, and that in the most arbitrary and unjust fashion. No warning is given of the higher standard demanded. The only intimation which the worker receives is by the rejection of a certain amount of his work, which the inspector (inspired from above) has refused to pass. Unless his wages are to be reduced by the price of the articles rejected, the worker in question has, by hook or by crook, to go over the whole process of labour once more. Knowing that this reduction in the weekly wage involves an equivalent reduction in the comforts and even the necessities of the home, the worker makes a desperate effort and manages to keep the wage intact by repeating the work upon the rejected articles. Meanwhile the foreman has taken notes. He has observed the number rejected and redelivered. If these amount to a twentieth, and the worker has managed to go over that portion so as to prevent a cut in the wage of that particular week, the deduction which he draws from it is that this man can increase his weekly output by one twentieth. Accordingly he is called upon to produce 5 per cent. more in the course of a week.

The worker is now in a cleft stick. He knows that if he does produce the quantity required, although for a very short time his wages will be 5 per cent. higher, before very long the prices will be reduced, so that in return for the increased output—with all the physical and nervous strain which it involves, he will be earning the same wage as before. *This is the real aim of the "inspection" process.* On the other hand, if he refuses and continues to produce the former quantum, prices will be reduced immediately, and to maintain his wage he will be forced to comply with the new demand. So that in either case the firm will gain bigger profits by increasing the tension at which men and women work, and by augmenting the amount produced. There is no limit to this acceleration. As soon as one increase has been forced upon the men, the firm through its inspectors are planning out another. Of course the increased demand is not made all along the line at one time. Now one department, now another are made the victims of a further exaction of labour power—until in the long run all are found to be working at a higher pitch than before. The firm is very adroit in its choice of times and seasons for making new inroads upon the workers. Immediately after a holiday, when the workers' funds are low, or a slack season when men are being paid off and there is a superabundance of available labour—these are favourite occasions for piling on fresh exactions. For example, the change from two meal hours to one per day was initiated during a period when most of the workers were on short time on account of slackness in trade. When full time was resumed, the one meal hour system was still continued in spite of the universal dissatisfaction among the workers at the new arrangement. Their powers of resistance being enfeebled by the previous term of short time and reduced wages, they were unable to express their protest in any other fashion than in grumbling. The firm in this way effected economy "without friction."

From the nature of the organisation of production in Kilbowie, the workers, in common with three quarters of the working class of Great Britain, belong to that large and increasing body of labour to

# ke and Its Lessons

which the Trade Union aristocracy refer contemptuously as "semi-skilled." Consequently it is outside the scope of organisation of the Trade Unions, who have done nothing to help them. Impotent as the Trade Unions have proved themselves, through the essentially vicious and sectional nature of their organisation, to prevent the lot of their own members from deteriorating steadily, it could hardly be expected that they could help those outside their charmed circle (although this does not explain their vindictive hatred of those industrialists who have endeavoured to take up the task which the Trade Unionists have shirked). Some seventeen or eighteen years ago an attempt was made to form a union, and for a little while it had a more or less feeble existence. It met, however, with strenuous opposition from the firm, who used its own members to kill it from within, supplemented by the efforts of the management from without. One of its members who lent himself to the loathsome work of acting as agent of the firm from within the union and who was largely responsible for its extinction, received his reward in the shape of a foremanship, and is still earning the wages of dishonour in that capacity. It is well to notice in passing that this union had no socialistic connection of any kind. It was merely a crude effort at organisation on the old-fashioned lines. Another point to be noticed is that while the whole Clydebank district in which Kilbowie is situated has been strongly infected by the wave of political Labourism which has arisen within the last ten years, the votaries of the new cult have made no attempt to organize the workers.

Industrial Union propaganda has been pursued in Kilbowie Works for over five years. About two years ago the Sewing Machine Workers' Industrial Union Group

was formed, and after less than a year of vigorous effort, in the course of which many meetings were held and thousands of propaganda leaflets were distributed, it had increased its numbers to 150. Then after a ballot of its members, it became affiliated to the Industrial Workers of Great Britain. The nascent organization was soon called upon to show its mettle. In the beginning of February of the present year the Foreman of No. 10 Department reduced the prices of the squad employed in assembling the I.M. Machine, with the result that they were called to handle 800 more machines (20 tons weight) for 1/9d. [one shilling, nine pence] per week less than the figure obtaining formerly. The squad, 16 in number, refused, and when the foreman saw them determined, he gave way and restored the old terms. This was an unparalleled occurrence in Kilbowie. Prior to this, the workers, helpless and disorganised, had been forced to accept every reduction of wages and increase of work without demur. Now the situation had changed. The small group of Industrial Workers of Great Britain, a mere handful of men, had checked the course of exploitation for the first time in close upon a score of years. The natural result was that 60 workers in that department immediately joined the Group, bringing its membership well over the three hundred mark. A few weeks later another attempt was made in the same department to reduce prices by 1d. per hundred. As a consequence 400 men, practically the whole department with the exception of underforemen and fitters, came out on strike, but returned next day—having obtained a withdrawal of the new prices. Then in Department 13 A. (Buffing) a particularly perfidious plot was perpetrated upon the men. For years the speeding up process had been carried on in this department until it seemed that the limit of physical exertion

and endurance had been reached, and that consequently the firm had reached the high water mark of exploitation so far as these men were concerned. A final experiment was made. The men on a particular job were told that they would receive 1/ per hundred more, as a higher standard of work was desired. In view of what experience had taught them as to the methods of the firm, it is obvious that the men should have refused to give the higher standard, even at the higher remuneration, unless a reduction was made in the weekly output expected. However, they accepted the offer and gave the higher standard. As might have been expected, the foreman's next step was to deduct the 1/ increase while still demanding the higher standard which the lure of a temporary increase had shown to be possible. The men, however, prepared to resist this new swindle, and the threat of a strike induced the management to restore the 1/.

It is well to notice how the industrial method of organisation had broken down the preexistent disunity and general lack of cohesion which had made the past encroachments of the firm so easy of effecting. Each department where I.W.G.B. members worked had its shop committee, to whom every grievance occurring throughout the department was reported. Above this there was the General Committee of the Industrial Union Group, comprising representatives of the Industrialists in all the departments where the I.W.G.B. had any membership. The workers now no longer suffered in individual ignorance of what was happening throughout the works. For the first time they shared their grievances through the medium of inter-communication supplied by the Group and the knowledge which it provided. Kilbowie Works was beginning to be organised on the only system by

which organisation is possible in that factory. The I.W.G.B. avoided the sectionalism of the Trade Unions which makes each little craft or section self-centred, blind to the interests of all the others and blind to the fact that its own interests are bound up with those of the others and can only be fostered by loyal co-operation with them. Similarly the Shop Committee system avoided the errors of the Gas Workers' Union (the big ditch into which the pure and simple unions relegate all sections of Labour which do not fit into any of the recognised trades)—a union which organises the workers as an amorphous mass, taking no account of the particular parts of the industrial process in which they are engaged and making no attempt to correlate them. The I.W.G.B. recognises these divisions as facts, but does not erect them into barriers. While by its Shop Committee system it took cognisance of each section to which its membership reached, it organised them, not as buffers, cabinet polishers, or fitters, but as members of the Singer Group of the I.W.G.B., each recognising the reciprocal rights and duties of the whole body of workers. It proved itself to represent the twin and interdependent principles of solidarity and orderly organisation.

These victories to which we have referred, small as they were in themselves, possessed an immense significance, as being the first examples of successful resistance after twenty years of practically uninterrupted and unquestioned supremacy on the part of the firm. A spirit of revolt became general. All were wronged; all had grievances of one nature or another. An outbreak became imminent.

(To be concluded)

\*The IWBG was mistaken in this. The founder of I.M. Singer & Co., Isaac Merritt Singer, was a native of Troy, N.Y. In 1863, the firm was incorporated in New York as the Singer Manufacturing Co.

## party news

### SLP of Ukraine

Last December, the National Office received an e-mail from Sergiy Skubenko of Kiev, Ukraine, reporting as follows:

"The SLPU [Socialist Labor Party of Ukraine] adopted a Declaration of Principles and a Constitution at its first National Conference on Dec. 7 based on the corresponding documents of the SLP-U.S. Representatives of Kiev and Sevastopol were present at the conference. In

accordance with the procedures provided by the SLPU Constitution, I was elected as National Secretary. Please find attached the translations of the Declaration of Principles and Constitution of the SLPU."

This information was promptly submitted to the National Executive Committee for its consideration. In January, a motion to recognize the SLPU as a fraternal organization of the SLP of America was offered by a member of the NEC, and on March 5 SLP National Secretary Robert Bills sent the following e-mail to Skubenko:

"Dear Comrade Skubenko:

"I am honored and privileged to inform you that the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party of America has voted unanimously to approve the following proposition that was placed before it on Jan. 23:

"Shall the NEC welcome the SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF UKRAINE as a fraternal organization of the Socialist Labor Party of America?"

"The vote on that proposition closed on Feb. 6. I regret that other demands on my time and attention prevented me from informing you of the outcome of the vote sooner. However, I take extreme pleasure in reporting it to you now.

"Please convey the warmest fraternal

greetings of the National Office, the National Executive Committee and the entire membership of the SLP of America to all our comrades of the SLP Ukraine."

On March 7 Skubenko replied, as follows:

"Dear Comrade Bills and Comrades of SLP-U.S.:

"Thank you very much for your message. We are very proud to be a fraternal organization of Socialist Labor Party of United States. The comrades are very enthusiastic about it. We continue to participate in events in Kiev with real Marxist-De Leonist propaganda. The information that we are a fraternal organization of SLP-U.S. and part of the world Marxist-De Leonist movement is very useful also in our propaganda for Ukrainian workers. We are using the Ukrainian versions of De Leon's works that you sent to us. We believe that in future our relationship will be even more fruitful and useful for the establishment of real socialism on the basis of De Leon's ideas in all parts of the world."

The De Leon works mentioned by Skubenko are Ukrainian translations of *Reform or Revolution, What Means This Strike?* *The Burning Question of Trades Unionism* and *Industrial Unionism*. The last mentioned includes a speech by Eugene V. Debs.

### High Schoolers Respond to SLP

In February, a teacher from Harvey High School in Painesville, Ohio, called and asked for a speaker for her economics class. She said that the class is composed of 10th, 11th and 12th grade students and that they were of a mixed racial and economic background. She said that they were

not very responsive and that I should not expect any questions from them. So I prepared enough material for a 45-minute talk.

I got about halfway through the talk and then the questions started and that was it. Questions and comments from the students lasted the rest of the period. After the class one of the students congratulated me and shook my hand. The teacher seemed pleased and asked us to return next year. Robert Burns, organizer  
Section Cleveland

### SLP in Peltier Walk for Freedom

On Dec. 10, Members of Section New York City, SLP participated in the Leonard Peltier Walk for Freedom. The march attracted from 3,000-5,000 participants. They hoped to influence the Clinton White House into granting executive clemency to the ailing Native American activist.

Peltier has been in prison since 1975. Amnesty International, Nelson Mandela, the National Congress of American Indians, the European Parliament, former FBI agents, former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, members of the U.S. Congress, and thousands of other groups and individuals around the world have repeatedly challenged Peltier's imprisonment and appealed for his release.

Peltier's next parole hearing is not until 2006. Most of his friends and family doubt that he will live to see that date because he suffers from diabetes, is nearly blind and conditions at Leavenworth Prison are not doing his health any good.

The SLP takes its stand on the side of human rights. It is a stand directly opposed to the capitalist system, which upholds the rights of the few to profit at the expense of the many.

John-Paul Catusco  
Section New York City



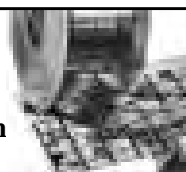
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# ...Bush Violates Oath

(Continued from page 1)

tion service." It was the first time any president had used the infamous act *before* a strike even began. Furthermore, Bush made it clear that tens of thousands of other workers in the industry can expect the same treatment. "I intend to take the necessary steps to prevent airline strikes from happening this year," Bush said.

## Unions a Broken Reed

The AFL-CIO criticized Bush with rhetoric. "Intervention is what it is," observed Edward Wytkind, executive director of the federation's transportation trades department. "It's an act that poisons collective bargaining and subverts the process."

Other union officials contended that political contributions to Bush from Northwest and other airlines played a role in the move and that Bush sought to punish "organized" labor for supporting Al Gore for president.

But such milquetoast language hardly redeems the AFL-CIO's claim to represent, much less

defend, workers' rights when they are threatened by the ruling class or the political state. Merely criticizing efforts to deprive workers of their rights is the least that workers can expect from any organization that claims to represent their interests.

Yet AMFA's Web site serves notice that it "does not condone or sanction...any conduct which advocates violating the Railway Labor Act." As one report noted, "The 1926 Railway Labor Act was made law with the full agreement of railroad labor and management, and later amended to include the airline industry after discussion with the parties." The unions did so because the act codified their role as merchandisers of labor to capitalist enterprises by establishing the "collective bargaining" process. It enabled union bureaucrats to fortify and perpetuate their privileged positions as labor lieutenants of the capitalist class.

No wonder the overwhelming majority of American workers have turned their back on the AFL-CIO. No wonder AFL-CIO Pres-

ident Sweeney recently declared that the federation is drifting toward the point where it will be "virtually impossible to exist as a viable institution...."

## Defending Our Rights

"Rights" that can be nullified or suspended by a stroke of the presidential pen obviously are worthless. To give them substance and meaning they must be safeguarded beyond the power of any authority, other than that of those whose rights they are supposed to be.

The only dependable safeguard for workers' rights is their own power to enforce them. The power to enforce implies organization, in this case the organization of workers determined to protect and preserve what their forebears fought a revolution and a civil war to establish.

The Socialist Industrial Union program of the Socialist Labor Party offers the only viable plan of working-class organization to place our rights beyond the reach of any usurper to mock or tamper with.

—K.B.

# Connecticut Doctors Sue HMOs

By B.G.

In February, two groups of Connecticut doctors, with support from the state's attorney general's office, filed a number of lawsuits against six major health maintenance organizations (HMOs).

Six lawsuits filed by the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS) charge that the HMOs systematically harmed patients by denying them necessary and crucial medical treatment. Five separate suits filed by doctors acting independently of the CSMS make similar allegations and charge the HMOs with having illegally refused to pay millions of dollars owed to doctors for their services.

The 11 suits are an attempt to force the HMOs to cease the penny-pinching way they treat patients and their doctors. They seek to force the HMOs to stop the arbitrary denial of essential medical services to increase their profit; to stop the practice of refusing care without proper explanation; to halt the practice of cutting costs by allowing clinic staffs to operate with minimal personnel, thus endangering the welfare of patients; and to stop alleged violations of Connecticut's Unfair Trade Practices Act by withholding payments due physicians.

The HMOs named in the series of suits are: Aetna U.S. Healthcare, Cigna HealthCare, ConnectiCare, Oxford Health Plans, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, and Physician Health Services. These cover health care for about 1.5 million people in the state.

Timothy B. Norbeck, executive director of CSMS, explained, "These suits take direct aim at health plan policies and practices that place critical medical care decisions in the hands of insurance company bureaucrats instead of physicians, where they belong." (*The New York Times*, Feb. 15)

The American Medical Association (AMA) also is strongly supporting this legal action and is encouraging doctors' groups from other states to join in the suit. "Physicians throughout the country have been

pushed to the breaking point," said Dr. D. Ted Lewers, an AMA spokesman. He added that a federal patients' bill of rights is needed.

There was a time when the AMA attacked any effort toward universal health care as "socialized medicine." It denounced such efforts as unpatriotic attempts to undermine the "free enterprise system," which was the ordinary be-guiling euphemism generally in use to describe America's vicious capitalistic system. Now that many of its physician members are being hurt by the capitalistic insurance companies, the AMA has changed its rhetoric.

Although physician groups in Florida and California have launched similar lawsuits against HMOs in the past couple of years, the Connecticut suit is unique in that Connecticut is the headquarters of much of the country's insurance industry, and the lawsuits are multitudinous and are brought not only by the state medical society but also by additional suits filed separately by a group of doctors. The 11 lawsuits were filed in the State Superior Courts in each county where the individual HMOs are located. Also, the state's attorney general's office is cooperating with the doctors. The plaintiffs have described HMOs as the "dark side of managed care."

HMOs also have the habit of dumping enrollees who are sick often enough to interfere with the companies' profits. This dumping includes the elderly, who typically suffer poorer health than younger people.

The responses of HMOs to these lawsuits have been typically self-serving. They claim that the suits have more to do with the need and greed of trial lawyers than with health care services. "Connecticut has probably the most advanced patient protection statutes in the country," said Keith Stover, a lobbyist for the Connecticut Association of Health Plans. He characterized the lawsuits as "disingenuous."

Aetna issued a statement saying, "We believe that suits such as this one are without legal merit

and we will, of course, vigorously pursue our defense."

The insurance companies will obviously go to the wall to defend their profits. That, after all, is what capitalism is all about.

## ...Principle

(Continued from page 1)

*The People.* We are working to teach workers why they need to build a movement capable of organizing and mobilizing their potential strength, not only to resist the encroachments of capitalism, but to mount the counter-offensive that will put an end to all such "intrusions" by putting an end to class-divided society.

Help us in that effort with your financial support. Please use the coupon on this page to contribute as generously as you can to the SLP Sustainer Fund.

## WORKERS OF THE WORLD

### Nepal Quashes Hotel Strike

By John-Paul Catusco

On March 15, more than 200,000 hotel workers in Nepal went on "indefinite strike." The workers were demanding that the government attach a 10 percent surcharge to tourists' hotel bills. In theory, proceeds from the surcharge would ultimately be distributed among hotel workers by some formula that news reports failed to describe.

Presumably, union officials hoped to have a say in how the funds would be disbursed. However, all that became academic 12 hours *before* the strike began when the government changed the country's strike-barring Essential Services Act to include the hotel and tourist trades. The move brought the "indefinite strike" to an immediate end. Ninety-three workers who dared to stage a protest in response to the ban were jailed for two days. They were released after the union agreed to comply with the strike ban and officially call the strike off.

## activities

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

### CALIFORNIA

**Oakland**  
**Discussion Meeting**—Section San Francisco Bay Area will hold a discussion meeting on Saturday, March 31, 4-7 p.m., in the Community Room, Rockridge Branch, Oakland Public Library, 5366 College Ave., Oakland. Moderator: Frank Prince. Topic: "Will Capitalism Survive Its Next Bust?" For more information please call 408-280-7458.

### OREGON

**Portland**  
**Discussion Meetings**—Section Portland holds discussion meetings every second Saturday of the month. Meetings are usually held at the Central Library, but the exact time varies. For more information please call Sid at 503-226-2881 or visit our Web site at <http://slp.pdx.home>.

mindspring.com. The general public is invited.

### PENNSYLVANIA

**Philadelphia**  
**First of May Celebration & Discussion**—Section Philadelphia will celebrate May Day on Sunday, April 29, at the home of G. Taylor, 7467 Rhoads St., Philadelphia. Begins at 1 p.m. A political discussion on the topics of the day will be conducted. Pizza and drinks served.

### TEXAS

**Houston**  
**Discussion Meetings**—The SLP group in Houston holds discussion meetings the last Saturday of the month at the Houston Public Library, Franklin Branch, 6440 W. Bellfort, southwest Houston. The time of the meetings varies. Those interested please call 713-721-9296, e-mail [reds1964@netzero.net](mailto:reds1964@netzero.net) or visit the group's Web site at <http://houston-slp.tripod.com>.



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## VANCOUVER

SLP, Suite 141, 6200 McKay Ave., Box 824, Burnaby, BC, V5H 4M9.

# Nortel Layoffs Evoke Cheer, Fears in High-Tech Industry

By B.B.

*It is impressed upon the workpeople, as a great consolation, first, that their sufferings are only temporary ("a temporary inconvenience"), secondly, that machinery acquires the mastery over the whole of a given field of production, only by degrees, so that the extent and intensity of its destructive effect is diminished. The first consolation neutralizes the second. When machinery seizes on an industry by degrees, it produces chronic misery among the operatives who compete with it. Where the transition is rapid, the effect is acute and felt by great masses.*

—Karl Marx, *Capital*

Nortel Networks, a "major player" in the telecommunications industry, recently announced that it was doubling its worldwide layoffs from 4,000 to 10,000. Art Roberts, executive vice president of another telecommunications firm, Diamondback International Inc., greeted the news with callous disregard for the workers about to lose their jobs and their income by saying: "Of course, it's bad news for any worker who's laid off. But for the industry as a whole, I certainly don't think it's a disaster."

Similar reactions from other

capitalist sources resembled thinly concealed joy. Dr. Hasan Pirkul, dean of the School of Management at the University of Texas-Dallas, nodded at the crisis facing many workers, but then turned to the "brighter" side. Recovery is just around the corner, and soon "we will be back to a position where we are worrying about employment visas to bring more workers in."

Others chimed in with such statements as: "When people get laid off...you often see those employees form new companies, which create new jobs," and "I think this latest round of layoffs will be a blessing to a lot of corporations here because other companies are always looking for good employees."

Some referred to the layoffs as "workforce restructuring" in a "sizzling" and "overextended" market. In Marxist terms this restructuring is the "absurdity—the epidemic of overproduction"—producing beyond the capacity of the working class to buy back what they produce.

The "restructuring" theme is a popular rationalization. Sally Bane, executive director of the Plano, Tex., Economic Development Board, stated: "It's probably more helpful for start-ups or midsized companies

who are now able to attract some employees who have more experience and might be ultimately very helpful."

The gist of all of this commentary amounts to this: How wonderful it is to have a glutted labor market filled with skilled workers who by their competition with one another for fewer jobs depress the level of wages. Under such circumstances wages and benefits tend to fall and profits rise, the savings in wages redound to greater profits. This is what the jubilation is about. This is the "good" news.

The bad news has nothing to do with working-class suffering and insecurity. It has to do with plant closings, profit losses and the impact the loss of workers' income has on other capitalists (retailers, landlords, etc.) As *The Dallas Morning News* put it:

"The future of the computer hardware business is so foggy at the moment that Dell Computer Corp. isn't offering any clues to investors beyond the first quarter of this year."

Capitalism's instability is boldly highlighted by the mounting tide of layoffs. Media spokesmen, academic savants and other crystal ball gazers disingenuously refer to this instability as if it were part of the natural order of things, akin to earthquakes, tidal waves and bad weather. The Socialist Labor Party recognizes that it is really a reflection of an irrational, cruel and outmoded social system.

## Genetically Engineered Disaster Narrowly Averted

By Ken Boettcher

Capitalism's production for profit continues to add more threats to the safety and health—indeed, the very existence—of the human race. *The New Zealand Herald* recently reported that a genetically engineered holocaust was narrowly averted.

According to the *Herald*, a soil ecologist from Oregon State University, reporting in February via video link from the United States to a commission on Genetic Modification in New Zealand, said that alcohol-producing bacteria had already been approved for field tests by the Environmental Protection Agency (sic) when her team of researchers discovered lethal effects in 1994.

The genetically modified bacteria, *GM klebsiella planticola*, produces alcohol from postharvest crop residue. Sludge left over from the process was to be returned to fields as fertilizer. Ingham's team independently tested the bacterial sludge on plants—something the EPA failed to do. "After seven days," Ingham said, "all wheat plants turned to slime."

According to the *Herald*, Ingham "believed that the widespread plant deaths caused by the GM bacteria would in turn affect all life on Earth."

With hundreds or even thousands of companies now vying to get their GM products to market, it seems only a matter of time before capitalism produces an environmental cataclysm that will dwarf the effects of its profit-motivated rape of the environment to date.

### KARL MARX ON EXPANSION, CONTRACTION, UNDEREMPLOYMENT AND CREDIT

...The mass of social wealth, overflowing with the advance of accumulation, and transformable into additional capital, thrusts itself frantically into old branches of production, whose market suddenly expands, or into newly formed branches...the need for which grows out of the development of the old ones. In all such cases, there must be the possibility of throwing great masses of men suddenly on the decisive points without injury to the scale of production in other spheres. Overpopulation supplies these masses. The course characteristic of modern industry, viz., a decennial cycle (interrupted by smaller oscillations), of periods of average activity, production at high pressure, crisis and stagnation, depends on the constant formation, the greater or less absorption, and the re-formation of the industrial reserve army or surplus population. In their turn, the varying phases of the industrial cycle recruit the surplus population, and become one of the most energetic agents of its reproduction. This peculiar course of modern industry, which occurs in no earlier period of human history, was also impossible in the childhood of capitalist production. The composition of capital changed but very slowly. With its accumulation, therefore, there kept pace, on the whole, a corresponding growth in the demand for labor. Slow as was the advance of accumulation compared with that of more modern times, it found a check in the natural limits of the exploitable laboring population, limits which could only be got rid of by forcible means...The expansion by fits and starts of the scale of production is the preliminary to its equally sudden contraction; the latter again evokes the former, but the former is impossible without disposable human material, without an increase in the number of laborers independently of the absolute growth of the population. This increase is effected by the simple process that constantly "sets free" a part of the laborers; by methods which lessen the number of laborers employed in proportion to the increased production. The whole form of the movement of modern industry depends, therefore, upon the constant transformation of a part of the laboring population into unemployed or half-employed hands. The superficiality of political economy shows itself in the fact that it looks upon the expansion and contraction of credit, which is a mere symptom of the periodic changes of the industrial cycle, as their cause. As the heavenly bodies, once thrown into a certain definite motion, always repeat this, so is it with social production as soon as it is once thrown into this movement of alternate expansion and contraction. Effects, in their turn, become causes, and the varying accidents of the whole process, which always reproduces its own conditions, take on the form of periodicity. When this periodicity is once consolidated, even political economy then sees that the production of a relative surplus population—i.e., surplus with regard to the average needs of the self-expansion of capital—is a necessary condition of modern industry.

Karl Marx, *Capital*

## 255075100 years ago

### The Attica Investigation

(*Weekly People*, April 17, 1976)

The dismissal of the two grand juries investigating the 1971 Attica prison rebellion on March 30 officially ended the whitewash that began two and a half years ago.

Since the beginning of the state's investigation, two sets of standards were applied. One served to shield the state's hired guns from legal repercussions stemming from the deaths of 29 inmates and 10 prison guards. The other was applied to inmates, who were hounded and persecuted for years by the state on almost 1,300 charges so flimsy and trumped up that in the end most

had to be dropped.

Under America's class system of justice, there was never any possibility that the minions of the law would be held accountable—the state officials for their refusal to provide medical care, or state troopers for the brutal beatings and killings of inmates during the storming of the medieval prison fortress. In fact, the man at the head of the whole state operation at the time, Nelson Rockefeller, was appointed vice president in the aftermath.

The Attica coverup will one day be recorded as one of the most blatant examples of class justice in capitalist America.

# ROOM Reservations

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Enclosed is my check/money order in the amount of \_\_\_\_\_. Please make the following room reservations for the undersigned for Saturday, June 2, at the Holiday Inn—Great America in Santa Clara, Calif., at the rate of \$93.07 per night, tax included. I will share these quarters with \_\_\_\_\_  
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## 2001 SLP National Convention



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Enclosed is my check/money order in the amount of \_\_\_\_\_. Please make the following reservations for the SLP's 2001 National Convention Banquet on Saturday, June 2, at the Holiday Inn in Santa Clara, Calif., at \$12 per adult and \$5 for children age 12 & under. Social hour at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 7 p.m.

\_\_\_\_ ADULTS \_\_\_\_ CHILDREN  
\_\_\_\_ CHICKEN MARSALA \_\_\_\_ SPINACH LASAGNA (VEGETARIAN)  
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 Monday, May 28.

## SLP of Ukraine on Political Front Line

By Sergiy Skubenko\*

KIEV, Ukraine, March 16—Our organization participated in two mass events in Kiev this month.

The first mass demonstration took place on March 9 in the park across from Shevchenko State University. The park surrounds a monument to national poet Taras Shevchenko.

The action was organized by the National Salvation Forum (formerly the "Ukraine without Kuchma" movement), but many left organizations also came and participated separately with their materials. These included united front organizations, which signed a common declaration for a "Ukraine without bourgeoisie and fascists." Left organizations separated themselves from "Ukraine without Kuchma," and had their own speakers and propaganda.

In the morning, President Leonid Kuchma came with flowers for the Shevchenko monument. Protesters tried to prevent him from entering the park, but were attacked by police. The meeting, which continued after Kuchma left, was interrupted by police attacks, both on "Ukraine without Kuchma" and the left organizations. About 300 persons were arrested, including one member of our organization. Our comrade was released next morning, but 200 persons are still in prison, including 50 left activists. We are continuing the struggle for their freedom. We distributed about 30 leaflets before our materials were taken by police.

Yesterday our organization participated in a protest picket line near the Ukrainian



A demonstrator holds an anti-Kuchma placard during a December protest in Kiev to demand President Kuchma's resignation (left). Demonstrators and police clash in Kiev on March 9 (right).

parliament. This action was announced by its primary organizers—the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) and some of its satellite organizations—as an alternative for fighting the two bourgeois camps led by Kuchma and Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko. The action lasted about five hours.

Unlike the actions of March 9, no battles erupted between police and protesters. The main slogans of the Stalinoid CPU were "Ukraine without Kuchma and Yushchenko" and "Back to Soviet Ukraine." It is necessary to mention that some anti-Semitic and anti-West slogans also were heard from CPU members, especially their leadership.

Many organizations were represented at the March 15 event, but the picket line attracted only about 4,000 persons. The relatively small number of participants may be explained by the heavy rain that fell.

We distributed about 55 copies of our Marxist-De Leonist leaflets and explained that workers have no interests in the fighting between the two bourgeois clans led by

Kuchma, which favors closer ties to Russia, and Yushchenko, which favors closer ties to the West. In discussions we explained that the problems of all workers can be solved only on an international level through Socialist Industrial Unionism. We also pointed out the reactionary character of the chauvinistic CPU slogans.

We talked primarily with rank-and-file CPU and Komsomol (the youth organization of CPU) members from different regions who participated in the protests through a special CPU mobilization over all Ukraine. We won some new contacts from these young people, who wanted to know more about Marxism-De Leonism, primarily about Socialist Industrial Unionism. In this connection, the Ukrainian translations of De Leon's books were very useful.

\*Sergiy Skubenko is National Secretary of the Socialist Labor Party of Ukraine, which was organized at a National Conference in Kiev on Dec. 7.

ian insurgent army to fight the predominantly Serbian Milosevic regime, the U.S. government commissioned MPRI. Parts of this operation were delegated to other NATO countries. *The Scotsman* reported:

"...MPRI subcontracted some of the training program to two British private security companies, ensuring that between 1998 and June 1999 the KLA was being armed, trained and assisted in Italy, Turkey, Kosovo and Germany by the Americans, the German external intelligence service, and former and serving members of Britain's 22 SAS Regiment."

MPRI's handiwork continues to bear bitter fruit in Kosovo as the KLA, now called the KPC, terrorizes the Serbs and other ethnic minorities, with "nearly 1,000 people murdered in 18 months."

Moreover, attacks by Kosovo Albanian guerrillas on Macedonia have recently escalated. "About 200 black-uniformed Albanian fighters have taken control of Tanusevce...[and] have clashed...with some of the 300-plus Macedonian soldiers and policemen surrounding the village."

MPRI claims that the Macedonian army has been their client for over two years, but *The Scotsman* noted that recently MPRI has stepped up their "training" of "the higher echelons of the Macedonian army," as well as "border police."

In an ironic twist, these new MPRI graduates are now working hand in hand with NATO to ward off attacks by bands of ex-KLA guerrillas, which was another brainchild of MPRI. As these two armies of MPRI's Balkan star pupils go for each other's throats, MPRI will have more opportunities to rake in the profits.

That MPRI has clientele on both sides of this armed confrontation does not mean that MPRI can be dismissed as just a band of mercenaries on sale to the highest bidder with no inherent loyalties. MPRI uses "former U.S. marines, helicopter pilots, and special forces teams" and is hired by the U.S. government for specific purposes. Also, MPRI serves U.S. client states and insurgencies clearly under the auspices of the U.S. government.

MPRI is extremely useful to the "executive committee" of America's capitalist class in doing the dirty work of covert operations, training alleged "war criminals" and using proxy armies so that American ground troops don't return from the Balkans in body bags. Such private military firms have no interest in peace. In a war-torn region like the Balkans, MPRI has hit the jackpot in the midst of all the misery, death and destruction of constant warfare.

### letters

#### Women's Day Greeting From Kiev

Congratulations to all women comrades on International Working Women's Day.

Sergiy Skubenko  
Kiev, Ukraine

#### Juggling With Numbers

I was so encouraged to read the article "Capitalism Juggling With Numbers—and Workers' Lives" (March issue). From my family's own experience, and the difficulty of true lovers to stay together, I see how the wretched capitalist system uproots and destroys lives. Work for socialism—something new!

Greg Stark  
Rochester, N.Y.

### Earth Day vs. May Day:

Two Views of the Future

By Robert Bills

8 pages – 50¢ (postpaid)

New York Labor News • P.O. Box 218  
Mountain View, CA 94042-0218

## Military Training for Profit Adds Fuel to Balkans Crisis

By Diane Secor

One of the most despicable "entrepreneurial" schemes ever hatched is that of training and supplying professional mercenaries to do a ruling class' dirty work.

Because war or the threat of war is the norm under capitalism, there is always a demand for the services of so-called soldiers of fortune and the companies that specialize in training them. As more brawls over markets, cheap labor and raw materials break out, these legalized versions of "Murder Inc." and their product become increasingly useful to the United States and other governments around the world.

One example of this is Military Professional Resources Inc. (MPRI).

"MPRI," according to its Web site ([www.mpri.com](http://www.mpri.com)), "provides a wide range of services to the U.S. government and, under license by the U.S. government, to a number of foreign countries..."

MPRI's "services" include "assisting Ministries of Defense establish policies, procedures and strategic plans; assisting armed forces in democracy transition efforts; working with armies to attain greater efficiencies, economies and effectiveness; working with legislators to provide effective oversight; and a long list of humanitarian and peace operations around the world." MPRI boasts of its military and technical aid to U.S. client states such as Nigeria, Colombia, Taiwan, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, as well as in the Balkans.

A close look at how MPRI has served U.S. interests in the Balkans reveals how lucrative this business can be. There are at least four known areas of these MPRI Balkans operations: (1) Bosnia and Herze-

govina, (2) Macedonia, (3) Croatia, and (4) the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC).

In the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, MPRI has been instrumental in the U.S.-dominated Military Stabilization Program, which includes training and directing the Federation Armed Forces. The 1995 Dayton peace agreement, which was designed to cement this Croatian-Islamic federation, is rapidly disintegrating. Reuters, on March 9, reported that Bosnia's Croatian nationalist leaders have declared "self rule" and have now been removed from office by the "international peace overseer" Wolfgang Petritsch, the head of the administrative arm of the NATO-controlled Stabilization Force (SFOR) occupation army. If this showdown leads to an armed confrontation, business will pick up for MPRI in Bosnia.

Also, according to the company Web site, MPRI's current Republic of Macedonia, Stability and Deterrence Program started in 1998. This is "supported by U.S. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and focuses on assisting the Macedonian armed forces in improving their military capability to deter armed aggression and should deterrence fail, defend Macedonian territory." Who is attacking Macedonia right now? It is not the Serbs or the now deposed Slobodan Milosevic. Macedonia is now under siege by other MPRI protégés—none other than NATO's own allies, the "freedom fighters" of the KLA!

To get the full picture of MPRI's role in the KLA leaders' rise to power in Kosovo it is necessary to go back to MPRI's relationship with another client, the Croatian Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia.

"MPRI," according to *The Scotsman* of March 2, "armed and trained the Croatian army in the mid-90s, in preparation for 'Operation Storm' in 1995, which saw the Croats liberate the Krajina region, forcing up to 100,000 Serbs out." This act of "liberation" was also the target of war crimes investigators. According to Michel Chosudovsky, "The United Nations Appoints an Alleged War Criminal in Kosovo" (March 2000), Agim Ceku was named by *Jane Defence Weekly* as the "mastermind" of the "Croatian offensive at Medak," as well as being "one of the key planners of...Operation Storm." This was the subject of an International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) inquiry.

The ICTY "investigat[ed] Ceku for alleged war crimes committed against ethnic Serbs in Croatia between 1993 and 1995." This ICTY investigation was well known to the United States, NATO and the U.N. administration in Kosovo, but was not made public, unlike the uproar over ICTY allegations of Serbian war crimes.

One reason for this coverup was that Ceku was hand-picked to be chief of staff of the Kosovo Protection Corps by the NATO puppet, nominally U.N. administrator Bernard Kouchner. Ceku's new endeavor, the KPC, like its KLA predecessor, was trained and armed by MPRI.

This "transformation" from the KLA to the KPC was largely cosmetic in nature, with many of the same players involved in "organized crime and the Balkans narcotics traffic." Thus, as a KPC chief of staff, KLA commander and a leader in Operation Storm, Ceku has a long history of working under the tutelage of MPRI.

To build up the KLA as an ethnic Alban-